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Community Circle Key Takeaways
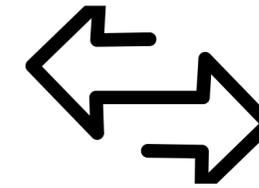
Diversity and Inclusion

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Key Recommendations

Speaker notes

"This is the way we've always done it"
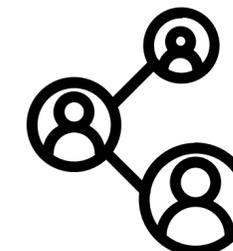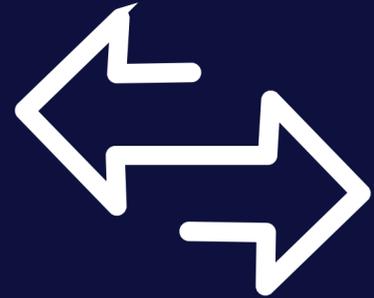– famous last words of businesses that become obsolete

Taking a step back

Asking the right questions

Building the business case for diversity and inclusion

Making changes collaboratively

Taking a Step Back

Before starting to look into the diversity issues surrounding specific research methodologies, we need to take a step back and consider the wider picture:

• As researchers, we are responsible and have a privileged position from which we tell other people stories about society and the world we live in, both in qualitative and quantitative research;

• So far, we haven't fully acknowledged this position of responsibility and privilege, so we need to look at ourselves and question ourselves before even stepping into the research – if you are still bringing your own prejudices into the job, there will be no change;

• Whilst there are positive initiatives that are already taking place, we need to make sure that they are supported and sustained, or we run the risk of not being the responsible storytellers that we are supposed to be.

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Asking the Right Questions

One of the first ways through which we can identify the steps we can take in the right direction, it's important to ask questions and continuously challenge systemic, foundational issues:

• As researchers, we tend to ask the same questions and answer them the same way, so how can we start asking questions differently?

• Who is conducting the research and who is designing the questionnaires?

• Are we truly inclusive and representative in the way we design research?

• Are we hiring diverse talent, and ensuring inclusion and diversity in the entire process?

• How can we train the next generation of researchers and ensure access to traineeships and training schemes to people from different backgrounds and of different abilities?

Building the Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion

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From the corporate perspective, the approach to diversity and inclusion is that either it is the right thing to do or because it's a requirement – but what is the business case for it and how can this be presented to all stakeholders?

• From past research on the topic, 30% of self-employed people said that issues linked to diversity and inclusion were part of their decisions to work as freelancers or independent researchers or join a microbusiness – a key part of the business case is therefore that the industry is losing talent due to a lack of diversity and inclusion;

• Legacy is always anti-inclusive: corporates who are used to approaching research projects in the same way again and again require a clear business case to be made, as they might cite that changes are expensive or unnecessary;

• There could be ways to encourage more inclusion and diversity through recognition by industry bodies such as ESOMAR, or through awards;

Building the Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion

- How can we hold organisations accountable when they are not doing enough?

- From the recruitment perspective, we have to not only encourage minority groups into the profession, but we also have to ensure that they are accepted into a positive and inclusive working environment once they do;

- Diversity and inclusion is not just a trend, or just altruistic: it makes strategic sense.

Making Changes Collaboratively

Industry bodies such as ESOMAR have an important role to play in terms of driving change through standards. At the same time, the entire industry needs to join forces for this effort to work:

- We have to collectively put aside our competition and work together as an industry to overcome some of these challenges: can we work collectively rather than competitively?

- Acknowledging and leveraging the role of clients in this conversation: much like the sustainability agenda is being talked about with clients, diversity and inclusion also needs to be discussed together in a deliberate way;

- Change on this scale cannot be a totalitarian, top-down approach where we push new regulations onto people: it has to be a collaborative effort with clients, because without this they might not feel the urgency of the matter;

- As an industry we can also do better in telling the story of successful case studies where we have worked together on the diversity and inclusion agenda, and it has paid off in enormous ways;

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Resources

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Check our library with Codes and Guidelines:
https://www.esomar.org/what-we-do/code-guidelines

Join the conversation in the ESOMAR LinkedIn Group:
https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2755/

Find relevant papers and presentations in ANA:
https://ana.esomar.org/

Visit our COVID-19 Resource Page:
https://www.esomar.org/covid-19