



D&I: Roadmap to Change



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Successful Diversity and Inclusion initiatives require detailed planning and ongoing processes that include:

- *Executive leadership commitment*
- *Effective recruitment, hiring, and promotion processes*
- *An inclusive company culture*
- *Overall community engagement*
- *Continuous assessment and improvement*

IChange Collaborative Diversity & Inclusion Roadmap

The case for centering diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives in business is driven by ethical concerns. However, there are strong correlations between D&I initiatives and both higher profits and better organizational performance. Rapidly changing demographics require a focus on cultivating an inclusive workplace culture, where people feel a sense of shared purpose and community. In such environments, people not only value differences, but understand how to leverage differences to make relationships innovative and productive.

When an organization embarks on a D&I journey, they need a map to guide their direction. While the exact components may vary by company, initiatives can generally be organized into the six areas detailed below. A successful journey results from recognizing that D&I work is an ongoing process, a marathon, not a sprint, and the exact route will inevitably be altered during the trip.



D&I Strategy

Establishing sustainable change begins and ends with strategic planning. A clear approach to planning and implementation helps establish the tools and processes needed to develop an inclusive workforce. A leadership team composed of a diverse group of engaged change

agents, including those who are most marginalized, will be essential to guiding a successful strategy. This team takes a collaborative, strengths-based approach to organizational change.

All companies are different so their goals will be different as well. However, a clear commitment to transformational change drives the development of a holistic D&I program that integrates and sustains initiatives companywide.

Key aspects of the strategic planning process include:

- Defining a clear vision, supported by shared values. This is an important first step for enacting effective, purposeful change leadership.
- Understanding the value of D&I in your organization. This includes the role of the ethical case, the business case, and the case for organizational intelligence in moving change initiatives forward.
- Defining expectations and roles for advancing D&I initiatives.
- Setting measurable goals and communicating them throughout the organization.
- Identifying specific metrics to evaluate progress, recognizing that these may change over time.
- Detailing what needs to be done to achieve your company's D&I objectives and goals. A multi touch point approach provides all employees with multiple interactions and opportunities to engage in D&I related processes.
- Outlining expectations for and the cadence of reporting to help manage the ongoing efforts to implement your company's D&I plan.



Executive Leadership Commitment & Development

Sincere commitment from executive leaders is essential for success. D&I leadership, by its very nature, is countercultural. Why? Because the people most impacted by the problem are rarely sitting at the decision-making table. Unless leaders know how to get authentic input from underrepresented groups, companies risk reproducing the very problems they are trying to solve. Including as much diversity as possible on the leadership team ensures that input can be gathered from a range of stakeholder groups and include as many points of view as possible.

In addition, D&I topics are fluid, and as such, and require ongoing development of the leadership team. The learning journey includes.

- Learning to effectively engage in conversations around the importance of D&I in organizational growth and development.

- Completing an inclusive leadership skills assessment to determine areas of strength and areas of improvement.
- Identifying inclusive behaviors and core cultural competencies.
- Defining leadership accountability and agreeing to frequency of meetings and leadership trainings.
- Exploring how to:
 - lead with purpose and vision.
 - build high-performing teams.
 - establish psychological safety.
 - handle sensitive conversations.
 - give supportive feedback.
 - manage conflict.
 - become listening leaders.
 - develop a strength-based approach to change.



Recruitment, Hiring & Promotion of Diverse Talent

Leaders identify D&I hiring goals. Diversity in the workplace is the idea that your teams should reflect the general demographic makeup of the society around you and even beyond. The ability to attract and retain a diverse workforce can be challenging, and companies benefit from a developing inclusive recruiting and interviewing processes. Resourceful ways to engage a diverse source of applicants include:

- Offering internships to underrepresented groups.
- Engaging recruiters who specialize in underrepresented candidates.
- Training hiring managers to recognize and address potential biases.
- Auditing your job postings through an inclusivity lens and updating the language.
- Creating company policies that appeal to underrepresented candidates.
- Advancing the careers of underrepresented employees internally.



Inclusive Company Culture

Diversity is about being invited to the dance. Inclusivity is about being asked to dance. Better yet, it is about being promoted and paid to organize the next dance. Creating an inclusive company culture is one of the most important yet challenging cornerstones of a successful D&I

program. Sustainable change takes time and commitment at all levels of the organization. The number of underrepresented employees you hire doesn't matter if they end up leaving because they do not feel included. Programs established throughout the organization can offer ongoing opportunities for employees to engage in D&I-related conversations, increase psychological safety, and build trust on teams. Over time, employees at every level learn to address topics essential to creating an inclusive company culture.

The process for creating an inclusive culture may include these components:

- Establishing a D&I Task Force.
- Initiating an inclusive workplace behaviors assessment.
- Facilitating Employee Resource Group meetings and engaging in cross group conversations.
- Educating employees and facilitating small group conversations on topics such as:
 - Identifying and counteracting unconscious bias.
 - Developing a common language to talk about identity experiences.
 - Identifying common microaggressions and counteracting their impacts.
 - Understanding genuine allyship.
 - Establishing psychological safety.
 - Offering supportive feedback.



Community Engagement

A fully effective D&I program goes beyond the walls of the organization. It's visionary focus leads to community engagement as well. Opportunities for community engagement may include efforts to:

- Set corporate social responsibility goals.
- Establish partnerships and strategic alliances.
- Engage diverse suppliers.
- Engage in volunteer opportunities.



Assessment & Review

D&I assessment and review is an ongoing process, and getting a baseline is essential for measuring progress and sharing it with your constituents. Identifying which tools are the best

for your documentation and review depends on which data will be most effective in achieving your goals. Some key areas of focus are:

- Establishing your company's baseline data.
- Identifying performance goals
- Rewarding engagement
- Communicating progress company-wide.
- Monitoring, measuring, and reporting outcomes on a predictable, consistent basis.
- Collecting data for Strategic Plan modifications.

Conclusion

Effective D&I programs consist of these six (6) phases, guided by a diverse team of engaged change agents, including those who are typically the most marginalized. Each step of the way, this team manages the implementation of an integrated D&I program. The aim is the development of an inclusive workforce, the benefits of which include higher employee engagement, increased productivity, higher retention, and greater profitability.

How iChange Collaborative Can Help

iChange Collaborative partners with businesses to develop inclusive workplace cultures in which both companies and their people thrive. We bring deep knowledge of how individuals and organizations develop mindsets as they move through a transformational change process. Our services include:

- 🔦 Diversity and inclusion strategic planning
- 🔦 Inclusive leadership development
- 🔦 Inclusivity workshops
- 🔦 Coaching and facilitation

iChange Collaborative is a BIPOC and women owned business, collaboratively operated by a diverse, equitable, and inclusive team of experts.