

Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace

Information and Training Package



Contents

- 1** *Introduction*
- 2** *What is Diversity and Inclusion?*
- 3** *Why is Diversity and Inclusion important for employers?*
- 4** *Inclusive Hiring Practices - Job Postings, Interviews and Onboarding*
- 5** *Inclusive Workplaces*
- 6** *Employee Retention*
- 7** *Resources*
- 8** *Definitions*



Introduction



Promoting diversity and inclusion at work is important for employers who want to create a welcoming and diverse environment. It means hiring and keeping a diverse group of employees with different backgrounds and perspectives. This has many benefits, such as better decision-making and problem-solving.

This guide explores different ways to achieve diversity and inclusion. It starts with fair hiring practices like using unbiased job descriptions and reaching out to diverse community organizations for more candidates. Mentorship and sponsorship programs can also help support underrepresented employees, and good compensation and benefits can attract and retain diverse talent.

Keeping employees is also crucial for an inclusive workplace. Organizations can do this by having programs to manage disabilities, gathering feedback through surveys and focus groups, and working with employee groups focused on disabilities. Developing plans to keep employees, conducting exit interviews, and analyzing why people leave also help create an inclusive environment.

When organizations prioritize diversity and inclusion, employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to do their best work. This guide provides insights and resources to help employers build inclusive workplaces and keep a diverse workforce, leading to long-term success and positive impacts on individuals and society.



“The value of a diverse team is its capacity to challenge the norm or group think and thus boost organizational performance and improve decision making.”

-Yrthya Dinzey-Flores



What is Diversity and Inclusion?

Diversity

Diversity means recognizing and celebrating all the ways people are different, like their race, ethnicity, abilities, age, gender, beliefs, and more. It's important to value and respect these differences. Research shows that having a diverse workforce leads to better decision-making and innovation. But it's not enough to just have diversity; we also need inclusion.

Inclusion

Inclusion means creating a fair and empowering workplace where everyone feels valued and can be themselves. It's about treating people equally and making sure they have the same opportunities. An inclusive workplace culture ensures that everyone feels safe and that diverse individuals can work well together.

Building an inclusive workplace is not only the right thing to do, but it's also good for businesses. Embracing diversity brings different perspectives and leads to success. We need to make sure our policies and practices are fair and inclusive, considering people's individual needs.

Discrimination has negative effects on individuals and organizations. Creating a workplace that embraces neurodiversity, which includes differences in brain function like dyslexia and autism, involves making simple adjustments that can greatly improve people's work lives.

In summary, fostering inclusion in the workplace is important and beneficial. Diversity means recognizing what makes people unique, while equity means providing support based on individual circumstances. Inclusion involves valuing and including diverse perspectives in our policies and practices. It's crucial to understand these concepts and take action to make sure everyone feels acknowledged and valued.



Why is Diversity and Inclusion important for Employers?

1. Financial Success

Companies that prioritize diversity and inclusion tend to be more financially successful. Research has shown that companies with more gender and ethnic diversity have higher chances of achieving above-average profitability. Inclusive teams can also improve performance by up to 30% in diverse environments.

2. Attract Talented Employees

Strong diversity and inclusion practices help attract talented employees. Many millennial workers consider a company's diversity and inclusion policy when evaluating job offers. Diverse teams excel in problem-solving, decision-making, and innovation, benefiting from a wide range of experiences.

3. Employee Engagement

Employees in diverse companies also report higher engagement levels, resulting in better customer service and longer tenures. This leads to higher morale and helps businesses avoid turnover. Additionally, organizations that embrace diversity and inclusion gain a competitive advantage by understanding and meeting diverse customer needs, ultimately increasing profits.

4. Increased Innovation and Creativity

Bringing together employees who have different skills, backgrounds, education and experiences leads to greater innovation and creative ideas. In a diverse environment employees feel more at ease to share their ideas with other employees and their employer. Creating an environment of diversity and inclusion can directly benefit the expansion and growth of businesses who are accepting of the sharing and generation of ideas.

4. Increased Productivity

Teams that work well together and where a sense of inclusion and diversity exists can increase productivity. Diverse teams provide a wider range of skills, backgrounds and experiences and this environment allows businesses to thrive in a shorter period of time as the connectedness of team means forward momentum is not slowed.



“We are greater than, and greater for, the sum of us.”
- Heather McGhee



Inclusive Hiring Practices

Inclusive hiring practices involve various stages of the employment process, such as job postings, interviews, and onboarding. To foster diversity and inclusion, organizations should follow these best practices:

1. Commitment from the top

Owners, managers and supervisors should set a clear vision for diversity and inclusion, which should be communicated throughout the organization. Management should lead by example and exhibit inclusive behaviour.

2. Develop a comprehensive plan

Form a committee to develop and adopt diversity and inclusion initiatives. The plan should prioritize fair treatment, equal opportunity, diversity education, and more.

3. Gather feedback and take action

Regularly collect employee feedback to understand their needs and make informed improvements. Conduct surveys to assess the current state of diversity and inclusion and address concerns promptly.

4. Address unconscious bias

Implement training programs to create awareness and mitigate bias in hiring decisions and workplace interactions. Use unbiased language and standardized interview processes.

5. Employee recognition

Implement an employee recognition program to emphasize inclusion and make everyone feel valued. Recognition positively impacts employee happiness and engagement.



“When we listen and celebrate what is both common and different, we become wiser, more inclusive, and better as an organization.”

-Pat Wadors

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Inclusive Hiring Practices

Job Postings, Interviews and Onboarding

Additionally, organizations can adopt specific strategies in their hiring processes to promote inclusivity:

1. Eliminate unconscious bias: Avoid biased questions and standardize the hiring process.
2. Implement diversity hiring best practices: Use inclusive language and explicitly invite diverse applicants.
3. Focus on skills: Prioritize skills over credentials and provide opportunities for underrepresented groups to gain experience.
4. Connect with diverse communities: Reach out to organizations representing underrepresented communities and explore diverse job boards and events.
5. Make diversity part of your brand: Showcase a commitment to diversity and inclusion through employer branding and build a diverse recruitment team.

What are unbiased questions; where do we start?

Bias is when the interviewers personal prejudices influence their decision in hiring. It is often unconscious in nature.

To create a diverse and inclusive workplace, we need to start with our hiring practices and acknowledge biases and be aware that they can be problematic.

From this place of acknowledgement, we can start to create questions that remove bias.

Examples unbiased questions:

- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult customer.
- Describe a situation where you had to deal with conflict.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult coworker.

Make a question bank that are open ended questions and try to stick to behavioural or situational questions in order to best assess candidates. Reducing or remove standardized questions can help your organization reduce bias in the hiring process.



Inclusive Workplaces

Professionals can create inclusive workplaces by recognizing the importance of inclusion and fostering an environment where everyone can thrive. Here are steps to build inclusive workplaces:

Assess inclusion

Measure how inclusive the workplace is through surveys, focus groups, and analyzing workforce data. Identify barriers and gather employee views.

Set goals and metrics

Establish clear goals and metrics to track progress, like increasing representation of underrepresented groups in leadership positions

Provide training

Offer training programs that raise awareness of biases, stereotypes, and promote inclusive language. Make training accessible to all employees

Foster an inclusive culture

Create a culture of inclusivity by providing flexible work arrangements, equal opportunities for growth, open communication, and celebrating diversity

Adopt a person-centred approach

Recognize individual strengths and challenges, including neurodivergent employees. Match skills to work requirements and focus on abilities rather than diagnoses.



Include neurodivergent workers

Remove barriers in the hiring process that may discourage neurodivergent candidates. Value diverse opinions, provide workplace accommodations, and celebrate differences.

Educate on inclusion

Promote real acceptance of differences through education that goes beyond awareness and tolerance.

By following these strategies, professionals can contribute to building inclusive workplaces where all employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to succeed.

Employee Retention

To promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace, organizations can use different strategies. Here are some simplified suggestions:

✓ Recruitment

1. Use inclusive job descriptions and advertisements without bias or stereotypes to attract diverse candidates.
2. Partner with organizations that serve diverse communities to reach underrepresented groups.
3. Offer mentorship and sponsorship programs to support the growth of underrepresented employees.
4. Provide competitive compensation and benefits packages to value diverse talent.

✓ Retention

1. Implement disability management and prevention programs to support employees with disabilities.
2. Collect feedback through surveys and focus groups to understand the needs of employees with disabilities.
3. Collaborate with disability-focused employee resource groups to develop retention strategies.
4. Create retention plans based on survey and exit interview insights.
5. Develop a procedures manual for managers and HR professionals on best practices for retaining employees with disabilities.
6. Review proposed terminations to ensure proper consideration of disability accommodations.
7. Conduct exit interviews to understand if disability-related factors influenced an employee's decision to leave.
8. Analyze employee terminations to identify trends and take proactive measures.

By following these strategies, organizations can retain a diverse workforce and create an inclusive workplace culture.





Resources

AccessibleBC

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation/accessiblebc>

AskEARN | Neurodiversity in the Workplace

<https://askearn.org/page/neurodiversity-in-the-workplace>

AskEARN | Hire (& Keep) the Best: Talent Acquisition & Retention Processes

<https://askearn.org/page/hire-and-keep-the-best-talent-acquisition-and-retention-processes>

Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task

<https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/corporate/reports/building-diverse-inclusive-public-service-final-report-joint-union-management-task-force-diversity-inclusion.html%23toc5>

Equality, diversity and inclusion in the Workplace | Factsheets | CIPD

<https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/factsheets/diversity-factsheet/>

Hiring for Diversity and Innovation | Monster.ca

<https://hiring.monster.ca/resources/workforce-management/workplace-diversity-equity/hiring-for-diversity-and-innovation/>

How Canadian Employers Can Promote Diversity and Inclusion (peninsulacanada.com)

<https://peninsulacanada.com/blog/employer-advice/how-to-promote-diversity-inclusion-workplace/>

The Quick Guide to Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace (achievers.com)

<https://www.achievers.com/blog/the-quick-guide-to-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace/>

The University of British Columbia/Autism and Neurodiversity in the Workplace

<https://circa.educ.ubc.ca/autism-in-the-workplace/>

UBC offers free training: Autism and Neurodiversity in the Workplace. The training is self-paced and is designed to support anyone interested in inclusive employment and inclusive workplaces.

Ultimate Guide to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in the Workplace (benevity.com)

<https://benevity.com/resources/ultimate-guide-diversity-equity-inclusion-workplace>

Definitions

Diversity

Recognizing and including the differences that individuals bring to the workplace, such as their background, abilities, beliefs, and experiences. It's about valuing and celebrating everyone's uniqueness.

Employee Retention

The ability of an organization to keep its employees. It involves creating a positive work environment where employees feel valued, supported, and motivated to stay.

Equity

Recognizing that different individuals may need different support to achieve fairness. It's about providing specific assistance to ensure equality based on individual circumstances.

Inclusion

Creating a fair and empowering workplace where everyone feels respected and can be themselves. It involves treating people equally, providing opportunities, and fostering a safe environment where diverse individuals can work well together.

Inclusive Workplace

A workplace that embraces diversity, promotes inclusivity, and values everyone's contributions. It's a place where all employees feel safe, respected, and empowered to share their talents and ideas.

Neurodiversity

A term used to describe natural variations in the human brain. It relates to differences in the way we think, process, learn and behave.

Understanding these concepts is important for creating a diverse, inclusive, and supportive work environment where everyone can thrive.

