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Holiday Cheers: Tips on Intentional Celebration of Diversity Holidays in Your Organization

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WHAT?



What?

- By “holidays” we mean non-dominant holidays, observances and celebrations
 - Remember:
 - Celebrations take different forms depending on the culture, traditions and norms
 - People who are a part of multiple groups or communities might celebrate numerous holidays that may seem contradictory or non-traditional to some
 - Not all celebrations are “happy” in the traditional sense
 - Not all celebrations are religious or cultural
 - Not all celebrations occur at a fixed time of year
- “Celebrating” means that your organization will celebrate/recognize these holidays as a group, whether through a party, corporate event, a day off, gift-giving, or another manner appropriate for the occasion

WHY?



Why?

Inclusion

- A way to acknowledge and respect the contributions and presence of different cultural communities to which your employees belong

Promote Cultural Understanding and Appreciation

- By learning about and recognizing the holidays and customs of different cultures, we can gain a deeper understanding of their traditions and values

Uncover Commonalities

- Celebrating cultural holidays together can unify people of different backgrounds and promote a sense of belonging for people from diverse backgrounds

“People of different religions and cultures live side by side in almost every part of the world, and most of us have overlapping identities which unite us with very different groups. We can love what we are, without hating what – and who – we are not. We can thrive in our own tradition, even as we learn from others, and come to respect their teachings.” —Kofi Annan

HOW?



Ask

- Start by reaching out to those in your organization to find out what holidays mean the most to them
- Here are some questions to consider asking:
 - What holidays would you like to see recognized in the office?
 - What cultural celebrations are important to you?
 - How would you like those holidays, observances, and celebrations to be celebrated and acknowledged?
 - Is there anything else we should know about these holidays that are important to you?

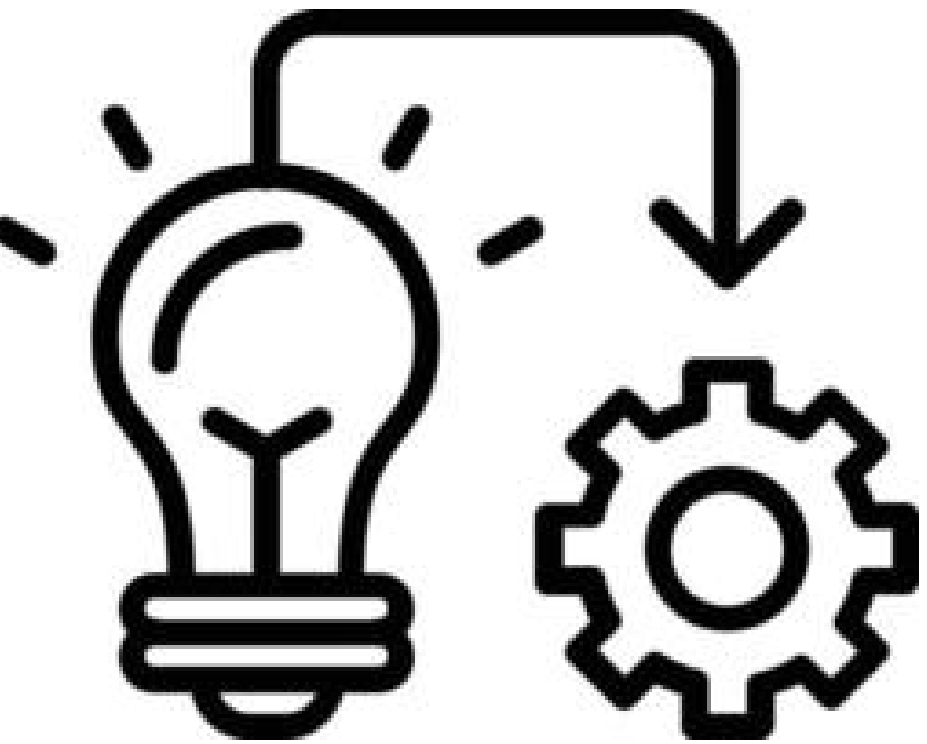


Ask

- Be aware that these questions can be personal and sensitive, so:
 - Keep answering entirely optional
 - Provide the option for answers to be submitted anonymously
- The responses received will inform the path forward
- This is a continuing process
 - Consider requesting this information yearly to account for new team members and provide the opportunity for individuals to respond who may not have felt comfortable doing so in the past

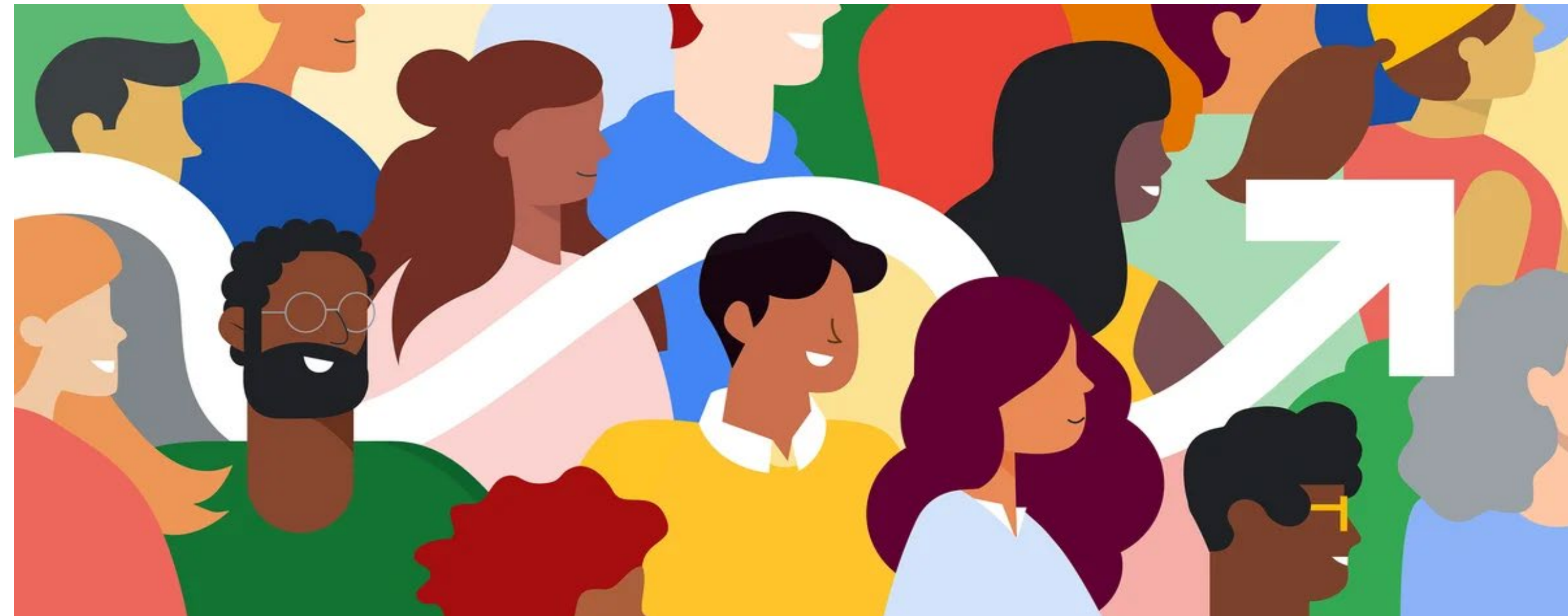
Implement

- Once you have feedback:
 - Select a representative group to review the responses
 - Include decision-makers from your organization in this process, because to be successful, DE&I efforts (yes, even holidays) need buy-in from leadership
 - Explore outside resources on diverse holidays to decide which holidays and events your organization will recognize throughout the year
 - This includes deciding how they will be celebrated and if there are any budget requests that need to be made
 - Ultimately, the number of holidays and how they will be recognized will be different for every organization



Implement

- To get your organization started, here are some ideas:
 - Floating holidays
 - Promote the holiday in the office
 - Create a multicultural calendar
 - Consider sending monthly emails
 - Host events
 - Get involved outside the office



Be Accountable

- Do you have a staff member that can take ownership of implementing these plans, or should they be handled by a committee?
 - Make sure that the person(s) responsible know the responsibilities and that all dates and reminders are calendared
- Make sure that any budgetary needs are approved
 - Create a comprehensive budget that expands the dates your organization celebrates or engages beyond the dominant days
 - Reallocate money that would have been spent on a single holiday party to other internal initiatives that foster belonging and inclusion for more team members

Focus on Intentionality

- Understand that steps forward aren't always perfect but do the work
 - If your team is thoughtful and takes a genuine interest in the backgrounds and beliefs of your colleagues, the outcome is very likely to be a net positive



Pop-Up Question

- **What season does Nicole's favorite holiday fall in?**
 - A: Spring
 - B: Summer
 - C: Fall
 - D: Winter



THANK YOU!

If you have any questions, please contact
one of the presenters



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