

My time as a member of the United States Army will always be treasured for a variety of reasons, chief of which was the virtue of courage, candor, competence, and commitment. The 4Cs are what my First Sergeant called them. Click [here](#) for more information on how the Army defines these four words . For my purposes I want to use these four basic leadership values to explain why all leaders should know these words and why they should apply these values to their equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) programs.

It takes courage to oppose lagers and resisters who view EDI as a threat to the status quo. Executives who are knowledgeable understand that courage isn't solely physical, but also moral. An example of physical courage is requiring reluctant first line supervisors to embrace and support the new EDI practitioner and the program. It is an act of moral courage for a leader when they become aware of certain influential members of the leadership team actively delaying EDI efforts, and that upon learning of these actions, they confront the resistor and demand compliance.

The concept of candor means that leaders should be honest and forthright when it is evident that new EDI policies and procedures are not being followed by subordinate leaders. Often, leaders are conflict-averse and ignore obvious noncompliance, which demotivates EDI practitioners and emboldens opponents. The success of EDI practitioners depends on self-aware leaders confronting and correcting inappropriate behavior at all levels. In contrast, EDI practitioners working for uncaring and uninformed leaders are more likely to lead underfunded and poorly supported programs.

Executive competence is an essential leadership characteristic for establishing a successful EDI program. Leaders who value competence often have a high emotional intelligence as well as excellent people skills. The more competent the leader, the more likely he or she is to fully support the EDI program by funding the office and attending training events. When executives model desired behavioral changes and set appropriate expectations for EDI, they demonstrate competence. In general, executive competency increases the likelihood that employees and leaders at all levels will fully support EDI initiatives.

Commitment is about the future of the organization. Executives who commit to the implementation and development of an EDI strategy are committing to enduring setbacks, delays, and unforeseen events. A committed executive will recognize that EDI initiatives are just as vital to organizational health as IT initiatives. For committed executives, the budget office and the EDI office both play a vital role in organizational success.

The Army of the 1990's instilled the four soldierly values in every member of the service from four star general to brand new recruit. After serving in the Army and

running two EDI offices, I can attest to the fact that courage, candor, competence, and commitment are not only excellent values, but also a solid foundation for a strong EDI program.

-Richard Pete Hill