

# Trends in Employee Perspectives of DEI

White Paper

MSM Global Consulting  
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How do employees really feel about their organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

What can organizations do to demonstrate a true commitment to DEI?

# Executive Summary

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) play a pivotal role in molding organizational culture and propelling progress. Regardless of the size or type of business, research overwhelmingly confirms that organizations committed to diversity, equity and inclusion outperform those that don't in a variety of ways.



They tend to cultivate more innovation and problem solving, increase retention and employee engagement, garner more positive reputations among consumers and the public, and even increase the potential for financial performance.

MSM Global has been a consulting partner to dozens of organizations to support systemic change and development to build more diverse, equitable, and inclusive cultures. We regularly conduct organizational DEI assessments to gather critical information on how employees view their organization's commitment and culture and provide data-driven recommendations to our clients on practical ways to address gaps and make progress toward DEI.

Although every organization is distinct in its culture, history, demographics and mission, our research has identified trends across industries and sectors in terms of employee perspectives of their employers' commitment to DEI and success in creating thriving organizational cultures for everyone.

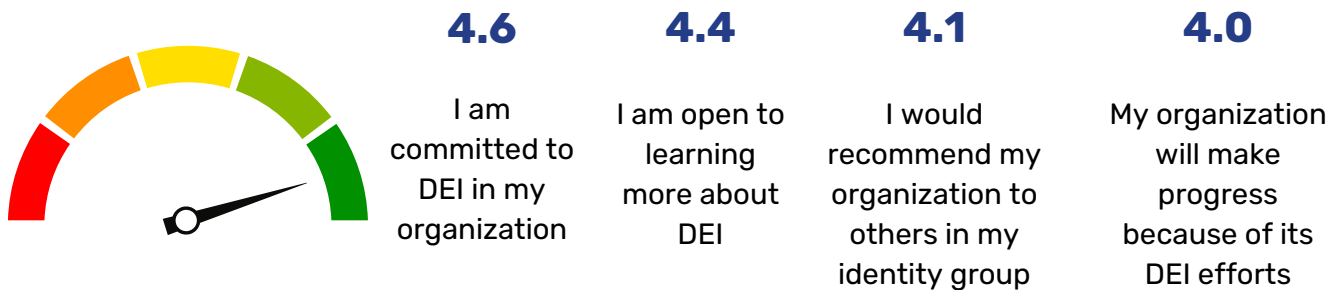
This white paper provides an insightful exploration of DEI survey data gathered since 2020 from over 3,400 respondents representing organizations of varying size, sector, and industry. The following analysis offers a holistic view of DEI and its influence on workplace dynamics, unveiling key trends and spotlighting areas that require attention and enhancement.

# Common Trends

## Finding 1:

### Employees feel a personal commitment to their organization and to DEI.

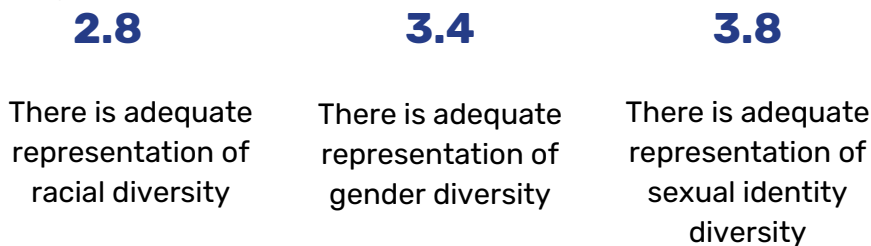
Employees also indicate they personally are open to learning more about DEI and are committed to supporting DEI in their organization. Employees would recommend the organization to people in their identity group and are proud to work for the organization.



## Finding 2:

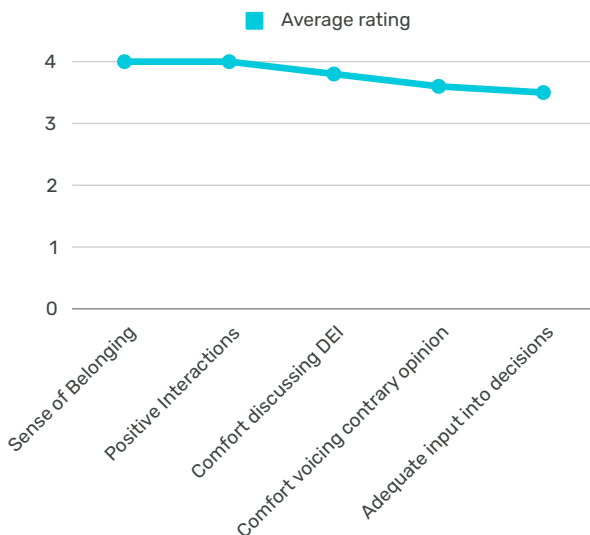
### Support for DEI does not translate representation.

Although employees generally believe their leaders support DEI, they do not see adequate representation of diversity across their organization, particularly in terms of race and gender, indicating a pressing need for improvement in representation of historically marginalized and minoritized identities.



## Finding 3:

### Employees Have Mixed Views of the Workplace Environment



Employees typically express a sense of belonging in their organization and feel there is positive interaction among employees from diverse backgrounds.

However, fewer employees feel comfortable discussing diversity related topics, voicing contrary opinions, or believe they have adequate input into decisions.

**Finding 4:  
Experiences of discrimination and harassment are low, but more subtle acts of exclusion persist.**

Generally, employees report low levels of discrimination or harassment in the workplace. However, a higher number reported hearing people making jokes about identity groups like race, gender, age, disability and experienced subtle acts of exclusion.

**Frequent exclusionary behaviors:**

- Infantilizing or discrediting the contributions of younger employees
- Gendered stereotypes against women and non-binary individuals
- Offensive or off-color jokes and comments
- Consistent mispronunciation of non-Anglo sounding names

**Finding 5:  
Organizations do not provide adequate development opportunities for diverse employees.**

**2.9**

I believe there is a clearly communicated career development path

**3.3**

Employees from diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply for higher positions

**3.6**

I believe work is delegated fairly

Employees indicated a need for their organizations to encourage diverse employees to seek higher positions and provide clear career development paths for employees to advance. Employees also indicated room for improvement in terms of work being delegated fairly and equitable treatment of diverse employees.

**Finding 6:  
Accommodations for employees need improvement.**

Employees' views regarding accommodations for employees with disabilities, religious observances and holidays, and caregiving obligations indicate some room for improvement.

**3.4**

Accommodations for people with disabilities

**3.6**

Accommodations for caregivers

**3.8**

Accommodations for religious holidays/observances

# Recommendations

To leverage the insights gleaned from our research and foster a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, consider the following recommendations:

## 1. Enhance Representation at All Levels.

- Track employee demographic data to identify what and where the gaps are.
- Forge lasting partnerships with professional associations and educational institutions to expand outreach to marginalized identity groups.
- Embed bias “checks” at every inflection point of the hiring process, including job descriptions, posting sites, interviews, and selection.

## 2. Strengthen Support for DEI.

- Formalize DEI policies and initiatives with visible leadership commitment and involvement.
- Communicate transparently about DEI goals, actions, and progress.
- Establish clear, confidential and safe reporting channels for concerns related to DEI, including discrimination, or harassment, bullying, disrespect, and subtle acts of exclusion.

## 3. Foster Inclusive Work Cultures.

- Invest in DEI training that is practical and skill focused, and tailored for specific job functions and roles.
- Empower Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to not only provide platforms for shared experiences and collaboration but also to advocate for member needs.
- Continuously monitor workplace culture through culture assessments and “pulse checks.”

## 4. Advance Professional Development.

- Establish mentorship and sponsorship programs to support the career advancement of diverse employees.
- Promote leadership development opportunities and ensure transparent pathways to higher positions.
- Train and hold managers accountable for mitigating bias in performance evaluations, developmental assignments, and promotions.

## 5. Expand Access and Accommodation.

- Conduct accessibility audits to identify and address physical and digital barriers.
- Offer flexible work arrangements to accommodate diverse needs. (For example, floating holidays for religious observances, telework for those with caregiving obligations.)
- Provide resources to support the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of employees.

## 6. Commit to DEI Long-Term:

- Embed DEI competencies with specific behavioral indicators into leadership and supervisor performance evaluations.
- Embed DEI into organizational goals and strategic plans. Set specific DEI metrics to track progress.
- Recognize and celebrate progress to maintain momentum and confidence in the organization's commitment to DEI.