



Can We Talk Inclusion?

EQUITY IN BLACK AND WHITE

GETTING STARTED:

An introductory framework to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) best practices.



[CANWETALKINCLUSION.TODAY](https://canwetalkinclusion.today)



CONSIDER THIS

"IT'S SO IMPORTANT THAT THERE'S REPRESENTATION, NOT BECAUSE IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO BUT BECAUSE IT'S THE SMART THING TO DO."

**DERRICK JOHNSON, PRESIDENT & CEO
NAACP**

LET'S TALK INCLUSION

Building an inclusive and equitable workplace isn't just the right thing to do. It's the smart thing, too: According to [McKinsey](#), diverse teams are good for business, with research indicating that diverse teams are more innovative, potentially generating a competitive edge. And there's plenty more research that has found that leaders who prioritize diversity see increased productivity, creativity, and revenue.

That includes leaders in the hiring and recruiting space: A 2021 Gartner Survey found that Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) is a top five priority for HR Leaders, with 35% of HR Managers prioritizing equity initiatives in their 2021 development goals.

So how do we take these goals and turn them into sustainable action? By strategically building a DEIA approach that suits your organization's unique needs.

This guide is by no means a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, think of **Getting Started** as a blueprint, sketching out a framework for organizations considering their next steps toward a more equitable workplace.





LUCKIE DANIELS

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STRATEGIST AND SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER**

A seasoned IDEA educator and thought leader, Luckie has guided many organizations and teams through the process of implementing workplace practices that lead to transformative culture and equity change.

When not rocking her Director of IDEA cape across the Meow Wolf multiverse, Luckie is the owner and operator of ENCHANTMENT WHILE BLACK, a family-operated Travel and TURO transportation service fueling the wanderlust dreams of Brown and Black adventure travelers to Northern New Mexico and Northern Arizona.

A proud VR4Good Innovator and Girl Who Codes, Luckie is lucky to call the Land of Enchantment home, where she has championed community-centered equity and STEAM initiatives for more than a decade.

SPRINT 0

1
ALIGN: HOUSE RULES

2
REFLECT: WHY + WHAT

3
BUILD: PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

4
DEFINE: EQUITY DREAM LIST

5
IDENTIFY: REPRESENTATION



1 ALIGN

HOUSE RULES

HOW WE BUILD TOGETHER

Before we get started on the journey toward a more equitable future, we need to lay out some house rules.

These house rules will be the foundation of your DEIA strategy, the “how” behind your equity building. By establishing a strong framework, you’ll better understand your goals and the reality of achieving them. And you’ll be better able to create transformative, lasting change in your organization.

The good news is there’s no need to reinvent the wheel. Your organization can borrow from evidence-based approaches and established best practices to create the framework of action that best suits your needs and goals.

Alignment is Key.

These house rules are only effective when your organization is committed to honoring them. Teamwork is essential here: The more you and your team are aligned with the reality of building a working DEIA strategy, the stronger your foundation. Below are the house rules we champion the most:

- **Patience.** It takes time to build space and create impactful, transformative change. Trust the process.
- **Create a safe space.** Concerns, comments, and suggestions shared in the group should stay in the group unless otherwise agreed.
- **No voluntolds.** Choose for yourself when and what to share.
- **Focus on self-growth.** As you lead the charge, remember that you’ll be growing too. Identify and commit to your personal evolution.
- **Prioritize transparency.** Honesty and transparency are essential to progress.
- **No assumptions.** If we have questions, we ask.

Commit to the path forward. Together, focus on what you’re working towards.



2 REFLECT

WHY + WHAT

REAL TALK: WHY ARE WE HERE?

Let's get real: DEIA training educates and energizes, but training is a lot different from applying these practices in real-time. That's why it's essential to establish the why behind your DEIA efforts and to understand that equity work is an ongoing practice.

Why is DEIA important to my organization?

Ideally, you'll think of DEIA as a kind of professional development tool: a learning curriculum that guides the people in your organization; helps them to identify and evolve subconscious, biased behavior and thoughts; and spurs sustainable, transformative change.

What will I do to ensure DEIA training doesn't land on a shelf after the workshop is over?

Still, sometimes the most well-intentioned DEIA trainings fail. A variety of factors can contribute to the disconnect between learning DEIA best practices and applying them authentically.

Most often, you'll encounter Reactive DEIA. Reactive DEIA is usually utilized with a one-and-done approach in response to an incident or event, and can easily (and quickly!) undermine your organization's progress.

How can my organization reflect DEIA-centered values?

The truth is, incorporating a DEIA strategy into the foundation of your organization is about building a consistent, integrative practice for your team's unique business plan, mission, and values. No DEIA strategy will be the same, because every workplace is as unique as the people and culture within it.

How do I approach decision-making that positively impacts my employees and workplace culture?

So how should you begin this work? We suggest a thorough cultural assessment of your organization to collect key insights. That way, you can create a strong framework for open communication, which will in turn reduce conflicts that naturally arise when change is afoot.

While there may be some friction in the name of growing pains, keep in mind that you're defining your organization's DEIA strategy for the long term.



3 BUILD

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

DEVELOPING TRUST

Think of Psychological Safety as a construct that helps to explain the spectrum of people's workplace experiences: whether or not they feel comfortable admitting they don't know something, or whether or not they take risks within their work group.

Trust. Work. Change.

The reality is that all too often, marginalized peers don't feel this sense of Psychological Safety. What does this look like in practice? Underrepresented peers are often:

- Required to validate their intelligence, skills, and qualifications repeatedly
- The first to be challenged and talked over in group and team settings
- Lacking team allies who are willing to address inappropriate group dynamics on their behalf
- Overlooked, their contributions unrecognized, erased or credited to other team members
- Experiencing real and impactful anxiety associated with admitting what they don't know or understand
- Questioned about their competency despite being impacted by a variety of issues affecting their work performance
- Fearful of being penalized for expressing negative work-related experiences and speaking honestly

As a champion of equity, it's your job to develop trust with these peers impacted by workplace and/or cultural inequity. By utilizing Psychological Safety as a tool, you give your team assurance that they are safe in taking risks in their work and expressing their work-relevant thoughts, feelings, and opinions.



4 DEFINE

EQUITY DREAM LIST

CHANGE STARTS WITH LEADERSHIP

This is where the rubber meets the road. Change starts with leadership.

Inclusivity must trickle down from the top. That means walking the walk: Inclusive leadership has to be modeled before it is truly accepted by your workforce and adapted into your company's culture.

If sustaining DEIA momentum is truly your organization's goal, your organization's C-Suite must become experts in diversity and inclusion, too.

What would that look like in practice? Our Equity Dreamship for leadership would look something like:

- Establishing a diverse and inclusive leadership model
- Introducing inclusive decision-making to inform actions and outcomes
- Consistently building and practicing DEI proficiency and cultural competency
- Partnering with Human Resources to advance equitable hiring practices and attract diverse talent
- Promoting team development to improve the application of DEIA Best Practices
- Redesigning internal processes, including hiring, retention, and promotion systems, to remove bias
- Establishing a DEIA Scorecard to track organizational progress
- Committing to becoming Equity Champions leading DEIA transformation

As a best practice, we encourage mandatory DEIA competency development for C-Suite and Upper Management, incentivized and aligned with annual performance evaluations and/or professional development goals.



5 IDENTIFY

REPRESENTATION

INCLUSION: WHO IS MISSING?

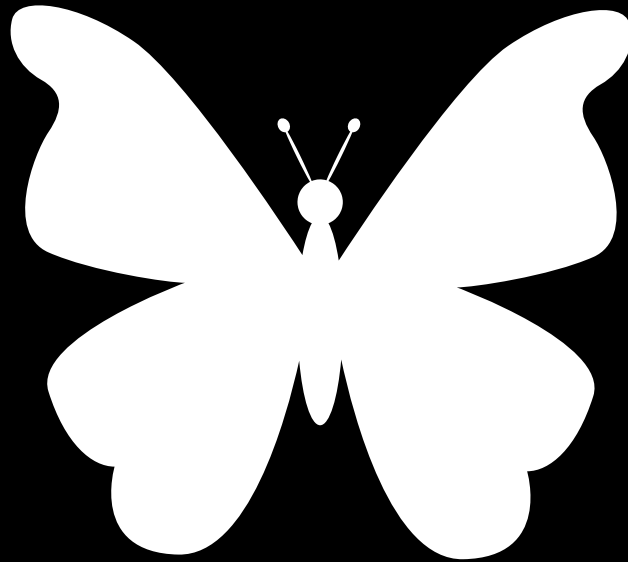
Creating an inclusive workplace is not a passive act. Think of equity building as assembling a diverse and well-stocked DEIA tool kit. With the tools gathered, leaders and employees develop skills that can be refined by exercising humility, courage, and a commitment to change.

Once those tools are readied, you can move on to the next step: identifying who is missing from the DEIA dialogue and all the strategic planning you've started. Identity and intersectionality matter and all employees want to be heard and included.

Having an inclusive mindset means you're capable of identifying a broader range of issues that may be impacting non-dominant identities in your workplace. It also means you can bring about transformative, equitable change that isn't reactive or motivated by a single incident.

Still, deciding how and where to begin implementing an inclusive mindset can be daunting. Culture assessment findings play a big role here, but also consider these equity-centered activities as a starting point:

- Understanding implicit, unconscious, and subconscious bias
- Aligning on what inclusion and equity mean
- Ongoing cultural competency development
- Identity groups and workplace support for non-dominant identities
- Building community and cultural sharing
- How to engage in equity-centered dialogues
- Exploring how to grow as an Equity Facilitator



COMMIT TO CHANGE

Have you identified an equity champion to lead your DEIA initiatives, manage action items, and drive equity work group success?

ACTION ITEMS



MOOD
CHECK



Laney



Hope

SESSION 2: COLLABORATION

- Check Your Privilege Survey Insights
- Team Updates
- Align Activity: Identify Equity Work Group Goals

FOLLOW-UPS: NEXT STEPS

- Task/Owner
- Task/Owner
- Task/Owner
- Task/Owner
- Task/Owner

WORK SESSIONS: SCHEDULING

- Session 2 - Date & Time
- Session 3 - Date & Time

LEVER: 8 DEI BEST PRACTICES

To get started on creating or refreshing your DEI strategies, we've created these 8 best practices for DEI that can serve as the foundation for your efforts.

- Measure and Analyze Current Efforts
- Attract and Recruit Diverse Talent
- Eliminate Bias During Interviews and Hiring
- Facilitate Inclusive Onboarding
- Lean on Learning and Development
- Use DEI to Boost Retention
- Make Offboarding Count
- Use Analytics to Measure Your Efforts

Fully embracing DEI at your organization means doing more than just hiring people from a variety of backgrounds. A comprehensive commitment to DEI spans every part of the employee lifecycle. From attracting talent all the way through to succession planning, opportunities exist for companies to think bigger and better about DEI — and to make a true impact on their employees.

[Download the full LEVER.CO eBook: 8 Pillars of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)



Diversity is a fact, but inclusion is a choice we make every day. As leaders, we have to put out the message that we embrace and not just tolerate diversity.

Nellie Borrero
Managing Director, Senior
Strategic Advisor – Global
Inclusion & Diversity at
Accenture



GOT QUESTIONS?

Pace yourself. Think of creating sustainable DEIA change as a marathon, not a sprint. After all, building a more equitable workplace requires patience and time. And deciding to commit to equity is a big step in and of itself.

For teams new to the DEIA concepts presented in this ebook, Luckie offers a **COMPLIMENTARY 30-MIN Q&A session** to help kickstart your equity initiative.

Thank you for being an Equity Champion. You got this!

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