

PREMIER
TALENT PARTNERS

D.E.I.B. GUIDE



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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION FOR GROWING ORGANIZATIONS

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) are more than just buzzwords. These four ideas work symbiotically to improve workplace dynamics, workflow, productivity and the community of any organization. When a company decides to incorporate these as core values they see a genuine shift in culture and the success of the business.

Success is more than an increase in quarterly profits. Success is also defined by employee retention and how productive those employees are on the job. With a vast job market out there, employees have plenty of employment options. Keeping this in mind, a company needs to express their appreciation for each team member. The best ways to do this include:

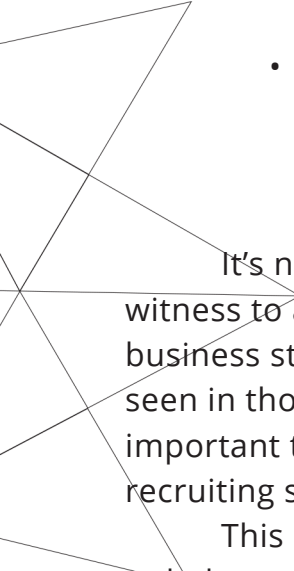
- Make efforts to see each individual employee for the unique qualities they contribute to the team.
- Make sure each employee has what they need to thrive in their role.
- When celebrating differences, make sure that everyone is working together to make the environment truly welcoming for all.
- Enrich the workplace community with authentic gatherings, employee highlights, and opportunities for the whole staff to express their opinions and/or needs.

Small businesses don't always have large HR teams to tackle big-ticket topics like DEIB, it takes everyone on staff to pull a community together. Just like the "all hands on deck" moments to pull a big project together, everyone plays their part in building an inclusive space. It is the responsibility of each person to be accountable for growth, but it's the company's responsibility to set the precedent.

When there is equal participation you are naturally creating an equitable space. Ownership in this community will inspire each employee to show up fully, especially if they are recognized for that work.

**CREATING A DYNAMIC
WORKPLACE ALLOWS
EACH INDIVIDUAL TO
HAVE THE COURAGE
TO PARTICIPATE
IN DEFINING THE
ENVIRONMENT.**

- **Collecting Data:** Identifying where change is needed will help to take steps in the right direction. Because many small businesses are often strapped for time and budget, using your resources in the right ways will be beneficial. Utilize anonymous employee engagement surveys to determine the need for change.
- **Educating:** One of the biggest steps a small business can take toward developing an inclusive workplace is education on the subject. Make a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and make sure that everyone in your organization understands what that means and how it's beneficial. Once you get buy-in on the investment needed, further education will be welcomed rather than resisted.
- **Pacing:** It's possible to overwhelm your team with too much too fast. Execute one initiative at a time and ensure that it's done well rather than trying to do everything at once and risk doing it poorly.
- **Showing Appreciation:** If it's not feasible to show appreciation monetarily find other authentic ways to build morale and show appreciation. If the business is thriving, remember a little goes a long way.
- **Evaluation:** Throughout the process check-in with those involved to ensure that progress is being made. Consider conducting annual surveys and take time to listen to your staff.



It's not just what your business is doing in the office but what customers are witness to as well. It's important that the gesture of building a diverse and inclusive business stretch beyond Human Resources and reaches marketing. People want to feel seen in those they work with. A customer's identity influences where they invest, it's important they feel they belong as well. Your DEI efforts should also translate into your recruiting strategy and employer branding.

This is a big step for a small business. We have taken the some steps to better to help your organization on its journey. In this ebook we have defined some terms and concepts that will inspire the conversation. We also offer some tried techniques to centering diversity, equity, inclusivity, and belonging in the workplace.

Whether it's a team of two or a team of 200 building workplace community is about intention. Every little action goes a long way.

WHY DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE IS BENEFICIAL

Today, the concept of diversity is hopefully foreign to very few human resources departments. But when it comes to creating a truly diverse workplace, there's more than meets the eye. Below, we'll reveal what real diversity looks like—and why it should be a priority for your company.

Diversity comes in many forms: racial, gender, ability, cultural, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, age, and religious—the list goes on. It also manifests in less conspicuous ways: life experience, personality, skill set, talent, and perspective. In the workplace, it's crucial to embrace each of these categories separately to create a strong, varied workforce.

Consider this: When your company's staff is homogeneous, the way team members approach problems—and arrive at solutions—is the same, because their lived experiences are similar. When diverse people and perspectives are welcomed, innovative and creative ways of thinking are unleashed. Because you've focused on hiring employees with diverse skills, you can trust your staff to not only autonomously ideate but also execute and measure the success of their projects.

The payoff of this conviction is broad. Embracing diversity leads to higher employee satisfaction, retention, and talent acquisition. When you hire a diverse workforce, your brand is viewed as a progressive entity that values the individual, thereby attracting potential candidates and improving the morale of current employees. The end result? You end up with a workforce that feels more confident, creative, valued, and (as a convenient byproduct) productive.

Welcoming diversity benefits employers in more than one way: in a 2018 Boston Consulting Group study, researchers found that companies that have more diverse management teams see 19% higher revenue. It also opens the door to new business: diverse employees can help break down language and cultural barriers to build a global business. In a world that increasingly points to inclusivity as a moral duty, it positions employers as a leader in creating a strong, successful company culture.

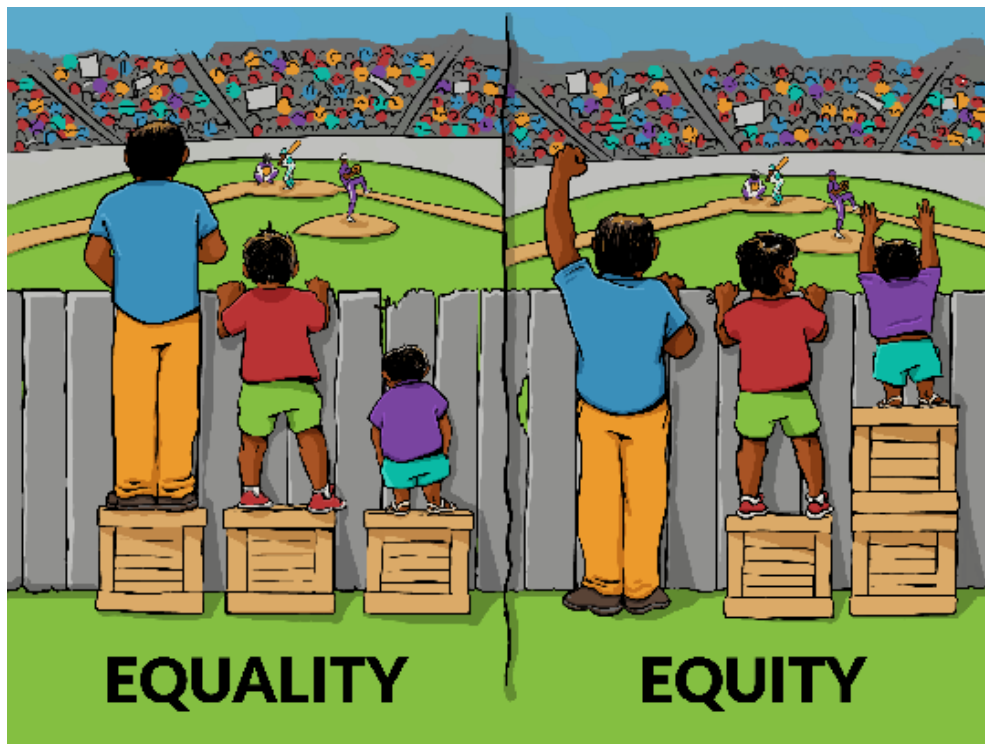
In today's competitive economy, the positive impact of a diverse workforce on productivity, profits, and morale is indisputable.



HOW EQUALITY AND EQUITY ARE DIFFERENT (AND WHY IT MATTERS IN THE WORKPLACE)

If you thought equity and equality were synonyms, you wouldn't be alone—but you'd also be wrong. In fact, the pursuit of one can sometimes directly contradict the pursuit of the other. How? By definition, equality means “the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities.” Equity means “justice according to natural law or right” or “the quality of being fair and impartial.” So what does this mean in the workplace? It means that treating everyone the same in the pursuit of equality might not actually be fair.

Let's break it down via the image below.



Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

On the left, each boy is given the same box to stand on to watch a baseball game over a fence. But because the boys on the left are taller—a privilege—they're able to see what the shortest boy cannot. In the image to the right, we're shown what it looks like to employ equity instead. When those who have not been given the same privileges are armed with resources that offer the same opportunities as their peers, fairness is achieved. In other words: Equality is the end goal. Equity is the means to get there.

ENSURING EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE

On the job, our example takes form in more serious applications. Issues of gender, race, sexual orientation, language, and disability require you, as an employer, to be deliberately conscious of equity when creating company policies and workflows. Choices like offering gender-neutral restrooms, ensuring interview panels are diverse, providing accessible workspaces, and eliminating discriminatory handbook language requires more intentional thinking, but the result is worthwhile: An environment that creates equal access and opportunities for all.

TAKING ACTION

Are you ready to put these principles into practice? First, test your own knowledge of equity versus equality here. If your company hosts diversity and inclusion training, that's a great start, but workplace fairness truly begins with more specific employer initiatives. Consider taking the following actions:

- Establish measurable high-level diversity and inclusion initiatives and create an action plan to achieve them. Consider hiring or designating a point person for this role.
- Create Employee Resource Groups that allow employees to connect and share experiences with their coworkers.
- Include a salary range on all public job postings.
- Ensure company benefits are equitable (For example, are spousal health insurance benefits available to same-sex partners? Do parents have enough flexibility to reasonably perform their job well?).
- Offer accommodations for employees with disabilities, language barriers, or mental health needs.
- Train hiring managers on equitable candidate evaluations, and ensure said managers are diverse in gender and race.

BENEFITS OF CREATING A FAIR WORK ENVIRONMENT

It's not just employees who reap the rewards of an equal-opportunity office. Companies who value equity attract more talent, retain employees longer, and employ a more diverse workforce. By implementing equitable practices, it is ensuring a strong future for your company—and help move the needle toward workplace equality for all.

BELONGING IN THE WORKPLACE

OFFICE VS WORKPLACE

The difference between space and place has to do with the engagement we have and the community built within these locations. People can go to an office, but when we take our intention to build community and drive that action forward we are creating a workplace. An office is a stagnant building where professional work is conducted. Place, however, is a space that becomes relative to what exists there; place is used for a special purpose.

Placemaking is a movement to transform space by strengthening connection and inspiring collaborative interaction. When we apply this to our offices we can shape those historically drab cubicles into engaged and dynamic workplaces. Placemaking celebrates diversity and inclusivity but also fosters a feeling of safety for others so no one feels erased from the space.

When we cultivate the office to workplace it becomes a destination for team members to gather over a common goal. There is no better way to inspire a group of people to work together at their best than giving them a common purpose. It lays the groundwork for purpose-driven results based on your companies mission. This unification in the workplace will have people bringing their unique ideas forward with confidence. It will give each person a sense of purpose in the workplace community.

COMMUNITY

To understand a particular community, like the one in your workplace, we must know the people that the community is made up of along with the driving force that brings them together. Community can be simply defined as a group coming together over a common interest, but if that common interest is to see a paycheck than we



can't expect much in the scope of return. People in communities need to have a sense of belonging in order to contribute to the greater purpose of the groups work. Crucial aspects of building community are:

- Establishing trust amongst the entire team.
- Creating meaning by listening to what is meaningful to each person.

Welcoming voices of each staff members lets everyone know that they matter. Multi-generational, cross cultural and gender diverse folks in all positions of the company should feel their differences are a contributing factor not something that feels like a burden to an office. If people feel they need to tiptoe around difference or others can't be their authentic self, then we aren't going to see that person perform at their best. People shouldn't be performing to fit in, they should be performing well for the satisfaction of excelling in their role.

INTENT VS ACTION

Intent falls flat when we don't put action behind our words. Just because a workplace is talking about being inclusive and diverse does not mean it is a truly welcoming place to thrive. Commitment to building a space for all is the first measure we can make towards action. As a leader in the workplace it is your responsibility to meet the expectations of this commitment. Reputations and credibility start to unravel when a person keeps "intending" as opposed to driving action. Are cultural markers of your employees represented in the workplace?

You can participate in actively shifting the dynamic of the workplace even if you aren't the boss. Being genuine, kind and expressing gratitude for others are great steps to building community. Advocating for more representation of your coworkers in the workplace will also influence the culture. Not everyone can advocate for themselves, the more each person steps up to celebrate what each team member is contributing the more the team will feel united.

If you feel like you don't belong, take some time to reflect on why. Don't sweep your comfort under the rug or dismiss your own feelings of isolation. Ask yourself what would make you feel like part of the team and how do you want to be seen in the workplace? As you define your feelings of belonging and sense of purpose the better equipped you are to start leading by example. Lead by example and treat others the way everyone should be treated. Try being vulnerable with your narrative, this celebrates our humanity and builds connection with others. If you feel you have tapped your resources, or if there is discrimination, be sure to tell someone. Everyone deserves to spend their workdays in a welcoming environment.

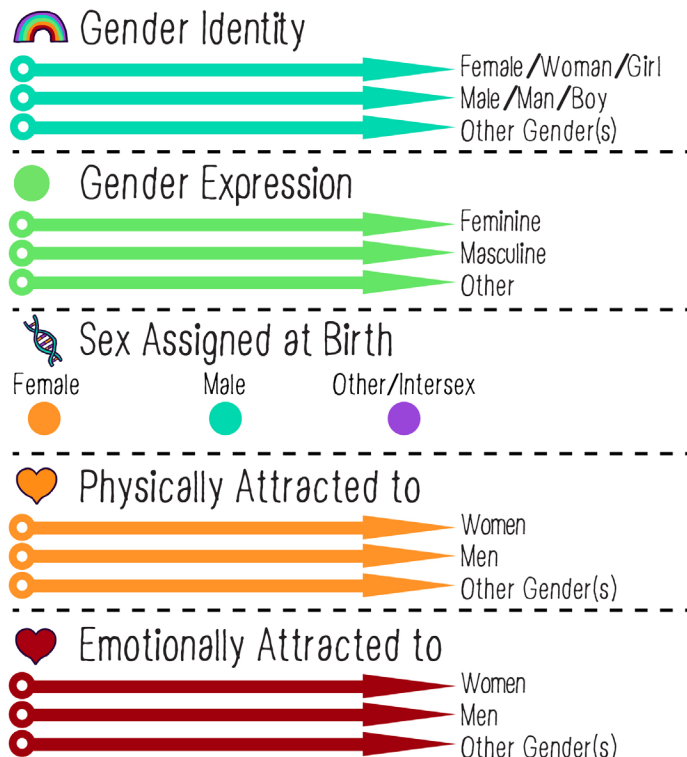
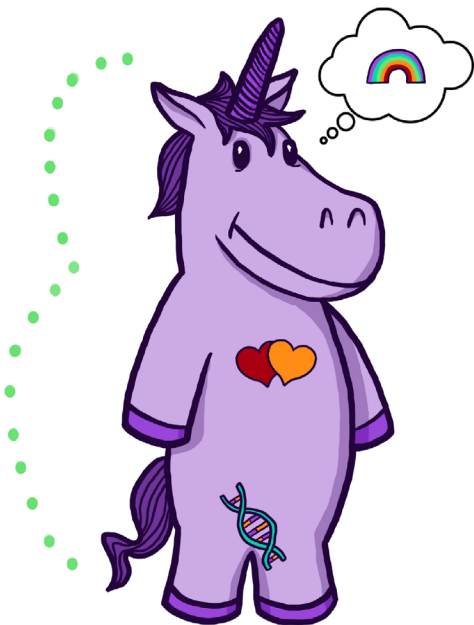
HOW TO ADDRESS GENDER IDENTITY IN THE WORKPLACE

WHAT IS GENDER IDENTITY?

Gender identity is how individuals think about themselves. It expresses who we are on the gender spectrum, a term used to include folks of all identities. Understanding gender identity is the first step to understanding and caring for others, especially in the workplace.

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

WHY PRONOUNS MATTER?

Trans and gender non-conforming people face discrimination in the workplace from the hiring and on-boarding process to assimilating into the culture of a company to job retention. Companies that haven't cultivated a diverse staff, inclusive work environment, or provided resources for both non-conforming individuals and/or colleagues seeking more learning opportunities are at higher risk of discriminating folks of different identities. If employees are worried about hiding their identity for fear of being fired then employers aren't giving a fair opportunity to marginalized folks to be part of the team.

Just because a company practices using pronouns office-wide or updates policy doesn't mean people who identify outside of the cis-hetero-norm aren't facing discrimination. Everyone has inherent bias they have learned and need to unlearn. Building a truly inclusive work environment means the whole team is on board. Adapting pronouns into the culture of a company is a small step to say "Hey, we see you and are so happy to have you here!"

HOW TO GO FROM AVOIDING TO PROMOTING

In order to avoid singling people out, adjust the beginning of meetings to include pronoun use. Use they/them with everyone until you know a person's preferred pronouns, provide a place for people to mark their identity discreetly. Not everyone wants to be asked or to be put on the spot.

Gendered language (ladies and gents, sir, mam) < Gender neutral language (everyone, people, folks, teammates) is a great way to welcome everyone!

Misgendering < Practicing they/them on your own time, listen to when people tell you who they are, correct yourself and do better next time. Be sure to not center your apology for misgendering around you, use the right ones next time.

Assuming < Unless you are using your active listening skills and have picked up on another's pronouns it is better to not assume. Just use the person's name, use they/them for all or if it's something you do with everyone, ask.

WAYS TO TAKE DIRECT ACTION

Update your forms for applicants and new hires. If the HR team or management team is using the right pronouns without a flutter, others can pick up on a new hires' pronouns without singling anyone out. "Hey everyone! We want to welcome Pat. We are thrilled to have them join the team."

Inclusivity training for new hires and ongoing company enrichment meetings. Set the standard and expectations for an inclusive workforce from the beginning and continue building on this in all trainings.

Identify a point of contact person for topics like gender identity and inclusivity. Whether or not you have a designated HR person on your team, there should be someone in the office to be able to hold the company accountable, hold space and offer your whole staff guidance as you continue to build your welcoming space. It shouldn't be up to the marginalized employee to be a spokesperson for their group.

Discretion. Make sure that any on-boarding has a private place for folks to self-identify. Not everyone wants to be asked pronouns or be put on the spot.

Encourage or require email signatures.

Jane Smith (she/her)
Employee at
Awesome Company
(123) 456-7890

Signage.

Desk nameplates with pronouns, ID badges and on business cards is a good start.

Make the physical space inclusive. Bathrooms are a good place to start. Do you have gender-neutral bathrooms? If they aren't single-occupant there are ways to make them inclusive for everyone to use. Are there sanitary napkins in both the "men" and "women" restrooms? Private stalls in both?

Mindful accountability. It will take the whole staffing team to build an inclusive workplace. Sometimes mistakes are made. Make sure your team feels comfortable pointing out areas for improvement and can call people into action.

"Hey Tim, I noticed you misgendered Pat, our new hire. Don't forget to use they/them."
"Thanks for the reminder, Jane!"

Zero tolerance. Your company should be clear on its bullying, harassment and discrimination policies. While we can work on shifting our language and making the space welcoming through direct action, it should be clear where the line is drawn.

Again, having a point of contact in the office that is trained on this topic and others like it will be an invaluable component to keeping the workplace safe. Employees who are transgender and gender non-conforming are faced with bias's regularly. It is harder for folks outside societal norms to land their jobs and once they do join the team they face environments that haven't put the thought into welcoming them. There is fear in losing jobs based on one's identity. We can't imagine performing at our best if we were always worried about hiding our authentic selves.



HOW TO DEVELOP AN INCLUSIVE COMPANY CULTURE

IS YOUR COMPANY CULTURE INCLUSIVE?

Upon immediate consideration, most company executives would likely say yes—because their businesses don't support an oppressive, divisive culture. But inclusion is more than just reproaching bad behavior. It's about making employees feel heard, seen, and supported at work. It's about empowering all of your employees to bring their whole selves to work, and therefore offer their best contributions on the job. This looks different at various organizations, but it's best exhibited when employees feel comfortable sharing their ideas, taking risks, and being vulnerable.

SO, HOW DO YOU CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE?

First, read more about employing a diverse workforce and valuing equity over equality in business. If your company isn't prioritizing equity and diversity first, true inclusion is impossible to achieve. This is because diversity and inclusion are, in practice, very different: While having a diverse staff is crucial to doing work that increases company

value, your employees won't feel comfortable sharing their best ideas without inclusion. Think of it like this: Diversity is shown through who—and how—you hire. Inclusion is exhibited in what you do after you hire a diverse staff. Here's how you can ensure your business is an inclusive one:

1. Acknowledge biases. No one is perfect. We all have what's called "inherent bias" — the innate judgment that comes into play when we're working or interacting with others. But rather than ignore these biases, we have to acknowledge them to break them and become better leaders and colleagues.
2. Commit to building a diverse and inclusive leadership team. Hiring a diverse group of employees is one thing—but pledging to build a diverse leadership team is another. Your staff should be able to look up to executives and see themselves mirrored in leadership.
3. Educate your staff. Diversity and initiative training should be engaging and actionable. Consider bringing in a D&I specialist to present to staff on how they can encourage inclusion on their teams.
4. Form an inclusion council. The best way to show your commitment to inclusion is to prioritize it. By forming a group dedicated to addressing opportunities, you'll see more success in creating a culture that brings out the best in your staff.
5. Celebrate and accommodate differences. Making your employee's culture, needs, and desires a priority is part of creating an inclusive environment. Actions like creating a space for employees to pray or meditate—or offering a dedicated pump room for new mothers—allows employees to integrate work seamlessly into their lives. Consider celebrating all holidays, not just bank holidays, and offering flexible time off for employees who may want or need it.
6. Encourage feedback. Offer a method for providing anonymous feedback and constructive criticism, either electronically or physically in the office. Employees will feel more comfortable offering honest thoughts when they know their identity is protected. Address feedback in a public forum regularly, and include an action plan to remedy problems when appropriate.

Above all, transparency is key. Include measurable diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives in your company goals, and make sure your business mission and handbook align with these goals. Be open to change and hold yourself and your employees accountable for inclusive action, and your business will flourish.

LEADERS AT EVERY LEVEL CAN CONTRIBUTE TO INCLUSIVITY

Leadership is not just from the top down, anyone in the organization can be a leader and contribute to the inclusiveness of an organization.

IT TAKES COURAGE

True leadership isn't defined by our title, but our actions and how we contribute to the community of our workplace. It is defined by holding our values at the forefront and being strong enough to recognize when the community we are in needs to strengthen its intentions.

We think of courage as facing adversity head on without fear, but fear can be an underlying current when deciding whether or not to step up. Contemplate past your fears and find the deeper meaning of why taking the risk to build an inclusive space is important. Trust in the potential to create positive change in your workplace. Support the risk-taking required by courageous leadership to navigate your actions.

COURAGE ISN'T SOMETHING TAUGHT, IT IS SOMETHING EACH PERSON NEEDS TO PRACTICE. WITH PRACTICE YOU SET YOURSELF APART AS A TRUE LEADER IN THE WORKPLACE.

CALL IN, DON'T CALL OUT

When taking the risk to be a leader at any level in the workplace it takes delicate finesse. You don't want to seem driven by power, but encouraged by the positive change you want to see. When we call others and/or our work environment out for missteps in inclusivity we can create a distance in the conversation. Leadership is driven by the connections we make with others so it is crucial we don't elevate ourselves from an opportunity to bring relationships in the workplace closer. Rather than pushing others away from the cause, we want to be calling our coworkers, bosses and work community into the efforts of change we know the workplace needs.

Leadership in inclusivity can be practiced both in one-on-one scenarios or in group settings when calling others "in" to rise above oppressive behaviors.

- Explain why you are advocating or stepping up.
- Speak from your own personal experience.
- Distinguish between positive intentions as opposed to the problematic scenario you are calling attention to.
- Trust in others to reflect and bare responsibility for contributing to change.

LEADERSHIP DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SOLO

Leadership can be just as important when it is brought to the team to collaborate on finding a solution. Leadership doesn't mean you have to manage the whole scenario, sometimes getting the conversation started can contribute to the change needed. Let others contribute to the solution and develop the action your workplace needs to see. Know when to call on the support.

Advocating on behalf of others means including their voice, their narrative and stepping aside to give them the space you are advocating for.

SHOWING UP PAYS OFF

By showing this attention to greater equity and inclusion you will showcase your own personal leadership qualities, potentially making you look better to upper management for future promotions. Also, you can potentially improve your resume for future roles by including details about the work you've done to help your workplace become more inclusive.

When you participate in growing equity and inclusion in the workplace you are showcasing your own leadership qualities. This not only has the potential to impress, it will also build trust with your coworkers and in turn create more opportunity for positive workplace. When others feel seen and heard, when inclusion has been advocated for, there is a sense of belonging that will attribute to a more productive work environment.





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