

Tip Sheet

Tips for Fostering Equity in Your Workplace

VisionSpring  
Inclusion Learning Loop

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## Tips for Fostering Equity in Your Workplace

More and more organizations are adding equity to their Diversity and Inclusion strategies. A focus on equity means addressing pay and career opportunity gaps and committing the right effort and resources to strategic priorities that purposely focus on providing opportunity to traditionally underrepresented employee groups. Here are some things you can do to foster equity in your own organizations.

1. **Develop and adequately fund your DEI Strategy** – Simply saying you are committed to diversity equity and inclusion is not enough. It takes more than desire and more than even commitment. Desire and commitment are just fantasy without a well thought out plan. If you are serious about achieving talent parity and fostering inclusion then you need to put the time, energy and resources into your DEI strategy and roadmap. Your strategy will be instrumental in establishing a unifying vision, prioritizing efforts and allocating resources.
2. **Set SMART Goals** – Goal setting is a critical part of the strategic planning process and enables you to set a specific target. While it can be stressful and intimidating to set goals that are specific and measurable, it is the best way to actually make measurable progress. Without a specific target in mind, any forward movement can be considered a success. But, according to a recent study published by McKinsey, if we continue on this trajectory where we strive for small incremental improvements, talent parity will not be reached for 95 years. SMART goals enable you to strive for real progress by making goals specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. SMART goals can provide a sense of direction and push you further because success is defined by an end goal, not simple forward progression.
3. **Hold leaders and managers accountable** – Make sure each manager, leader, and executive is responsible for achieving their DEI goals and hold them accountable during performance evaluations. Discuss DEI during leadership meetings and share feedback from employees.
4. **Provide training to leadership and overall employee base** - To truly foster equity and inclusion in your workplace, everyone needs to be bought-in and involved. It is unrealistic to expect employees to support DEI without the proper training and resources to increase competency and facilitate collaboration and interaction across differences. As a baseline you need to build awareness and understanding regarding your organization's DEI vision and establish basic expectations around behavior. Training, particularly training that is interactive and ongoing, can build awareness, improve skill and competency across the board, influence behavior change, and can enable all employees to support and engage in DEI efforts.
5. **Ensure talent management processes foster fair & transparent decision-making** – Hiring or promotional decisions that are made based on personal relationships or gut feelings tend to have unintended impact on marginalized employees who remain outside the inner circle. To mitigate the impact of bias on your talent management process look for patterns associated with organizational norms that may minimize difference and limit the success of marginalized employees. Your promotion process must be transparent and should foster objective decision making that is based on clear criteria.
6. **Create formal development programs to close career gaps among diverse employee populations** - Gaps in employee demographics, particularly as you get higher up in the company, can indicate a need to offer development that targets under-represented employee groups. This could include traditional training that focuses on skill-development, stretch or high-profile assignments that provide on-the-job training and opportunities to develop key leadership skills, and/or formal coaching and mentoring programs. It is also important to make sure diverse employees are represented in your succession plans.

7. **Regularly connect with employees to evaluate their experiences and engagement** – In order to foster an equitable and inclusive work environment, all employees should have similar, ideally positive, experiences. It's important to solicit employee feedback through regular employee surveys, one-on-one meetings, and exit interviews. Ensure all employees are empowered to voice their concerns and that every voice is heard. And most importantly acknowledge the ideas and input shared by employees and take all feedback seriously.
8. **Address microinequities** – Microinequities are the brief verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults to the target person or group. Microinequities are those small, commonplace things we do or say that make people feel less-than, uncomfortable or hurt. And although these slights are usually unintentional, these little injustices detract from inclusion and can have a negative impact on individual well-being and overall productivity and employee turnover. Inclusion requires us to pay attention to the big picture – like our hiring and performance management policies and practices – as well as the small actions and messaging we use and tolerate in our daily interactions. Educate employees on what microinequities are and how to practice microaffirmations in the workplace.
9. **Adjust recruiting practices to improve hiring outcomes among diverse candidates** –Establish clear expectations & accountability around hiring processes, work with executive recruitment firms that specialize in D&I, and address bias in your hiring practices by using clear results-base criteria and hiring committees. To attract diverse talent, you need to think differently about where you're looking for that talent and how you are reaching those candidates. Consider expanding your talent sources to include HBCUs, community colleges or trade schools that target underrepresented employee groups. Also, build relationships with professional/affinity-based organizations and community groups and attend conferences and job fairs that attract BIPOC.
10. **Reexamine your job descriptions/postings and the required qualifications associated with open positions.** Make sure that job advertisements and job descriptions use inclusive language that encourage all groups to apply and avoid language that could indicate a preference based on gender, age, ethnicity or any other dimension of diversity. Also, resist the urge to inflate the qualifications for a job as a way to attract seemingly more qualified candidates. By overinflating your job requirements, you can actually limit the number of candidates and can exclude talented skilled employees who tend to graduate college at lower rates. To reach candidates with nontraditional backgrounds and encourage more applicants to apply consider focusing on skills rather than education level and experience that mirrors that of the individual previously in the role.
11. **Support and leverage Employee Resource Groups** - ERGs can be instrumental in promoting equity in your workplace and can be leveraged in support of many of the 10 tips listed above. ERGs can create a safe environment for employees to voice concerns, can serve as an excellent resource to determine employee perception of organizational culture, can help uncover disparity in employee experience and can offer programming and development that helps close opportunity gaps.

# Action Planning Worksheet

What tips resonated most for me?

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Conclusions: What tips will I incorporate to help foster equity in my own workplace?

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What challenges or roadblocks do I anticipate?

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Action Items:	Required Support:	Deadline:
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