



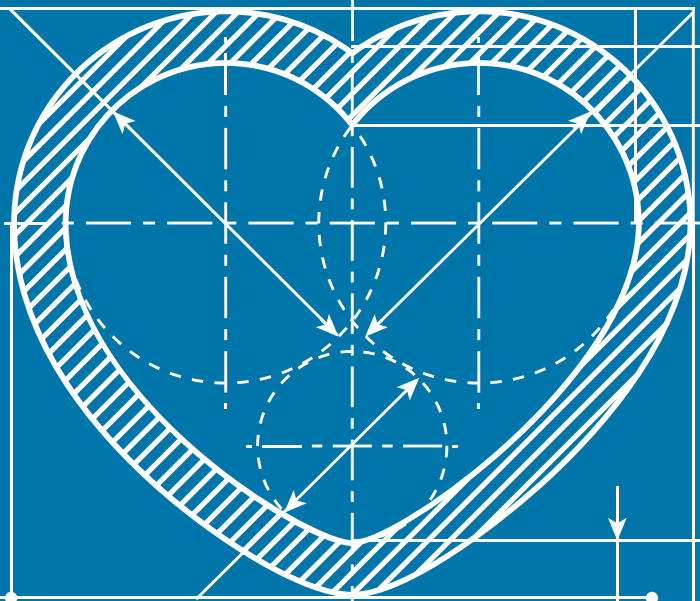
TALENTDIMENSIONS

50% ↓ IN TURNOVER RISK

# BELONGING by DESIGN

IGNITE BELONGING  
THROUGH INCLUSION AND  
ENGAGEMENT

75% REDUCTION IN SICK DAYS



SAVINGS \$52M

56% ↑ IN JOB PERFORMANCE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When we think of basic human needs, we think of physiological needs like food and shelter or safety. Typically, we don't think of the third human need—belonging. To be happy and fulfilled, we all want to feel like we belong. When employees feel they belong, performance increases, turnover decreases and sick days decline. A sense of belonging elevates the bottom line. Unfortunately, everyone feels like they don't belong at some point in their lives.

Creating a culture of belonging in the workplace has always been important. When COVID-19 changed how we work, feelings of isolation increased. Employees had to balance their jobs while caring for children or other family members, and it became difficult to establish work/life boundaries. They also had to contend with a lack of technological support or skill and communication breakdowns.

Even before COVID-19, societal divisiveness created environments where people felt that they didn't belong in one way or another. During the pandemic, social unrest and social justice issues brought sensitive subjects to the surface. Often people were remote when having these conversations, which made them even more difficult.

The combination of both the pandemic and the increase in social unrest intensified tensions that were continually stirred by the 24-hour news cycle. Now more than ever, creating a culture of belonging in the workplace has become increasingly critical.

Talent Dimensions believes that to truly create a culture of belonging, you need to focus on both engagement and inclusion. In fact, the area where inclusion and engagement intersect is belonging—a sense that you are appreciated and recognized as part of the organization. When employees feel they are valued, treated fairly and honestly, seen as an individual with something to offer, and made to feel they are a part of things, they are happier, more productive and more committed.

## WHY BELONGING MATTERS IN THE WORKPLACE

Sarasvati was excited to join the marketing team in a new organization. Her experience from her last job was going to elevate the work of the team. From the interview process, Sarasvati learned that the team had a reputation for being a tight-knit group: they worked well together, went to lunch every day and frequently went out together after work. She was looking forward to being a part of such a close group.

On Sarasvati's first day of work, her co-worker, Lisa, escorted her around the office and introduced her to the rest of the team. Lisa stumbled over Sarasvati's name. After three attempts, Lisa exasperated, exclaimed, "I'm going to call you Sara. If I have problems pronouncing your name, others will, too." Sarasvati didn't want to be called Sara, but she wanted to make it easier for her new teammates.

The team invited Sarasvati to all the right meetings, and she was able to contribute immediately even as she learned from her teammates. After team meetings, everyone talked about where they should go to lunch and said goodbye to Sarasvati as they got their jackets. Sarasvati wanted to go with them to build relationships—and because their lunches looked like fun. She understood how it might be hard to include a new person, so she was willing to give it more time as they got to know her at work. However, Sarasvati's teammates often continued important work-related conversations during their outings.

Missing out on these conversations often left Sarasvati a step or two behind the others. She wondered if she wasn't included because she had a different background than others in the group. She and her parents had immigrated from India several years ago, so she spoke with an accent, didn't look like her teammates and often wore bright colors and fabrics from India. Whatever the reason, Sarasvati felt like she was not really a part of the team. As the weeks turned to months, Sarasvati felt more and more isolated. No matter what she said, wore or tried, she didn't belong. The excitement Sarasvati felt about her job in the beginning had now turned to dread.

At one time or another, everyone has felt like Sarasvati. Like they didn't belong. Maybe it was always warming the bench on a team, maybe you were over or under dressed for an event, maybe you were bullied as a child, maybe you were uncomfortable in a situation because of your religious beliefs, maybe, like Sarasvati, it was when you joined a new work team or maybe you were actually told that you didn't belong. Regardless of the situation, you get an intuitive sense when you feel like you don't belong. In fact, being excluded may even be more than a feeling; it can also become real physical pain.

## 40% OF PEOPLE SAY THEY FEEL ISOLATED AT WORK.<sup>1</sup>

Whether in your personal life or at work, belonging is a fundamental human need. In fact, the only needs humans require more than belonging are food, shelter and safety. Meeting people's need to belong in the workplace improves key performance measures. According to research from BetterUp, if employees feel like they belong, performance improves by 56%, turnover decreases by 50% and sick days decline by 75%—all contributing to the bottom line<sup>1</sup>.

However, creating a culture of belonging is a challenge for organizations. COVID-19 changed the way we work as more and more employees began working from home. Many also had to balance work while caring for children or sick family members or they themselves were sick. It became difficult to establish work/life boundaries. When people work remotely, they can become isolated due to physical limitations, which weakens connection and reduces trust.<sup>2</sup> In early 2021, 40% of people said they feel isolated at work.<sup>3</sup> Likely that number increased as the pandemic lingered.

Even before COVID-19, societal divisiveness created environments where people felt that they didn't belong in one way or another. During the pandemic, social unrest and social justice issues, brought to the forefront by major events like the death of George Floyd, surfaced and highlighted sensitive subjects. Often people were remote when having these conversations, which made them even more difficult.

The combination of both the pandemic and the increase in divisive social issues intensified tensions continually stirred by the 24-hour news cycle. Today, creating a culture of belonging in the workplace has become increasingly critical.

Your identity can also factor into your sense of belonging. With Sarasvati, isolation was only part of the issue. Sarasvati tried to get her teammates to include her; she began to hide important parts of her identity that were different from them. She allowed her new teammates to call her Sara. She also always dressed in clothes that were more like theirs. She worked on making her Indian dialect less prevalent. In other words, she hid as much as she could of her Indian culture. Like Sarasvati, 61% of employees across all demographics feel the need to conceal some aspect of their identity at work. The percentage of people who feel they must hide a part of themselves by demographic group are: 83% of LGBTQ employees, 79% of black/African American employees, 66% of women, 63% of Hispanic/Latinx employees, 61% of Asian/Pacific Islander employees and 45% of white heterosexual white men.<sup>4</sup>

So how do you decrease the feeling of isolation and increase the feeling of belonging? First, we need to understand belonging and its components.

## WHAT IS BELONGING?

Belonging is sometimes confused with inclusion. However, the two are not interchangeable. Inclusion is making a person feel welcome and that they have a voice and the opportunity to contribute. Inclusion is an intentional act that you can choose whether or not to do. Belonging is when a person feels safe and doesn't have to hide parts of themselves. The American Psychological Association defines belonging as, "the feeling of being accepted and approved by a group or by society as a whole."<sup>5</sup>

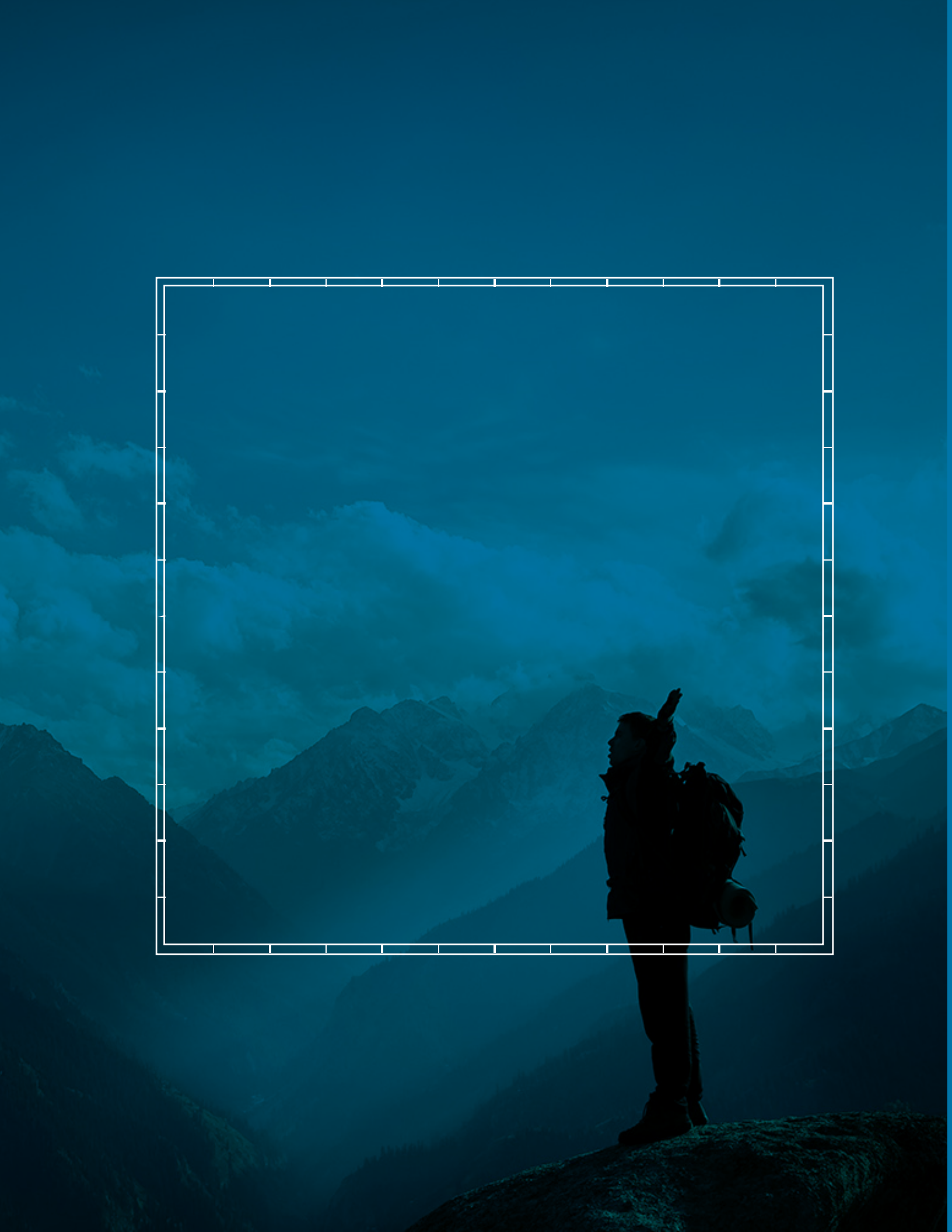
- 1 Shonna Waters, "Here's How to Build a Sense of Belonging in the Workplace," BetterUp, May 11, 2021, <https://www.betterup.com/blog/belonging>.
- 2 Britt Andreatta, "A culture of belonging starts with psychological safety", Chief Learning Officer, February 25, 2022 <https://www.chieflearningofficer.com/2022/02/25/a-culture-of-belonging-starts-with-psychological-safety/>.
- 3 Shonna Waters, "Here's How to Build a Sense of Belonging in the Workplace," BetterUp, May 11, 2021, <https://www.betterup.com/blog/belonging>.
- 4 Kenji Yoshino and Christie Smith, "Fear of Being Different Stifles Talent," Harvard Business Review, March 2014 <https://hbr.org/2014/03/fear-of-being-different-stifles-talent>.
- 5 Belonging," APA Dictionary of Psychology, American Psychological Association, <https://dictionary.apa.org/belonging>.

An organization's culture contributes to a sense of belonging. Sarasvati enjoyed her work, but she had to work harder and longer since she was excluded from information discussed in the informal meetings. And since she was typically a step behind in information, Sarasvati felt uncomfortable sharing her ideas; she felt she didn't have a voice. Because she sensed she didn't belong, she began to question herself—her decision to accept the position and her ability to contribute. Despite a record of high achievement, Sarasvati became less and less motivated.

Talent Dimensions takes belonging a step further by adding engagement to the equation. We believe belonging is where inclusion and engagement intersect. It is a sense that you are a part of, not apart from the organization. A sense that you are valued, treated fairly and honestly, seen as an individual with something to offer and made to feel you are a part of things. The benefits of this are obvious; a happy and safe workforce is a more productive and reliable workforce.

Belonging is the sweet spot where inclusion and engagement intersect.







60% OF  
EMPLOYEES  
FELT WHEN  
THEY WERE  
EXCLUDED,  
IT WAS  
BECAUSE OF  
LEADERS.<sup>8</sup>

## INCLUSION COMES FROM THE TOP.

Sarasvati noticed that the marketing group leader was also relationship driven and conducted work informally with people she was friends with. It is no wonder Sarasvati's teammates also had a similar style. Their behavior reflected the group's ethos. In other words, their character and guiding beliefs.

Even though organizations have made progress by offering Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) initiatives, many employees still don't feel included at work. When someone doesn't feel included, they suppress parts of themselves, especially those that make them different and unique. Feeling like an outsider is painful, not just emotionally but often physically, too.<sup>6</sup> In fact, researchers at Harvard, Purdue and UCLA found that brain scans of those feeling the pain of exclusion reveal activity in the same areas that react to physical injury.<sup>7</sup>

Although everyone in the organization has a role to play in including others, leaders can have the most impact on making employees feel included. In fact, a study by Paolo Gaudiano found that almost 60% of employees stated that when they felt excluded it was due to organizational leaders compared with almost 40% feeling excluded by direct managers and about one-third by peers. The percentages exceed 100% because employees can feel excluded by more than one group.<sup>8</sup>

The Gaudiano study also found that feelings of exclusion are typically caused by people's behaviors. Company policies only contributed to feelings of exclusion 10% of the time. Not surprisingly, if employees were in the non-majority group within an organization, they felt they were excluded 40% more of the time than those from the majority group.<sup>9</sup>

George Dei said it well, "Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists. It is making a new space, a better space, for everyone."

## ENGAGEMENT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT.

Employee engagement is also a critical driver to success—impacting top and bottom lines. When employee engagement is high, organizations experience higher retention rates, improved customer loyalty and increased organizational performance.<sup>10</sup> In addition, highly engaged employees can also effectively deal with substantive challenges, such as those that emerged due to the COVID-19 pandemic and societal issues.<sup>11</sup>

Engaged employees are more focused, passionate, innovative and have a sense of urgency. Typically, engaged employees go beyond their job descriptions, which brings meaning to their work.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, a Gallup study shows that only a little more than a third of U.S. workers are currently engaged. Globally, the number of engaged employees dropped to just 20%.<sup>13</sup> When employees aren't

6 Jackie Wiles, "Build a Sense of Belonging in the Workplace," Gartner, August 4, 2020, <https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/build-a-sense-of-belonging-in-the-workplace#:~:text=Creating%20a%20sense%20of%20belonging,their%20inclusion%20approach%20and%20goals.&text=When%20employees%20are%20truly%20included,as%20individuals%2C%20their%20authentic%20selves.>

7 Britt Andreatta, "A culture of belonging starts with psychological safety", Chief Learning Officer, February 25, 2022 <https://www.chieflearningofficer.com/2022/02/25/a-culture-of-belonging-starts-with-psychological-safety/>.

8 Paolo Gaudiano, "How Each of Us Influences Workplace Inclusion," Forbes, September 7, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paologaudiano/2021/09/07/how-each-of-us-influences-workplace-inclusion/?sh=1ef9f5434e23>.

9 Ibid.

10 Steve Huang, "Why Does Belonging Matter at Work?," SHRM, July 3, 2020, <https://blog.shrm.org/blog/why-does-belonging-matter-at-work>

11 Jim Hartner, "U.S. Employee Engagement Hold Steady in First Half of 2021," Gallup, July 29, 2021, <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/352949/employee-engagement-holds-steady-first-half-2021.aspx>

12 Steve Huang, "Why Does Belonging Matter at Work?," SHRM, July 3, 2020, <https://blog.shrm.org/blog/why-does-belonging-matter-at-work>

13 Jim Hartner, "U.S. Employee Engagement Hold Steady in First Half of 2021," Gallup, July 29, 2021, <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/352949/employee-engagement-holds-steady-first-half-2021.aspx>

engaged, they tend to watch the clock and do just enough to get by.

While most employees are not engaged, 15% are actively disengaged.<sup>14</sup> In other words, they are unhappy at work. Or, today, given everything happening in the world, they may just be burned out. In 2021, 74% of actively disengaged employees were seeking another job. Although an engaged employee sometimes leaves, it is at a much lower rate than employees who aren't engaged.<sup>15</sup> Inclusion also plays a critical role in engagement. A Gallup study found that when employees feel excluded, they're more likely to be actively disengaged.<sup>16</sup>

## MAKING THE CONNECTION.

In January 2021, Talent Dimensions conducted research to investigate the correlation between inclusion and engagement. In brief, we found that employees who self-identify as feeling included, highly engaged and committed at work, are more likely to have an overall sense of belonging.

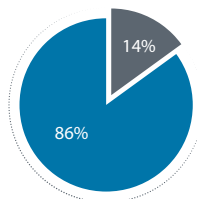
Eighty-six percent of respondents who believed they were highly included said they were committed to the success of the organization, while only 14% of respondents in the low inclusion group felt committed to the organization. Furthermore, 100% of respondents who identified as highly included stated that they felt valued at work. In turn, no one in the low inclusion group believed they were valued.

In a world where people are exploring new job opportunities in record numbers, inclusion is critical. Seventy-one percent of respondents who felt included said

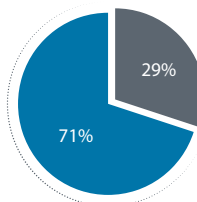
that if they were offered a job at another company, they would stay at their current one. Less than a third of respondents in the low inclusion group said they would stay. In other words, over two-thirds of employees who don't feel included are likely to resign if another opportunity arises.

The implications of these results are clear; employees who feel included by their managers at work are far more likely to remain with the organization, they are more committed to the organization's success and they feel valued, i.e., they are more engaged. When inclusion is high, and engagement is high, employees feel an overall sense of satisfaction and acceptance at their job, leading to a feeling of belonging within their organization. If employees feel included, engaged and feel psychologically safe—they belong—that is the sweet spot for peak individual and organizational performance with a happy and reliable workforce. The key is to make this intersection a part of your organization's DNA.

% of Responses That Strongly Agree They are Committed to the Organization's Success



% of Responses That Strongly Agree They Would Stay With This Organization if Offered a Job at Another Company



ONLY A  
LITTLE  
MORE THAN  
ONE-THIRD  
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14 Jim Hartner, "U.S. Employee Engagement Hold Steady in First Half of 2021," Gallup, July 29, 2021, <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/352949/employee-engagement-holds-steady-first-half-2021.aspx>

15 Jim Hartner, "U.S. Employee Engagement Hold Steady in First Half of 2021," Gallup, July 29, 2021, <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/352949/employee-engagement-holds-steady-first-half-2021.aspx>

16 "Build a Culture Where Everyone Can Use Their Voice," Gallup, <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/215939/diversity-inclusion.aspx>.

PSYCHOLOGICAL  
SAFETY IS WHEN  
EVERYONE FEELS A  
SHARED SENSE OF  
TRUST AND RESPECT  
SO THAT PEOPLE  
ARE ALLOWED TO  
BE THEMSELVES.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IS FOUNDATIONAL TO BELONGING.

Psychological safety is critical to creating a culture of belonging. In fact, if you don't have psychological safety, then you can't truly achieve a sense of belonging. Employees need to feel safe to state their opinions and bring their full selves to the workplace.

Psychological safety is not about being liked. It also doesn't protect you from feeling uncomfortable about different opinions or beliefs. It is about being safe to have an open conversation without fear of embarrassment, penalty, rejection or retaliation. Everyone involved feels a shared sense of trust and respect so that people are allowed to be themselves. According to Gartner research, when frequent and open dialogue exists between leaders and employees, then feelings of psychological safety increase by 21%.<sup>17</sup>

A large global Google study on team effectiveness found that psychological safety was the most important factor—the differentiator—in the best teams. Psychological safety was even more valuable than the individual skills and performance of the team members. The study discovered two key actions that these teams did consistently: they showed empathy and they actively sought out all members' thoughts and contributions.<sup>18</sup>

## CREATING A CULTURE OF BELONGING: CASE STUDIES

Creating a culture of belonging must start from the top and become a core tenet of the organization. In other words, a focus on increasing engagement, inclusion, psychological safety and belonging must be a part of your organization's DNA.

In 2012, Trane Technologies (then Ingersoll Rand) discovered in an engagement survey that their employee engagement numbers were flat. CEO, Mike Lamach a people-focused leader, added improvement in engagement to the corporate strategy. Thanks to sponsorship from the top for the strategic engagement initiative, Trane now trains several hundred managers each year around the world in different languages, giving everyone the same message and tools on engaging their employees. To date, more than 4,000 managers have experienced the program over the last nine years.

In the first year alone, Trane saw employee engagement leap by 8 points to 71%. Each year engagement continues to increase. "We are most proud of the fact that we can show direct reports of trained managers there is double the level of engagement as those of managers who have not yet been trained," said Sarah Matney, Leadership Excellence Learning Leader at Trane Technologies. Even during the pandemic and a significant reorganization, Trane saw engagement at 80%, with employees exhibiting pride, energy and optimism.

17 "Five Things Leaders Can Do Today to be More Inclusive," Gartner, September 27, 2019, <https://emtemp.gcom.cloud/ngw/globalassets/en/human-resources/documents/5-things-to-do-today-to-be-more-inclusive.pdf>.

18 Work, Google, <https://rework.withgoogle.com/print/guides/5721312655835136/>.



A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of several modern skyscrapers with glass facades, set against a clear blue sky. The perspective creates a sense of height and architectural grandeur. The image is overlaid with a white rectangular border that has small tick marks along its edges, resembling a technical drawing or blueprint.

TRANE TECHNOLOGIES  
(THEN INGERSOLL RAND)

CHILDREN'S HEALTH OF  
ORANGE COUNTY (CHOC)

# "BELONGING IS THE HEART-BEAT OF EVERYTHING."

Dr. Sharonne Herbert,  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Officer at CHOC

"Engagement is a part of our culture," Matney explained. Every manager reviews their employee engagement results, which helps them to understand what they are doing well and where to focus improvement efforts.

Along with engagement, Trane has a robust D&I program to promote inclusion and a sense of belonging. At Trane, employees are encouraged to welcome diverse viewpoints and backgrounds. They are also committed to equity in both how people are treated and the opportunities offered. Like engagement, D&I is a strong part of Trane's culture.

Both engagement and D&I efforts are important pillars in Trane's strategy to create an overall sense of belonging. Sponsorship at the top and enterprise funding helped incorporate these pillars into Trane's culture, and leaders at all levels know what the expectations are.

Another organization, Children's Health Orange County (CHOC), advanced a culture of belonging using a different approach than Trane Technologies. In the fall of 2019, Kim Cripe, the president of CHOC communicated that creating a culture of belonging was a new strategic priority for all staff as well as the population they serve. She believes that belonging is the hallmark of everything.

"We started by investing time to recognize all our differences and communicating information candidly," explained Dr. Sharonne Herbert, Belonging, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (BDEI) Officer at CHOC. They accomplished that through townhalls, department meetings and an enterprise newsletter. Dr. Herbert said, "Staff appreciate the opportunity to be heard and a sense of coming together has been created."

Dr. Herbert described how they were attracted to the Talent Dimensions' Belonging model where belonging is the sweet spot at the intersection of inclusion and engagement. "It is how I wanted people to experience it: 'I have voice. I have meaning,'" she said.

Dr. Herbert pointed out that just after COVID-19 hit, CHOC began its deep dive into building a culture of belonging. Staff were burned out from the increase of treating patients with COVID-19. They were struggling during a time of duress and constant change. But CHOC knew it was critical to continue what they had begun. "I can't think of a time when it is more important for people's voices to be heard," Dr. Herbert added.

To equip staff, CHOC is offering inclusion and bias training and developed a style guide of inclusive language to help staff with their communication. It is not one-and-done training; they know they will continue offering training and tools like the style guide. Dr. Herbert goes from department to department to talk with smaller groups about bias and belonging, and also to listen. She believes a part of creating an enterprise culture of belonging is to ensure each individual group also has a culture of belonging.

CHOC is transforming how they look at talent by refining the hiring process to have more diverse perspectives and update job descriptions with more inclusive language. Dr. Herbert in her Belonging, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion role is included when other functions make decisions on purchases and initiatives. She is also expanding CHOC's work in the community by participating in panels and other education initiatives. Dr. Herbert cautions that building a culture of belonging must be multi-pronged, becoming a part of day-to-day life.



While CHOC leadership has received positive feedback, they also want to be able to quantify their progress. Dr. Herbert stated they first did an assessment to establish a baseline. We communicated the results with each leader and gave them recommendations on what they can do to improve within their departments and teams. Now, CHOC is in the process of doing the assessment again to measure gains and identify where they need to do more work.

Both of these successful illustrations have several things in common. First, the desire to improve engagement, inclusion and belonging began as a vision from the top by setting strategic goals and funding at an enterprise level. Leaders and employees were provided a foundation in the form of awareness, training and tools. Expectations were established. Both organizations created a baseline metric and measured regularly to understand where they are and where they still need to go. CHOC and Trane both made a conscious choice to make belonging a part of their organizational DNA and are committed for the long run.

## HOW TO INCREASE A SENSE OF BELONGING IN YOUR ORGANIZATION.

To move the needle on belonging in your organization, you can start big with an enterprise strategic objective. Or you can initiate change right where you are within your circles of control and influence. Whether you begin an enterprise journey or focus on your immediate surroundings, it's important to first understand where you are and where you want to be.

For enterprise-wide efforts using an assessment will establish a baseline you can use to measure progress and understand the impact. Once you have established a baseline, you can examine the gap between where you are and where you want to be. This is a great point to bring people together for an ideation session. Look at the trends that are, or will be, impacting your organization, industry and market. Being aware of where you want to go and what you will face along the way will help you plan the course of action that is specific to your organization.

Whether you want to start at the individual or the enterprise level, the main thing is just to start! There are many things you can do to create impact:

### Be curious.

Make an impact just by being curious. Ask questions to seek to understand, not to explain. Ask others to share their opinions, perspectives and approaches. Then, actively listen to the answers. Ensure that you build in space in your conversations to create dialogue.

### Set clear expectations with a common purpose.

While this seems basic, it is sometimes overlooked or taken for granted that it has already happened. Ensure that everyone—direct reports, teammates, co-workers, colleagues—know how the effort, big or small, connects to the organization's mission and goals. Make sure individuals know what's expected of them and how their actions contribute to larger or common objectives. Demonstrate your commitment through your own actions every day.

### Conduct regular check-ins.

Schedule regular check-ins to make sure people have what they need to do their jobs; if there are obstacles in their way to achieve their goals; and overall how they are doing. A regular check-in is arguably easier to do when staff is co-located. And for remote workers, some of whom are relatively new to the arrangement, regular check-ins are more critical in establishing and maintaining connection. Be intentional and deliberate in creating dialogue whether face-to-face or through technology.

### Provide opportunities to develop.

Employees want to grow, to expand their knowledge to be even better at their work, to prepare for more responsibility or new roles. Providing opportunities to develop shows that the organization is committed to them and to their futures, and in turn builds greater commitment to the organization. Opportunities to grow and learn must be available and accessible to everyone, not just a chosen few. Ensure you understand what individuals want to learn and what they aspire to do, then help them get there.

### Encourage participation and listen.

First and foremost, employees need to have access or be invited to contribute. If it is a meeting or task force, make sure that there is diversity in the group. Make room for more than just the usual players. Invite new perspectives and ideas. Create a safe space where everyone has opportunity to speak and express ideas. Give floor time in meetings, access to chat functions in virtual meetings or message boards outside of meetings. If someone tends to dominate the conversation (there usually is someone!), ask them to pause and allow space for others or find another role the talkative member can play. Encourage, reinforce and model active listening.

### Belonging is everyone's responsibility.

Communicate expectations to the team you lead that belonging is a part of everyone's day-to-day work. Provide employees with an understanding of belonging and tools they can use, such as valuing what each person can bring to the group. Ensure that every voice can be heard.

### Communicate using inclusive language and images.

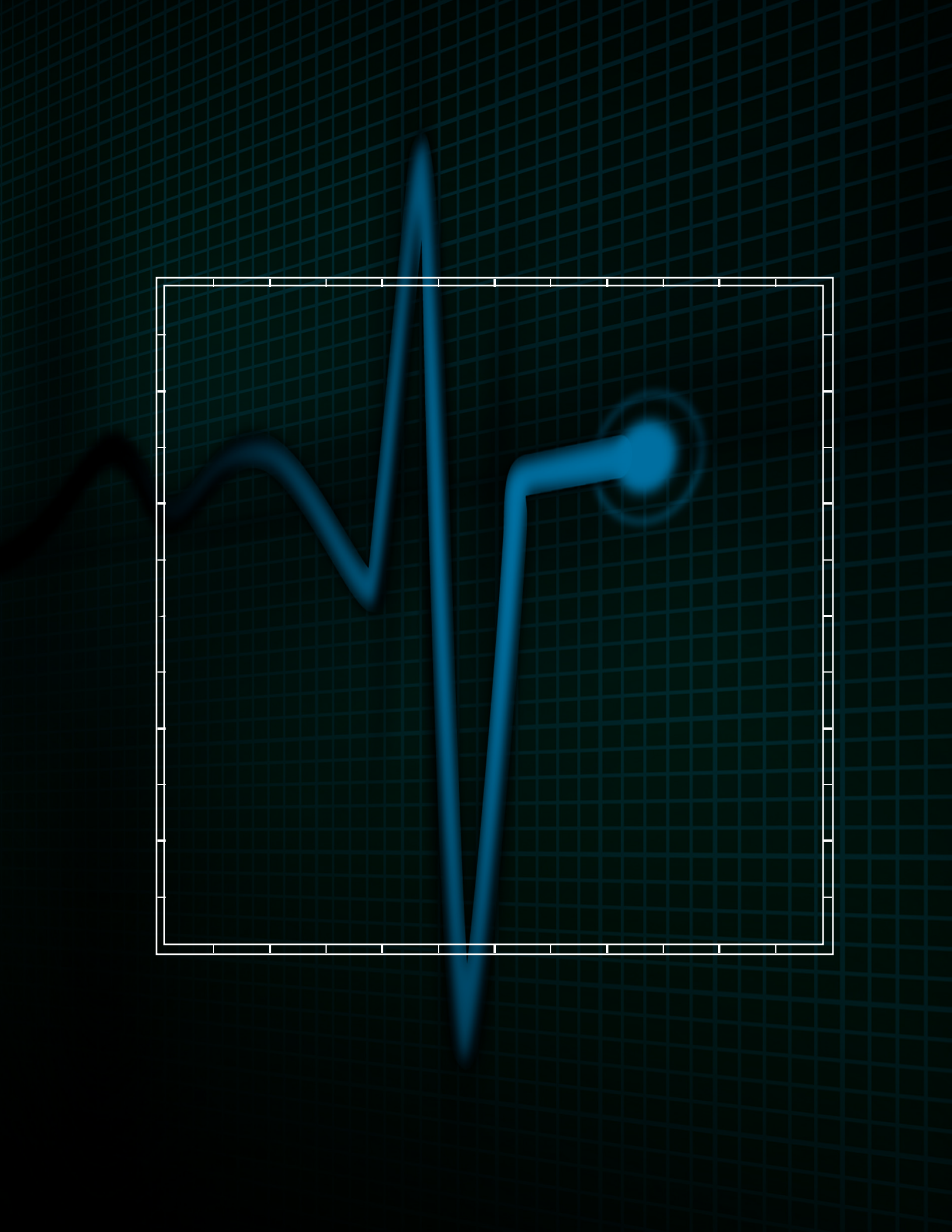
From internal communications to external marketing, use language and images that include rather than exclude. For example, remove guys when you mean a group and instead use gender-neutral language like team, all or members. Avoid language that highlights differences in a negative light. Be aware of and avoid micro-messages embedded in language and actions. As Al Etmsanski suggests in his book, *The Power of Disability*, "If you're wondering what language to use, ask. Don't assume. It could be the start of a beautiful relationship."

### Create allies.

An ally is someone who supports members of an underrepresented group even though they themselves are not a member of the group. When an organization encourages allies, it begins to drive systemic improvements to organizational policies as well as the culture. Being an ally doesn't mean you have to do something big. It can be small acts. In fact, anyone can be an ally by leveraging their privilege to help an underrepresented person or group. A word of caution here! First do some research to understand the role of an ally and to learn about and connect with the group or groups you wish to support.

## BELONGING IS THE HEARTBEAT OF EVERYTHING.

A culture of belonging is made up of people who are engaged in their work and know they are included – they have both meaning and a voice. Belonging leads to a space where everyone feels respected and valued. They are free to contribute more to the organization's success and have a sense of agency and ownership. They are more likely to stay with the organization because they know it's where they belong! As Sharonne Herbert with CHOC said, "belonging is the heartbeat of everything."





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