


YOUR COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO DEI

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

Unlock business growth with an unbiased approach.





“ Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance. ”

– Verna Myers

Index

- Introduction
- Understanding the Current Landscape
- Let's Talk About Bias
- 3 Ways to Combat Unconscious Bias
- So, What exactly is DEI?
- How Do I Apply Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Metrics Throughout my Company?
- 3 Ways to Prioritise Diversity
- Workplace Culture
- DEI Tips for Success in 2024
- Conclusion



Introduction

Welcome to our guide on Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI) in hiring. In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, DEI isn't just a buzzword; it's a critical force for change. It's about embracing differences and fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and can thrive. This guide will show you why DEI is so much more than a checkbox on your HR to-do list.

In this guide, we will explore why DEI and an unbiased approach are essential for your business in the current landscape. We'll dive deep into the compelling reasons for integrating DEI into your hiring process, and how this shift can empower your organisation to reach new heights of success.

Key takeaways from this journey will provide you with valuable insights into what's in it for you and your business. DEI isn't just a social initiative; it's a smart business strategy. It can lead to enhanced innovation, higher employee engagement, and a stronger market presence. Let's embark on this transformative path together.

Understanding the Current Landscape

While the state of DEI efforts varies by company, industry and geography, a growing number of management teams have recognized the importance and urgency of taking action to drive progress on DEI.

Understanding the current state of DEI is paramount in the journey towards a more inclusive and equitable work environment. DEI is no longer a mere concept; it's a dynamic force reshaping workplaces across the globe. In South Africa and the United Kingdom, the adoption of DEI principles has been gaining momentum. Companies are recognising the necessity of fostering diverse and inclusive workplaces, not only to meet regulatory requirements but also to remain competitive and innovative.

In recent years, DEI has become a central theme in business strategies, influencing the way companies attract, hire, and retain talent. This shift is not limited to a single industry or region; it's a worldwide movement. As organisations acknowledge the positive impact of DEI on their bottom lines and overall success, they are working towards implementing strategies that foster inclusivity and diversity at all levels of their workforce.

However, this progress is not without its challenges. As DEI gains prominence, companies face the task of addressing deep-seated biases, fostering an inclusive culture, and promoting equal opportunities. It's essential to recognize that DEI is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Different regions and industries may face unique obstacles and opportunities on their path to embracing diversity, equality, and inclusion.

Exploring global DEI trends and challenges allows us to understand the evolving nature of this movement and helps us to tailor our strategies to the specific needs of our organisation. It's a journey that involves continuous learning, adaptability, and commitment to creating an equitable and diverse workplace. By recognising these global trends and challenges, we can navigate the landscape more effectively and contribute to the larger DEI movement.

This rapid increase in attention to DEI was driven in part by the combined impact of:

- **Movements**, including racial justice movements, gender equality activism, the global campaign for LGBTQIA+ rights and the growing environmental justice movement, which have increased awareness and galvanised public action.
- **Evolving consumer expectations**, including holding brands accountable for their impact and shopping with intent. One global survey found that 58% of consumers buy or advocate for brands based on their beliefs and values.
- **Social media**, which has helped expand the ability to communicate with brands about their impact, especially among younger consumers. On International Women's Day, UK entrepreneurs created a chatbot that responded to employers' tweets with details of the company's gender pay gap and an invitation to take action. As part of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, 66% of consumers expected and called on companies to have a point of view or make a statement about the issue.



LinkedIn reports that 77% of talent professionals say diversity is very important in the future of recruiting, and that means it's time for new approaches. While DEI initiatives can help, acting as guideposts and setting expectations throughout an organization, research shows that what really makes a difference for top companies in DEI is a focus on recruiting and advancement.

For instance, **75% of the top 10% of organisations** in a recent Inclusion Index require panels of interviewers to be diverse.

– Brazen.com

– **Investor attention to environmental, social and governance (ESG) metrics**, which has encouraged organizations to implement DEI initiatives from the start to attract capital. In a global survey, 83% of executive leaders and investors were willing to pay a 10% premium, on average, to acquire a company with a positive ESG record.

– **Competition for talent that prioritizes DEI**, which has led companies to incorporate DEI into recruiting efforts and has made leaders more vocal about DEI issues. Of global jobseekers, 39% have turned down or decided not to pursue a job opportunity because of a perceived lack of inclusion¹¹ and 60% expect the CEO to speak publicly about social and political issues.¹² This trend is amplified among young millennials and members of Generation Z, for whom a “diverse and inclusive organisation” is one of the top three things they look for in an employer.

– **Impact of DEI on team and company performance** – ethnically diverse companies and gender diverse companies are 36% and 25% more likely, respectively, to financially outperform (from a total return to shareholders perspective) organisations that are of average diversity in their industry. Studies show greater diversity can help teams focus more on facts, process those facts more carefully and generate more creativity and innovation when the broader organisation is inclusive and equitable.

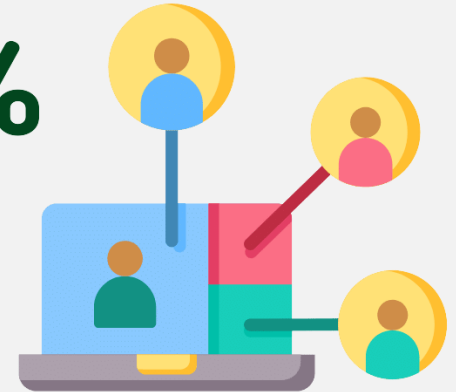
– **The Rise of Virtual Recruiting** - Virtual recruiting has positively impacted DEI by making it easier for employers to attract and connect with candidates in different geographic areas, making their recruiting processes more accessible, and breaking down some of the obstacles that keep qualified candidates from engaging with a potential employer.

Although the pandemic drove widespread adoption of virtual work, virtual recruiting isn't just a pandemic-era trend. According to LinkedIn, **70% of talent professionals** say virtual recruiting will become the new standard. That's just part of the story. When virtual recruiting is combined with in-person recruiting techniques, resulting in a hybrid recruiting approach, employers can maximise results and create new strategies to target desired candidate personas, even for hard-to-fill roles and in tight talent markets.

Taking advantage of a 'Talent & Skills First' approach must start with diversifying your talent pipeline. Virtual recruiting makes it easy to reach and attract candidates who may be underserved through in-person channels, due to the constraints of budgets, time, and geography. Virtual recruiting enables employers to widen their reach, directly enriching the chances of a perfect acquisition match without breaking budgets or exhausting your recruiting team, which helps expand the talent pool and engage with candidates you might otherwise miss.

World Economic Forum in collaboration with McKinsey & Company

70%



70% of talent professionals say virtual recruiting will become the new standard.

Source: LinkedIn

Recent research from McKinsey has proven that diverse businesses deliver 35% better results than non-diverse ones.

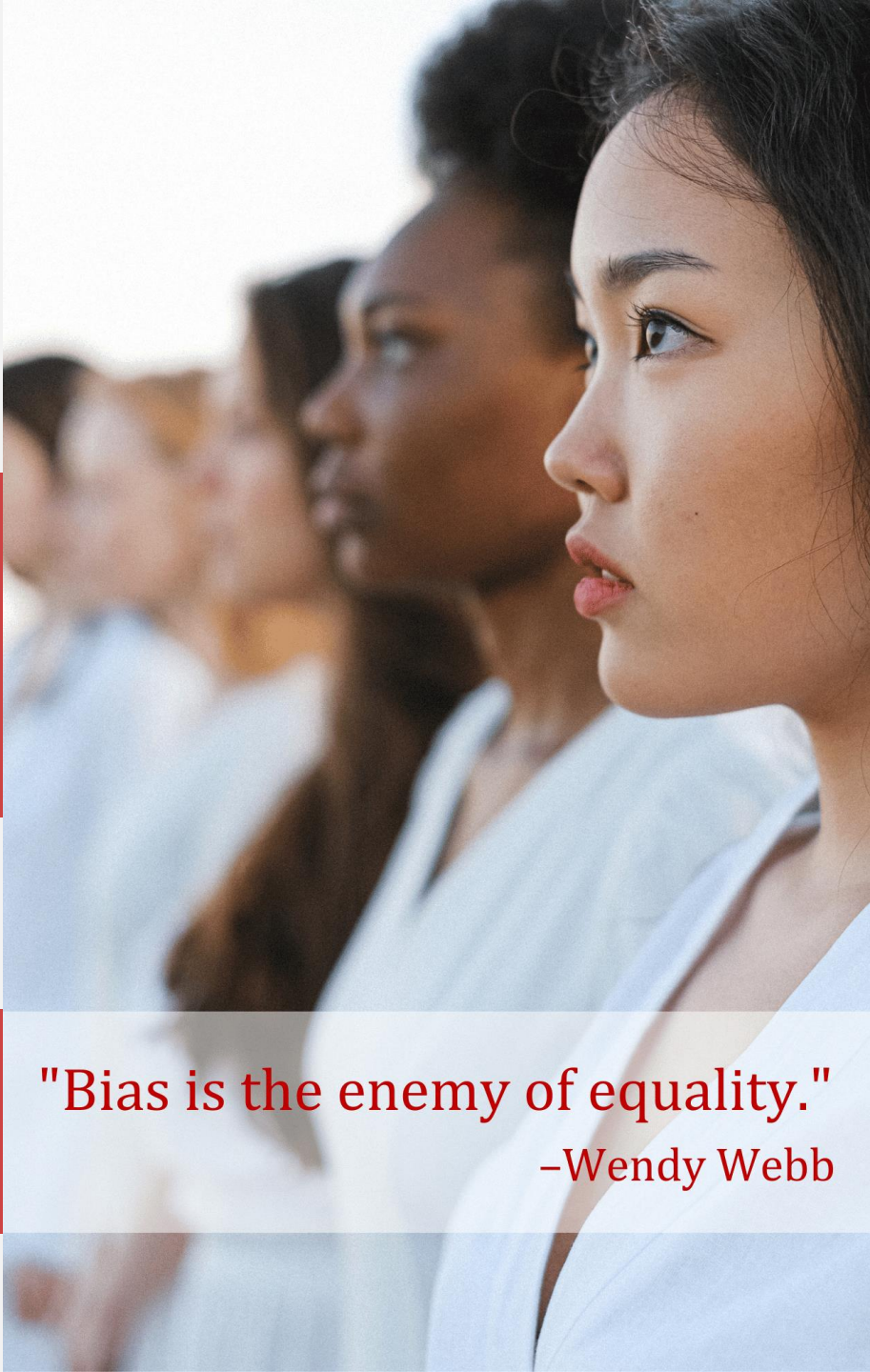
Let's Talk about Bias

Unconscious bias refers to a bias that affects our decision-making without our being aware of it. As Greg Moran, founder and CEO of predictive hiring software company Chequed, told *BusinessNewsDaily*:

“ *Overt bias is exceedingly rare, but unintentional, abstract bias can occur. It's human nature; employers use their gut reactions to job candidates and hire people like themselves that they get along with. This can be dangerous because employers don't even realize there's bias in their hiring process.* ”

These biases can wreak havoc on even the most genuine attempts to hire fairly. Since it happens involuntarily, bias is a particularly insidious enemy of diversity and equality.

Learning to recognise these different types of bias and training your staff to do the same is a good step toward neutralising them.



"Bias is the enemy of equality."
–Wendy Webb

There are many different kinds of bias at work in our brains:



Confirmation Bias

This is when people create a hypothesis then seek out information to prove it (ignoring any information that disproves it).



Expectation Anchor

This is when an interviewer forms an opinion before the interview occurs and is unable to look past this uninformed opinion to assess the candidate fairly.



Effective Heuristic

This is your basic “judging a book by its cover,” when people see someone with, say, visible tattoos, and assume something negative about their job performance based on that observation.



Intuition

This is when an interviewer makes a judgment based on his or her “sixth sense” rather than objective information.

3 Ways to Combat Unconscious Bias:

1. Make the unconscious, conscious.

The first step to combat unconscious bias is simply becoming conscious of it. It's human nature to hire in one's own image, but when you as a company make a conscious effort to hire for complementary skills and good role fit, you make the team, as a whole, stronger. If you doubt bias affects your decisions, you might find it interesting to take an [Implicit Association Test \(IAT\)](#) for hidden biases.

2. Start with a diverse slate.

If you're only thinking about the outcome of the hiring process, you're missing an important step. Set requirements to ensure you have a diversity of strong candidates from different backgrounds to choose from before going into the interview process.

3. Standardise hiring procedures.

Beware hiring decisions made based mainly on a manager's "sixth sense." Hiring for "cultural fit" can also be a red herring that excuses biased hiring decisions. Structure your hiring process to level the playing field and force a focus on performance and skill:

- ▶ Keep the interview process as similar as possible each and every time.
- ▶ Don't rely on your memory, which opens yourself up to unintentional bias. Instead, take detailed notes of the interviewee's exact responses (without your own potentially faulty interpretations). You may even want to record the interview, with the interviewee's permission.
- ▶ Use a rubric to make hiring decisions, rating candidates on factors like specific skills, soft skills, and cultural fit.
- ▶ One way to keep cultural fit from being a stumbling block is to clearly define what makes someone a good fit for your company. Companies like Netflix and HubSpot have even gone so far as to codify their culture into publicly available decks. Referring back to a concrete document helps hiring managers to focus on candidate's attributes without relying on their own affinity with the candidate.
- ▶ Never make a hiring decision in first 30 minutes when your first impression is still forming.





“ Diverse teams drive innovation and creativity. ”

– McKinsey Report

So, what exactly is DEI?

Race and ethnicity:

This refers to the various ancestral backgrounds and cultural identities of individuals and groups.

Sexual orientation:

This includes the diverse sexual preferences and identities of individuals.

Socioeconomic status:

This encompasses the social and economic backgrounds of individuals, including their income, education, and social class.

Gender identity:

This refers to the personal sense of gender and the gender-related characteristics individuals express.

Religion:

This includes the various religious beliefs and practices of individuals and groups.

Language:

This encompasses the different languages spoken by individuals and groups, as well as their linguistic backgrounds.

Age:

This refers to the various age groups and life stages represented within a demographic.

Marital status and family composition:

This includes the marital status of individuals and the composition of their families.

Veteran status:

This refers to the military service history of individuals, including their status as veterans or active service members.

Neurodiversity and physical disabilities:

This encompasses the various cognitive and physical abilities of individuals, as well as any disabilities they may have.

When discussing **diversity, equality, and inclusion**, various demographic differences are considered.

These differences can be observable or easily detectable, and they encompass a wide range of characteristics that distinguish individuals and groups from one another.

These demographic differences are essential to consider in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in various settings, such as the workplace, education, and healthcare.

By acknowledging and addressing these differences, organisations and individuals can create more inclusive and equitable environments for all





How Do I Apply a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Metrics Throughout My Company?

Prioritise Diversity

One of the biggest problems with diversity today is a lack of prioritisation from top management. While most agree that fighting for equality in the workplace is a moral imperative, most for-profit organisations do not exist to advocate for social good -- they exist to make money. Diversity efforts often get lost in the daily pressure to deliver on that goal.

"Diversity is a sub-goal for most companies," said Jim McKelvey, the cofounder of Square, in an interview with Sarah Kessler for Fast Company. "The first job is to get it done. So, if the company needs a work product, and the people who could do that work product are all, pick whatever stereotype, let's say they're a bunch of white guys. If that's what's going to get it done, that's what's going to get done."

Of course, the problem with this thinking is that it's short-sighted. "If you build a monolithic group, it will result in homogeneous thinking," McKelvey said. "But it's hard to graph that value in an emergency situation."

Diversity is about more than checking some boxes. Invest in initiatives and prioritise in your company's long-term success by making diversity a key part of your hiring strategy.

3 Ways to Prioritise Diversity

1. Approach diversity as a market issue

When Lou Gerstner joined as CEO of IBM in 1993, the company was on the brink of disaster. Over the next decade, he led one of the greatest turnarounds the modern business world has ever seen.

While his approach covered a number of business components, one of the lesser-known aspects of the story is the people component. Lou Gerstner led one of the most sweeping (and effective) diversity initiatives by making diversity a market-based issue.

"We made diversity a market-based issue," Gerstner told now-retired Harvard Professor of Business Administration David A. Thomas. "It's about understanding our markets, which are diverse and multicultural."

Under this initiative, IBM created eight task forces, each focused on a specific, disenfranchised group such as women, gays and lesbians, Asians, etc. The goal? To better understand each group's differences in order to "appeal to a broader set of employees and customers" (Harvard Business Review).

The results have been undeniable. Since 1995:

- ▶ The number of female executives increased by **370%**.
- ▶ The number of American ethnic minority executives has increased by **233%**.
- ▶ **52%** of IBM's Worldwide Management Council (WMC) are women, ethnic minorities, and non-U.S. citizens.
- ▶ Self-identified LGBT executives have increased by **733%**.
- ▶ Executives with disabilities **tripled**.

Making diversity a market-based issue breaks it out of the HR silo and opens it up to the entire company's resources. Like we mentioned earlier, diversity has benefits that reach much further than your team's dynamics – treat it like the asset it is, and you'll be in a much better position to achieve your goals.

2. Set measurable goals

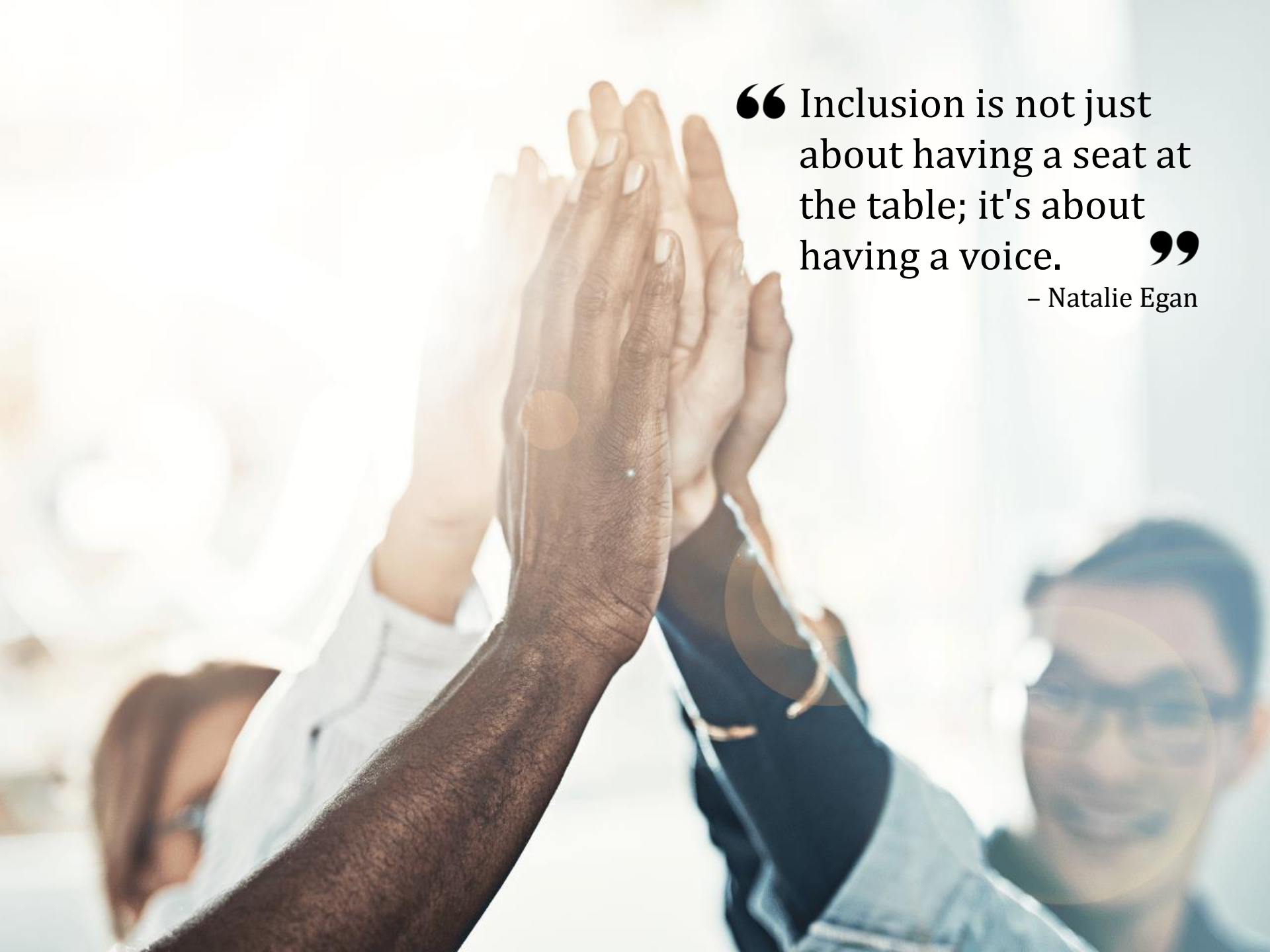
Speaking of goals, set them! As the old cliché goes, "What gets measured gets done."

“**In business, you make goals around everything that's important. If you don't make goals, you won't do it, and it's not important.**”

– Cecily Joseph, Symantec Chief Diversity Officer

3. Put your money where your mouth is.

A 2019 analysis finds that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25 percent more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile—up from 21 percent in 2017 and 15 percent in 2014. Placed side by side with how these companies achieved their diversity targets are clear financial and focused investments towards planned goals.

A group of people are high-fiving in a bright, blurred office setting. The focus is on the hands being raised and clapped. The background shows a person with glasses smiling in the foreground and another person in a white shirt in the background.

“ Inclusion is not just about having a seat at the table; it's about having a voice. ”

- Natalie Egan

Workplace Culture

Foster a Culture of Belonging

It isn't news that happy employees are more productive, engaged, and stay longer than those who are unhappy. But there's a broader issue at play for employees (and thus, candidates) who belong to groups that have traditionally faced discrimination. In order to achieve DEI goals, your organisation must have a culture of belonging, in which employees feel accepted, valued, and empowered to contribute to the greater good.

An inclusive recruiting process will help you make more diverse hires, but diversifying your organisation is a broader scope. This presents an opportunity for talent acquisition leaders to partner with top execs to effect real change. The business case for steering toward a culture of belonging is solid. Research finds that a culture of belonging correlates with an estimated **56% increase in job performance**, **a 50% reduction in turnover risk**, and **a whopping 75% decrease in employee sick days**. Knowing that a culture of belonging also supports DEI goals minimises the challenge of getting executive buy-in for a broader organisational shift, and HR leaders can influence workplace culture by leading the charge.



56%

increase in job performance



50%

reduction in turn-over risk



75%

decrease in employee sick days



DEI Virtual Recruiting Best Practice

Investing time and energy in building relationships, designing virtual recruiting events, and working toward a culture of belonging are all paths to progress toward your DEI goals. To ensure your approach is intentional and organised, develop a targeted DEI recruiting playbook that outlines all the strategies and tactics you'll employ throughout the recruiting process. Having a guide to follow will help you make deliberate choices about your recruiting efforts, track your progress, and replicate successful strategies. A well-articulated plan will also set expectations and guidelines not only for your entire TA team, but also for the rest of your organisation, equipping you to partner with hiring managers and organisational leaders on driving this transformational change.

- Measure your results
- Ask candidates for feedback
- Set examples for organisational change
- Create and share your own DEI organisational playbook

Your DEI playbook is an opportunity for collaboration, learning, and improvement that truly makes DEI a reality in your organisation and not just a program or a policy on paper alone. Share your DEI advice outside of recruiting with your broader talent acquisition team and with organisational leadership, and foster conversations with how DEI really looks, feels, and functions in every aspect of your organisation.

“Talent has
no gender.”

– Sheryl Sandberg



DEI Tips for Success in 2024

1. Have an inclusive employee onboarding process
2. Eradicate bias
3. Provide a work environment where multilingual teams can thrive
4. Take advantage of focus groups
5. Analyse talent practices
6. Get leadership buy-in
7. Honor workers' cultural and religious practices
8. Address pay inequality
9. Conduct regular employee surveys
10. Strengthen company policies
11. Start a Diversity and Inclusion Committee
12. Use employee resource groups
13. Focus on practices that attract a diverse workforce
14. Take an individualised approach
15. Offer inclusive benefits
16. Embrace diversity discussions as part of doing business
17. Design inclusive workplaces
18. Leverage DEI professionals
19. Be transparent about progress



Conclusion

Without workplace diversity, equality, and inclusion, it would be difficult for organisations to benefit from a wider talent pool. In addition, organisations can serve their customers' needs more effectively with a diverse workforce.

The biggest key differentiator between top companies in DEI and those that fall short of real progress is a commitment to walking the walk throughout the entire candidate and employee experience, from the job posting to the interview to the job offer to onboarding and far beyond. Building a culture of inclusion and belonging isn't a challenge talent acquisition leaders can take on alone, but they can influence positive change by diversifying the talent pool, educating recruiters and hiring managers, and designing a candidate experience that welcomes everyone, regardless of background, ethnicity, culture, and life experience.

The demand for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace isn't a trend. It's a necessity. The need for employers to take strong, proactive steps to effect change is long overdue. Now is the time for talent acquisition leaders to create new strategies that help organisations shed the bad habits, biases, and broken systems that stand in the way of real social change and lead the way for their organisations to transform.

About Job Crystal

Job Crystal is a leading innovator in the field of recruitment AI, dedicated to creating cutting-edge technologies that help match top talent with great opportunities. With a strong focus on ethics, transparency, and human collaboration, we strive to develop AI systems that empower individuals and organisations while upholding the highest standards of responsibility.



About the Authors

Zane van Rooyen: Passionate writer, traveller, and marketer, inspiring others through creativity and experience. A product marketing strategist and mentor. Certified Product Marketing Manager (CPMM).

Sasha Knott, CEO: With over 25 years of experience in the Technology sector, having worked within the Financial Services Industry and E-Commerce, and with an expertise in strategy, Sasha is a tech dreamer, always on the lookout for where the future of recruitment is headed and taking Job Crystal with her.



**CONNECT
WITH US**



www.jobcrystal.com

#jobcrystal[®]