

**Team Bright,  
Beautiful & Brown**

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program Implementation

- Employee Resource Groups/Affinity Networks (ERGs)
- Mentorship Programs for BIPOC
- Culturally-Specific Holidays



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# Executive Summary

Initial efforts at Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) implementation in the workforce were mandated through government legislation in the mid-1960s to early 1980s. Companies began making internal changes to improve working relationships in the mid-1980s to mid-1990s through the advent of Employee Resource Groups and Mentorship Programs. These programs gave rise to the recent, concerted effort to create more diverse and inclusive workspaces simultaneously increasing morale, agility, innovation and productivity for enhanced business performance. This white paper will explore current companies that have success in these areas as well as academic theories in addition to an interview with Dr. Ame Lambert to create a set of best practices recommendations and approaches in regard to DEI program implementation.

**“We need to frame [DEI implementation] as non-negotiable. It’s a have to-do; it’s not a want to-do, it’s not a good to-do, it’s not about liberal values ... this is required for success”**

**- Dr. Ame Lambert**

Vice President for Global Diversity and Inclusion  
at Portland State University

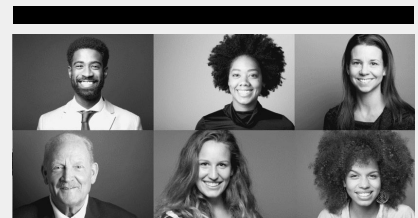
## Mentorship Programs for BIPOC



## Employee Resource Groups/ Affinity Networks (ERGs)



## Culturally Specific Holidays



# Common Terms

The diversity, equity and inclusion landscape is vast and complex. This introduces the need for common vocabulary to ensure a shared understanding and interpretation. This glossary is not exhaustive and it is meant to be a guide and starting point.

## Diversity

The presence of differences that may include race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, culture, socioeconomic status, language, (dis)ability, age, religious commitment, or political perspective.

## Belonging

Belonging is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group. It is when an individual can bring their authentic self to a space.

## Power

The ability to decide who will have access to resources; the capacity to direct or influence the behavior of others, oneself, and/or the course of events.

## Privilege

Often unearned access to resources only readily available to some people as a result of their advantaged social group membership

## Equity

The fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist in the provision of adequate opportunities to all groups.

## BIPOC

An acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Not all people of color face equal level of injustice and this term acknowledges the difference for the Black and Indigenous peoples' experiences.

## Oppression

The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures.

## Inclusion

An outcome to ensure those that are diverse actually feel and/or are welcomed. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. Inclusion outcomes are met when an institution, and the programs are truly inviting to all to the degree diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes and development opportunities within an organization or group.

## Equality

Treating everyone the same way, often while assuming that everyone also starts out on equal footing or with the same opportunities.

## Allyship

Supporting a group other than one's own (in terms of multiple identities such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). An ally acknowledges oppression and actively commits to reducing their own complicity, investing in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.



# The Business Case for Diversity

Did you know that the total U.S. labor force is expected to reach 163.8 million by 2024 according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projections?<sup>1</sup> With this growth comes rapid growth from certain demographic groups:

- The African American labor force is expected to increase by 10%; Asian labor force by 23%, Hispanic labor force by 28%; and Multiracial, Native American and Pacific Islander labor force by 22%. In comparison, the White labor force is expected to increase by 2%.
- Additionally, the Selig Center for Economic Growth estimates the buying power for African American, Asian American and Native American consumers, which has exploded over the past 30 years, up from \$458 billion in 1990 to \$3 trillion in 2020. In addition to increasing sheer size, these groups' combined share of the U.S. total buying power increased from 10.6% in 1990 to 17.2% in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

Reflecting on these statistics, companies and organizations will need to be agile, adaptable and responsive to the changing economic and demographic environment to maintain a competitive advantage. Companies and organizations, more than ever, have a responsibility to embrace diversity, equity and inclusion to meet the competitive challenges that come with rapidly changing consumer attitudes, behaviors, needs and preferences.<sup>3</sup>

## Advocacy, Support & Resources for BIPOC Community

In determining the focus of this white paper, our team applied an Equity Lens to enable us to see and comprehend the existing structures and conditions that create inequalities in the workplace as well as the changes that will be critical to create more equitable workplace environments.<sup>4</sup> Applying an Equity Lens allowed us to identify an equity challenge in the workplace we seek to address – a lack of advocacy, support and resources for BIPOC. Sustainability considerations were folded into the Lens to ensure impact is not only transformational but enduring:

### Employee Resource Groups

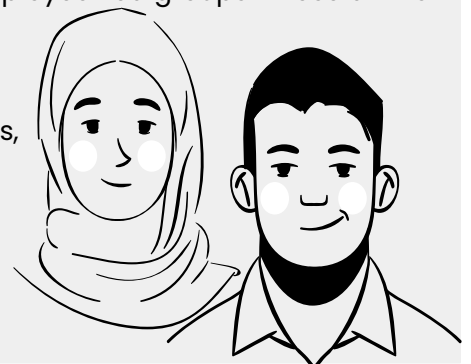
Employee Resource Groups or Affinity Networks (ERGs) are voluntary, employee-led groups whose aim is to foster a diverse, inclusive workplace.

### Mentorship Programs

Programs that support and empower minority employees in their careers, develop their skills and network to increase leadership advancement.

### Culturally-Specific Holidays

Dates, events and observances that are important to a wide range of cultures and communities.



### Equity + Sustainability Lens

*What is the decision at hand?*

*Who will benefit from this decision/work (Black, Indigenous, people of color, people with disabilities, etc)?*

*Who may be burdened by this decision?*

*How will this impact certain communities?*

*How can this work be sustained?*



# Case Studies: ERGs & Mentorship

Employee Resource Groups and Mentorship Programs are an essential piece to building a workforce that is representative of a changing demographic environment and a workplace that fosters a sense of belonging. Below is a sample of global and local companies and organizations that have successfully established and operationalized these DEI initiatives.

## GLOBAL

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

### Coca Cola

Coca Cola is home to nearly 10 ERGs or “Inclusion Networks,” ranging from the Black Employee Network to the LGBTQ + Allies Inclusion Network.<sup>5</sup> Recognized as “valued voices,” the company relies on these groups to be “diverse sounding boards for business strategies and initiatives, capturing input on potential actions through the lens of inclusion.”



### Intel

Intel’s mentoring program is built around the goal of knowledge transfer. Through its employee mentoring program, Emerging Leaders Development Program, a mentee is assigned a mentor for at least two years who helps them focus on how to further their career.<sup>7</sup>



MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

## LOCAL

### Port of Portland

The Port of Portland offers half a dozen Employee Resource Groups that are open to all employees, including the Asian Pacific Islander ERG and Women’s Development Network.<sup>6</sup> Best practices include: executive sponsorship, ERG leaders receive a monthly stipend, intersectional collaborations, and ERGs receive an annual budget.



### Portland State University

Oregon’s urban research university offers a multitude of programs and services that provide mentorship to underrepresented students.<sup>8</sup> Programs include Comma in the School of Art + Design, mentor program in the School of Business, and ACCESS, DSP, GANAS, EMPOWER, and NATIONS in Multicultural Retention Services – PSU Global Diversity and Inclusion.





# DEI's Impact

DEI programs, training and support groups have gained popularity in recent years and have demonstrated to be effective in workplaces.<sup>9</sup> McKinsey has published three different reports on the business case for diversity. McKinsey's 2018 report, in which more than 1,000 companies in 12 different countries were studied showed that companies in the top quartile for **gender diversity on their executive teams were 21% percent more likely to experience above-average profitability** than companies in the fourth quartile. **For ethnic and cultural diversity, there was a 33% likelihood of outperformance on EBIT margin.**<sup>10</sup> Today, DEI is at the forefront of progress and shaping culture in companies, not only because it has shown to increase profitability but also because it heightens morale and collaboration throughout an organization.

DEI successful programs have not only been correlated with profitability. Through DEI programs, employees and companies are looking to increase diverse representation, leadership accountability, equality, openness, and belonging.<sup>11</sup> The January 2018 issue of the Deloitte Review has revealed that **companies that follow an inclusive culture are six times more likely to be agile and innovative.**<sup>12</sup> These diverse workplaces become more creative and with this comes resilience and faster problem solving methods, thanks to the different perspectives and points of view.

More diverse companies are better able to attract top talent; to improve their customer orientation, employee satisfaction, and decision making; and to secure their license to operate.<sup>13</sup> In a country where diversity is growing year after year, DEI should be of great importance and its impact in business should be measurable and tangible.

## Historical Markers

The Civil Rights Act of **1964** made it unlawful for any organization to engage in discriminatory hiring practices.<sup>21</sup>

**1960s**, affirmative action policies, aimed to increase the representation of underrepresented groups in the workforce were introduced.

**1970** Xerox established the first ERG called National Black Employee Caucus. In **1978**, Hewlett Packard established the first LGBT ERG.

**1987**, Workforce 2000, published by the Hudson Institute, forecast a major decline in the labor share of white men and a concurrent rise in female and minority workers.

In the **1990s**, diversity training and mentoring programs became more common in the workplace.

**2000s** movements such as Me Too and Black Lives Matter created social awareness for businesses. DEI is now a core business function



# Academic Theories

The academic theories that inform our foundational construct of DEI implementation include the following:

## Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory is a framework that clarifies how people form their self-concept based on their affiliations with diverse social groups.<sup>14</sup> Mentorship programs for BIPOC, employee resource groups, and affinity groups can serve as crucial starting points for addressing issues related to prejudice, discrimination, and inequality. This is because, support groups understand the intricacies of the communities they serve and as a result offer influential and meaningful solutions to current challenges.

## Contact Theory

Contact Theory explains how direct contact between members of different social groups can reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations.<sup>17</sup> Allyship is a great example of how positive interactions and communication can reduce bias and promote inclusion. Empirical studies have supported this idea that contact between members of different groups can lead to more positive attitudes, reduced prejudice, and increased intergroup cooperation.

## Stereotype Threat

Stereotype Threat Theory explains how the risk of confirming negative stereotypes can affect individuals' performance and sense of belonging which can lead to decreased performance and increased stress.<sup>15</sup> BIPOC communities often struggle with the ramifications of Stereotype Threat which can lead to lower achievement and reduced participation. As Dr. Lambert explained, heterogeneous groups are difficult to manage, however, the long term ROI is greater when compared against homogeneous groups.

## Social Dominance Theory

Social Dominance Theory explains how social systems create and maintain hierarchies, resulting in the dominance of certain social groups over others.<sup>18</sup> Mentorship programs provide an avenue to remove some of the leadership barriers that shape social structures and create inequities.

## Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality Theory highlights how different social identities intersect and interact with each other, leading to unique experiences of oppression and privilege.<sup>16</sup> Most people identify with multiple social groups and this creates a complexity of identities. These identities affect individual experiences. In the context of DEI practices, intersectionality emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing the unique experiences and challenges faced by individuals from marginalized identities.

## Implicit Bias

Unconscious biases can influence attitudes and behaviors towards individuals based on their social identities.<sup>19</sup> These biases are often based on social identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and nationality. Implicit bias can lead to discrimination and exclusion, even among individuals who consciously reject prejudice and this can contribute to workplace discrimination and inequality.



# Interview with Dr. Ame Lambert

Vice President for Global Diversity and Inclusion at Portland State University



Dr. Lambert joins Portland State University from Roger Williams University in Rhode Island, where she served as the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, and Chief Diversity Officer — ensuring equity was embedded into all university operations. Dr. Lambert’s goal at PSU is to close the gap between potential and thriving for students and the university as a whole.

## What is your perspective on Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)?

“I am a huge fan of affinity programming period. I do believe that what it provides is a home base. I am a consumer of neuroscience – not a neuroscientist by any stretch of the imagination – so I tend to think about it from a neurological perspective.

For minoritized folks going through a world that they know is not designed for them, where they don’t necessarily see themselves reflected: folks are hypervigilant, tracking their safety all of the time. So at about 11 seconds the brain is scanning, “am I with friend or foe?”, “Am I safe or not?”, and for minoritized folks it is even more frequent than that. If you just think about it, **minoritized folks are spending a whole lot of time in parasympathetic mode when we want them to be at rest.**

People are not supposed to be in fight, flight, or freeze mode all of the time but minoritized folks tend to be, which is why we tend to have higher incidences of high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, and all of these [medical conditions] that stress can impact.

**So what the affinity spaces do is provide an opportunity for people to**

**take a breath, relax, and not need to be hypervigilant.** A place to ask honest questions, because of all of these navigational pieces that are invisible, [such as] hidden curriculum for students, exists in the workplace as well.

Safe spaces where people can ask. “I saw two people wearing jeans, is this a jeans place or is that only for certain people or days?” **It is also a place to be heard and be validated – that does not mean that you cannot be challenged – but first, you just need someone to recognize that you are not crazy, your experiences are actually happening.** Then, if it is a place where you trust [those around you], they can also say “I hear you and that sucked... and here are some strategies” to either avoid it, mitigate it, process it or respond. We need spaces like this to help us grow.

One of the first decision to make in the beginning is, “What do we want to be [as an ERG]?” There is a very different role to play if this is just going to be an advocacy arm. It is important to get clarity and do periodic assessments on the percentage of time spent doing advocacy work versus social affiliation. Allowing for flexibility is important.”





# Best Practices



## **Diversity Training**

Diversity training can increase awareness and understanding of diversity issues among employees by promoting contact and highlighting unconscious biases. It can include workshops, webinars, and other educational programs designed to teach individuals about different social identities, cultural competency skills, and how they can be more inclusive in the workplace.

## **Recruitment and Hiring Strategies**

Recruitment and hiring strategies can be implemented to increase the diversity of the applicant pool and improve hiring processes. This can include establishing partnerships with diverse niche organizations, removing biased language from job postings, and implementing blind resume reviews.

## **Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)**

ERGs provide support, networking opportunities, and a sense of belonging for employees from underrepresented groups. Employers with strong ERG networks have higher employee engagement. This could lead to improved retention of diverse employees.

## **Inclusive Leadership Training**

This approach involves training managers and leaders on how to create a more inclusive workplace culture. Inclusive leadership training should be embedded in company strategy and include topics such as emotional intelligence, unconscious bias, intercultural communications, and creating a psychologically safe work environment.

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Metrics**

These are quantitative measures used to assess the effectiveness of DEI initiatives. This can include metrics such as diversity of the workforce, employee engagement and satisfaction, and retention rates. The Centre for Global Inclusion's Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks<sup>23</sup> is a resource for standards for organizations around the world.

## **Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs**

These are programs that pair employees from underrepresented groups with more senior employees who can provide guidance and support. Sponsorship goes beyond mentorship by actively advocating for the advancement of the mentee and providing them with opportunities for career growth.

**and...**



# Best Practices

## Culturally-Specific Holidays

Creating awareness, understanding, and appreciation for our social identities is key to creating an inclusive work culture. That can start with the observance of Culturally-Specific Holidays. We have listed dates, events and observances that are important to a wide range of cultures and communities. The calendar below is a starting point, and not meant to be mutually exclusively or comprehensive.

<b>January</b>	1/17: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
<b>February</b>	2/1: Lunar New Year
	2/1-2/28: Black History Month
<b>March</b>	3/1-3/31: Women's History Month
	3/1-3/31: National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
	3/1: International Transgender Day of Visibility
	3/22: Ramadan
<b>April</b>	4/22: Earth Day
<b>May</b>	5/1-5/31: Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
	5/1-5/31: Mental Health Awareness Month
<b>June</b>	6/1-6/30: Pride Month
	6/19: Juneteenth
<b>July</b>	7/4: Independence Day
<b>August</b>	8/9: International Day of the World's Indigenous People
<b>September</b>	9/5: Labor Day
	9/15-10/15: National Hispanic Heritage Month
	*Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur
<b>October</b>	10/1-10/31: National Disability Employment Awareness Month
	10/10: National Indigenous Peoples Day
	10/11: National Coming Out Day
<b>November</b>	11/1-11/30: National Native American Heritage Month
	11/11: Veterans Day
	11/12: Diwali
	11/20: Transgender Day of Remembrance
<b>December</b>	11/18-12/26: Hanukkah
	12/25: Christmas
	12/26: Kwanzaa

\* The exact date of Rosh Hashanah varies every year since it is based on the Hebrew Calendar. Rosh Hashanah is almost always in September or October. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, concludes the 10 Days of Awe that began with Rosh Hashanah.<sup>24</sup>



# Recommendations

## (In addition to best practices)

### Overall alignment

Effective ERGs **ensure alignment with the company's overall DEI** goals/strategy and communicate extensively about the ERG's purpose.<sup>20</sup> One way to do this is by providing a clear and cohesive overview of all ERGs, their intended audience and scope of work, and how employees can participate during **company wide town hall meetings**. In addition, effective ERGs focus on generating interest and awareness among employees by utilizing the right communication channels, **making it easy to join**, hosting community-building events, **centering and prioritizing the voices and needs of the community the ERG is designed to serve**, and **empowering members to take action towards the ERG's goals**. These practices help create a strong sense of community among ERG members.

### Recruitment and job descriptions

Highlight the company's commitment to DEI by **including a statement in the job description**, go beyond the standard Equal Opportunity Employer (EEO) statement and demonstrate a genuine dedication to fostering an inclusive workplace culture. **Avoid gender-coded words**, like "rockstar," "ninja," and "dominate." Research indicates that **the usage of jargon in job listings** prevents highly skilled young professionals from applying for entry-level positions, so focus on highlighting the essential qualifications. Getting input from team members with diverse backgrounds and experiences when writing job descriptions also helps.

### Compensation

In some companies, **ERG leaders are compensated for their intellectual, emotional, social, and physical labor**, and their responsibilities are included as a formal part of their **performance evaluations**. Organizations with effective ERGs also provide access to **professional development, networking opportunities**, and interactions with company leaders.

### Metrics

Effective tracking of ERGs and Mentorship Programs involves creating **annual strategic plans detailing all the initiatives**, identifying responsible parties for each initiative and evaluating performance and impact. Metrics are established to measure the success of initiatives and programs, and goals are analyzed and adjusted as per **feedback gathered**. Other ways of tracking performance can include **quarterly workplace climate/pulse surveys, employee anecdotes** and **focus groups**.



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**“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”**

**- Maya Angelou**



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This white paper was a labor of love from Team Bright, Beautiful and Brown. Thanks for reading!

