**Building the case for diversity in equine community**

Why does our industry care about diversity, equality, and inclusion?

We love horses because they give us the power to unlock our own power. We want to invite all people to experience the power of the horse/human connection. Sharing that passion with others by ensuring underrepresented communities are invited and welcomed to experience the power of horses will create a greater sense of belonging for all horse lovers, and build a stronger, more sustainable equine industry.

Industries and organizations that prioritize DEI values now will rise to the top for future generations. diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces will take on greater importance as younger generations – including millennials and Generation Z – become the dominant groups within the workforce. These demographics are set to be more culturally diverse than ever before, and are motivated by values, purpose, and experience. Early research suggests this approach can improve teamwork, spark innovation, and boost millennial engagement, and over time it might even help alleviate divisions in the broader society.

* **Engaging Future Participants/ Industry Sustainability:** According to the Brookings Institute, current census population projections underscore that racial minority groups “will be the source of all the growth in the nation’s youth and working-age population, most of the growth in its voters and much of the growth in its consumer tax base.”
* Harvard Business Review found that diverse companies are 70% likelier to capture a new market. They’re also 45% more likely to report increased market share year-over-year.
* **Financial Performance and Profitability**: A 2009 analysis of 506 companies found that the ones more racial and/or gender diversity were more profitable.
* A study conducted by McKinsey & Company found that ethnically diverse companies are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians. Gender diverse companies are 15% more likely to outperform their respective national industry medians.
* The 50 companies on Fortune’s 2016 Best Workplaces for Diversity list averaged 24% higher revenue growth than companies that failed to make the list.
* **New Revenue Sources**: As the customer base for equine nonprofits (rescues, sanctuaries therapy centers, etc.) expands so too can the donor pipeline. Studies indicates that nonprofits are not effectively engaging non-white communities, with black and non-white Hispanic donors reporting that they are solicited less frequently but would give more if asked more.
* **Talent Recruitment & Innovative Solutions:** Younger generational cohorts, especially millennials and Gen Z, attach greater value to working in organizations whose missions and values they can related to. Companies that value diverse ideas are far more likely to engage and retain these cohorts of employees.
* According to Glassdoor, 67% of job seekers view a diverse workforce as an important factor when evaluating companies and considering job offers.
* And diverse boards of directors tend to hire diverse leaders and diverse teams have much higher likelihood of creating diverse content and solutions that reflects and inspires.
* **Greater teamwork & engagement:** Highly diverse and inclusive organizations report 26% increase in team collaboration and 18% increase in team commitment.
* 83% of millennials report being actively engaged when they believe their organization fosters an inclusive workplace culture. That percentage drops to 60% when their organization does not foster an inclusive culture. (A Gallup study has assessed the cost of disengaged employees at up to $350 billion per year in lost productivity.)
* Teams that are inclusive make better decisions up to 87% of the time, according to a study conducted by Forbes.
* **Great Influence:** Diverse equine organizations will have the expertise and networks that will be required to expand the circle of support from policymakers, donors, volunteers, and participants as the demographics of the country change.

At a time when the industry is fighting so many challenges and resources are limited, how can we afford to engage in DEI?

* This would allow the industry to address the broadest possible market in a time of financial challenges and, as indicated by the research above, increase the financial stability of the industry.
* Demonstrate inclusive thinking and practices to participants, donors, leaders, and funders
* Meet public expectations that this work is essential and immediate in every sector
* Create an environment for attraction and retention of the highest talent across board, staff, volunteers, and participants
* Deepen relationships in a time of great emotional need

How big is the gap or challenges from the current state of the industry? Below are some examples:

* AVMA/AAEP -Of the more than 104,000 veterinarians in the nation, nearly 90% are white, less than 2% are Hispanic and almost none are Black, according to 2019 Bureau of Labor Statistics figures. Race and ethnicity data for equine practice shows that 95% of equine veterinarians are white.
* USEF - Black riders make up less than 1 percent of the USEF, and a Black equestrian has never competed for the U.S. in the Olympics. 12% of United States Equestrian Federation - USEF's management is Black or African American. 8% of the management team is Hispanic or Latino. Company-wide: White is the most common ethnicity company-wide. 76% of employees are White. 11% of employees are Black or African American. 6% of employees are Hispanic or Latino.
* PATH Intl – Survey results indicate 90% of individuals in the equine-assisted industry identify as white. Less than 1% identify as Black or African American and just over 1% identify as Asian or Hispanic respectively.

How can we measure progress toward DEI in the equine industry? Here are ideas for a scorecard:

Internal

* organization offers education to all employees on DEI (creating awareness and understanding)
* organization has talent acquisition (hiring) goals that address DEI
* organization has talent development (promotion) goals that address DEI
* organization has Management transition goals (promotion) that address DEI
* organization offers internships or scholarships to promote diversity
* organization addresses DEI in procurement/contracts
* organization has reviewed HR practices to ensure DEI

External

* organization has collected data regarding demographics of their audience (awareness of current state)
* organization has communicated diversity vision with their audience
* organization offers education to audience on DEI (creating awareness and understanding)
* organization's marketing images and stories (including website, etc.) reflect diversity

Foundational:

* organization has DEI vision statement and plans
* organization publicly shares DEI data and vision/goals
* organization's board routinely discusses DEI and/or has formed committee/task force to work on DEI
* organization's board reflects DEI