

IMPACTful Dialogues: Activating Diverse Networks to Deliver Solutions Transcript

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Voiceover: Safety first.

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operating your vehicle.

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Dexter: Welcome to IMPACTful Dialogues, an Ecolab podcast that elevates inclusion, mindfulness,

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purpose, awareness, collaboration, and trust through executive conversations.

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I'm your host Senior Vice President of Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Dexter Davis.

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Hello everyone and thanks for listening.

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Cathy, thank you so much for joining me;

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I look forward to our conversation.

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Cathy: Hey Dexter, I really have been looking forward to this discussion. You know, as I've been thinking

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about this discussion, I've also, you know, realized we've had three people before me.

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Dexter: Yes.

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Cathy: And so, as I've

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listened to what you know, Nick [Alfano], Jen [Bradway] and Jeff [Burt] had to say, just

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a lot of really good stuff. So, looking forward to doing what I can to add to the discussion.

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Dexter: Absolutely will, Cathy.

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Just for people to know,

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let me give a little background on who you are.

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You serve as Senior Vice President of Global Talent at Ecolab, and really have a

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deep experience of leading global talent development and organizational change efforts.

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You also play a key role in Ecolab's Executive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council.

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So you've done a lot here at Ecolab,

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and you continue to do a lot and just get to know you over the last couple of years,

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I think you like to do a lot.

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Dexter: So, I think that's really good. And that kind of

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energy is good for somebody who's leading our talent here at Ecolab.

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So given that, you're broad experience in HR experience from different [roles], working directly with the

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business and functions, leading change efforts.

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But let's go back a little bit and think about earlier in your career at Ecolab,

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Where you were the Director of Culture and Inclusion here at Ecolab, which was a big role

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for us at that time.

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Dexter: I think that was around the 2008-2009 time, around the recession, which wasn't an easy time for all

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businesses at that time.

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So that's a perfect time, right?

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To lead culture and inclusion.

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During that time, can you just talk a little bit about, go back in time

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and think about what that experience was like for you, especially during a turbulent

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time? How your bias for change and leader of organizational change

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either developed through that role or just what that experience was like for you?

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Cathy: Yeah, I'm happy to because there's so much I could say about that time, Dexter.

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So I'm going try to be concise and really pull out kind of the big points, you know,

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first in terms of context.

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The Ecolab of today is so different than the Ecolab of 2009, so we've made huge progress in our

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path to being a more inclusive organization.

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And so, there's a lot to be learned by looking back through the time machine and understanding,

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you know, what was it that really helped us make that shift? And the first thing that

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I'd love to point out is how important it is to honor the past

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and to really acknowledge the strong foundation that's in place.

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Nobody likes to work in a culture that feels like it's under attack, right?

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And so, there's a lot to be gained from really honoring what has gotten [us] to where we are.

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So it's really taught me to spend time learning and listening before I jump to conclusions,

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and really asking questions like, "Why do we do what we do today?"

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Because normally there's a good answer to that.

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It's our role as leaders to figure out does that condition still exist or do we need to shift?

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The first one is really honoring the past, and what goes along with all of that is

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listening, and Jen Bradway talked about it in her IMPACTful Dialogues. How important listening is.

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And so, a lot of learning to be had there.

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And then as you move into action, is how to empower and engage a broader group of folks.

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And so, we started with 19 inclusion change partners.

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I could list off their names, but I won't, and those inclusion partners were

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carefully selected and then you know their role was to really bring some of the cultural inclusion

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work we were doing and bring that back to their functions, their teams, their businesses.

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So could have never done that on my own and these inclusion change partners were really the spark.

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So long answer, but boy there's so much more I could share.

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Dexter: Yeah, And I love to dig into that too, because I totally believe in honoring the history of the

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past and really getting to understanding of the why is kind of what I'm hearing.

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Because I think as we continue to evolve from

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a diversity, equity and inclusion perspective here at Ecolab, those efforts in 2009, and probably before that,

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build up to us.

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So each time we're getting better and better, and really creating that inclusive culture.

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So I think that is so important, and

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as I was looking at your history and the work you did in that role,

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one thing you did was serve some employee resource groups and you think about understanding the

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history and how you build on that.

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Can you talk a little bit more about that and what that was like for the organization?

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Like, why did you see that was a need? And then how was that being a part of that really

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at the beginning as we really starting to build up employee resource groups here at Ecolab?

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Cathy: I'd love to say I saw the need.

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I didn't see the need, I heard the need, right? And so, you know that's the big piece again

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around listening is those needs will bubble up, and I'm a strong believer that we can do anything

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but we can't do everything.

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And so, how do you start to then say, where are those areas that are going to make that biggest

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impact, right?

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And so, you know, a couple of things is during my time as Director of Culture and Inclusion,

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one of the most memorable moments, you and I have talked about this before, Dexter.

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Is seeing the EcoEssence in-person conference for the first time

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in the Schuman campus here in St. Paul, [Minn.]

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and for that group of Black and African American associates being able to look each other, eyeball to eyeball for the first time

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many times was really, really quite motivating, you know, also at that time we launched Pride,

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because we heard how important it was for this idea of psychological safety.

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And I'll go back to what Jeff

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Burt talked about, right?

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Dexter: Yes. Good to hear you listen to the podcast too, Cathy. So, I appreciate that.

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Cathy: I did, yes. I have a lot

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of respect for my colleagues, and so you know the need spoke to us, and we just kind of responded and

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then if you can put the empowerment of you know of associates to say and how might we come together

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really great things have happened and so you take a look at EcoEssence stronger than ever before.

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Pride continues to grow

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and build and on the regular helps inform my point of view and my perspective so that's just a little

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bit of what I learned.

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Dexter: That's awesome. You know, as you were talking about that and all the things you did and during that

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time, not only you, we as an organization did at that time and really being a part in that role.

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Those were really turbulent times externally,

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and I say that because, as you know, you're a part of our Executive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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Council, and we're always paying attention what's going externally versus internally.

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We're kind of in turbulent times when it

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comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion today, and I love to hear how given all the external turbulence

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with the recession and everything going on, how are you able to keep the focus and do those things

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even though the noise could be really distracting. I just love to hear your perspective of that.

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Cathy: Yeah. You know,

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I think that there is something that comes in the face of adversity. There are solutions and

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there are creative approaches that frankly, you can't get to without a little bit of tension.

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At least that's what I tell myself

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when I procrastinate. And I come up with a really good idea. See, I wouldn't have come up with that

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if I hadn't procrastinated.

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But you know, humor aside, I do think that there is in in tough times can often come. Umm come you

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know the best solutions, right?

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And so it is about getting really clear on values during that time, because that's what

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steers us, right?

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If you've got your true north and you have a really clear set of values and your

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how you get things done is aligned to that, then that goes a long way.

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So, I'd say clarity on values is what kind

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of difficult times really help us do.

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Dexter: Absolutely. And I'd say that for us here today that, North Star of our values is really helped

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drives and that's why it's a fortunate to be in an organization where that's where we really anchor

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and that's when you know, when you talk about listening to people getting connected to people

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we're a people organization.

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And I think that really speaks to that and it's important for us to do that and adversity can lead

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to great things that happens all the time. And I'm really looking forward to partnering you as

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we continue to navigate everything else. I think there's going to be a lot of great things that

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come out of this as well.

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Yeah, you know what I'd say is, there's no finish line to that, right?

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And so, you know,

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as we think about listening to our associates, you know, the Humu engagement survey I
I'm assuming

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when everyone listens to this, it'll it will be it will be done in closed, but that doesn't
mean the

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conversation closes, right?

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It only just begins in terms of what of our associates told us. What do we learn?

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How do we adapt, so it is a constant and dynamic process and one that never ends?

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Dexter: Yes, absolutely, absolutely.

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You know, Cathy as

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you think about your career in your long career at Ecolab and your career at other
organizations.

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I would just say from just for me being

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in this role for a couple years and coming to the team, you do really good job of
welcoming people,

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making sure they feel welcome and really building out networks. And this is me seeing
you and watching

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you do this.

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So how does that help you throughout your progression, your career? And why is that

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important? And especially diverse networks, because I think that's so important. It's

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always important to have, but I may not think like you look like you. Have you

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done that through your career and how do you think that's helped you be successful?

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Cathy: Yeah, I have a fundamental

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belief that in the potential of each and every one of us, it's just a core belief that I've got.

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I don't know where I got that. I don't know how I got that. It's just part of who I am, right?

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And a goal along with that

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belief is some of us, myself included, I'm just happened to get really lucky in life and have the

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right set of circumstances that that was a little easier to bring out the best in me, right?

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And with that self awareness, then

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comes a sense of responsibility to create that environment as much as I can, knowing that I'm

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just one person, but as much as I can and how I can extend my impact to create that for others.

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So, it's really about unleashing the potential

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that I see in our associates, and so, you know, at Ecolab we've got 48,000 associates.

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And I feel really quite appreciative and lucky to

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be in the role that I am in today because I get to help shape and hopefully unleash the potential of

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those 48,000, whether it's an associate that has been here for 35 years and how do we leverage the

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best out of her or his experience with us and what they've gained or if it's someone that's walking

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in the door tomorrow, right?

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Dexter: Yeah! I 100% agree, and I think that's a good perspective to have. I think it's so important

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in the work we're doing good, especially in Human Resources and DEI, because it's just a big piece

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is the people.

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And I think when we think from a diverse networks and how we develop, I think it's important that

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organization gives you opportunity to do that.

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And how would you say that we do that here at Ecolab?

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Cathy: In a myriad of ways, right?

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And so, I even think

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about my time since I've been here at Ecolab and the analogy that I often use is we've moved from

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being a town to a big city, OK?

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And so with that move to a big city, you've got to have the things in place. The maps in place where,

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you know, the directories of people. Because you can't just rely on knowing everyone or being

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able to easily navigate.

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So, as we moved into the big city of Ecolab, we have a lot of solutions that help associates from

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a career development standpoint.

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I would point each and every person [at Ecolab] that's listening to Career Hub on Workday.

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OK, it's an app that

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people can find when they click in Workday and boy does that. It shows you just the world

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of opportunity that's here at Ecolab. And so you can put in not only the skills that you have,

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but the skills that you want to get.

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You can put in interest that you have in other areas or other jobs and out pops, possible mentors

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and people that you can connect with, right.

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If you indicate career interest, it will suggest to you bite size,

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LinkedIn learning or workday learning, and so it's really much easier than you think it would be.

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Get yourself on career hub and you'll find you

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got a lot of resources at your fingertips.

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Dexter: Absolutely. And I think that speaks to the initiative you've been really

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rolling out and really been talking about it as well when Win From Within,

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can you talk a little bit about that because that really speaks about what you're saying?

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Cathy: Yeah, it really does.

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And so, you know, Win From Within,

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you know, embodies this idea of we can all win from within Ecolab, as we think about our career

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and our development.

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But it also speaks a little more individually, we can all win from within ourselves,

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right? And So, what that looks like for me, Cathy Lambert, is different than what it looks like for

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Dexter Davis.

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And so, we've got the opportunity in this large company of ours to really personalize what that,

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what that means.

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Dexter: I do think as we think about Win From Within and how do we really unleash the potential of

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our associates.

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Some of the pieces that which I know we talked about within the [Executive] DE&I council is how

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do we create that inclusive culture that allows people to unleash that, and we talked about

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psychological safety with Jeff [Burt].

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All those things create that piece and really create that opportunity for people to really

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unleash that potential.

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When you think back to 2009, when you had that roll around culture and inclusion,

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why is that ongoing, to your point earlier, I'd love to hear you say a little bit more about this,

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why is that an ongoing thing and not an end line to it going?

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It's a why do we always

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get a pay attention to how we're doing from a culture and inclusion, because we could have

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been in a good place in 2009, moving in a good place in 2012. But why do we have to be intentional

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throughout to make sure that we continue to improve and develop that inclusive culture?

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Cathy: Yeah, so here's what I

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would say is looking back to 2009, big changes. But let's just look back three years, right?

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So let's talk 2020-2021 and what's

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happened with the pandemic.

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And we all know that this amount of change is going to continue to accelerate for us, right?

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And so you know the

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change curve goes from, you know, we're going to try to get something done in the next 12 to 18

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months to we're going try to get something done and the next 12 to 18 weeks, right?

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And so, as that pace changes,

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we got to know that we got to try new things, do them quickly, learn where we can. If we fail,

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okay, let's try it again. And the only way we can do that is by really engaging and inspiring our

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associates. There is no other way.

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Top down just doesn't work anymore. We've got a really be all clear on and the purpose we serve,

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right? And so, protecting what is vital in the world and how do we all engage in that in a very

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quick and nimble way?

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Dexter: Great! I mean, I think that s well-said, Cathy. And I think it speaks to, as you speak and talk

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about our culture, as you talk about the work you're doing in Talent, it speaks to the importance of

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why diversity, equity and inclusion is so a part, we work to embed it in these processes, because

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these processes are people processes and I believe people processes are most important processes.

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When you really, when driving a business to

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your point, I love the unleashing the potential of our associates and we can't do that unless we have

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embedded in us our diversity inclusion. I think that's something worth continuing to strive for

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and appreciate your partnership in this.

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I appreciate being able to have conversations and figure out what can we do differently.
How

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do we build up those things and how we create an environment where we we're not shying away from

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change, we embrace it, we don't shy away from diversity, we learn from it and grow from it.

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And I think that's a lot of what the work you've been doing in our talent team and I really appreciate

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your partnership.

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Cathy: Well, Dexter, it has been a partnership, right? And not to get too personal, but you and I have

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had some really quite vigorous exchanges, we, you and I, have both have the same goal.

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We have maybe sometimes the

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difference of opinion of how to get there, and I think you and I can both agree we are better

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because of some of the debates that we've had. I know I can absolutely say that.

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Dexter: Absolutely, 100%.

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And I think you need that and that's a test of

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the culture and how inclusive that culture. If you can't hear different perspectives and you can't

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understand how other person's perspective and bring those perspectives together and come with

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something better than you both could have done individually, or a team could do individually,

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we're missing out.

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And that's why I think it's so great about the work you're doing and how we got to continue

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throughout whatever is happening externally or whatever that we got to continue on the path that

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really speaks to what makes this great as an organization, which our purpose and our values.

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Cathy: Well, thank you.

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Dexter: Yes. Well once again, thank you, Cathy, for the

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conversation and thanks everyone for listening.

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Our next conversation will be with Rich Szponder, senior vice president of Human Resources, Global

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Supply Chain.

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We will discuss the role of allyship and promoting understanding and advocacy for

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underrepresented groups, and his impact in his new role as executive sponsor for our Pride employee

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resource group.

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So once again, thanks everybody for listening. And Cathy, I really appreciate the conversation.

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I appreciate your partnership and all the work you do here for Ecolab before our associates.

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Cathy: Thank you, Dexter. This was great.