#WEC2023

Women & Equity
Conference 2023

INTERACTIVE SESSION

# How DEI is a journey that needs to be tailored to YOUR situation

**Bianca Bax**
Expert Partner Humanized Change
Bain & Company

8 June 2023 • BRUSSELS, BE

By careersinternational

# How DEI is a journey that needs to be tailored to YOUR situation

Careers International –
Women & Equity Conference

*Brussels, June 8th, 2023*

BAIN & COMPANY

# Who am I?

**Bianca Bax**

**Expert Partner**
**Humanized Change**

Bain & Company Amsterdam

- **>23 years of management consulting experience** – started as consultant #13 in Amsterdam and 1st woman
- **EMEA lead for DEI** and **global lead for leadership alignment in transformations**
- Believes you need to be as **rigorous about the human side of change** as you are about the analytical side to get deeper results
- Co-author of publications **"The fabric of belonging, how to weave an inclusive culture"** and **"Working women and the war for talent"**
- A **trained professional coach**, holds an MBA from Columbia in NY, and a MSc in Chemical Engineering from Delft

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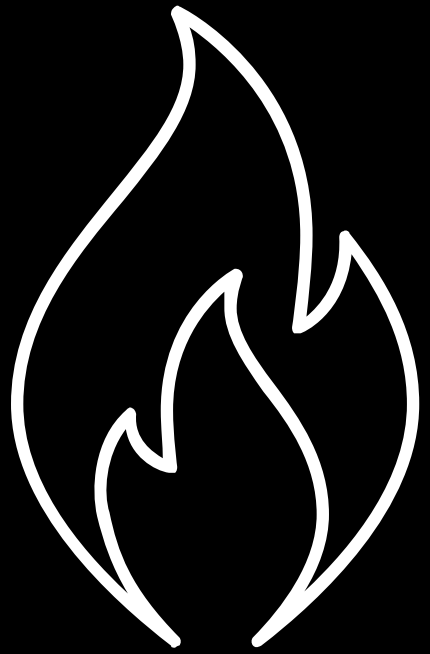
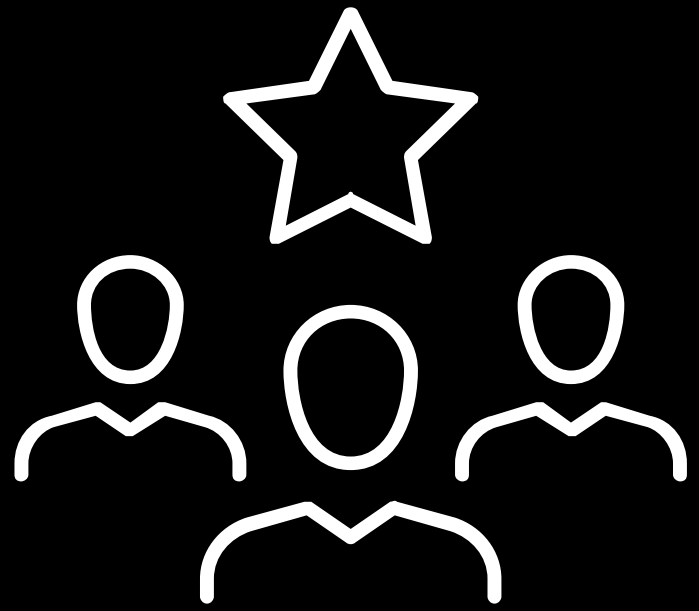
# Two topics for this session

What are the key elements of
**a DEI strategy and journey?**



What are practical ways to
**make a dent and progress?**



# Organizations are at different stages **along the DEI journey**

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

MOBILIZATION
*"We act on our plan"*

AMBITION
*"We have clear goals and a plan"*

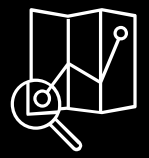
COMMITMENT
*"We want to change"*

UNDERSTANDING
*"We know how to talk about DEI"*

AWARENESS
*"We acknowledge need to focus on DEI"*

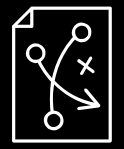
**Focusing on a few levers**

*"I know where I want to focus, how do I best drive real results?"*



**Laying foundations and roadmap**

*"Where do I start and/or how do I meaningfully adjust course?"*



**Embarking on journey**

*"How do I build the right leadership awareness and understanding to begin this journey?"*

**Regardless of starting point, there are actions that can be taken to drive DEI progress**

# Organizations are at different stages **along the DEI journey**

## ***Where is yours?***

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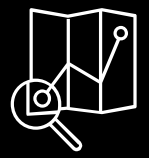

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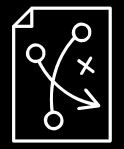

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# **DEI journeys are difficult** and different than other **big change efforts**

## Challenging topic

- Deeply **personal**
- **Inherently subjective**
- Data alone will not tell the full story or reveal **root causes**
- Concept of **equity is different than our common notion of equality**

## Leadership readiness

- Different personal **starting points**
- Most will **not be experts** on DEI
- **Delicate dance** of intentions, outcomes, behavior change

## Employee experience

- **Diverse teams** scientifically shown to perform better, but **feel harder**
- **Cannot control everything** that “touches” employees on topic
- **Progress will be felt inside individual teams** which requires “all of us, all the time” behaviour change
- It **may not ever be 100%** clear when we reach “the end”

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# **An organization's DEI strategy** needs a bold ambition, compelling strategy and sufficient investment in critical enablers

**ASPIRATION**

**Multi-year ambition with goals and metrics**

**Sustained leadership commitment**

**STRATEGIC LEVERS**

Inside the 'four walls'

Outside the 'four walls'

**Equitable Talent Journey**

- Recruiting
- Hiring and onboarding
- Development and advancement
- Performance recognition
- Compensation and benefits

**Inclusive Organization**

- Behaviors
- Leadership and peer mindsets
- Structures, systems and processes
- Rituals and norms

**Marketplace**
*(brand, product, customer experience)*

**Supplier base**

**Community partnerships**

**ENABLERS**

**Governance and resourcing**

**Communication and engagement**

**Technology and data**

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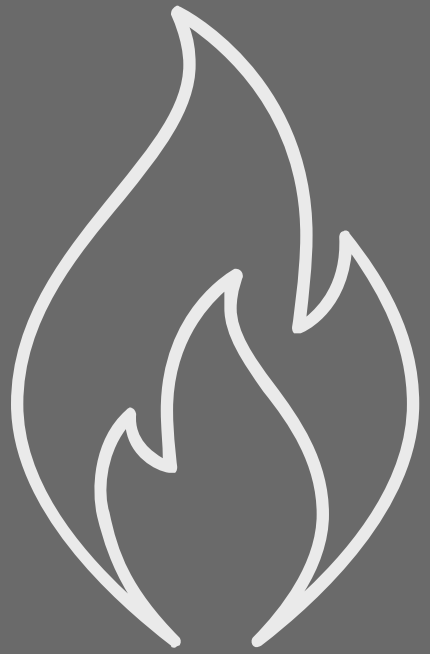

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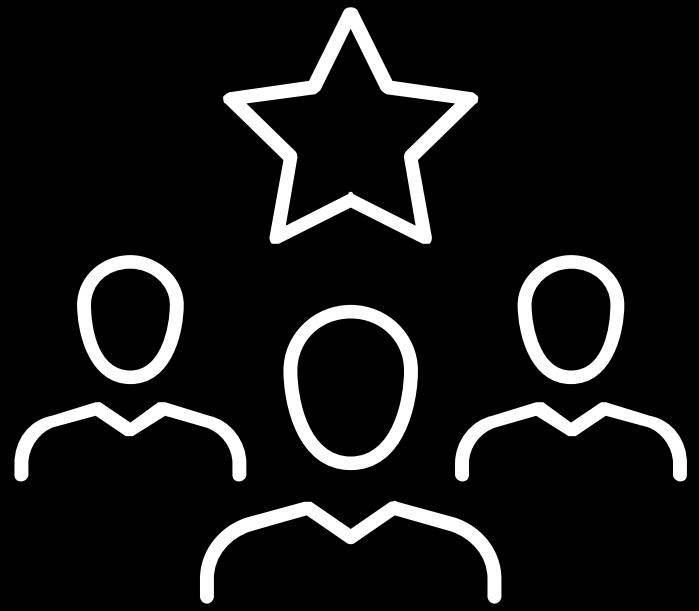
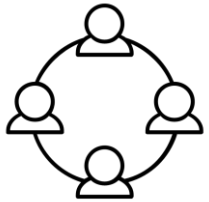
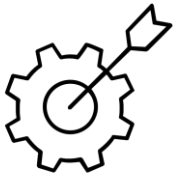


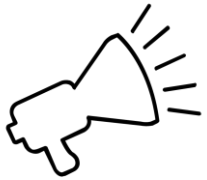
# Regardless of an organization's starting point there are several **best practices to accelerate DEI journeys**



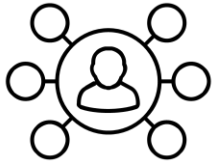
Set aside time to build **shared leadership awareness** on DEI



**Invest heavily in DEI data infrastructure** – numbers *and* stories – to understand current state and track progress against goals

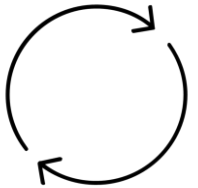


Ensure **marginalized voices are at the center** of understanding the point of departure and designing solutions



**Embrace transparency** by sharing frequent updates on DEI efforts and outcomes with all stakeholders

Ensure **sufficient resourcing for the DEI team and for line leaders** to **generate real results**



Install **high velocity feedback loops** to accelerate **learning, progress, and transparency**

# Our **own (Bain) story:** A >10-year journey to greater representation of women in leadership (50%+ increase)

- **Accountability in the "line":**
  Managing Director accountability, robust data tracking and engagement of line leaders (office/practice/function)
- **Targeted recruiting actions:**
  Increased women interviewers, profiled Bain women leaders on campuses, focused on diverse slates
- **Equitable benefits:**
  Flexible working models and enhanced benefits (e.g., part-time programs, additional parental leave policies, adoption/fertilization support, increased dependent care benefits)
- **Tailored sponsorship initiative:**
  Program pairing women with senior partners who could advocate for their career success
- **Inclusive leadership:**
  'Thriving @ Bain' training, 'listening sessions' on lived experience for women, focus on everyday moments of truth
- **Community building and engagement:**
  Leadership forums; multiyear commitment to gender parity research

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# Thoughts to leave you with

**DEI is an organizational mindset, not an HR program –** it takes all of us all the time, with strong senior leadership commitment

**It's a complex arena with no silver bullet** – you needs a clear strategy/ambition, supported by actions inside/outside 4 walls

**Organizations will ultimately be judged by results –** actions might speak louder than words for a while, but both matter

**DEI is a journey and not a destination**

# Thank you!

## And the journey continues…