

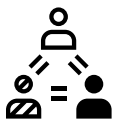
RACIAL & HEALTH EQUITY: Make It Your Business

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Learn: What is Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)?

Businesses have been focused on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at varied levels in recent years. The history of these efforts span decades, but many see the 1980s as the modern starting point of diversity programs and training in the workforce.



Diversity

Definitions of “diversity” vary widely, but most are rooted in the idea that diversity is a representation of multiple races, cultures, ethnicities, gender identities, abilities, religions, socioeconomic levels and lived experiences.

While diversity is essential in organizations, diversity efforts alone can run the risk of focusing too much on numbers and quotas. For instance, if a company is solely committed to increasing diversity in the organization, high priority would be placed on metrics like the percentage of employees who identifies as male or female, the percentage of employees who identify as Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), etc. But diversity alone is not enough.

As Yomi Adegoke says in a recent article for the Guardian:

“Quotas are often offered as a panacea to all diversity-workplace woes...Diversity itself is only one part of the puzzle – inclusion is the bigger, most integral piece. If the culture of a workplace doesn’t genuinely embrace diversity of thought, the backgrounds of its staff mean nothing.”

Liese Rodger expands upon this idea:

“Meeting a diversity quota is not enough. To ensure success, development and sponsorship are required. Company-wide discussions about race are required. Equal pay is required. Representation is required. An inclusive environment must exist. This doesn’t mean that annual diversity training hosted by HR checks the box. It means acknowledging uncomfortable situations... understanding that diversity does not mean racism ceases to exist and amplifying voices of people of color in order to combat unconscious biases.”

For an organization to be most effective, and for everyone in its workforce to be set up for success, it is essential to go beyond the first step of increasing diversity. Which leads to equity and inclusion.



Equity

The term “equity” has become more commonplace in recent years, including how it is different and distinct from equality. One way to think about the difference: equality means everyone has access to the same thing, while equity means everyone has access to what they need. (Learn more about this distinction [here](#).)

From a business perspective, it is essential to embed equity into an organization’s culture in order to achieve success. A recent article from HRTechnologist offers this reflection:

“Equity...attempts to identify the specific needs and requirements informed by demographic traits such as ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, etc. It then tries to address the differing needs of each group by bridging the gap... This makes equity central to genuine empowerment ... and not just theoretical equality.”

There are many examples of racial inequity in the workplace. A recent [Harvard Business Review article](#) explored this issue, specifically related to the experience of Black employees and leaders: *“Black managers report receiving less psychosocial support than their white counterparts do. Black employees [compared to whites and Latinos] are less likely ... to say that their company’s mission or purpose makes them feel their job is important, that their coworkers will do quality work, and that they have opportunities to learn and grow. Black leaders are more likely than white ones to leave their organizations. It’s clear that the norms and cultural defaults of leadership in most organizations create an inhospitable environment that leaves even those Black employees who have advanced feeling like outsiders — and in some cases pushes them out the door.”*

Addressing these and other inequities is crucial in order to have a culture that can recruit, retain and empower all employees – particularly BIPOC employees.



Inclusion

Inclusion means that diverse perspectives and lived experiences are sought out, listened to, believed – and acted upon by making meaningful decisions and changes in the organization.

A blog post from [the Kaleidoscope Group](#) shared the following:

“Simply put, inclusion generates more favorable outcomes by facilitating deeper discussions. Each of us possesses our own unique worldview. Coming together and sharing our worldviews enables companies to formulate strategies that connect a company to its audience... Furthermore, utilizing employees stemming from different backgrounds or cultures adds depth to a conversation. Your all-so-important board meetings and discussions are not very effective if everyone is saying the same thing.”

In short, an inclusive culture benefits everyone.

Reflect: DEI and Your Organization



Are DEI efforts prioritized in the organizational culture?

Are diverse viewpoints and lived experiences valued in your organization? Or is there is a built-in expectation that employees will assimilate to the established culture?

Where are there opportunities to establish or strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion efforts?

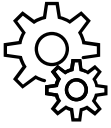
What actions can you take today to create change?

Change: Steps Toward Progress



Conduct an [Intercultural Development Inventory \(IDI\)](#) assessment of your leaders and employees

- The IDI assesses intercultural competence, cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adaptation.
- These features have been identified as key capabilities in job performance and organizational effectiveness.
- Create individual and collective action plans based on IDI results.
- Let employees and leaders know that everyone has a responsibility for their personal growth and engagement – and hold folks accountable through goal setting, performance reviews, etc.



Create or expand DEI efforts in your organization

- Institute anti-racism policies and racial-equity training.
- If diversity, equity and inclusion are not embedded in your organization's culture and values, redefine your culture and values to include them.
- Explore creating a DEI council to advise on decision making, recruitment and retention of BIPOC employees and leaders, career development opportunities, etc.
- Establish recruiting relationships with historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).
- Expand supplier diversity.
- Recognize holidays that contribute to telling a more complete history of our country (Juneteenth, etc.) and that support full civic engagement (Election Day).
- Encourage all employees to look at the resources available on this site, and create space for them to advance their learning and cultural competency.

Learn More



- "[I'm Still Here](#)" by Austin Channing Brown
- "[We Can't Talk about That at Work! How to Talk about Race, Religion, Politics, and Other Polarizing Topics](#)" by Mary-Frances Winters
- "[How to be an Antiracist](#)" by Ibram X Kendi
- "[Understanding Inclusion at Work – and Why it's Important](#)"

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