

# 9 Proven Strategies to Improve Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Your Workplace



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A diverse workplace is a successful workplace. Research shows that organizations that embrace diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) have increased revenue, greater readiness for innovation and improved retention.

But improving the diversity and inclusion in your workplace is about more than increased hiring of women, BIPOC, non-binary or neurodiverse employees.

It is about weaving genuine inclusion into the fabric of your organization – that is, not just having diverse people, but ensuring they're involved, empowered and trusted within the business.

Here are 9 ways to improve DEIB within your workplace.

## 1. Identify DEIB as a strategic priority

Workplaces can only move the needle if they make DEIB a key organizational strategic priority. With this, the strategy has clear *goals* and *performance measures* that are reviewed and discussed by the CEO and leadership regularly.

## 2. Conduct pay equity reviews

The U.S. Equal Pay Act may be over 50 years old, but the wage gap has continued into 2021, with women still only earning 82 cents for every dollar a man makes. That gap is even bigger among Black and Hispanic or Latina women, who earn 61% and 53%, respectively, of the average salary of Caucasian men.

Conduct formal reviews of your own pay structure to ensure pay parity. Then, make adjustments where gaps are identified.

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### 3. Recruit and promote from a diverse POV

Having a diverse slate of candidates is essential, but it's not enough if you want a truly inclusive workplace that supports DEIB. You also need a diverse hiring panel to ensure an objective and fair process.

### 4. Create a robust mentorship program

The options for providing employees of under-represented groups with greater exposure to mentorship opportunities are endless, from cross-department shadowing to breakfasts with the CEO.

Initiatives such as these boost engagement and [prime employees for promotion](#), no matter where they are in the company hierarchy.

A [robust mentorship program](#) sets clear expectations for both mentor and mentee, crosses all levels of the business and encourages dynamic, two-way mentorship – enabling people to learn from each other rather than simply setting up a teacher-student arrangement.

### 5. Consistently train and engage employees on DEIB

Diversity and unconscious bias training is required in many workplaces, but do these sessions have long-term impact? [Some studies say no.](#)

The problem is, if DEIB training programs are presented as lessons to be passively taken in, they may raise awareness, but won't necessarily stimulate behavioral change. To do that, training needs to be interactive and ongoing and part of a [broader conversation](#) within the organization.

### 6. Make sure benefits and programs are inclusive

In our own study of [Women in the Workplace](#), 45% of Caucasian women and 71% of African American or Black women reported having caregiving responsibilities, with children and elders.

Evaluate your employee benefit plans and programs to ensure they adequately support the caregivers within your workforce. Flexible schedules and caregiver resources, such as designated nursing spaces or eldercare seminars, go a long way in helping those with caregiver responsibilities to fully contribute while still balancing work and home needs.

### 7. Set your ERGs up for success

Effective [Employee Resource Groups \(ERGs\)](#) need to be developed, encouraged and supported (with time and money) by the organization.

In our own [research on ERGs](#), we found that while 100% of executive sponsors (senior leaders who pledge to assist ERGs) say the company encourages ERG participation, only 52% of ERG leaders believe that to be true. The majority of ERG leaders we surveyed reported low budgets and a lack of influence within the company.

Leadership should participate and engage with ERGs and leverage them to support the organization's DEIB goals and success.

### 8. Scrutinize board and executive team representation

The composition of your board and executive team should mirror the diversity of the geographical area. If it doesn't, take action.

But be aware of what Dr. Akilah Cadet, founder & CEO of Change Cadet,

refers to as the “the Black bluff.” When organizations place Black employees in leadership roles in an attempt at diversity before fully committing to a culture a belonging, they set these leaders up for failure.

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## 9. Make leaders accountable

A DEIB strategy will only take hold within an organization if leadership holds space and accountability for it. Once you’ve set goals and measured your DEIB results against them, hold the leadership team accountable to results – good or bad.

Employees look to their workplace leaders to guide them, but they’ll only follow if they believe their leaders are changemakers alongside them.

### One step at a time

While the list of best practices may look overwhelming, selecting one thing and doing it well will go a long way toward putting your company on the path to progress.

For more information or help with your workplace’s DEIB journey, [contact us about measuring diversity, equity and inclusion with our Emprising™ tool](#).



### Laurie Minott

Laurie Minott is a former partner at Great Place to Work®, where she consulted and coached CEOs, CHROs and executive leadership teams on advancing business performance and culture change through strategies and solutions that create a great place to work For All™. She has deep experience leading successful organizational change, including her own direct experience as an executive in an organization that achieved recognition on the *Fortune* Best Workplaces in Health Care & Biopharma™ list.