

# Disruptive Diversity Fosters Inclusive Culture

Shuddle's 8-Week Engagement



It is a widely held belief that diversity and inclusion programs, which bring people from different demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic backgrounds together, can improve workplace relationships while enhancing corporate innovation and brand. As a result, many tech companies began implementing such diversity and inclusion programs with particular emphasis on issues tied to unconscious bias. While all very well intentioned, it is perplexing to see that the diversity and inclusion needle has barely moved within tech companies. Why is this so?

Programs aimed at diversity manifest themselves in an intentional effort to cultivate a workforce representing different social, racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds. In such diverse work cultures, there is recognition that stereotyping can occur which might impact workplace performance. This has led to the explosive growth in unconscious bias training, and yet, problems persist.

Unconscious bias initiatives are built around left brain or rational thinking. They assume that awareness of an issue is sufficient to avoid problems.

Behavioral shift demands more than awareness, or left brain training. Inclusion initiatives must go the extra step in addressing the right brain processes tied to inclusion and its negative affect, exclusion.

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Disrespect can register in the brain as physical pain.

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As companies make the purposeful migration from homogeneous to heterogeneous workforces, issues of exclusion can crop up among the most well intentioned employees. The feeling of exclusion registers in the brain identical to physical injury. With exclusion, if an emotional repair doesn't occur, when an employee encounters someone who reminds them of feeling excluded, according to their brain, it's as if they are being reinjured.

Focusing on a simple and unique 'rupture and repair' method quickly surfaces inner root causes of exclusion (rupture) and creates an innate state of inclusion (repair). By connecting the left and right hemispheres, we dissolve the cortisol caused by experiences of exclusion and allow for the synaptic transmission to complete. Individuals show up in the workplace with greater attention to detail, higher performance levels, sustained dedication and an increased sense of belonging.

A huge and heartfelt thank you to Doug Aley, former CEO of Shuddle, Inc., who wrote this case study.

As the founder of iRestart, my imperative is to work with teams and organizations to help them overcome societal barriers engaging them, bringing them together and thus, building inclusive culture.

RNeogy

**Rajkumari Neogy**  
Founder, iRestart



# Shuddle's Case Study

## SNAPSHOT

### Challenges

- Communication barriers
- Lack of trust between teams
- Managerial inexperience
- Ops team felt undervalued

### Impact

“By the end of our time with Rajkumari, the senior team was rowing in the same direction, managing like all stars, and re-building an open, collaborative, and incredibly driven organization.” -- Doug Aley, CEO

### Results

- Improved the unit economics of the business from -25% contribution margin per ride to +25%
- Decreased driver activation costs by over 70%
- Decreased burn rate by 25%

## CASE STUDY

### WHAT

Shuddle engaged Rajkumari to help build a safe, sustaining, and significant workplace.

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### WHY

Good cultural hygiene is always a must, and Shuddle had a bit of a rollercoaster beginning. Upon the new CEO's entry into the company, it was evident that the company needed to solve for trust, risk-taking, and high performance. There were some cultural cancers growing in the organization that needed to be quickly addressed.

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### TARGET AUDIENCE

Rajkumari worked with the entire team in different capacities, but in incredible depth with the executive team.

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### CHALLENGES

The company needed to solve for a variety of issues:

- Physical barriers between the 1st and 2nd floors of the office had turned into very real communication barriers.

- There was a lack of trust and empathy between the different teams. This led to little issues being blown out of proportion, and bigger issues left unaddressed.
  - The operations team felt undervalued by the former management and by the company in general.
  - The senior team was comprised of incredibly smart and emotionally intelligent performers, but most had a lack of managerial experience and needed some coaching to help deal with the issues above.
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### THE 8-WEEK PLAN

Rajkumari laid out the following plan for the team:

**Six 2-hour coaching sessions for the senior management team.**

The biggest change agent of the process was definitely the coaching sessions. By the end of our time with Rajkumari, the senior team was rowing in the same direction, managing like all stars, and re-building an open, collaborative, and incredibly driven organization.

### Three half day off-sites for the entire company.

The off-sites helped ground the rest of the team in the culture we collectively wanted to build. We reviewed and added further substance to our values, we dove deep into communication problems that had plagued the organization and spoke in an incredibly open way about them, and we learned a lot about the science of communication and teamwork. Nearly everyone left feeling energized, and eager to understand and to be understood.

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### An ad hoc coaching “hotline”.

This ensured that more junior members of the team had 1 on 1 coaching. About half of the team took advantage of the hotline - interestingly, though it was anonymous, most people ended up talking quite openly about it and the benefits they took from it.

## THE RESULTS

Shuddle was an inter-dependent organization that needed to operate incredibly well cross functionally in order to succeed. Communication breakdowns were a very common occurrence prior to Rajkumari's influence, but her sessions helped foster an inclusive culture that had employees asking not only who needed to be involved in a decision, but who needed to be included in communications.

In the months during and immediately following Rajkumari's program:

- The Shuddle team improved the unit economics of the business from -25% contribution margin per ride to +25%
- Decreased driver activation costs by over 70%
- Decreased our burn rate by 25% (crushing the primary goals set out by management and the board).

### SUMMARY

Given the funding climate and how long we had to turn things around (4 months), it wasn't enough to save the business, but by all accounts, it was a Herculean effort, and one that wouldn't have been possible without trust and teamwork - much of this was built on the backs of Rajkumari's program.

### TESTIMONIALS

#### Doug Aley – CEO

“Rajkumari was immensely helpful in guiding dysfunction out of the organization. She became a crucial sounding board to me and the entire senior management team, a friend, and an incredible coach. Her process unearths hidden biases and opportunities for growth and she helps you address them. She approaches each person with the same process, but recognizes the uniqueness of each personality and molds the program to the individual. I left the process personally and professionally more positive, confident, and energized. Most importantly, Rajkumari knows that at the end of the day, you do this work to drive business results and she reinforces that understanding throughout the process and her guidance. I'll invite Rajkumari into every future organization I lead.”

#### Carly Lutz- SVP of Marketing

“Rajkumari is a uniquely effective leadership coach with whom I had the pleasure of working while on the executive team at Shuddle Inc. Over the course of my career, I've been through many engagements with 'leadership' coaches and curriculum, but I have never before seen such immediate and important results as with our team's engagement with Rajkumari and her iRestart framework. Perhaps most impressive is Rajkumari's exceptional ability to relate to ALL members of a team, regardless of level, experience, or background. Related, it is Rajkumari's ability and willingness to focus on each individual's motivation, intent, and impact that resulted in significantly improved empathy, communication, and business results for our team in a very short period of time. It was incredible and rewarding to see growth and progress with even our most skeptical team members. I remain grateful for my own opportunity to work with Rajkumari and continue to benefit from the insights I have gained into my own motivations, intent, and impact in both my personal and professional interactions.”

### TESTIMONIALS

#### Sophy Lee - VP of Engineering

“Rajkumari transformed the way that I approached conversations with other members of the team. After working with her, I was able to fully listen to what the other person was saying and take myself out of the equation. I was also able to express my ideas and concerns in the company more fully than I had ever done so in the past. I saw this level of ownership and thoughtful listening across my entire team and it fundamentally altered the way that we worked and communicated with each other.”

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#### Adam Borelli - VP of Product

"Rajkumari is an incredibly empathic executive coach who has the unique ability to focus on what is most challenging for the executive, whether the executive knows it or not! When working with companies on Disruptive Diversity, Rajkumari guided our team to break down silos and barriers in a way that meaningfully and in some ways fundamentally changed how we work together. Rajkumari identified and helped me address growth opportunities I hadn't yet recognized. By being so perceptive and sharing her observations, I became more self aware."

#### Andrew Byrnes - Chief Administrative Officer

"Rajkumari is a tremendously effective coach. At both the personal and organizational level, she helps unpack dysfunction and biases, and then helps rebuild productive working relationships that propel collaboration and growth. I had the privilege of working with her one-on-one and in group settings at Shuddle, and she gave me and the team a new perspective and ways of being and communicating that helped us transcend a difficult leadership change and business challenges."

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#### Andrey Liscovich - VP of Analytics

"I learned a lot more about how I am perceived by others, and how these perceptions influence my ability to promote ideas within the company."

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Please direct questions to:  
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