



# **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Template**






“

When an individual  
is no longer labeled  
a diversity hire is  
when we have true  
inclusion.

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Manpreet Dhillon,  
CEO/Founder  
Veza Global



Congratulations on taking an important next step on your Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) journey! We are delighted that you are taking this step and will be here to support you along the way. This strategy template is designed to provide you with a clearer idea of your EDI journey as it relates to advancing on the journey model.

This template has the following key components:

- ◆ A self-assessment for your organization: These questions will help you understand where your organization stands in terms of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusive pathway.
- ◆ A maturity model: This chart shows the five stages towards an inclusive culture and the self-assessment tool will place your organization in one of those stages.
- ◆ An ED&I strategy: This strategy formulates how your organization can initiate this process.




## What happens when Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are not a part of an organization?

Higher turnover rate: If the organization doesn't provide an inclusive environment then employees will leave the company which would result in more 'recruitment cost'.

Negative image: Organizations are being judged on how open they are. Non-inclusive environments will create bad publicity and create a negative brand image.

Talent: The more open and accepting an organization is, the more valued employees would feel which would result in a more competitive environment and a larger field of well-qualified potential employees.



Lawsuits: Discrimination, harassment are outcomes of a non-EDI environment and these factors are roots of lawsuits.

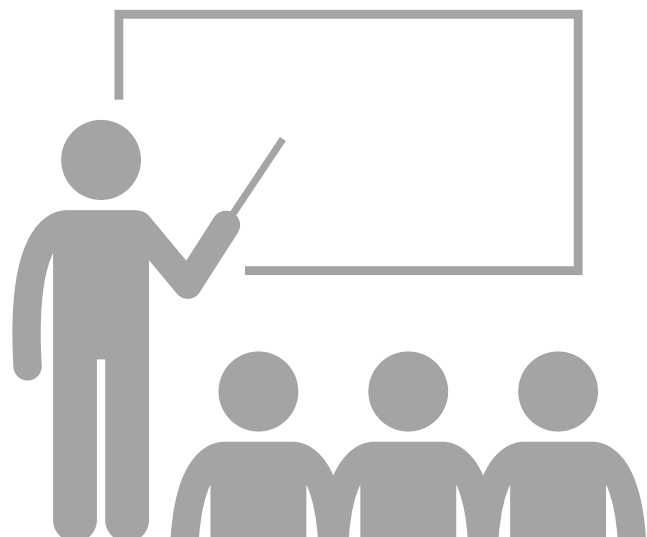
## What does EDI bring to the table?

- ◆ Increased creativity (Scientific American article research shows that diverse groups are more productive and creative than homogeneous groups.)
- ◆ Faster problem solving
- ◆ Variety of perspectives
- ◆ Reduced employee turnover
- ◆ Improved company reputation (In an article by Fast Company states that higher female representation in the C-suite level will result in a 34% greater return for the shareholders)
- ◆ Increased profits (According to a 2014 report by the Credit Suisse Research Institute, "Companies with higher female participation at Board level or in top management exhibit higher returns, higher valuations, and higher payout ratios." )



## How Training affects Inclusivity

- ◆ It starts from the top: Leaders should understand what inclusivity means. Inclusivity does not only mean having a diverse environment but providing an equal and comfortable environment to all irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender...etc.
- ◆ Training: Yes, training is the key. This process allows the equal opportunity to educate every level of the organization from newly hired to senior management on various topics while providing the understanding of treating people the way they want to be treated. Training on unconscious bias, equity, hiring process, being an ally and managing an inclusive team should be provided to leaders.



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- ◆ Inclusive council and effectual meetings: A powerful and diverse council helps to bring different perspectives to the organization. Meaningful and inclusive meetings are very effective, studies have shown that diverse companies result in 2.3 times more cash flow per employee.

## Budgeting helps

An organization that wants to achieve a better ED&I environment should have budget to implement the strategy. An additional budget can help in-

- ◆ Hiring an external party to assess the company's ED&I.
- ◆ Employee resource groups.
- ◆ Cultural events





## Self-assessment

This self-assessment is a snapshot into how well the organization is doing on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion maturity model. An organization's EDI journey is fluid and depending on the initiatives can move to a deeper level of engagement. In this self-assessment, we are using a sample of the larger [Veza EDI Assessment](#) which provides recommendations for organizations on how to move forward.

0-2: Strongly Disagree

0-2: Strongly Disagree

3-5: Disagree

6-8: Agree

9-10: Strongly agree

On a scale of 1 to 10, Rate the following statements.

How accurate is this statement? Diversity is a barrier to progression at my organization.

. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

How accurate is this statement? This organization vouches to take strict action against discrimination.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩



## Self-assessment

How accurate is this statement? The manager handles diversity matters appropriately and demonstrates a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

How accurate is this statement? Employees are comfortable talking about their background and cultural experiences with their colleagues.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

How connected are coworkers with each other? For example, do coworkers respect and consider each other's roles in the team, or do coworkers socialize during corporate events?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

How respected do your employees feel by their direct supervisor?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

How accurate is this statement? It is known to everyone that they can have a career path which helps them to grow and flourish within the organization.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩



## Self-assessment

How accurate is this statement? Do employees know the process of filing complaints regarding discrimination and harassment within the organization?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Does your organization give opportunities for employees to grow and improve?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

How much cultural diversity is there among the job candidates?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

The sum of all the answers will represent the stage your organization lies in.

## Veza Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Maturity Model:

The 5 Stages towards an inclusive culture



0-20 Compliance: Organizations in the compliance stage are following all legal requirements mandated by the provincial and federal levels of government. Organizations are working to ensure safe working conditions and are providing the minimum level of benefits required by law.

21-40 Discovery: A great start! Organizations at the Discovery stage recognize there is a problem or potential to grow. Often, these organizations have identified an organizational culture issue, a high turnover rate, or had concerns and suggestions brought forward by their employees. Discovery is a great time to implement quick wins and see what can be done right away to build momentum.



41-60 Committed: Wonderful! A committed organization usually has committed resources in terms of people, money, and time towards D&I. A committed organization is usually in the first few years of their D&I journey and has a few programs and initiatives in place. Some are well on their way to reaching the next stage.

61-80 Championed: Excellent! In an organization at the Championed stage, the leadership team is most likely very engaged in the development of a diversity & inclusion strategy and its execution. These organizations are leading initiatives and are advocating for new programs and processes to support clear D&I goals.

81-100 Innovation: Congratulations! Your organization is most likely leading the way in your industry in terms of diversity and inclusion practices. Perhaps you can expand your D&I impact beyond your organization and by ensuring you support each of the 5 designated groups.



# EDI Strategy

In setting up any strategy, it is important to start with the past. Analyze the organization's history and present with an ED&I perspective can help the company understand how equity, diversity, and inclusion is embedded within the organization. The self assessment provides you a snapshot of what is working well now. As you are developing the strategy, think about what is the vision of the inclusive culture the organization wants to create. The vision of inclusive culture needs input of senior leaders and representatives of various departments. This exercise is a great way to have inclusion and create champions of the EDI strategy.

## **It's time to incorporate the PDCA cycle (Plan, Do, Check and Act)**

The initial step is planning your strategy. These questions will help you understand where your organization stands in relation to EDI and assist in figuring out the strengths (reputation, turnover rate, productivity, creativity...etc) and challenges (such as equal pay, generation gap, hostility, language, and communication... etc). Always keep in mind the 80/20 rule, addressing 20% of problems will make the working environment 80% better. Imagine if you addressed more than that.

# EDI Strategy

1. Why is EDI important for your organization?
2. Does your company have any diversity group? If yes, are they recognized?
3. When was the last time EDI surveys were conducted and list the changes made from them?
4. Does the organization have a mission statement for EDI?

## **Let's do this: Your Company Initiatives**

List the areas of concern with relation to an ED&I environment and look at possible steps taken to address it and help in improvement. Looking into how other organizations have incorporated EDI policies can narrow down your organization's needs.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



# EDI Strategy

## **Check and Act: The final and crucial step**

After implementing new changes and policies for an inclusive environment. The organization should collect feedback and have frequent check-ins with employees to see whether their changes have had a positive impact. If yes, that's great, the organization can look into other areas for further improvement and if not, the organization should rethink their implementations.

## **Some areas to incorporate ED&I**

- ☐ Writing an Effective Anti-Harassment Policy
- ☐ Having Respectful Workplace Training
- ☐ Measure the current culture with the lens of EDI through survey and focus groups
- ☐ Do the Veza EDI Assessment for detailed recommendations on how to move forward and incorporate those recommendations into this strategy

Develop an ED&I strategy (Equity Diversity & Inclusion strategy)





# EDI Strategy

- ☐ In addition to vocally expressing the organization's EDI, it should also reflect in the environment. (internal communities or employee resource groups, allies are a great addition to EDI)
- ☐ Mental health resources and support
- ☐ Review all hiring, retention and development programs with an inclusive lens
- ☐ Have a strong inclusive employer brand
- Have strong supplier diversity plans
- ☐ The office calendar should include all important celebration dates for the various underrepresented courses including Pride Month, Indigenous Month and Day, Cultural holidays, International Women and Men's Days and Accessibility Month and Day dates.



# Conclusion

The ED&I journey is a work in progress and requires consistent attention in order to create the change your organization desires. We are honored to be a part of your journey.

## WANT MORE?

We will build you a customized diversity and inclusion (D&I) plan that strengthens your ability to attract leading talent, creates an organizational culture that people want to stay in, and certifies your commitment to D&I for your clients, customers and partners to see - without expanding your human resources team.



## About Veza Global

Veza Global is an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) organization advocating for equity and equality for underrepresented groups with a focused lens on the leadership journey of people of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Diversity of Thought and Inclusive Culture are the pillars of the approach that Veza takes to build capacity for organization to execute on their EDI strategy. Veza offers EDI Assessment and Audits, EDI strategy development and Inclusive Leadership Training and Coaching.

Through Veza's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Assessment tool, companies can identify under an hour where they are on the EDI Maturity Model and receive a list of detailed recommendations and actionable next steps for their EDI strategy to move forward to a more inclusive organization.





# Resources

[https://www.accenture.com/ca-en/about/inclusion-diversity/culture-equality-research?  
c=acn\\_ca\\_cultureequalitygoogle\\_11161409&n=psgs\\_0320&gclid=CjwKCAjw8pH3BRAXEiw  
A1pvMsfwxx4QHoxCPIwW0-  
MRxgADdootgaCZdgYouJgXgBkfDd8\\_09EVBCBoCqGQQAuD\\_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds](https://www.accenture.com/ca-en/about/inclusion-diversity/culture-equality-research?c=acn_ca_cultureequalitygoogle_11161409&n=psgs_0320&gclid=CjwKCAjw8pH3BRAXEiwA1pvMsfwxx4QHoxCPIwW0-MRxgADdootgaCZdgYouJgXgBkfDd8_09EVBCBoCqGQQAuD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds)

<https://ccdi.ca/media/1073/20150716-ccdi-report-erg-toolkit.pdf>

<https://builtin.com/diversity-inclusion/diversity-in-the-workplace-statistics>

[https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-  
and-cultural-effectiveness/pages/try-these-strategies-to-reduce-implicit-bias-in-your-  
workplace.aspx](https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/pages/try-these-strategies-to-reduce-implicit-bias-in-your-workplace.aspx)

<http://www.aldenhabacon.com/strategy>

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>

<https://www.calpers.ca.gov/docs/diversity-forum-credit-suisse-report-2015.pdf>

<https://www.fastcompany.com/3048342/the-business-case-for-women-in-the-c-suite>

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2019028-eng.htm>

[https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/topics-start/gender\\_diversity\\_and\\_inclusion](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/topics-start/gender_diversity_and_inclusion)

