

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Checklist for Inclusive Leaders



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Directions: Use this checklist to identify gaps at your organisation and inform action for DEI through organizational policies and practices. It is not exhaustive and plans should be customized by each organisation.

Level 1 – Institutional: Robust list of policies

The policies are categorized in the following domains: Recruitment, promotion and employee evaluations, pay, sexual harassment, flexible work and care.

Recruitment & Hiring: Recruitment procedures can be built to be blind, and therefore help to attract and hire the best candidates – regardless of the identity/ies they associate with. They can include:

- ☐ **Remove bias from job descriptions.** Wording in job descriptions can impact whether more females or males apply (i.e. research shows that “masculine” adjectives like “superior,” “competitive,” and “determined,” result in less female applicants). All qualifications should directly tie to duties performed on the job.
- ☐ **Expand your sourcing networks.** Look at diversity-oriented job groups, partner with diversity organizations and connect with diversity-oriented groups at universities. Also, develop outreach programs with educational institutions beyond elite universities and ensure more equitable focus on under-represented groups. Job advertisements can be shared with these contacts.
- ☐ **Conduct blind CV screening.** Gender and ethnicity of names are known to have an impact on resume screening. Removing names can enable reviewers to avoid potential bias.
- ☐ **Define objective hiring criteria.** Get hiring teams on the same page ahead of time to prevent unspoken or subjective criteria from appearing late in the evaluation stages.
- ☐ **Create diverse interview teams (e.g., sought after skills).** Structure interview teams based on who can evaluate candidates objectively and who would make the candidate feel comfortable. Be aware of affinity bias – which is the preference for people “like me”. Consider having interviewers do mock interviews with existing employees to improve their own skills.
- ☐ **For technical applicants, consider blind code reviews** (as opposed to “whiteboard interviews”, which can create extra stressors for people from underrepresented groups). In blind code reviews (modeled on blind auditions that orchestras hold) candidates are given a problem to complete at home. Ensure all personal identifies are wiped from candidate’s assignment and evaluate against a standardized process (e.g., checklist). Consider allowing candidates to complete the assignment in the office if preferred, as this may be preferred for candidates with caretaking responsibilities.
- ☐ **Ask potential hires the same questions.** Develop an interview script that is used for each candidate for a certain job. This can help avoid confirmation bias – which is when someone forms an opinion and interprets new evidence as a confirmation of that belief (such as an interviewer starting with preconceived opinion of a candidate and asking questions geared to confirm that belief).
- ☐ **Create more pathways for contractors, temps and vendors to become full-time employees.**

Employee evaluations & promotions: Policies and actions can include :

- ☐ **Commit to transparency in how candidates are leveled and promoted.**
- ☐ **Use a uniform evaluation cycle.** Conducting performance reviews of all employees simultaneously helps supervisors dedicate ample time to write good evaluations and ensure consistency among all employees. A uniform evaluation cycle allows management to review individuals' contributions to organizational goals.
- ☐ **Ensure managers are given adequate time to do their evaluations.** The more rushed people are, the more they rely on stereotypes.
- ☐ **Consider having and ensuring managers maintain a regular (i.e. monthly or bi-monthly) performance log for each subordinate.*** A performance log should be set with clear, objective standards of what is "doing one's job" and "going beyond one's job" – based on the job description of the current role and the role at the next level of the hierarchy. An accountability mechanism can ensure managers are completing performance logs (such as a digital tracker when performance logs are saved).
- ☐ **Train managers / supervisors on how to provide concrete and objective examples of feedback that are backed by facts from the performance log notes.***
Avoid personal critiques and exaggerations.
- ☐ **Provide training to manager to counteract bias in performance reviews.***

Pay:

- ☐ **Do not ask for previous salary history or have applicants name a salary when hiring.** If individuals have lower initial salaries, basing wages off salary history can trap them into lower wages and lower lifetime earnings.
- ☐ **Create narrow pay bands, as women are less likely to negotiate the first offer.**
- ☐ **Create robust pay equity processes grounded in statistical analysis with annual reviews, including bonuses.** Annually evaluate pay data and bonuses – controlling for observable factors – such as level of position, years of experience, education, etc. Include contract workers, temps and vendors as part of the pay equity goals and process.
- ☐ **Inform employees of low, median and high pay ranges for particular roles.** Employees understand why they are paid within the range, managers can discuss with employees why they are at a certain pay range level, and employees can be empowered to ask for raises when they feel deserving of them.
- ☐ **Implement formal remediation protocols.** Formal remediation protocols are important in ensuring pay equity processes are implemented appropriately and that manager discretion doesn't promote inequality.
- ☐ **Publish compensation levels (including bonuses and equity, across all roles and job categories, broken down by race and gender) and pay bands.** Doing so, will hold the organization accountable. Further, employees will think the organization is bought into practices given this accountability – which can improve recruitment, morale, organizational commitment and of course transparency

Flexible work: Flexible working policies provide support to caregivers (often women, who do most unpaid care work and therefore face time burdens to complete care responsibilities and professional responsibilities) and can reduce care burdens for female caregivers in the case of male partners taking flexible work to assist with care work. The appropriate flexible work policy should be identified by considering your workplace environment and the needs of employees.

NOTE 1: In instituting a flexible work policy it is important that the policy be available and used by all employees, not just women, and that the managers understand not to potentially punish (consciously or subconsciously) employees that take advantage of the policy.

NOTE 2: For shift workers, it's important to implement a standard or regularly communicated work schedule. Ideally, schedules are communicated two weeks in advance so that employees have ample time to arrange childcare.

Care & health:

- ☐ **Provide paid parental leave and leave for caretaking.** Paid parental leave is important to allow new parents to take time off of work. It's important that return to work policies smooth transitions back to work and there are sufficient lactation rooms for breastfeeding/pumping. Leave for care can provide support to caregivers and should include "chosen family" which is more likely taken by LGBTQ individuals and people of disabilities.
- ☐ **Support childcare & eldercare.** Childcare and eldercare provision reduce care burdens – which often fall on women and put pressure on professional women.
- ☐ **Provide health care benefits, and options for insurance packages that cover the specific health needs of women (e.g., gynecology, maternal health, reproductive health, cancer screens, domestic violence treatment).**

Sexual harassment: Policies and practices to mitigate sexual harassment include:

- ☐ **Have a strong sexual harassment policy that is in the employee handbook and make employees aware of it (e.g., through a training / refresher trainings).** The policy can include a definition of sexual harassment, and begin with a statement about commitment to providing a zero-tolerance, discrimination and harassment free workplace. It should detail consequences for violators of the policy.
- ☐ **Enact a whistleblower policy.** A whistleblower is an employee who reports an activity that he/she considers to be illegal or dishonest. Whistleblowers are protected through confidentiality and against retaliation.
- ☐ **Implement a transparent reporting process that involves third party reporting systems, and incorporate employee feedback.** Be transparent about how the reporting process works and who in the organization receives and reviews complaints about harassment channeled through third party systems. A transparent reporting process with third party reporting systems can increase trust in the process and mitigate negative impacts on employees from reporting. Incorporating employee feedback can increase buy-in and trust.

- ☐ **Have multiple people receive reports from the transparent reporting process (not just in HR). This improves accountability.** One of the individuals should be a board member.
- ☐ **Train staff on what constitutes sexual harassment and provide bystander training.** Bystander training provides strategies and skills for employee bystanders to intervene to prevent sex-based harassment.
- ☐ **Publish harassment and discrimination transparency reports, including number of claims over time, types of claims submitted and actions taken.**
- ☐ **Create a measurement system that holds leaders accountable.** Consider evaluating managers by adding questions related to sexual harassment to culture or engagement surveys. This could be a stand-alone survey that staff complete about their managers, and results could be incorporated into performance objectives, reviews and promotions. For example, you might ask employees to rate their agreement with the following statements:
 - If I were harassed, I'm confident that I could safely report it and be treated with respect and fairness.
 - Leaders in my department make it clear that they will not tolerate harassment or assault in any form.
 - If I were at risk of being harassed, I'm confident my colleagues would intervene and stand up for me.

Level 2 – Community: Robust list of strategies for managers & activities for professional development / skill building

Goal: To support managers in changing group dynamics and create a workplace culture that supports DEI in the workplace.

Unsupportive supervisors and organizational cultures commonly counteract formal policies. Managers who oversee implementation of new policies often do so with limited success because they hold strong biases in favor of old policies. Finally, policy implementation is partially based on supervisor discretion and so can be subverted depending on the supervisor. Due to these reasons, training managers on gender equity in the workplace, for example, how to support new parents, as well as on unconscious bias, is key. In addition, **managers have the ability to create inclusive and equitable work cultures.** Regardless of formal policies, there are many things that managers can do to ensure that all employees are given equal opportunities, are respected and valued, and are able to excel. There are accountability mechanisms and strategies for managers to promote equity within the teams they manage, and suggested training topics for managers.



Train managers on “equity fluent leadership”...

- ☐ The business case for diversity, equity and inclusion
- ☐ Understanding how certain identities have more privilege and power than others, and how inequities can be perpetuated (oftentimes inadvertently) in the workplace
- ☐ Stereotypes and disrupting stereotypes in the workplace through growth mindsets (including related to gender, race / ethnicity, sexual orientation and other marginalized identities)
- ☐ Unconscious biases (including what they are, how they manifest, how to tackle them)
- ☐ Addressing micro-aggressions and practicing allyship
- ☐ How to support new parents returning to work, and how to work with employees taking advantage of flexible work policies.
- ☐ Understanding how one’s own actions send messages to employees (e.g., Do you take leave? When do you stop working and when are you sending emails? Are you inviting people to out of work activities that unintentionally excludes a group, and if so how might you include those people in the same or different activities?)
- ☐ Providing concrete and objective examples of feedback backed by performance log notes.
- ☐ Understanding language of equity fluent leaders – including terms to avoid and preferred terms

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY Create an accountability mechanism to track who is being given particular opportunities to ensure that the diversity of the company is reflected in who is being given these opportunities and require that this is reported to upper management.

Additional strategies for managers:

- Frame diversity initiatives around the business case / facts relating to business imperative
- Make clear that bias and feelings of exclusion are universal
- Make sure trainings are not framed as attacking/preferential to a certain group
- Avoid tokenism, which inflates bias towards minorities and create division
- Comment on employees’ work performance, not their appearance
- Don’t call women by terms such as sweetheart, honey, dear or make sexist/racist jokes
- Don’t talk over women, if someone does this in a meeting, make sure that the woman has the opportunity to be heard
- Reflect regularly (e.g., quarterly) on questions such as: *What is the gender, race, ethnicity, ability status, etc. composition of your internal teams? Who are you providing leadership options to? Who is leading internal meetings? Are all team members given opportunities to share their opinions (and not be interrupted)? Who are you providing travel, training or speaking opportunities to; and are their needs understood and accounted for? When are key business decisions made and who is present at those meetings? Are there any outside of work commitments that give some employees an advantage over others?*

There are various mechanisms to develop, motivate and retain organizational talent with equitable opportunities to build skills and advance:

- ☐ **Ensure professional development and career advancement opportunities (e.g., mentorship, trainings) meet the needs of, and are accessible to and used relatively equally by individuals from different identity groups.**
- ☐ **Provide formal and informal mentorship and sponsorship opportunities.** A mentor is someone who provides support and guidance, building confidence, providing empathy, and helping an employee chart his/her path. A sponsor is someone who identifies an employee as a high performer, invests in his/her professional development through assisting him/her to access resources and opportunities and expects high results. Companies can set up mentorship and sponsorship programs that link employees and provide time and tools for regular meetings and goal setting.
- ☐ **Create support / community groups (i.e. Employee Resource Groups).** Support groups provide opportunities to develop problem solving and coping skills. They can also support employees to discuss and address a variety of issues.
- ☐ **Provide information on how women and individuals from underrepresented groups can join professional networks for individuals of the same identity/ies in the tech sector**

Practical Information

We are continuously adding new online programmes and sessions throughout the year on inclusive leadership. Please make sure you refer to our website for the latest dates and information:
www.thepeoplespartner.com

Contact us

For more details about our programmes & offers, or to apply, please contact:

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