

## **IMPACTful Dialogues: Open Minds, Open Doors for Effective Collaboration**

Dexter Davis talks with Tiffany Atwell, executive vice president, Government Relations, about how important openness is to business objectives.

Transcript:

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Voiceover: Safety first. Please start the podcast before driving

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do not interact with your phone while operating the vehicle.

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Voiceover intro from Dexter with music: Welcome to IMPACTful Dialogues,

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an Ecolab podcast that elevates inclusion, mindfulness, purpose,

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awareness, collaboration, and trust through executive conversations. I'm your host

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Senior Vice President of Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Dexter Davis.

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Dexter: Welcome to the ninth episode of IMPACTful Dialogues! Today we'll be

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speaking with Tiffany Atwell to discuss her role in Government Relations, its impact on

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Ecolab's operations and broader mission, and how she manages diverse perspectives and opinions.

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Dexter: Well, welcome again, Tiffany. So great to have this time to speak with you,

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and I've just really been impressed by the impact you've already made here at

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Ecolab and how it's really taken our government relations program and what we do in a different

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direction and made it more truly global. So, can we just start off by telling me a

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little bit about your role here at Ecolab? Kind of what it consists of. What do you

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like about it? What are some challenges and where do you see it expanded in the future?

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Tiffany: Great. Well, thank you, Dexter, and thanks for being such a great partner with the

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Global Government Affairs team. I think a lot of the work you are doing for the company is

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complementary for what we're trying to do. So, when you think about Global Government Affairs,

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really we are a marketing arm of the company. It's our duty to be able to understand what

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the business, and what many of our leaders are trying to achieve for our customers and share

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that vision and partnership with government stakeholders around the world and other key

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stakeholders. And so, we like to understand what we're doing from the business side,

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what we're doing from the philanthropic side, what we're doing to try to ensure

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that our workers are their best selves when they come to work and we use that to tell our story,

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to help people understand, you know, the value add that we bring. And then in hopes of, of course,

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making sure that we have the freedom to operate in any country or state that we're trying to do

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business in. And sometimes that is in regard to regulations ensuring that our regulatory

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team has the ability to get our products registered. I mean, sometimes their policy

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barriers that are caused by politics. So my team would come in to play there. When we think about,

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you know, our customers being able to access our products. It can be through the regulatory piece,

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but it also sometimes can be because they may not have an incentive to do. So, if you think about

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the Inflation Reduction Act, the CHIPS Act, some of that legislation recently passed in the U.S.,

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but you can also think about what the French water plan, which is recently passed legislation

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in France those types of opportunities, those things come about by educating the government

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officials on here are some solutions to help you deal with your water scarcity issues,

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your energy challenges, and also if you want your countries or states to be more sustainable. You

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can do all while at the same time ensuring that those companies are making money. So,

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it really is an honor for us to be able to go in and tell that story. To those stakeholders

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and let them know what a good corporate actor we are and a partner we are and really just market

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the company in that way. So where we are now, I mean I think what I started we had three people.

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We now have nine, and all of it is targeted to trying to match where the business is trying to

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grow to ensure they have the freedom to operate. So, I think that our expansion really is directly

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connected to business growth opportunities. And so, I think slowly but surely we'll

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expand based on where we see out there for the business, and it's a great collaborative effort.

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Dexter: I mean, it's really impressive. I know you recently came and spoke to our

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HR team and talked a little bit about Government Relations and the expansion, and how it's really,

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you are really ambassadors of what we do here at Ecolab and play these key partnership roles with

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different government officials from all over the world and different backgrounds, and everything

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too. And it makes me think a little bit like what are some challenges that you see with that?

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Tiffany: Yeah, I think some of the challenges you know are really kind of changing our mindset

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internally, so that we will be at the table to share this information. Instead, we thought,

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oh well, people will just get it, you know, and we have a great product, people will understand it,

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and they'll somehow pick it up. And I have a saying, If you're not at the table, you're

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on the menu. So, I think a lot of the challenges have been trying to help us understand the value

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of being at the table and committing the time and resources to do that. So, I think that's first and

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foremost. And then I think, the other piece of it is it's a huge undertaking to get people to

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understand the power of water, the water energy nexus, and so part of it is just capacity to get

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out there and tell the story to the right people, which is why I think the collaboration that we

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do internally, whether we're working with our [communications] team, which has been instrumental

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in amplifying the messages. Making sure Christophe and some of our other amazing business leaders are

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actually out there telling the story, along with my team. And so, that One Ecolab approach has

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really helped us try to catch up and telling that story to the appropriate stakeholders.

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Dexter: That is so important, and I love that that's front of mind and that's something you're

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doing, and we're communicating that throughout all of our partners in the different government

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relations, in the different countries all across the world. And I can't help but to

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think about that, to be able to be able to do that and have those conversations just

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from a people perspective, from different people, different backgrounds. You got to have that level

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of comfort with different cultures, and really have that mindset of employing inclusive culture

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and people being authentic selves. How do you think that plays out in your role? And then also,

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how do you employ that like with your team? You mention your team a lot,

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you start with your team, right? And you create that culture of inclusion and

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what do you do to that, and then how does that translate into work you do as well?

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Tiffany: Let me say first, it does start with my team. I just did an interview for a candidate

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today, and that's what I started with, to let her know the expectations are that we collaborate,

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we listen to diverse perspectives of our team members. We are looking on how we can build up

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our team members, and that their success is our success and how you get to the win

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is more important than the actual win. And so, you start with a team with that mindset,

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that's where I started. And I'm very fortunate to have great leaders on my team who have similar

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values in that way, and we work from the team to make sure we're expanding that out

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to whichever internal stakeholders we're working with. But I think the importance

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of that is in any given country that we're working in, whether it's the U.S. or southern U.S. or

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northern part of the U.S., you have different cultures, and people have different ways of

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thinking. When you go in with an open mind and looking at OK, here's a diverse way of thinking,

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I've never thought of it this way. But when you're open to that, people respond to you

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in a different way, and so often times people think about diversity, inclusion and equity like,

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Oh my gosh, these are just nice things to do. No, it's actually a business imperative, because this

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is going to help us not just to be able to connect with our current customers, but also our future

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customers. And so, if we're practicing those values and how we treat each other internally,

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it will help us and strengthen our efforts when we go external. And I was just in Saudi. Never

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been to Saudi before, and the Kingdom. And what I what I found was, I had to have an open mind

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going into the country. Not what I was seeing on the news or some of those preconceived notions,

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because when I was accepting of their culture and learning about their culture, they could see that

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willingness in that openness. And so, many of the government interactions or interactions

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with the customer receive it favorably, because they saw that I was open to their culture

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and trying to be inclusive of, well, I never thought about that. How could we learn from you?

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And not just, kind of going in with, OK, this is Ecolab's way or the highway. And so, I think that

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you know it really is a business imperative. For us to be able to embrace those values to

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ensure that we're going to continue to be the world's leading water company. So it's exciting,

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but I this is the way I look at it, and it applies regardless of race or, you know, wherever you

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are in the spectrum. It applies because people want that acceptance. It's just human nature.

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Dexter: You know, it gets me to go a little off a tangent here, but as you're hearing,

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you talk about that and understanding how important it's a business imperative and

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people want that people human, it makes me think about it with the environmentally right now

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with people and diversity, equity and inclusion. And there's not as much, I would say flexibility

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or willing to hear different perspectives. And it's really frustrating, right? I mean,

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I think it's like what you just said is just what we should be doing outside of work. What do you



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think as we kind of come up to especially here in the U.S. election coming up and everything

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to ideas especially in general of how we can be civil and really understand that it's important

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that we hear different perspectives? But we also know that we all come up in the same common cause

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of making our country or the world a better place. What's your thoughts about that because you have

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to do this every day, right? And you do. And now, we're in this environment where it just

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feels like we quit listening to each other and it's just, it's kind of disheartening a little

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bit. I just love to get your perspective. Totally just Tiffany's perspective.

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Tiffany: Well, actually it came up on my interview today as well, because of course we're government

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affairs. And so, we have to support the company and the political, you know, discussions and I

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mentioned to this candidate we listen to Democrats and Republicans equally. And it's our job to find

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a win-win in those discussions with them, regardless of whatever side of the aisle

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they're on. You know we bleed Ecolab blue. So for us, my team is expected to go in and be able to

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talk to a Democrat or Republican about the values of Ecolab and help them understand how it connects

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to their values. So, it really is the bedrock of what we have to do every day. But I think that,

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it's important for us to kind of think about it even as citizens, because you have to think

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about it as a businessperson. If we can't use that same mindset with our colleagues,

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whoever your customer is, you never know if they are a Democrat or Republican. And so,

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if you can't go in with an open mind and really just kind of making sure you're embracing and

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having that beginner mindset when you're going in with them, then you may lose a sale. I mean so

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this is, I hate to kind of taking it back to the business, because of course you know, as a human

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there is a benefit to wanting to make sure that you're treating people with respect and kindness.

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It's just like what we learned in kindergarten. There's a basicness, you know that like, you know,

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our kids can remind us if we're interacting with children. But I do think on a personal level,

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what I try to do is to take that opportunity to learn instead of judge. And realizing that this

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other person even though they may not have the same political views at the end of the day they

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probably want the same values. And that's of course to be safe and healthy and happy,

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and to have a future for their families. And so, these are some of the basics that if we can

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understand that, we may have a different view on how we get there. But at the same time, respecting

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everyone's rights to want to have that, I think you know, it could really help us a long way,

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and realizing that often times people want to shut out others opinions because they may be feeling

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insecure. There's some insecurity there, and so I think that it's an opportunity for us to do

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something different. And sometimes you have to hit rock bottom before you understand what a beautiful

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country we are, even though we're complex. And so, that's my hope that, you know, the pendulum will

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swing back the other way. But I think it starts with one individual making that change and saying,

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I want to do something different. And it will hopefully catch on for many of us.

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Dexter: So well said Tiffany. I could not agree more, and I think that speaks to the work that

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you do. And I think that I'd love partner with your team and that mindset. It's almost naturally

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what we're trying to do from a diversity equity, and inclusion. So, how do you do

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that when you're out there and you're having this conversation promote the importance diversity,

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equity, and inclusion within? Because I think you've all been great partners with me and  
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my team. And I think, if you think about the influence you could have with our customers,  
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and our different governments can be really impactful. [Laughing] I said,  
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Impactful. It can be a big deal. So that's how big of a deal it is. So, I'm just like,  
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what do you do to promote there and out there too, because what you just said it was, it's so  
true

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about understanding each individual impact to do, but you are in a great position to really be  
able

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to impact so many people by having that mindset. So, what do you all do to really promote  
that?

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Tiffany: Well, I think we do it based on this is how we're going to be successful. To be honest,  
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it really is understanding that for us to be successful, we have to embrace diverse opinions  
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and people from diverse backgrounds. And so, realizing that is part of an important part of  
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what we need to be able to go in the room and hear what people are saying, because part of  
our job is

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not just telling the Ecolab story, it's hearing what that Stakeholder's interested in. And the  
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only way you can do that is if you're open to a diverse opinion, because if you're not, then you  
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can't hear them, right? Because you come in with your own preconceived notion. And that's  
kind of

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what's leading the discussion, which of course is a recipe for disaster. And then even if you don't

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agree, you can't go in. You can't go in and tell a government official. I don't agree with you,

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you're wrong, you know. But your best bet is to try to be inclusive. And so, then you're listening

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to them and you're saying OK, well, he's saying XY and Z I'm saying ABC. How can I come together

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bring these two worlds together and include his ideas and my ideas? And so that's where you that

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inclusiveness comes from. You're hearing something different. He's hearing something different and

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then you're trying to like package it and come up with that compromise and say it from

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their voice. And so, I and I think, you know, understanding that all the views have equitable

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seat at the table. Is what's going to help people understand that you want to create a win-win,

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and it's not just a win for Ecolab. And so I think for us, It's when we coach business leaders,

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when they go in to hear and talk to government officials. A lot of it is we are trying to tell

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that business leader listen to what is keeping them up at night, and I think that that's why

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it so neatly fits into the DE&I model, and I hate to overuse the term, but for us we have to

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take it from that perspective because. Everyone that we're dealing with Republicans.  
Democrat,

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Independent, Agnostic. I mean, it doesn't matter. They're all coming at this, you know,

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discussion from diverse perspectives. And that's what we try to do. We try to learn from it and

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then try to build in how it fits into Ecolab, and then, of course, how we can be a partner to  
them,

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because we can provide the services they need to solve whatever that problem is. But if you

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don't have an open mind going in, you will lose. And so, this is, I think the bedrock of what we

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have to do every day. And so for us to be able to be successful, how we interact as a team, we  
have

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to take on each other's diverse perspectives. We actually have to because that's the only way  
we're

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going to get to the best outcome. I just want to win. I just want to win. When I don't care,

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because your idea or you know someone else's idea, I just want us to win.

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Dexter: Yes, that's awesome. Anyways, with you, the work you're doing is helping us

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win and that's so important. And I and I think about you at Saudi you're traveling all over the

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globe. You come home, you're exhausted, that alarm clock gets over, comes up in

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the morning. One gets you out of bed, excited to go to work for you. [Laughing] Go out, not

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assume it's excited. Let's just say that. So, what gives you exactly when that alarm

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comes off? What's that thought in your head? You really get to go out, yeah.

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Tiffany: I love my job. I will tell you I love my team. I got a chance to see,

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you know Sean today. Just briefly, but I love my team, and I just love what we're able to

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do to support our amazing company. When we were in the field in India and Saudi, and we

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were able to engage with some of our teams there, they're just amazing. And so, what gets me going,

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it's just like I get to represent these amazing people every day doing this amazing work

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for amazing customers. And we meet our customers where they are and I love that because it sounds simple,

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but it's just like I feel like we all can make change and do good in the world just

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by what we do by going out and greeting your name, being kind to each other.

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When we show up and give each other hugs or high fives, it really does help people. And so,

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I think that the energy that I get from seeing you know our amazing leaders and colleagues,

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is something that energizes me. And I feel honored that I'm able to represent them

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wherever I go and I just take it seriously. So, I just feel like it's the best job in the world.

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Dexter: That's awesome. And we are so appreciative and so fortunate to

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have you here, Tiffany. Thank you for all you do and thank you for your time today a very impactful dialogue.

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Tiffany: Thank you.

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Our next conversation will feature Kris Taylor, vice president of Global Community Impact and Ecolab Foundation.

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We will focus on her role, the intersection of Community Impact and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion,

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and challenges as well as opportunities between the two areas.