

Tip Sheet

Sustaining Commitment to DEI Tip Sheet

VisionSpring
Inclusion Learning Loop

Sustaining Commitment to DEI Tip Sheet

The growing attention placed on misguided claims against DEI poses a threat to hard-won progress and may even lead to a reversal in the strides that have been made toward more equitable workplaces. Those of us committed to this work need to stay steadfast in our mission. Below are some tips for navigating uncertainty with clear, actionable strategies to sustain commitment to DEI.

1. **Stay steadfast in the mission:** Remember what is most important - addressing systemic barriers and making our workplaces more welcoming, accessible, and equitable for all – and to continue this work in any way possible. That might mean pivoting our approach by using more inclusive language and talking about this work in ways that speak to and for everyone.
2. **Be transparent and clear about your DEI priorities.** Frame DEI priorities in ways that resonate with everyone. Clarify that DEI is about fairness, compliance, and reducing the potential for bias or discrimination in decision making. Talk about your DEI priorities in terms of creating healthier workplaces that benefit everyone. And reenforce messaging that everyone thrives when interactions are respectful, pay is fair, our workplaces are safe and accessible, and employees are happy and engaged.
3. **Provide clarity on job descriptions and criteria.** At the foundation of most DEI strategies are hiring and decision-making processes that are fair for everyone, help reduce the potential for bias or discrimination, and are based on clear criteria that's tied to the success of the role. Revisit job descriptions and the criteria for success ensuring it is not solely based on the skills and experiences of those who have been successful in the past. And readily share what most-qualified means both internally and externally. Hold hiring managers accountable to using that criteria to make decisions.
4. **Address pushback with consistent messaging.** Develop and communicate clear, consistent messaging about your DEI strategy that specifically addresses and counters anti-DEI sentiment. Prepare responses to commonly asked questions that focus on the tangible benefits of your DEI strategy and what this works means and doesn't mean. When possible share company demographics that counter reverse-discrimination arguments.
5. **Manage potential risks to your brand reputation.** Organizations remaining committed to DEI will undoubtedly reap long-term benefits but must be prepared to mitigate potential risk in the short-term. Have a clear communication strategy in place to respond to potential backlash that is focused on facts and messaging that emphasizes values like belonging, respect, and collaboration. Instead of framing DEI as a social stance, highlight its role in improving teamwork, customer and employee experience, innovation, and performance.
6. **Ensure your DEI strategy and programs align with existing laws.** Work closely with legal experts to ensure DEI initiatives comply with Executive Orders, pre-existing EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) laws, civil rights regulations, and anti-discrimination policies. Document all hiring, promotion, and disciplinary decisions with objective, non-discriminatory reasoning and regularly

review and update DEI policies to ensure they comply with emerging legal trends and court rulings.

7. **Share tangible outcomes whenever possible.** Use data-driven insights to show how DEI positively impacts revenue, customer satisfaction, and employee productivity and engagement.
8. **Use Storytelling.** Share meaningful stories that emphasize the real, day-to-day experiences of inclusion and exclusion and talk about this work in ways that make sense for everyone. Most of us share similar goals: to provide for our families, to live happy fulfilled lives, to build meaningful and fulfilling careers, and to leave the world a better place. Framing this work in terms of those shared ideologies can be a powerful way to find common ground.
9. **Cultivate a culture of curiosity.** DEI and the language we use in this work is constantly evolving and questions and missteps are often met with shame and blame, and people can face professional and social exclusion. It is time to stop playing the shame and blame game and extend grace to those interested and brave enough to engage in productive conversations about this work. Encourage open dialogue and a willingness to understand different perspectives, which can lead to a higher-level of engagement, more productive and supportive interactions and a willingness to listen and learn.
10. **Lean on your community.** DEI has always been hard work and can often feel isolating – now more than ever. Lean on your network of peers and create safe spaces where you can discuss shared fears and challenges, share insights and strategize paths forward, and support and uplift each other. We are always here to listen, brainstorm and offer support. Please reach out info@visionspringinc.com

Action Planning Worksheet

What are my key take-aways from this tip sheet?

Conclusions: What tips resonated most with me?

What are my goals with respect to sustaining our commitment to DEI?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Accountability Coach:

Follow up Meeting Date:

Action Items (what tips will I apply):	Required Support:	Deadline: