

STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP SKILLSETS

Building a strong and robust cybersecurity workforce, one leader at a time.

How do we prepare our existing cybersecurity workforce for career growth and advancement? WiCyS has reassessed our State of Inclusion benchmark report and Cyber Talent study by asking partners to provide guidance on where we can go from here as an industry.

Here are **SIX** ways to take action now to strengthen your leadership skillset and provide a trusted space for your cybersecurity teams to thrive.

6 WAYS TO TAKE ACTION NOW

- Focus on solutions
- Lead to happier people and higher profits
- Create alignment around employee experiences
- Use data-driven approaches to improve hiring, training and retention
- Invite all stakeholders to the table to ensure a strong cyber workforce strategy
- Bring everyone with you

1 Focus on solutions. Actions are what matter most, so if specific words are barriers to change, let them go. Find what resonates best with your teams. For instance, if inclusion is your desired outcome, you might focus on building psychological safety, increasing trust and mutual respect and improving feelings of fairness and access. Everyone benefits from these outcomes.

2 Lead to happier people and higher profits. Use a data-driven approach to pinpoint opportunities and estimate the return on investments of initiatives. It's important to socialize why and how inclusion improves financial performance, employee satisfaction and retention.

3 Create alignment around employee experiences. By focusing on experiences rather than identity groups, measuring inclusion eliminates the "zero-sum-game" mindset of other approaches. This avoids resentment and backlash while creating alignment at all levels of the organization.

4 Use data-driven approaches to improve hiring, training and retention. Leverage skills assessments, performance metrics and industry benchmarks to identify gaps and opportunities for growth. Data-driven insights help eliminate bias, optimize talent placement and ensure cyber workforce initiatives are both clear and effective.

5 Invite all stakeholders to the table to ensure a strong cyber workforce strategy. Build collaborative relationships between cyber teams, human resources and the learning/development department to streamline workforce acquisition and optimization efforts. Engaging these teams ensures alignment with overall business objectives, enhances talent pipeline efficiency and fosters proactive rather than reactive workforce planning.

6 Bring everyone with you. Listen to concerns in your engagement surveys, meet people where they are and address their concerns. Develop programs, processes and procedures that benefit a workforce where people of all backgrounds can thrive. For example, robust leadership development and team building programs can address much of what we've learned in our State of Inclusion and Cyber Talent studies.

TOGETHER, WE THRIVE!

These inclusive leadership actions were created by our partners, Melinda Briana Epler, Founder & CEO of Empovia and author of *How to Be an Ally*; Simone Petrella, Director at N2K Networks; Jeff Welgan, Chief Strategist & CEO at skillrex; and Paolo Gaudiano, Founder & Chief Scientist at Aleria and author of *Measuring Inclusion*.

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