



Please note: This position paper is for TMBC internal use only. Elements from it may be used to make a client-facing document, but this document is not to be shared outside TMBC.

What Is a TMBC Position?

A TMBC position captures how TMBC's products and services relate to a specific topic, and what we as a company understand about how our strengths-based StandOut Approach can address the topic. A Position helps TMBC Associates speak with one voice, using the same messaging and terminology when sharing how our work connects to the issue at hand.

A TMBC position is NOT a research publication or a way for us to stake a claim that we have fully solved a problem or are the world's leading experts on the topic.

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I. Intended Audience/Use

TMBC Associates who are being asked questions by clients or workshop attendees about how StandOut supports DEIB initiatives can use the information in this Position to inform discussion or develop materials on this subject.

II. Introduction

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) is an area of focus supported by a body of scholarship that aims to provide a more diverse and inclusive culture within groups of people and to create groups in which individuals of diverse backgrounds experience belonging. As a company that values uniqueness and appreciates the individual, TMBC wants to promote the concepts of DEIB, particularly **inclusion**, through our own behavior and org/team cultures. We also want to ensure that we integrate DEIB into how our products and offerings address the strengths-based approach to work.

III. Key Messaging

Core Position

This section explores how TMBC's suite of StandOut products and services connects to and supports DEIB concepts and practices.

What StandOut Does NOT Do

StandOut does not guarantee that individuals who use it will feel that they fully belong on their teams. If people from underrepresented groups feel they must work twice as hard to prove themselves, or change the way they naturally speak in order to be accepted at work, they are not able to fully express who they are, and so may not authentically feel like they belong to the group. StandOut is not a solution to address organizational climate issues, such as implicit bias or discrimination, that negatively impact inclusion. An important aspect of feeling seen, heard, and valued at work is experiencing that your manager and team understand your broader cultural contexts, in addition to your strengths and the uniqueness implied in them.

Understanding someone's strengths does not imply that one is free of implicit or explicit bias, or that there is inherent safety in a relationship or organization.

StandOut should not be used as a primary DEIB tool. If a client organization does not have a broader strategy and experts in DEIB to help inform the way it uses StandOut, we should not imply that StandOut will solve for inclusion by itself.

What StandOut Does

Although StandOut is not designed as a standalone inclusion tool, it is a tool that can be used to **help** with inclusion by fostering a workplace in which individuals are seen and recognized first and foremost for their unique strengths. TMBC suggests that clients only use StandOut to support inclusion as part of a broader DEIB strategy with the support of DEIB experts. We do not claim specific and robust expertise in DEIB, per se.

Organizations that have DEIB practitioners can leverage StandOut as a useful support in that area, which is an important part of integrating the strengths approach into an organization.

StandOut's collection of products and services (including the StandOut Assessment, StandOut Platform, coaching, facilitation, and leader development) can **support** fostering inclusion when used as a component of an organization's DEIB strategy. StandOut can support a broader DEIB approach by facilitating:

- **Diversity** in recognizing individual uniqueness and celebrating it through strengths
- **Inclusion** by allowing common language to recognize each individual's unique strengths and contributions within an organizational culture that celebrates individuals within a team context
- **Belonging** by fostering an environment in which employees are more likely to be seen first and foremost for their unique talents and strengths

StandOut supports inclusion by encouraging individuals to understand and appreciate their unique contributions. It can help people identify and share their strengths, which contributes to them feeling seen, heard, and valued for their contributions. But this is only one of two dimensions of inclusion. The other is feeling that you belong to a group while being able to fully express who you are. StandOut addresses the first aspect, but not the second.

StandOut's Differentiators

By encouraging people to pay active attention and ask about others' emotional experience at work (what they loved and loathed), StandOut supports a climate for truthful communication. It supports people in shifting the loathes and amplifying the loves.

The StandOut Assessment creates a language that people can use to talk about their uniqueness in a way that establishes and familiarizes this strengths-based approach.

Client Testimonials on the Topic

*"The StandOut Platform has really supported our transformation towards a People First organization. The focus on strengths and continuous coaching has helped to improve engagement and build a culture that strengthened the relationship between team members and team leaders. **Eliminating the one-size-fits-all transitional performance review has also***

supported our journey towards a more equitable and inclusive work environment by focusing on individual feedback and strengths.”

“StandOut provides a common language to allow individuals to share their contributions via the language of strengths, enabling them to have their accomplishments and strengths seen by their manager and colleagues.”

IV. Relation to TMBC Offerings

Note: StandOut does not necessarily reduce bias or create trust between team members and/or their managers. The items listed below can (but do not inherently) support DEIB when deployed in a context of safety, trust, and authentic connection between the parties involved.

StandOut Platform

How Can Check-Ins Support Inclusion?

- **They create a culture of communication.** By creating a structure in which all team members share, Check-Ins support an organizational culture in which all members can be heard.
- **They encourage sharing your strengths.** Check-Ins consistently ask people to share what makes them feel strong, so team members are allowed to own their strengths and the value of their contributions. This can help people acknowledge their own value without feeling as though they are “bragging,” which can make some people uncomfortable.
- **They encourage curiosity about team members’ personal experience.** The best way to appreciate anyone’s unique experience and point of view is to hear directly from that individual. Check-Ins provide space for team members’ self-reflection and an opportunity for them to share their strengths and contributions directly with team leaders.
- **They provide a common written communication channel.** Some people do better when they have the time to collect their thoughts before a meeting, and/or communicate more thoroughly in writing. Some people prefer to share electronically rather than verbally. Check-Ins allow leaders to gain more/better insights from these employees.
- **They encourage asking for and giving/receiving help.** This can support people in navigating cultural norms in which a person might feel threatened or uncomfortable asking for help.
- **They normalize giving regular attention to everyone on the team.** StandOut Check-Ins ask all team members the same questions and encourage them to share their answers with their leaders every week. This could mitigate some types of implicit bias, as all team members get equal time with their leader talking about work.
- **They can provide a means to build trust and rapport between a team member and leader.** Providing this forum can lead to right-sized support and tailored communication that fits the team member’s needs.

- **Asking questions about people's experience at work shows care for the person.** Engaging people in a manner that shows care for their specific observations, needs, and experience can help them feel more seen, valued, and heard — key components of belonging.
- **Noticing your personal energy.** By allowing people to become aware of their unique sources of energy and supporting them in distinguishing between strengths and obligations, we allow them to provide their greatest contribution to the team/organization, which can contribute to them feeling valued.

How Can Coaching Intelligence Support Inclusion?

Coaching intelligence, as a part of the Check-In process, has its own value in support of DEIB initiatives. This value includes:

- **Encouraging team member individualization.** Each team member's Top 2 StandOut Roles are used to customize tips and to support developing a more precise understanding of the individual. This can contribute to an individual feeling seen.
- **Teaching team leaders to individualize.** On the team leader side, coaching intelligence provides specific questions and conversation guides informed by the other person's "come-from" place. This can support leaders in better understanding the lived experiences and perspectives of the team member, which can help people feel like they authentically belong.

How Can Engagement Pulse Support Inclusion?

A leader can use Engagement Pulse to pay attention to whether people are feeling seen, heard, and valued on their teams and to spark candid conversations to build trust and team culture over time. All team leaders are encouraged to have a team debrief after the Engagement Pulse closes.

- **"Me" and "We" questions.** The questions in the Engagement Pulse give voice to the experience each person is having as an individual, and to people's connection to the broader team.
- **"My teammates have my back" and "In my team, I am surrounded by people who share my values."** These items in particular relate to inclusion and belonging on the team. **Everyone is heard.** Because all team members are invited to participate and have their voices heard in the Engagement Pulse, but their individual answers are not shared with the team leader, they have a chance to speak up about how they feel on the team.
- **Warning indications.** A team leader can use Engagement Pulse to be on the lookout for warning signs that people might not be feeling included in a team, especially around aggregate scores related to shared values, team member support, and recognition for excellent work.

LD Offerings

- **Facilitated team experiences (e.g., StandOut Team Member for intact teams)** invite everyone to share their unique strengths, supporting team culture-building founded upon team members seeing one another authentically.
- **Learning events** help with awareness of people's own strengths and self-advocacy. They also encourage team leaders and teammates to be open-minded and curious about the unique strengths of others, which can promote inclusion.

Coaching

- TMBC 1:1 coaching creates a safe, confidential space for people to speak with an external coach who does not have a personal connection to the work. In this space, people can learn to advocate for themselves, find their voices, create more inclusive teams, and understand their own biases.
- Coaching can help people learn about and refine their own strengths and self-awareness and consider how they feel connected to their team and/or organization. They can develop strategies to address (implicit) biases and increase inclusion.
- Using strengths coaching as part of high performer programs can support BIPOC and other underrepresented groups in developing strategies to succeed at work (subject to appropriate coaches with knowledge and background doing the coaching).
- Coaching is a great way to have a team leader build a strong team culture.
- Coaching is a powerful tool for people in underrepresented groups, who are more likely to be passed over for promotion, not appreciated for their work, etc. It gives language, tools, and confidence for them to advocate for themselves and navigate work worlds that often don't reflect the client's reality as the dominant reality.
- Coaching can be a place for team leaders to examine their leadership assumptions, beliefs, and strategies. This can support identifying and mitigating implicit biases, developing the skills/mindset to be more inclusive, and developing stronger relationships with team members.

Coaching Certifications

- **StandOut Debrief Certification** promotes culturally responsive StandOut Assessment Debriefs by equipping debrief coaches with tips and practices to be inclusive.
- **StandOut Strengths Coaching** promotes culturally responsive strengths-based coaching.

V. Key Terminology

Words or Phrases to Use

If you are looking for consistent language that will be more accepted externally, these are the words and phrases we recommend.

- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)
- DE&I (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)
- DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging)
- Differently abled, or people with disabilities
- Inclusive
- LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, plus...)
- Populations who have been marginalized
- Populations who have been underserved or underrepresented
- Underrepresented groups

VI. Relevant Related Information

This section provides relevant connections between this Position and other information within TMBC, ADPRI, and ADP in relation to this topic.

ADP Research Institute (ADPRI)

ADPRI's Connection XPS Tool was first presented in the 2021 publication "Measuring the 'I' in DEI: The Connection XPS." This publication defines Connection as "one's feeling of being seen, heard, and valued at work for one's whole person" and explores 12 factors that can create or impede a sense of connection. ADPRI's instrument is currently in the applied research phase, in ongoing partnership with The Marcus Buckingham Company's research team. For more on this ADPRI research, please see www.adpri.org.

VII. Other Resources

TMBC follows ADP's guide for inclusive language, which can be found [here](#).

Additional resources related to DEIB can be found in the TMBC Virtual Office [here](#).