# How To Build A Diverse And Inclusive Workplace

Today, inclusion and diversity should play critical, high-priority roles in your company's hiring practices and day-to-day operation.

This isn't just about doing the right thing. It's about doing the smart thing. By expanding your workforce, by hiring skilled people from diverse backgrounds, you enhance your ability to innovate, compete, and thrive.

Here are some important things to keep in mind as you move toward a more-diverse, more-inclusive workplace.

## It Changes the Dynamic. For the Better.

When your workplace gets more diverse, it thinks and acts differently. And in a good way. You move away from groupthink, and your teams start thinking more creatively.

People with varied backgrounds collaborate in exciting ways. They innovate. They work faster. They create an energy that's contagious.

Inclusion tends to boost morale, foster greater engagement, and increase employee retention.

## It Boosts Productivity and Helps Your Bottom Line

The data is clear. By recruiting, integrating, and retaining a diverse and inclusive workforce, you create a workplace culture in which employees feel they belong, that their contributions matter, and that there are no limits to what they can achieve.

Workers thrive in that culture, and your company prospers as a result.

One study found that companies ranked in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 30% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians. The same survey showed that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15% more likely to financially outperform their respective national industry medians.[1]

To gain the benefits of a diversity initiative, however, you need to put some weight behind it. The people at the top of the organization need to embrace the idea. Mid-managers need to implement and maintain it. That's how you'll get buy-in from workers.

[1] McKinsey & Company. "Why diversity matters." Page 2. Accessed Nov. 2, 2020.

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## It May Require A Shift in Thinking

As companies across the country work to make themselves more inclusive, many face a hard reality: If you're not already diverse, fixing the problem takes work and plenty of time.

Changing your workforce may also require changing attitudes. For years, many businesses have rationalized that there simply isn't a large enough pool of diverse candidates from which to recruit. But companies large and small now know the right people are out there; HR staffs just need to seek them out, engage them, and invite them to apply. That kind of culture shift takes time, but it's critical.

As you make the shift, watch for unconscious bias. Names, addresses, even zip codes can influence the way we think about candidates. Train your staff to recognize their own biases. Work to modify behavior and attitudes. And consider eliminating unnecessary personal information from the initial review of candidate qualification. Hiring blind forces you to focus on what matters most: a candidate's qualifications.

## It Demands a New Language

A new approach to hiring requires a new language. In your job postings, eliminate aggressive language that sounds too masculine or words and phrases that tend to appeal primarily to female candidates. Your goal is to attract a broad group of diverse applicants. So, keep it simple and interesting. Focus on gender-neutral descriptions of the key job skills that are necessary for the job.

## It's All About the Long Term

Don't make this a one-off "initiative." Inclusion should become part of your corporate culture. Focus not simply on diversity in hiring, but on retaining a diverse blend of talented employees.

To do that, look around. Consider your work environment. Are all workers comfortable? Do some feel they have to mask who they are while at work?

Make sure you're creating a place where all people, from all walks of life, are excited to be on the job, collaborating and thriving every day.

### Eight Questions Every HR Department Should Ask

The most obvious way to address diversity is in hiring and promotions. But here are some other questions to address as you commit to a more-inclusive organization.

1. Is our board as diverse as it could be?
2. Do our website and social media portray a diverse, inclusive company?
3. Do we attend and support diverse community causes?
4. Do our marketing materials show inclusiveness and use inclusive language?
5. Have we asked diverse employees and members of the public for feedback on the inclusiveness of our organization?
6. Does our panel of interviewers look diverse and welcoming?
7. Is our workplace diverse and welcoming to all visitors?
8. Are we flexible in work habits and group benefits?

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## Stay in Touch

To maintain an inclusive culture and reap the benefits of diversity, you'll need to be vigilant. Keep doors open for all workers to share their thoughts and needs. Make sure your managers are working to understand the unique talents, skills, and requirements that allow individuals—no matter their backgrounds—to excel and grow. You'll be happy with the results. And so will your workforce.

The experts at EG Workforce Solutions are ready to share more ideas, feedback, and support to help you build diversity and inclusion in your organization.

### About EG Workforce Solutions

We've been in this business for decades and have developed a deep network of professional connections. Whether they're companies looking for talent, job seekers looking for work, or an up-and-coming store in need of some temporary help, we know the right people to bridge the gap between the hiring and the hired.

But what's more, we get to know people. From employers hiring to candidates looking, we take the time to listen and learn. We hear your likes, talents, and needs. We gain an understanding, and with it, we're able to facilitate lasting relationships between businesses and people.

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