The Big Book of People Analytics:
Diversity and Inclusion

LINKING D&I TO BUSINESS GOALS

BUILDING A CULTURE OF DIVERSITY

DATA-DRIVEN D&I STRATEGIES

GETTING STARTED WITH BENCHMARKING

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Contents

What is diversity & inclusion, and how does it affect HR?

Diversity and inclusion have been hot-button issues within the workplace for the past few years. Everyone seems to have an opinion on why they matter (or if they matter). But whether D&I is something you are genuinely passionate about improving in your workplace, or you are motivated to improve your diversity metrics to meet regulations, it's crucial to gain a clear understanding of what diversity and inclusion are.

Workplace diversity is the range of differences within a company or workforce, particularly related to the categories of gender, race, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation.

Workplace inclusion is the act of ensuring that all people, regardless of identity, are given the same rights and opportunities within your organization. This can mean ensuring you offer the same salary, employment, or advancement opportunities for diverse employees and candidates. But it also relates to the experiences they have while employed with your organization.

How are they different?

Inclusion and diversity are sometimes incorrectly used interchangeably when talking about the workplace, when in fact they are quite different. When we seek to understand diversity and inclusion in an HR context, we can treat diversity as the numerical metrics, and inclusion as the sum of experiences a diverse employee has within your organization.

Diversity is measurable. Using a decent HR reporting tool or a spreadsheet, you can measure basic diversity metrics. Here are some questions you might ask:

- What is our ratio of male to female employees?
- What is our ratio of white employees to employees of diverse ethnicities?
- What percentage of our leadership team are female?
- What percentage of our board of directors are ethnically diverse?

Inclusion is subtle, complex, and much harder to measure— but not altogether impossible. Inclusion speaks to many elements of the employee experience, such as whether or not they feel heard, experience a sense of belonging, and are able to express themselves safely in the workplace.

Some inclusion metrics are personal, anecdotal, and very difficult to accurately measure. However, there are ways to measure inclusivity in the workplace using your HR data. Here are some questions you might ask:

- Why are diverse candidates opting out during the recruiting cycle?
- If our employee population is 49% female, why is only 9.8% of our leadership team female?
- Are people of color paid fairly compared to other employees in their role?
- Why are our high-performing diverse employees choosing to exit the organization within their first two years?

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"Sometimes people think that diversity means that everyone has to be different. But what inclusion really means is that everyone is free to be themselves. You can be an introvert, you can be serious, you can be playful, you can be chatty, you can be unabashedly uncool. It's about being respectful of what everyone brings to the table."

— Deli Matsuo, Chief People Officer, Alert Innovation

Why D&I matters today:
the data doesn't lie

In many organizations that aren't large enough to have a Chief Diversity Officer, the responsibility of monitoring D&I falls onto the shoulders of HR departments. HR is known for tact and diplomacy, as well as building corporate cultures that inspire employees to perform at their best. But because D&I is such a complex, nuanced, and sensitive topic, it's challenging to know where to begin.

But organizations must find a way. Diversity has long been an important social and cultural mission, but it's now also essential for organizations that wish to grow and stay innovative. In 2020, investment bank Goldman Sachs announced that it would no longer take companies public if they did not have at least one non-white, non-male board member[1]. The bank plans to increase this number in upcoming years. Investment firm Blackrock released a policy in 2019 to vote against organizations that did not take diversity into account when selecting board members[2].

Global investors are taking such a strong stance on diversity not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because the data doesn't lie. Research has shown that a diverse and inclusive workforce is critical to the growth of an organization, and recent surveys show that a majority of organizations agree.

While the majority of organizations state that diversity and inclusion is a top value or priority, achieving meaningful results is not easy. Still, the future is diverse. If your workforce isn't keeping up, you're setting your organization up to get left behind.

The good news for HR leaders everywhere is that you are already sitting on a wealth of data that can help you build meaningful strategies to move the needle on diversity. The employee data you collect within your HRIS, HCM, or ATS can be analyzed to understand where you're already achieving success, and where you have room for improvement. Some HR leaders are already attempting to crunch these numbers using spreadsheets and business intelligence (BI) tools. People analytics can make these processes faster, better, and smarter.

People analytics is enabling HR and diversity teams to begin to close the gap between setting goals and taking action. Real change can be made within your organization when you have the data and insight to make objective, informed choices about hiring, retaining, and promoting minorities in your workforce. Let's get started.

86% of organizations surveyed by PwC stated that D&I is an important value to their organization[3]

Deloitte reported that the top issue CEOs cared about in 2019 was **improving their organization's impact on society**, including diversity and inequality[4]

LinkedIn reported that 71% of talent professionals state that **achieving gender parity** at their company is a top priority[5]

Inclusion and diversity: why now?

By Suzanne McAndrew, Global Talent Business Leader and Global LGBT+ Inclusion Network Leader, Willis Towers Watson

Suzanne McAndrew is Global Talent Business Leader and Global LGBT+ Inclusion Network Leader at Willis Towers Watson. She helps high-performing institutions cultivate and grow talent and implement programs that give organizations a competitive edge.

Our world is changing at unprecedented speed, with advancements in technology, shifting demographics and a changing workforce. Employees today want their organizations to take an active role in addressing social and cultural issues—in and out of the workplace. As research demonstrates that organizations with successful I&D programs perform better financially and deliver higher returns to shareholders, boards are taking note of these issues too.

Together, these factors are sparking positive change in the workplace. They're opening the door to meaningful conversations about inclusion and diversity.

Diverse environments are the building blocks for broad thinking and innovation. Inclusive cultures invite an array of ideas and foster a safe environment where employees can bring their best selves to work. When all of this happens, organizations will see improved employee engagement, productivity and financial results.

Inclusion and diversity is not a compliance issue. It's imperative to enhancing the talent experience, to demonstrating a commitment to empowerment of the workforce and to improving business results. The time is now for companies to get it right.

Understanding the many different facets of diversity

When we think about diversity, we often think about the things that we can see: gender and race. However, there are many facets of diversity in the workplace, many of which can't be seen, and some of which are difficult to adequately measure.

"The way we think about diversity has changed a lot over the last decade. Today we have realized that there are less visible elements of diversity that can cause discrimination in the workplace that we've overlooked, such as sexual orientation, parenthood, veteran status, and differing educational backgrounds. There are also facets of diversity that we can't readily measure, such as diversity of thought, diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds, and neurodiversity."

Deep Litt, People Operations & Analytics Manager, Visier

If we are going to be honest about what true diversity looks like in the workplace, we need to think about diversity in different ways. Not all employees who are considered to be "diverse" will have the same experience.

We need to continue to broaden our language and understanding of diversity. For example, when we speak about gender inclusivity, the most common focus is on women in the workforce. However, women are not a homogenous category. There are queer women, women of color, trans women, women who are mothers. There are women who are neurodiverse, women who re-entered the workforce after a decade spent raising children, and women from different socioeconomic backgrounds. When we think about inclusion, we need to take an intersectional approach to our workplace diversity strategies to gain a real understanding of our people.

What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality is the cumulative way that different forms of discrimination (for example, sexism or racism) overlap and intersect to form different experiences for marginalized groups.

When we begin to broaden our definitions of diversity, we take into account how these different systems of oppression overlap to shape an individual employee's experience. For example, a 31-year-old white woman with no children will likely have a different experience within a company than a 42-year-old black woman with two children. A person of color in a senior leadership position will have a different experience than an entry-level person of color.

Intersectionality means that we seek to understand a person's whole experience, rather than viewing their characteristics separately. When applying intersectionality to your D&I strategies, this can feel very overwhelming. A one-size-fits-all strategy will not improve inclusivity for all your employees or candidates. However, using data to improve inclusion can give you a better understanding of intersectional diversity.

Here are nine facets of diversity you need to consider within your organization:

1. Gender identity
2. Race/ethnicity
3. Sexual orientation
4. Age
5. Educational background
6. Family or caregiver status
7. Native language
8. Physical abilities
9. Veteran status

"To build an inclusive culture, you first need to consider how you define culture. It's a shared set of beliefs, principles, values, and behaviors that shape your organization's identity.

Behavior change is key to culture change. You need to consider the differences between the behaviors you desire and the actual behaviors of your workforce. As an HR leader, you may desire a more inclusive workplace, but if your employees or leadership teams aren't reinforcing the right behaviors, nothing will change.

This is why HR plays a critical role in driving the I&D agenda. You can define the values you want within your organization, and you can influence the policies, systems, and tools that ensure these values play out."

– Suzanne McAndrew, Global Talent Business Leader and Global LGBT+ Inclusion Network Leader, Willis Towers Watson

Building a culture of diversity

**By Amy Roy,
Chief People Officer,
Namely**

*Amy Roy is Chief People Officer at Namely,
an award-winning HRIS that supports
payroll, benefits, and talent management.
Namely connects seamlessly with VIsier's
people analytics.*

In any type of company initiative, top-down support is needed, but it's especially true when it comes to initiatives like D&I. Making corporate commitments like this requires cultural change and funding, both which are driven top-down. The reality, though, is that for D&I programs to permeate the organization, there has to be both top-down and bottom-up support. For example, HR might get support from leadership to build out a program of employee resource groups (ERGs), but without support and drive from employees, these programs won't develop.

I think most executives will agree that diverse opinions and thoughts help organizations grow. Where HR needs to get better is showing the value of diversity, both in terms of data and anecdotally. Is there a case within the organization to drive engagement? Reduce turnover? Hire faster? Increase productivity?

Organizational culture is tied to the behaviors and values of that organization. The first step toward a successful D&I program is to assess where your organization stands in its journey toward a diverse and inclusive workforce. This means asking questions like:

- Do you currently have D&I initiatives in place that have goals, metrics, and company funding aligned to them?

- Is diversity part of the core values of the organization?

- Do you have data to support that your D&I programs are impacting the culture?

- Where are the gaps? How can your HR technology support your plans?

- How do your facilities fit into the process? (E.g., are there gender-neutral bathrooms and spaces to accommodate nursing mothers?)

Once the assessment is complete, then it's a matter of defining what initiatives can realistically be put in place. Those initiatives are going to be tied to parts of the culture where behaviors should be modified. Set measurable goals and recognize that a culture shift is an evolutionary process.

Linking D&I to business goals

Getting buy-in from leadership to invest an adequate amount of attention and finances to a meaningful D&I strategy is challenging. While diversity simply for the sake of it is a worthy goal, any HR strategy is going to cost an organization in time and money, and this means securing the support of your executive team. One of the best ways you can make a case for diversity in your organization is to speak to what matters to all executives: your organization's bottom line.

D&I isn't just a sociopolitical concern. Research shows that diversity is integral to the success and growth of businesses.

What may surprise you is that none of this research is particularly new. Reports have been circulating for the last decade about why diverse organizations perform better. But when organizations haven't experienced it themselves, or when they haven't been able to see the improvement with their own people and finance data, it can be easy for leadership teams to dismiss D&I as a lower-priority strategy. HR teams are able to shift this mindset using people analytics.

"Organizations today are driving at a very fast pace of change. In order to thrive in this global economy, you first need to have an inclusive, safe environment in place. Then, you'll have the building blocks in place to foster collaboration, innovative thinking and diverse ideas—all keys to success in business growth."

Suzanne McAndrew, Global Talent Business Leader and Global LGBT+ Inclusion Network Leader, Willis Towers Watson

McKinsey states that companies that have higher gender diversity are **21% more likely to have higher profitability**[6]. Companies that are ethnically diverse are **35% more likely to have better financial returns**[7].

Deloitte states that organizations with inclusive cultures are **twice as likely to meet or exceed financial targets** as those without[8].

Forbes reports that companies with more **diverse leadership teams experience more and better innovation**, as well as 19% higher revenue[9].

Deloitte reports that **inclusive leadership teams improve overall team performance by 17%**, decision-making quality by 20%, and team collaboration by 29%[10].

How inclusion strategies impact your business priorities

By Johnathan Medina, Senior Strategy Manager, Accenture

The political environment has shifted quite a bit within the last decade, especially in the Americas and Western Europe. Organizations are waking up to the startling inclusion gap stunting bottom-line growth within their workplaces. For a long time, inclusion and diversity (I&D) was considered the "nice" thing to do. Over time, it became the "right" thing to do. Today, it's the "essential" thing to do, in great part because consumers are shopping based on their values.

Historically, companies have focused their I&D conversations on making diverse employees feel included and valued in an effort to improve overall productivity—and that's still a worthwhile exercise. Now, however, there is a more complex equation at play. It's not just about the employee anymore, it's about the consumer.

Companies are becoming aware that diverse populations have deep pockets and aren't hesitant to thoughtfully direct their hard-earned income. In order to fulfil the needs of consumer segments like these, companies need to make their workforce as diverse as the consumer base that they serve. With better representation comes increased expertise on the needs of the segment. This knowhow enables you to out-innovate the competition, reduce your time to market, tailor your marketing strategies, as well as diversify and grow your customer base.

Many of our clients are finding that focusing on inclusion opens-up meaningful segments of the market that they would have otherwise missed. They are learning that customers are already shopping based on their values. In fact, 41% of shoppers tell us that in the last year, they have shifted at least 10% of their business away from a retailer that does not reflect how important I&D is to them.

- **42% of ethnic minority shoppers** would switch to a retailer committed to I&D

- **41% of LGBT shoppers** would switch to a retailer committed to I&D

- **55% of shoppers** would switch if a retailer does not take responsibility for its own negative I&D incidents

All these factors have a direct impact on your bottom line. When it comes to convincing your leadership team that it's critical to focus on inclusion and diversity, these are the numbers that your board members and executives will understand. This is how you begin to build a business case, gain buy-in, and move the needle on making your company a more inclusive workplace.

Johnathan Medina is a Senior Strategy Manager at Accenture, where he advises his clients on shaping inclusive cultures that enable employees and consumers alike to feel a sense of belonging.

Diversity is driving innovation

By Kelly Silverman, Paycor

Diverse management teams are more innovative because individuals from different backgrounds come with unique mindsets, experiences, and ideas. If you're looking to optimize a process or solve a lingering issue, gathering feedback from multiple perspectives encourages collaboration and new types of thinking. But don't stop with the executive team. Diversity initiatives should be a focal point across your entire organization.

Creating a culture of diversity starts with developing a plan, communicating it, and then practicing what you preach.

You can hire more diverse candidates, but if they don't feel your company supports and promotes inclusion in all areas of the business, your message will fall flat. Creating a cohesive work environment while placing a premium on diversity, equity, and inclusion is no easy feat. That's why businesses across the country are turning to employee resource groups (ERGs).

Paycor has developed employee resource groups that are leading the charge for diversity and inclusion throughout the organization. These groups provide education, resources, and a built-in support network for associates across the company. We're dedicated to providing a safe, enriched environment where every employee has a voice and can bring their unique self to work each day. We propel each other by respecting diversity, celebrating our differences and commonalities, while having fun along the way.

Kelly Silverman is Senior Manager, Product Marketing at Paycor, an HCM software platform that integrates recruiting, payroll, time and attendance, benefits admin, and more.

Gender diversity: Making a case for women in leadership roles

Gender diversity in the workforce requires more than achieving a 50/50 split of men to women at your organization or equalizing the wage gap. It's equally important to recognize that women face discrimination and challenges when leveling up into management roles. Inclusion involves ensuring that minorities have the opportunity to grow their careers into leadership positions.

Having more women in leadership offers benefits to organizations, both financial and cultural. More representation of women in senior positions improves problem solving, helps to build collaboration and trust within your leadership team, and improves mentoring for women in more junior roles. One ongoing challenge that women face in leveling up in the workforce is the lack of female mentors to help them navigate organizations and meet their goals.

Companies with a higher percentage of women in executive positions have a **34% higher total return to shareholders** compared to those that don't[11].

Even though the evidence that having diverse leadership teams is well known, experts report that gender equality in the workplace is still decades away—five decades away, to be exact.

IBM reports that women will not achieve leadership equality with men until **2073**[12].

Gender parity and inclusion have been sensitive and polarizing topics in the news for years now, and all it takes is one skimming of the comments section in your LinkedIn feed to understand that we are still nowhere near equal footing for minorities in leadership.

While this is a challenge that clearly can't be fixed overnight (or even over a year), the choices that HR leaders make every day can begin to move the needle in the right direction.

Visier recently released a research report showing that, over the past two years, Visier customers:

- Improved their female leadership ratio to males by **4%**

- Improved their retention of female leaders by **3.7%**

Organizations that are focused on women's participation in upper management levels and taking corrective actions for improvement see greater gender parity in management, more inclusion, and fairer pay.

Read the Report

Gender diversity: How the wage gap and the motherhood penalty intersect

By John Schwarz, CEO, Visier

The conversation about the wage gap is usually limited the direct numbers comparison, and while that is an easy way of showcasing the disparity, it doesn't paint a broad enough picture to truly understand what's happening.

The wage gap starts to form at around the age of 32[13], which coincidentally is the average age at which women start to have children. The gap grows from there until about the age of 45, and then it narrows a bit because women tend to have a better performance rating at mid-career than men, but women never catch up completely. The early thirties are also the age at which people tend to reach their first supervisory position. Women are under-represented as supervisors, and supervisory positions carry much higher pay than individual contributor positions, ergo women end up with lower average compensation than their male colleagues in the same age cohort.

One of the driving factors of the wage gap is the penalty of motherhood. In families who chose to have children, it's more likely that the woman of the household will take parental leave than the man. While this seems innocent enough, women who do take maternity leave may be perceived as prioritizing their family over their career, even unconsciously. This leads to fewer opportunities when they return to work. Even if the environment in the organization eliminates the perception bias, the simple fact that the woman is absent from the job for a year or more means that she will get her promotion later than the male colleagues, and the wage gap starts to build.

There is also the problem of relationship building. A male-dominated work environment has built certain structures to allow for networking, relationship building, and general social gathering. These particular types of social structures, like after-work drinks, sports-related outings, networking events, etc. don't necessarily help women in the workforce, especially those with families who are unable to attend events during after-work hours. There is of course more nuance to this problem, but it's something that hasn't been given much thought until lately.

There needs to be more emphasis on learning and development opportunities for women, including mentorship. A shortage of female leadership means fewer natural opportunities for women to seek out successful role models and mentors. It has long been demonstrated that a successful female role model has a dramatic positive effect on other women in the organization.

It will take a combination of societal and individual business changes to close the wage gap. First, organizations need to take a macro and micro look at their pay practices to understand if they are fairly compensating their employees. Next, examine the distribution of genders across all levels and functions of the organization. Ensure that there is a gender balance in leadership at all levels. Finally, stop penalizing women for maternity leave. Count maternity leave as time on the job, and offer them the same promotion opportunities.

John Schwarz is CEO of Visier. This article was initially published in Authority Magazine.[14]

Refresher: What is people analytics, and why does it matter?

People analytics is the practice of collecting and transforming HR data and organizational data into actionable insights that improve the way you do business.

That's a lot of jargon. But what does this really mean for HR practitioners, and how does it relate to your diversity and inclusion strategies?

People analytics is the art and science of connecting data to uncover answers about your workforce that will lead to better business decisions. By transforming raw data into actionable insights, answers, and solutions, people analytics helps to give organizations the ability to better understand their workforce and organization. This information is then displayed in digestible graphs, charts, visualizations, questions, and answers. Using this knowledge, HR leaders are able to back up their instincts with facts and rely on data-driven strategies that help their organization to grow.

73% of companies say people analytics will be a major priority for their organization over the next five years[15].

How to use people analytics to build a data-driven D&I strategy

Select the key challenge you're hoping to improve on

Trying to improve everything at once will overwhelm your team and spread efforts too thin. Select one measurable aspect of inclusion that you would like to improve on. You can use an analytics tool to help identify which aspects may be the most pressing for your organization. Select something that is both pressing and measurable, so that you can track progress over time.

Review changes over time

Track your historical data to determine which direction it is trending year-over-year or month-over-month. Are your previous strategies making any progress, or do you need to start fresh?

Benchmark against your industry and location

Once you know your current data and how it's trending within your organization, measure how you stand against the rest of your industry. It's important to look at both metrics and trends when you review benchmarking data. Just because your current minority ratios are above average today does not mean that you will remain ahead of the curve if certain metrics are trending upward throughout your industry.

Select how you plan to measure your strategy

Consider the data points you're going to be tracking to ensure your success. Visier guidebooks offer hundreds of data visualizations in the form of questions, answers, charts, and graphs. You can use pre-built guidebooks, or build your own collection of analyses that support your strategy. Common data groupings include measurements like tenure, department, manager, location, and performance.

Analyze what is driving and/or impeding diversity

Many organizations still measure diversity as simply a ratio. To take action on data-driven strategies, you need to understand what drives improvement and why.

Drill down deeper into your data

Dig into your data by location, department, or job to explore within each analysis. Employee diversity may appear to be spread throughout the organization overall, but taking a closer look at the different functional levels could show pockets where diversity may be concentrated or lacking.

Talk to your people

While data is integral to building your strategy, it's equally important to speak to the people who these strategies affect. Whether you build an employee resource group tasked with diversity initiatives, or schedule one-on-one meetings with diverse employees that you have identified are at risk of exiting, it's essential to remember that these strategies and numbers are linked to real people. Your data may show a healthy culture of diversity, but inclusion involves understanding how people actually feel about it.

Start today

Even if you are not ready to begin acting on your diversity and inclusion strategy, it is important to regularly evaluate where you stand today, so that you have a baseline to measure against future success.

Update your data whenever possible

We manage what we measure. Data around gender and age are often collected, but demographics of race, ethnicity, and disability status are tracked with much less frequency. Once we begin to broaden our definitions of diversity, we will be able to improve our data collection policies, and use that data to take action on more inclusive strategies.

Avoid these common mistakes when looking at your D&I data

Knowing your people data is not enough to drive real change on your diversity strategies. Avoid these common mistakes that HR leaders make when they first begin to analyze D&I data.

Bombarding your team with numbers

Diversity strategies are both sensitive and overwhelming. If you kick off a diversity project by highlighting shameful diversity metrics within your company, some executives may feel attacked and defensive.

While it is crucial to show your executive team the realities of your data (good or bad), the way you choose to present this can have a dramatic influence on your success. Frame conversations about inclusion and diversity in the context of hope, rather than criticism.

Getting overwhelmed by the big picture

When it comes to making measurable differences, it's important to remember that small wins build momentum. Don't try to boil the ocean—it will be impossible to fix disparity within your organization overnight. You can, however, begin with small (and measurable) challenges, and then use analytics to show your success. This builds organizational buy-in and creates an impact that can be felt more strongly than spreading your efforts too thin by focusing on everything at once.

Prioritizing metrics and reports over insights

Compliance reports are often a critical part of D&I data monitoring, but it's critical to remember that these quotas are not the same as meaningful insights. People analytics can help HR leaders better interpret their data, beyond basic metrics like gender ratios, to achieve meaningful goals. Data is a must-have for any solid D&I strategy, but the complexities of inclusion require a human touch.

Forgetting to look beyond talent acquisition

Some HR teams make the mistake of focusing so intently on moving the needle on their ratios through new hires that they forget to form inclusion strategies for the employees they already have. You know, the people they see every day.

It's a classic case of taking for granted what is right in front of you, but it's all too common. To be truly inclusive, you need to ensure that you are working to retain the employees you already have. How can you create strategies that help move diverse employees into management positions? How can you ensure that all voices are heard during meetings? What can your employee turnover data tell you that you may have previously overlooked?
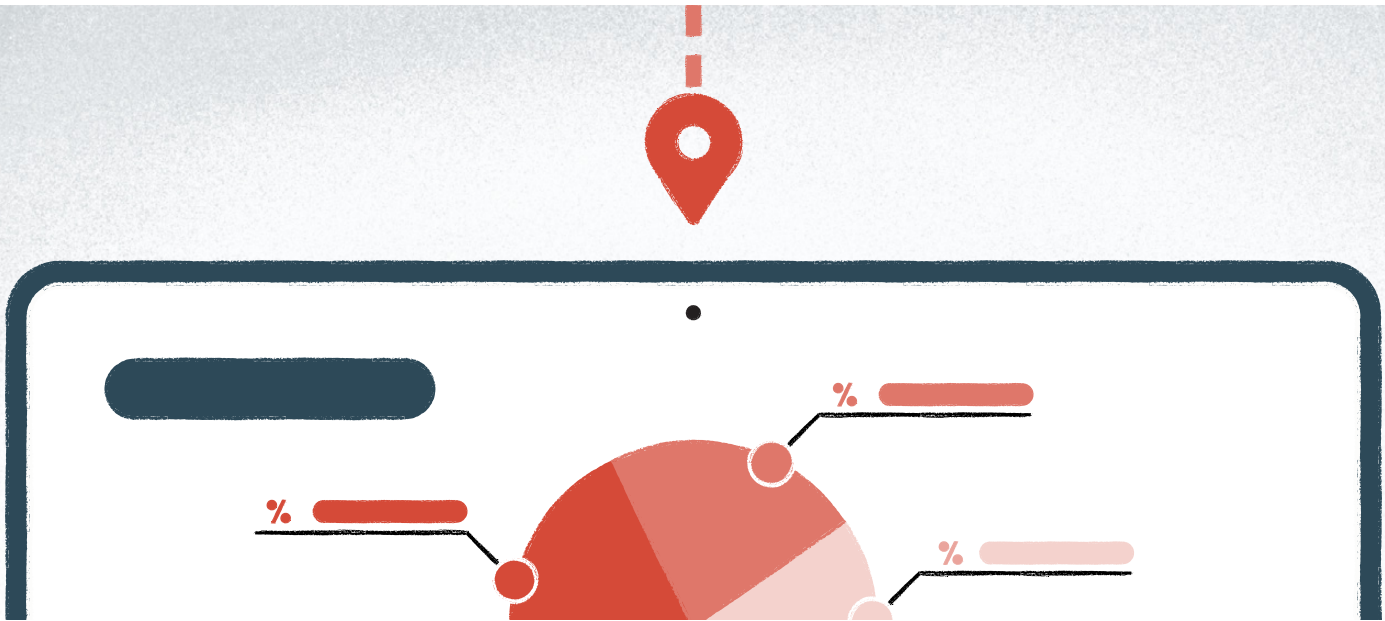
Finding your D&I path through data

By Deep Litt, People Operations & Analytics Manager, Visier

When it comes to improving diversity within your organization, every company will have a different path to follow. It begins with looking at your least-represented employee populations, and then digging deeper into their employee journeys.

Maybe you struggle to even attract applicants of a certain gender or ethnicity. If so, reconsider where you are seeking employees. Do you post on the same job sites every time? Are you hosting job fairs at the same university repeatedly, without looking at other populations? Are you too restrictive in your employment criteria?

If you are attracting resumes but are not effectively hiring a particular diverse population, look at talent acquisition data to help see where in the recruitment process they self-select out, or who made the decision not to hire them and why. Did they opt out after a particular interview? Was the salary offer on par with other offers in similar roles? Who was part of the interview panel, and did it represent the diversity of the organization? Are your interview questions consistent?

Once you've hired diverse employees, inclusivity is crucial to ensuring that you retain them and continue to attract a diverse employee pool. Inclusivity is harder to measure than diversity, but your data can still help. Looking at where in their career path employees quit, and why, can help you understand where your organization lacks inclusivity. Are diverse employees being promoted at the same rate as others in similar roles? Are they paid fairly?

There are almost endless possibilities when it comes to creating a more inclusive workplace. For example, a common inclusivity concern for organizations is that many women begin opting out of the workforce around the age they start families. Do you offer flexibility for employees who are parents? In the competitive tech industry that Visier operates in, we have noticed that the majority of roles offered are full time, which can be a challenge for parents who need to facilitate school pickups, daycare, and sick days for their children. What would happen if you offered part-time roles? What about flexible hours that allowed employees to fit their regular 40-hour work week into their own schedule?

The biggest question you should be asking yourself is, **what can you do to help diverse employees show up, be themselves, and be their most productive?**

Deep Litt is People Operations and Analytics Manager at Visier, with over 15 years experience in HR. She's passionate about influencing business leaders with data-driven insights to improve the employee experience.

Spotlight on: Benchmarking

Whether you are responsible for ensuring your large enterprise meets mandatory diversity benchmarks set by governing bodies, or you're a smaller organization trying to gain a better understanding of how your organization's diversity stacks up against your competition, benchmarking is a necessary first step.

However, the research involved in adequately benchmarking how your organization measures against your industry and location has been a massive undertaking for HR teams. It's time-consuming, costly, and research-intensive. For smaller teams, the amount of effort it would take to perform a proper pay analysis or diversity benchmark analysis simply doesn't provide a measurable outcome, and therefore, it's an often overlooked task.

So how do you benchmark your organization's diversity metrics?

Visier Benchmarks provide organizations of all sizes with a benchmarking tool typically only experienced at the world's largest enterprises. Built into all Visier products, Visier Benchmarks offer over 10 million securely anonymized employee records, offering organizations the chance to see how they stack up on important workforce metrics like diversity and equal pay.

Benchmarking your company's current diversity split across function or seniority is a key first step. Once you have a baseline, you can begin to set aspirational goals to level-up, recruit, and retain employees. Get started by looking at the ratio of diverse to non-diverse employees, and compare how your company stacks up to the industry average. Then dig deeper to examine different departments, job functions, and seniority levels. Even if your company-level numbers look good, certain departments or offices may present opportunities for improvement.

Benchmarking where your organization stands today is a great way to take the first steps in looking at your diversity data. Get comfortable with using an analytics tool by learning how you measure up against your industry. Then, use deeper analyses to plan how you'll innovate and grow.

"Diversity metrics and benchmarking can help you measure where you stand against your location, as well as industry. But it's important to remember that benchmarks are backward-looking data. Just because your organization's diversity is on par with your industry doesn't mean you can rest on your laurels."

Deep Litt, People Operations & Analytics Manager, Visier

How a midsize tech startup is using people analytics to build data-driven D&I strategies

We spoke to Deli Matsuo, Chief People Officer at robotics startup Alert Innovation, about why building a culture of inclusion, diversity, and data matters to his company's growth.

Our founder has a clear mission for an inclusive corporate culture. It's a matter of belief, rather than branding. We operate in the northeast United States, a predominantly Caucasian area. We're also a company that produces mechanical robotics, a typically male-dominated industry. Subsequently, our leadership team is predominantly Caucasian men. We can look at benchmarks, and that seems on par with our industry and location, but that also means we have to push harder to attract and promote diversity.

We want to continue to push this to be as inclusive as we can be. The efforts we make to hire female engineers, or people from different cultural backgrounds, is necessary for us to stay innovative. So how do we achieve this?

First, we need to be able to see our data. We have an enormous amount of information within our HR systems, but it was difficult to make sense of it all. We purchased Visier because we wanted a pre-built solution to help us extract value quickly. We are also using Visier to provide benchmark data that allows us to see what is going on within our market. By looking at tangible data, we are able to make smarter decisions in people management.

If you look at the difference between high-level HR strategies in large enterprises versus small to midsize organizations, the practices are not that different. The main differentiator is that large enterprises have had access to better data and analytics infrastructure, until very recently. They have been able to drive better decisions using data much more efficiently. In order for us to be able to play on that level, we needed a tool that would clarify and analyze our data, as well as provide us with benchmarking to show us where we stand against the competition.

Spotlight on: Unconscious Biases

Unconscious biases are learned stereotypes that are ingrained within our culture or society that influence how we behave toward minority groups. As the name suggests, they are usually unintentional—as much as most people want to be inclusive, society has hardwired us to have shortcuts in our brains that can be helpful or harmful.

Despite often being unintentional, these stereotypes can unconsciously alter how we treat minority populations of our workforce. These biases are not usually blatant examples of racism or sexism—for example, refusing to hire someone because they are of a certain ethnicity or gender. They instead appear in small microaggressions in the workforce, such as assuming that certain people of a certain ethnicity are best at a particular task, or that women are prone to being more emotional.

Solving unconscious bias in the workplace requires some vulnerability and self-reflection. Many organizations have begun to offer unconscious bias training in the workplace. These internal workshops provide hands-on activities where participants are able to start recognizing these unconscious thought patterns and stereotypes that we all have. By learning how to recognize them, we can begin to rewire how we think.

Technology is also an effective equalizer when it comes to biases in the workforce. When recruiting talent, some applicant tracking systems are able to anonymize applications so that recruitment specialists are unable to see the applicant's name, reducing the possibility that they will unconsciously make assumptions about the applicant based on gender or ethnicity.

People analytics can further improve unconscious bias training by identifying where in your employee experience diverse candidates or employees are opting out or hitting roadblocks. If you can see within your data that you are interviewing a large number of Latinx employees but are not successfully hiring any, how can you work backward from here? Are applicants turning down your offer, or are they never receiving one? Is your interview panel diverse, or all white men? Are you turning down applicants due to a lack of skills, or because they do not have the educational background you have traditionally required? How can you work to eliminate these biases, now that you are able to see the data and become more conscious about unfair preconceptions?

Managing unconscious bias requires vulnerability. It requires admitting when you (or your organization) have made mistakes or admitting what you don't know. For example, how often do you get on a call with someone and don't know how to pronounce their name? A lot of the time, you'll avoid saying their name, because you don't want to be vulnerable and feel uncomfortable asking the person to repeat themselves. But pausing to say, "I want to make sure I get your name right, repeat it for me," shows the person you care, and that inclusion is important to you.

**Johnathan Medina,
Senior Strategy Manager, Accenture**

The unconscious biases in cultures of meritocracy

By Kelly Reed, Managing Director, Talent and Culture, Lockton

Part of getting senior leaders on board with your inclusion efforts involves dispelling myths about D&I. Despite being well-intentioned, senior leaders may be thinking of things like fairness as happening in juxtaposition to D&I. A common rebuttal presented to workplace D&I challenges is the use of a meritocracy. Leaders often see value in "rewarding who is working the hardest," and may see D&I as a challenge to that.

However, to truly reward the hardest worker, there must be a color-blind and gender-blind approach, or you will risk having unconscious biases. This also doesn't acknowledge that many minorities have not had the innate advantages that majority populations have had. We need to use data to correct the fact that meritocracy is not bias-free.

HR leaders can help to build empathy among the senior leaders via story-telling and by leveraging internal data. By bringing D&I issues to light through compelling stories, they can make it real to their leadership teams, who may not understand from first-hand experiences.

Kelly Reed is Managing Director, Talent and Culture at Lockton, the world's largest privately held insurance brokerage firm, providing insurance, risk management, employee benefits and retirement services.

Spotlight on:
Recruitment and retention

Recruitment is often the first place that HR leaders start when they begin building out a D&I strategy. In order to have a diverse and inclusive population, you need to hire diverse employees, right? Yes—but it's critical that you're aware that these activities cannot be done in a silo.

"Organizations need to also look at how they can create an equitable and inclusive climate. They can create a more tailored approach by reviewing their rewards and promotion processes, and then begin to determine - once we get diverse people here, how do we keep them and show that we value them?"

Kelly Reed, Managing Director, Talent and Culture, Lockton

Recruiting and retaining good employees is frequently the most crucial role of HR teams, whether you're a team of 1 or a team of 30. You already know why recruiting and retaining talent is important to your organization's growth, financial health, and ability to innovate. But there is still further research on why inclusion and diversity can benefit both your talent pool and your employee population.

Nearly **half of millennials prioritize diverse companies** when job searching, according to a survey conducted by the Institute for Public Relations[16].

Now more than ever, people are selecting companies they want to work for (and buy from) with their heart and conscience. As the baby boomer generation reaches retirement age, the millennial generation has become the largest employee demographic. Even candidates who are not part of a minority population themselves are choosing to seek out employers that value diversity because they believe in these values. Projections suggest that Generation Z will follow suit, prioritizing diverse, ethical workplaces.

"As we prepare for Gen Z entering the workforce, focusing on diversity in the workplace becomes even more paramount. Gen Z prioritizes diversity more than previous generations and wants to work for companies that genuinely embrace inclusivity and hire an employee population that reflects the modern workforce."

Amy Roy, Chief People Officer, Namely

Looking for more information on how you can use people analytics to build a data-driven turnover and retention strategy? Download the previous chapter of The Big Book of People Analytics.

Read the Retention Chapter

Where do we go from here?

Diversity and inclusion are integral to the success of growing businesses. This belief is fueled by research that proves that diversity improves an organization's ability to innovate, increase profits, and attract better talent. The future is diverse, and organizations that don't embrace this will fall behind.

"The best organizations know that diversity and inclusion efforts are the right thing to do for society, and for the growth and sustainability of their business. Yet the majority of organizations still struggle to turn their aspirations into achievements. We built Visier's D&I analytics solution to close the gap between setting goals and taking action. Companies can put meaningful insights in everyone's hands. Change happens when it's easy for everyone to see the richness of a company's talent. Visibility is a critical step to leveling the playing field as we strive for objective, informed choices about interviewing, hiring, and promotion."

Paul Rubenstein, Chief People Officer, Visier

Is there a particular chapter you'd like to see? We'd love to hear from you.

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Endnotes

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Visier is a people analytics solution that makes it easy for HR leaders to transform their existing people data into meaningful analytics. Using hundreds of built-in graphs, data visualizations, questions, and answers, people leaders are able to gain insight into their organization, use data to tell the story of their people, and drive growth.

Move beyond outdated Excel spreadsheets, and make navigating complex HR data simple. With business intelligence tools built for HR, Visier drives growth and meaningful insight into an organization's biggest investment: their people.
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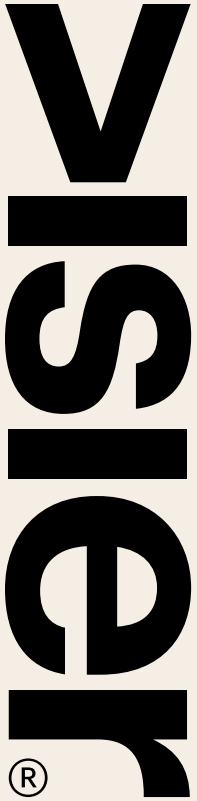
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