

DEI strategy: Make the most of your top talent

Masterclass handout



Masterclass structure

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About the expert

As the Founder and CEO of Hustle Crew, **Abadesi Osunsade** has delivered thousands of hours of training to board members, executives and leaders. She's also the former VP of Community and Belonging at Brandwatch, looking after DEI for a global company of 4,000 tech workers.

Abadesi has seen firsthand the impact you can make with DEI, and she's helped HR professionals like you to introduce initiatives that strengthen their business' bottom line and culture.



Definition of DEI

DEI stands for:

- **Diversity:** the variety of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives represented within your team.
- **Equity:** providing equal access to opportunities, resources and development programmes.
- **Inclusion:** creating an environment where everyone feels comfortable contributing their unique ideas and experiences.

Best practice:

1. Define what DEI means in the context of your business
2. Adapt your definition of DEI as your business changes over time

Why focus on DEI?

Competitive advantage with younger employees

Gen Z and Gen Alpha seek out employers that make a concrete stand on diversity.

Boost in performance

Companies with inclusive cultures foster more innovation and smarter problem-solving.

Higher retention

When people feel valued and respected, they're more likely to stay with the company.

Remaining relevant

Young people are leading the charge on social justice. Ignoring this puts your company at risk of being seen as outdated.

Tools for building an inclusive environment

Discussing privilege can be uncomfortable, especially for those who haven't had to think about it. Use these tools to build a culture where everyone is empowered to share their experiences and ask questions.

Use inclusive language

Engage in open dialogue

Affirm people's experiences

Underrepresented candidates to bear in mind

To attract and retain this talent, build a recruitment process that is empathetic and welcoming.

New graduates

That first job application can be really daunting. Is your company welcoming and patient with their potential learning curves?

Returning parents

They may have gaps in their CV due to childcare. Does your process allow them to showcase their skills and experience effectively?

Re-entering the workforce

Older candidates often have hugely valuable skills and experience. Does your age bias eliminate them from consideration?

Disabled candidates

Individuals with disabilities may require specific accommodations. Does your application process make it clear that these are available?

Candidate experience: Pre-application

Social media presence

What impression does your company give on social media? Can candidates see themselves represented?

Careers page

Where a candidate lands first often shapes their opinion. Is your careers page outdated and filled with jargon, or is it engaging and inclusive?

Job descriptions

Avoid biased language. Steer clear of terms like "rockstar" or "ninja" that can feel gendered. Focus instead on skills and experience.

Application forms

Review your application forms for unconscious bias. For example, requiring unnecessary personal information can deter diverse candidates.

Tip: Use AI tools like ChatGPT to help craft job descriptions that attract a wider talent pool.

Candidate experience: Post-application

Screening process

Uses a robust selection process that minimises bias when choosing the best candidate for the role.

Hiring process

Build hiring teams that reflect the diversity of the applicants you want to attract.

Communication and updates

Build trust and goodwill by maintaining transparency, with timely updates regardless of the application outcome.

Tip: Bear in mind how negative candidate experiences can affect your employer brand if shared on social media.

Case study 1: Building empathy through training

Situation

A direct-to-consumer company had a healthy gender balance, but lacked diversity in other areas.

POC employees felt that their communication styles, hair and fashion choices weren't understood, while microaggressions weren't taken seriously.

Action

Comprehensive training on conscious and unconscious biases, such as:

- Parental bias
- Age bias
- Affinity bias

Training

Result

A more open culture where employees felt empowered to speak up.

Increased diversity across the business.

Case study 2: Fostering inclusion in fintech

Situation

A survey revealed a stark disparity in employee satisfaction between white and Black employees, as well as between senior and junior team members.

There was also a lack of awareness surrounding microaggressions, privilege and systemic oppression.

Action

An overhaul on pay and equity, ensuring a level playing field.

Revamped recruitment process.

Compensation

Recruitment

Result

More representation of Black and brown employees.

Stakeholders felt set up for success.

Choose the right KPIs

The ideal KPIs for your company will depend on your specific context and the current state of your organisation's DEI initiatives. The main thing to bear in mind? **Set realistic goals.**

Quantitative KPIs

Reduced complaints: Track the number of cultural-related complaints received by HR and managers.

Diversity in applications: Measure applications for jobs, promotions and raises from specific identity groups.

Pipeline diversity: Monitor the diversity of your interview pool.

Qualitative KPIs

Run employee surveys, analysing the responses to questions by demographic to identify gaps. Here are some questions you could use:

- How do you feel about inclusion and belonging at work?
- Do you feel safe and supported?
- Do you feel equipped to overcome unconscious bias in your work?

Tips for presenting your findings to C-level leadership

Take a business lens

Frame the conversation around the connection between DEI and your broader mission. Show leadership how diversity fosters employee success, which directly impacts your bottom line.

Embrace a transparent, experimental approach

Showcase all of the initiatives you've tried, highlighting both successes and failures. Learning from "what didn't work" is equally crucial for progress.

Demonstrate courage and vulnerability

Encourage a culture of continuous improvement and show that DEI is a core business value, not just a box to tick.

Focus on progress, not perfection

Highlighting areas for improvement demonstrates your commitment to continuous learning and growth.

Get started with your DEI strategy

Embrace experimentation

View your ideas as experiments. This mindset allows you to iterate and improve upon your strategies.

The power of storytelling

Data is crucial, but data alone doesn't always inspire change. Use storytelling to bring your DEI efforts to life.

Own and learn from your failures

Analyse what went wrong and turn that into a valuable learning opportunity. This inspires trust.



All your data, all together

Put an end to searching through countless files and systems. Personio gives you a single source of truth for all your people data — so monitoring DEI metrics, building reports and answering complex questions is quick and easy.

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