



# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are integral aspects of an outstanding customer and employee experience. Your entire company - from the boardroom to the break room - should feature representation from as diverse a population as your prospective customer base includes.

In this guide, we'll cover how you can use the SUPER Model to launch your DEI strategy. First, let's define each of the words in the acronym:

**Diversity** is the presence of differences. This can include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, physical ability, political perspective, language, and socioeconomic class.

**Equity** is the fair access and opportunity for everyone so that there are equal possible outcomes for every individual.

**Inclusion** is the practice of making everyone feel welcomed, supported, and valued.

Too many companies believe that they can hire a few employees from diverse backgrounds and consider their work done. But are those team members given the same chance to succeed as everyone else, and paid on the same scale? Are they welcomed and respected? Do they feel like their opinion matters?

Here's how you can use the SUPER framework as the foundation to your DEI strategy:

## S: Start with your story

You know by now that everything is experience, and experience is everything. Every touchpoint says something about your brand and has the ability to make someone feel like they belong or don't belong. It's not enough to say that you're a welcoming and diverse organization; you've got to walk the talk, too. For example:

- Is the language on your website inclusive and politically correct?
- Is your store accessible to people with differing abilities?
- Do your website and social images have alternative text?
- Are your clothing models from different backgrounds with different body types?
- Are your business hours flexible on all major holidays, not just the ones you celebrate?
- Do your job openings require advanced degrees when it's not actually necessary?

Be intentional about the way you're telling your story in all of your interactions so that all customers and employees feel valued and have equal opportunity to fully engage with your brand.

## U: Understand your customer's story

You can't be effectively diverse, equitable, or inclusive if you don't take the time to understand your customers' and employees' stories. When you aren't aware of everyone's unique challenges and circumstances, your business is more likely to have blind spots. Your customers may face very different obstacles in order to achieve the same thing, so do not assume that everyone will interact with your brand in the same way.

This is especially important when it comes to Invisible Diversity, or the traits that you cannot see (such as sexuality, religion, socioeconomic class, education level, and more). When you actively listen to other perspectives, you're less likely to form unconscious biases and can become a better ally.

## P: Personalize

To the extent that you can personalize your interactions with customers and employees, they will feel more included. It's not just about understanding our differences, it's about accommodating them and celebrating them, too.

What seems simple or second nature to you may be confusing or unfamiliar to your customer. When you're aware of your customers' unique background, you can assist them and connect with them in a more meaningful way.

For example:

- Do you know which holidays are important to your employees and are you informed about their traditions?
- Do you offer customer support in more than one language?
- Can customers toggle between different sized-models on your website to see what they would like like in your apparel?
- Are you requiring your team to turn their cameras on for video meetings when an employee relies on lip-reading to effectively communicate?

No customer or employee experience is one-size-fits-all. When you can customize certain interactions for prospects, you can create a more level playing field so that everyone has the chance to work with you and feels welcomed to do so.

## E: Exceed Expectations

As a solopreneur or a small business, it may seem more challenging to implement an all-encompassing DEI initiative. You may not have the infrastructure or resources to serve all customers. However, you can empower your team to go above and beyond to serve people when the processes in place aren't meeting a customer's needs.

If a customer needs private access to pump breastmilk and your storefront doesn't have the space, are you telling them they're out of luck and sending them off? Can you offer up the employee-only room in the back? Can you call the other stores on your block to help them find a proper space?

Even if you can't serve all prospects in a way that you'd like, you can exceed their expectations by showing empathy and working with them to find a solution as best as you can.

The advantage you do have as a small business is that you likely have control over whom you're spending money with. Are all of your vendors from the same background?

For instance, when looking for an accountant, are you only interviewing female prospects? What about your referral partners? When you have the chance to send a client to a trusted loan officer, are you sending them all to the same person every time? Are all the products on your shelves from the same supplier, or could you strategically feature items from minority-owned businesses?

Go out of your way to broaden your consideration set and diversify your spend, and you will make an impact.

## **R: Repeat**

Like all aspects of customer and employee experience, you cannot take a 'set and forget it' approach to DEI. Too many brands are accused of "performance allyship," meaning they simply make their logo rainbow for the month of June and think that's enough.

You've got to make DEI part of your company's DNA. Define your DEI goals internally and communicate them to your organization to hold yourself accountable. Then, identify and implement the right systems that will keep you on track and consistent.

Here are a few examples:

- Hire a Director of DEI
- Develop a new recruiting and hiring process, including diverse interview teams and blind resume screening
- Implement mentorship programs
- Create resource groups for employees
- Collect regular customer and employee feedback
- Conduct annual DEI training for all team members
- Publish salary levels across the organization



## Additional Resources



[Creating an Inclusive Workplace](#)

[DEI Check list](#)

[Employers Embracing Employees with Disabilities](#)

[Google's Inclusive Marketing Toolkit](#)

[Inclusion Branding by Debra Ruh](#)

[LinkedIn's Inclusive Language for Marketers](#)

[Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)

[RespectAbility.org Resource Library](#)

[Self Assessment Tool on Diversity and Inclusion](#)

[Webinar: Creating a Culture of Inclusion When Working Remotely](#)

[Website Accessibility Test](#)