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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Your Guide To

DESIGNING A DEI STRATEGY

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BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

BEFORE WE BEGIN...

In the last few years, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) have taken on new significance to many organizations. Studies have shown DEI's powerful effect on hiring, retention, innovation, efficiency, workforce engagement, and even bottom-line results. This has prompted greater awareness for many senior leaders, driving increased investment and enhanced employee expectations.

This workbook is designed to distill the complexities of DEI, outline the ways it is impacting the workplace, and provide options to develop your DEI practices. We hope that on completion of this workbook, you will have a deeper understanding of how organizations are evolving their methods to execute DEI. And you will feel more confident leading DEI investments and driving change across your organization.

This topic is somewhat unique because it's personal and can be uncomfortable or remind you of times when you experienced discrimination. Here are a few things for you to consider as you move through this workbook.

This work can feel uncomfortable. It's essential to create a supportive environment where challenging conversations can take place without judgment. Lean into the discomfort and stay open.

This work is ongoing and non-linear. It will require many iterations - and that's okay. There are many good places to start this work. Don't let uncertainty get in the way of starting at all.

You don't have to know everything. Expanding your DEI knowledge and offerings will take time. This is a lifelong journey of learning and unlearning.

Progress over perfection. You cannot tackle everything all at once nor can you fix systemic issues overnight. This work doesn't have an endpoint. It's about making continuous progress in the right direction, not perfection. We like the idea of 3-5 initiatives in 3-5 years.

How To Use This Workbook

We suggest collaborating with other senior leaders to process the content in this workbook and prioritize what DEI programs you want to invest in and champion. Differences in experience can lead to differences in perspectives and understanding. What matters most and what to prioritize for your DEI programs and initiatives will vary based on your unique organizational needs and goals. It's unlikely that you will work through the entire workbook in a single sitting. To that end, we'd encourage you to divide the content into a few sections based on what's most important to you. We recommend that you take time to digest your discussions and learnings and then re-group. A well-thought-out DEI strategy takes time.

We'll be here to help along the way, so please do reach out to us with any questions.

If you want to get inspired and redefine what DEI means for your organization...

Chapter 2 will share with you general definitions for the core components of the DEI function and explore how a variety of organizations define DEI today. These definitions are not exact and demonstrate how DEI is an evolving pursuit; an ongoing journey not static or singular in definition.

If you want to develop or mature DEI programs and/or the impact of DEI across your organization...

Chapter 3 explores several common manifestations of DEI. You will find descriptions of some foundational programs that underpin dedicated investment and leadership commitment to DEI. You will find examples of how a company's DEI vision, concepts, and initiatives can enhance and improve existing HR programs.

If you want to consider steps to invest in developing and operationalizing DEI for your business...

Chapter 4 provides steps for designing and implementing DEI programs that meet your needs and the needs of your organization. This section provides you with options to help you determine what to prioritize and what action to take - from assessing your current state to building or maturing your Diversity Advisory Committee to enhancing your current HR programs to fully enabling the DEI results needed to achieve your goals.

Defining DEI

Depending on your organization or where you are in the world, you may know DEI (or diversity, equity, and inclusion) by a few different names. Some call it IDEA or DEIA, which stands for inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. Others call it JEDI, which stands for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Sometimes the word “belonging” is also used.

If we look at what each of these words mean, we get a clearer picture of what DEI (or any other acronym variation) is all about.

While these terms are closely related, each uniquely addresses differentiated concepts and expectations. To illustrate the difference in practice, we would like to start with how Dr. D-L Stewart describes the terms by demonstrating the relationship between them using an inquiry-based approach.

From *Rutger’s Division of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement*

Written by *Dr. D-L Stewart*

<https://nbdiversity.rutgers.edu/dei-committee-good-start-guide>

DIVERSITY ASKS, 'Who is in the room?'

EQUITY RESPONDS, 'Who is trying to get in the room but can't? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?'

INCLUSION ASKS, 'Has everyone's ideas been heard?'

JUSTICE RESPONDS, 'Whose ideas won't be taken as seriously because they aren't in the majority?'

DIVERSITY ASKS, 'How many more of [pick any minoritized identity] groups do we have this year than last?'

EQUITY RESPONDS, 'What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?'

INCLUSION ASKS, 'Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?'

JUSTICE RESPONDS, 'Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining a dehumanizing view?'

– Dr. D-L Stewart

Although 'Accessibility' was not included in Dr. D-L Stewart's example, we would offer the following:

ACCESSIBILITY ASKS, 'Whose contributions haven't been fully realized because they are lacking accommodation?'



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