

## 2025 IDEAS Conference – February 11, 2025

*(Inclusion | Diversity | Equity | Access Strategies)*

### **Empowering All: A Roadmap to Inclusive Excellence**

9:00am	Morning announcements/Opening
9:15am – 10:15am	Dan Egol: Self-Inflicted – How Incomplete and Problematic DEI Approaches Are Hurting our Efforts and What to Do About Them
10:15am – 10:30am	Facilitated Discussion: From Understanding to Implementation
10:30am – 11:30am	Sam Mitchell: Neurodiversity in Workplace – Success for All and How We Get There
11:30am – 11:45am	Facilitated Discussion: From Understanding to Implementation
12:00pm – 1:15pm	Ukeme Awakessien Jeter (Mayor of UA): Cultural Competency – The New Currency of the Next Century Leader
1:15p – 1:30pm	Facilitated Discussion: From Understanding to Implementation “What does this mean for you?”
1:30pm – 1:55pm	Break
2:00pm – 3:00pm	Alex Sheen: Words That Matter: Transforming Your Workplace through the Power of Promises
3:00pm – 3:25pm	Facilitated Discussion: From Understanding to Implementation  Meet & Greet with Alex Sheen
3:25pm – 4:00pm	Wrap-up Announcements & Dismissal





## IDEAS CONFERENCE 2025

EMPOWERING ALL: A ROADMAP TO INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

### PROGRAM & SPEAKER DETAILS

**Conference Moderator:** Dalia Kagreen, VP of Business Development for Unified Residential Management



**REGISTER NOW!**

**9:15am – 10:15am**

Opening Keynote: **“Self-Inflicted: How Incomplete and Problematic DEI Approaches Are Hurting our Efforts and What to Do About Them”** Speaker: **Dan Egol**



**Description:** Despite the uptick in political and social backlash against DEI, efforts to build organizational cultures, policies and systems that work for everyone are more important than ever. With five generations currently in the workforce and immense demographic transitions underway, organizations need leaders capable of bridging across differences to guide their workplaces in building internal cultures and external products and services capable of meeting ever evolving landscapes. Unfortunately, many of today’s prominent DEI practices remain unproven and

ineffective, exacerbating ‘us v. them’ dynamics and driving the very resistance they seek to overcome. To help break this cycle, this session will help situate current DEI practices in a broader context of efforts to achieve justice and equity in organizations and examine common DEI approaches that aren’t working. We will look at the leadership and organizational implications for these approaches and collectively reimagine new, more effective ways of building bridges across difference and engaging the whole organization in DEI efforts.

Some key takeaways include:

**1. Uncover the unintended consequences of common DEI practices:** \* Identify how well-intentioned DEI initiatives can inadvertently create division, resistance, and even legal

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challenges. \* Understand how current approaches may unintentionally reinforce existing power structures and hinder true inclusivity. \* Recognize the subtle and not-so-subtle ways DEI efforts can backfire and undermine organizational goals.

## **2. Develop a strategic framework for addressing the limitations of current DEI practices: \***

Brainstorm innovative and evidence-based approaches to fostering a truly inclusive and equitable workplace. \* Explore alternative models for addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion that go beyond traditional training and awareness programs. \* Develop a roadmap for integrating DEI considerations into all aspects of HR functions, from recruitment and hiring to performance management and employee development.

## **3. Translate learning into actionable steps for organizational change: \***

Gain the confidence and skills to champion more effective DEI strategies within your organization. \* Develop a plan for communicating the value of inclusive practices to key stakeholders, including senior leadership and employees. \* Build a coalition of support within your organization to drive meaningful and sustainable DEI transformation.

**10:15am – 10:30am Facilitated Discussion: From Understanding to Implementation**

**10:30am – 11:30am “Neurodiversity in the Workplace: Success for All and How We Get There”**

**Speaker: Sam and Gina Mitchell** from Autism Rocks and Roll

Join Sam and Gina Mitchell at the HRACO IDEAS conference for an inspiring session on creating inclusive workplaces that celebrate neurodiversity. This presentation will empower HR and DEI professionals with actionable strategies to support employees on the autism spectrum, demonstrating how their unique talents can drive innovation and success. Through Sam’s personal journey and expert insights, you’ll discover how embracing differences can foster collaboration, improve workplace culture, and redefine what success looks like for all. Learn how to unlock the potential of diverse minds and champion inclusion in your organization.



Key takeaways include:

- **Develop practical strategies for creating a neuro-inclusive workplace that supports employees on the autism spectrum.**





- Gain specific, actionable insights into creating an inclusive environment where employees with autism can thrive.
- Learn how to identify and address potential workplace barriers for autistic employees, such as communication challenges, sensory sensitivities, and social interactions.
- Discover strategies for leveraging the unique strengths and perspectives of autistic employees to enhance innovation and productivity.
- **Understand the business case for neurodiversity and its impact on organizational success.**
  - Explore how embracing neurodiversity can lead to increased innovation, improved problem-solving, and enhanced creativity within the workplace.
  - Learn how to communicate the value of neurodiversity to key stakeholders, including senior leadership and managers.
  - Develop a compelling business case for investing in neurodiversity initiatives and creating an inclusive environment for all employees.
- **Build awareness and empathy for the unique challenges and strengths of autistic and neuro-diverse employees.**
  - Gain a deeper understanding of autism spectrum disorder and its impact on individuals in the workplace.
  - Develop empathy and compassion for the unique experiences and perspectives of autistic employees.
  - Learn how to effectively communicate and collaborate with autistic employees in a way that respects their individual needs and communication styles.
- **Identify and implement strategies for fostering a culture of inclusion and acceptance for all employees.**
  - Explore strategies for promoting a culture of inclusivity and acceptance that values and celebrates all forms of neurodiversity.
  - Learn how to create a workplace where all employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work.
  - Develop a plan for implementing and sustaining neuro-inclusive practices within your organization.

**SAY NO TO  
#FOMO**

**YOU DON'T  
WANT TO MISS  
THIS!**

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**11:30am – 11:45am Facilitated Discussion – From Understanding to Implementation – What this means for you?**

**12pm – 1:15pm**

## **Lunch Keynote: Cultural Competency – The New Currency of the Next Century Leader Speaker: Mayor Ukeme Awakessien Jeter**



In an increasingly globalized world, leaders must cultivate cultural competency to effectively navigate diverse markets, teams, and partnerships. This keynote explores how cultural curiosity is becoming a crucial leadership asset, driving innovation, empathy, and adaptability. Through concepts in my book *IMMIGRIT*, attendees will learn the importance of integrating cultural awareness into their leadership approach and practical strategies to develop this skill.

Some **key takeaways** for the audience will be:

- ***Understanding the role of cultural curiosity in enhancing leadership effectiveness and global competitiveness***
- ***Gain actionable strategies to foster cultural curiosity within themselves and their organizations.***
- ***Leveraging the Power of Diversity: Learn how to leverage cultural diversity to drive innovation and strengthen team dynamics.***

Don't miss this opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of how cultural competency can drive your organization to new heights of success.

**1:15pm – 1:30pm Facilitated discussion – From Understanding to Implementation – What does this mean for your organization?**



Register with 2 others and save more than 25% with code:

**IDEASGROUP**

*\*\*off the non-member rate*

2:00pm – 3:00pm

## Words That Matter: Transforming Your Workplace through the Power of Promises

Speaker: Alex Sheen, from because I said I would



**Session description:** We live in a society that often does not respect the importance of a promise. This impacts our workplaces, leading to broken trust, decreased employee engagement, and a less inclusive environment. Alex Sheen, founder of the international social movement 'because I said I would,' believes that every individual has the strength to become a person of their word.

This session is designed for DEI and HR professionals who want to:

- **Strengthen Workplace Trust and Collaboration:** Learn how to foster a culture of accountability and integrity, leading to increased employee trust, improved teamwork, and enhanced collaboration.
- **Build a More Equitable and Inclusive Workplace:** Explore how consistently keeping promises contributes to a more equitable and just work environment for all employees, regardless of their background or identity.
- **Improve Employee Engagement and Retention:** Learn how a culture of accountability and keeping promises can boost employee morale, increase engagement, and reduce employee turnover.

Alex shares his insights and actionable ways to become better at fulfilling commitments. He inspires others to become more accountable to their promises through compelling and real-life examples. Alex convincingly illustrates how integrity and keeping your promises are forever interwoven and how holding ourselves and each other accountable truly changes humanity for the better – including our workplaces.

3:00pm – 3:25pm

Facilitated Discussion from Understanding to Implementation – What does this mean for you?

3:30pm – 4:00pm

Closing Announcements, Giveaways & Wrap-Up

