

The Waymakers: Clearing the Path to Workplace Equity with Competence and Confidence

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Amplify Publishing

(176pp)

978-1-63755-180-6

Asserting that diversity in the workplace has to be intentional, The Waymakers is a timely, action-oriented leadership guide.

Tara Jaye Frank's emphatic leadership book *The Waymakers* is packed with recommendations for creating and maintaining inclusivity and equity in the workplace.

The work begins by examining the reasons why disparities and inequity still exist in workplaces. It cites factors like a lack of access to power within marginalized groups as causes, and it urges leaders to assess and reflect on their companies' cultures before working to build more inclusive spaces. It evaluates core principles and strategies that are critical to cultivating equity, and it maintains throughout that every employee deserves equal opportunities to be successful.

The book is clear in defining what diversity is and what it is not, explaining that ensuring diversity entails deliberate techniques like setting goals to achieve equity, facilitating diverse decision-making, and training managers to recognize their unconscious biases. It is keen on tackling misconceptions about workplace diversity, such as that kindness towards underrepresented employees equals inclusivity. Instead, it emphasizes that equity requires intentionality.

Current references, as to the murder of George Floyd, the UK's media and racial biases against Meghan Markle, and the challenges that Black people including Barack Obama, Serena Williams, and Oprah Winfrey overcame in order to succeed, result in a richer understanding of the racial disparities that exist. The book moves from these to showing that racial discrimination is also present within companies that exist in adjacent settings. Its anecdotes about gender and racial inequity are helpful in showcasing issues like pay disparities and barriers to growth and success in play. They reveal that many corporate spaces do not recognize a middle ground for Black women, who are often seen as either top performers or under performers.

The book does an able job of revealing the emotional toll that being a person of color in corporate worlds takes. In counter, it shows that organizational diversity increases innovation, while under representation leads to isolation and extreme scrutiny for people of color. Still, most of the book's content is focused on racial bias; only a few of the anecdotes depict other forms of inequity, including ageism and disability discrimination. The issues associated with such inequities—like being isolated and subjected to age-related insults—are skimmed through. And by centering the US corporate sector and the racial inequities that exist within its systems, the book becomes less applicable to other countries' cultures and shortcomings in areas including classism, nepotism, and religious discrimination.

Asserting that diversity in the workplace has to be intentional, the timely, action-oriented leadership guide *The Waymakers* lays out plans for business leaders to achieve diversity and inclusion in their spaces.

EDITH WAIRIMU (March 14, 2022)

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