Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
Centre canadien pour la diversité et l'inclusion

Diversity & inclusion councils

Toolkit for diversity and inclusion practitioners.

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Contents

Foreword

Diversity and inclusion is a core leadership competency in today's organizations. As an inclusive leader, I understand the need and value of diversity of thought.

It is well documented that diversity of thought is vital to an organization's operational success. However, success will not be achieved by diversity alone. Once you have diverse people in the organization, how do you create an inclusive culture? As leaders, we must look at how we can be inclusive to make sure that the benefits of having a diverse workforce contribute to the business success of our organizations. The Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmark recommends executive-led diversity councils as a foundational structure for an inclusive organization.

We are pleased to present the latest in our toolkit series *Diversity and Inclusion Councils: Toolkit*, which provides insight to having a properly structured and empowered diversity and inclusion council. In this toolkit, the author Sujay Vardhmane discusses two key pillars needed to create inclusive environments:

1. leaders who are committed to diversity and inclusion, and
2. the structures for successful diversity and inclusion councils.

This toolkit defines diversity councils; describes the types; explains the value of diversity and inclusion councils to different areas of the organization and provides guidance on operationalizing diversity councils in your organization. It includes references to tools that will help you measure and report the results that will help your organization move ahead of its competition. The biggest takeaway for you the reader is the checklist for a successful diversity and inclusion council. Overall, this toolkit provides a framework that will help you implement a diversity and inclusion council to produce organizational results from an inclusive culture.

We hope you enjoy and find value in this toolkit.

We look forward to bringing you more tools and resources as we engage dedicated professionals across Canada to solve our biggest inclusion challenges.

Thanks.

Michael Bach, CCDP/AP
Founder and CEO
Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion

Introduction

Once the vision of an inclusive culture has been articulated, a business case or imperative statement has been established, and a diversity and inclusion strategy has been developed*, what are the organizational leaders' daily contribution to seeing that it all becomes part of the day-to-day culture? Perhaps, the best way to see results is for leaders to dedicate time to work on diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives.[1]

Organizational leaders send a powerful message when they demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion, which goes beyond rhetoric.[2] One best practice that demonstrates this level of commitment and involvement is forming and leading a Diversity and Inclusion Council (D&I Council).

In organizations that take diversity seriously, council members are held accountable for achieving the organization's diversity goals. They are ultimately responsible for the success of the organizational goals that are affected by the diversity policies. In fact, their compensation is often tied to it. As a result, diversity councils are highly instrumental in developing strong organizations that put diversity and inclusion at the forefront of the organization's philosophy, strategic direction, mission, vision and values.

For those employees tasked with implementing diversity initiatives throughout an organization's many layers, the commitment and support of organizational leaders is vital to maintaining momentum and getting results. Leaders set the tone from the top.

* For more information on developing a diversity and inclusion business case or strategy, please see CCDI's toolkits on business case and strategy development.

Note: If your organization needs help with creating a business case or strategy, please see CCDI's earlier toolkits: *Developing The Ironclad Business Case for D&I* and *Toolkit for Developing a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*, available free at http://ccdi.ca/products/workplace-solutions/reports-toolkits/.

[1] Connolly, Katherine, and Boris Groysberg. "Great Leaders Who Make the Mix Work." *Harvard Business Review*, 27 Oct. 2014, https://hbr.org/2013/09/great-leaders-who-make-the-mix-work. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

[2] Ibid.

What are diversity & inclusion councils?

What are diversity & inclusion councils?

Executive or senior-leadership led diversity councils can go by many names: executive diversity council, enterprise diversity council, executive diversity taskforce, diversity strategy team, etc. Usually led by the Executive Director, Chairperson, CEO, Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) or Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), such councils are made up of senior vice presidents, vice presidents, organizational, business-unit heads, functional unit heads, division heads, or other high-level leaders from across the organization. In general, this council develops or validates the comprehensive, integrated diversity strategy that drives best practices, goals and objectives and monitors progress against goals and objectives.

Types of diversity & inclusion councils[3]

Diversity councils vary in membership, reporting structure, vision, mission and goals. They are further differentiated by their metrics, accountability and operating business focus. Figure 1: Below is an illustration of the types of diversity councils
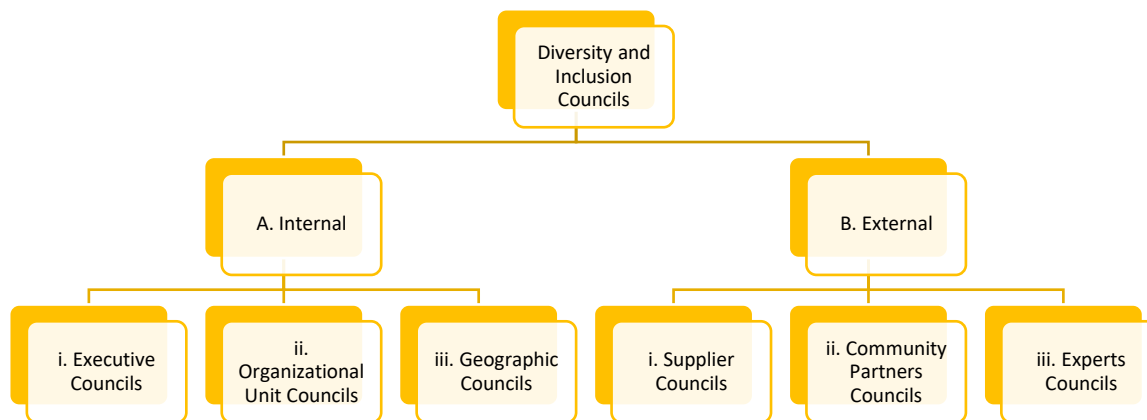
Figure 1. Types of diversity councils

Organizations with an integrated strategy find it easier to drive cultural change throughout the organization by using a wide range of councils. However, organizations that start with one or

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[3] Landsinger, Diane, and Barbara Deane. "The Diversity Councils Best Practices Study*." DiversityCentral*, April 2005, http://www.multiculturaladvantage.com/recruit/diversity/diversity-council/diversity-council-best-practices-study.pdf. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

two types of diversity councils will have trouble building or sustaining any kind of organizational change effort.[4]

Internal

i. Executive diversity councils

The CEO/ED/CDO/CHRO usually leads an executive diversity council. Membership comprises of senior executives representing all organizational functions or units. The executive diversity council oversees and ensures that the overall, integrated diversity and inclusion strategy is executed.

All other types of councils and committees flow from the direction and commitment of the executive diversity council. Generally, the metrics related to this type of diversity council are the most substantive because members possess the highest level of accountability and their goals are tied directly to organizational goals.

Financial metrics important to this level of diversity council include the costs and benefits of the diversity and inclusion strategy that influence the following:

» human resources processes (employee engagement, retention, turnover, cost of recruiting and training of new hires)
» growth of operations/market share and emerging markets
» improved communications and productivity
» return on investment for diversity initiatives such as increase business as a result of multi-cultural marketing and advertising, or decreased costs associated with turnover.

ii. Organizational unit/departmental councils

An organizational unit leader, such as a division/department head may sponsor a diversity council. The goals of the unit councils flow from the executive council and diversity and inclusion strategy. The unit leader's purpose is to ensure that the strategy is rolled out at the unit or departmental level. Council membership is diverse and can be drawn from across the unit to include a mix of grade levels, job groups, experience, age, gender, abilities and thinking styles, etc. Council members should leverage the developmental opportunity provided and allow for others to get involved at the end of their term. Councils at the unit level vary greatly on how formally or informally they are organized. Recruitment, reporting structure and term of office also vary widely. These councils can be strictly advisory or a critical and integral part of the

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[4]   Ibid.

operation. The metrics represent local units and measure departmental activities from the diversity and inclusion strategy, such as program development, multicultural fairs, newsletters, mentoring programs and training.

iii. Geographic councils

A leader representing a geography-specific unit - global/national/regional/local - usually leads this type of council with the participation of leaders from human resources, ethics, marketing and communications and functional/business unit. Employees Resource Groups (ERGs)* may be active members or partners on various projects. ERGs are often geography-specific in organizations. Council goals address understanding intercultural nuances, geographic orientation, strategic market development, communications, advertising, training, mentoring, use of expatriates and succession planning. Overall, the geographic council has to make sure that the strategy is rolled out at the regional level.

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* For more information on ERGs, see CCDI's toolkits for ERGs.

A. INTERNAL			
	i. Executive council	**ii. Organizational unit /departmental council**	**iii. Geographic councils**
	C-Suite	**Division/Function/Business unit**	**Global/National/ Regional/Local**
Lead	» Chair: Executive Director/CEO/ Organizational Leader or someone nominated/appointed to lead » Co-Chair: CDO/CHRO/ Senior HR Leader	» Chair: Division/Function/ Business/ Organization leader » Co-Chair: Senior Diversity Leader/ HR	» Chair: Geographic Head » Co-Chair: Senior Diversity Leader/ HR
Scope/Goals	Strategic direction to diversity and inclusion	Develop, align and implement Diversity & Inclusion strategy at unit/departmental level. Report back to the Executive diversity and inclusion council	Implement the Diversity & Inclusion strategy keeping geographic and cultural nuances in mind. Report back to the Executive D&I

A. INTERNAL		
	i. Executive council	ii. Organizational unit /departmental council	iii. Geographic councils
	C-Suite	Division/Function/Business unit	Global/National/ Regional/Local
		on progress, and flag issues and barriers.	Council on progress, and flag issues and barriers.
Membership Composition	» Fixed members: ED/CEO/CFO/CDO/CHRO etc. » Rotating members: appointed based on focus of strategy	» Fixed Members: Leaders of the Unit » Rotating members: Appointed - high potential employees, members from ERGs	» Fixed Members: Leaders of Geographic area » Rotating members: appointed - high potential employees, members from ERGs
Term	2-3 years	2-3 years	2-3 years
Meeting Frequency	» Annually: Two-day strategic planning meeting » Quarterly: Minimum 2 hours	» Annually: One-day planning meeting » Monthly: Minimum 90 minutes	» Annually: One-day planning meeting » Monthly: Minimum 90 minutes
Meeting Locations	Annual meeting hosted in person at Head Office or alternate. Quarterly meeting in person or virtually depending on geographic distribution of Council members	Annual meeting in person, usually hosted at Unit Office. Monthly meeting in person or virtually depending on geographic distribution of Council members	Annual meeting in person, usually hosted at Unit Office. Monthly meeting in person or virtually depending on geographic distribution of Council members

Figure 2. Types of Internal Councils

External

i. Supplier diversity councils

Membership in this type of council generally includes a partnership of employees and vendors/suppliers, and potentially government representatives, among others. Supplier diversity councils can be internal or external to the company, and may vary greatly in structure from a formalized council to a supplier diversity initiative. The organization would influence its internal and external stakeholders to use suppliers and businesses that are owned and operated by *women, visible minorities, lesbian gay bisexual transgender (LGBT), persons with disabilities and Aboriginal People.

ii. Community partners councils

Members of these councils are chosen from the various community partners that the organizations have an association with or would like to start/build relationships with. The focus could range from seeking knowledge on a diversity topic, research, talent acquisition, seeking advice from community representatives, responding to community concerns, and philanthropic giving to the community.

iii. Experts councils

Members of these councils may be recruited from community partners, businessess, government, academia or the diversity field so that they can offer a broader perspective, best practices and accountability for diversity. Councils may be proactive, voluntary and sponsored by an organization or community partnership.

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* For more information on supplier diversity, see CCDI's research report: *Supplier Diversity in Canada*, available free at http://ccdi.ca/products/workplace-solutions/reports-toolkits.

B. EXTERNAL			
	Supplier diversity council	Community partners council	Experts council
Lead	Appointed Organizational Leaders	Appointed Organizational Leader	Appointed Organizational Leader
Scope/Goals	Engage and influence major suppliers to adopt best practices in diversity and	Engage community partners to support the strategy - knowledge, research,	Engage experts to obtain best practices in diversity and

B. EXTERNAL			
	Supplier diversity council	Community partners council	Experts council
	inclusion.	talent acquisition, respond to the community or build relationships with the community.	inclusion.
Membership composition	Key leaders from Organization's D&I and procurement functions and main suppliers	Key Organization-Leaders, talent acquisition, social responsibility and select community partners	Organization leaders, academics, community partners, government, researchers, etc.
Term	2 years	2 years	2 years
Meeting Frequency	Twice a year	Twice a year	Twice a year
Meeting Locations	Organization's Office	Organization's Office	Organization's Office

Figure 3. Types of external councils

Value of diversity & inclusion councils

Value of diversity & inclusion councils

Benefits to organizations

» The role of a D&I Council is to provide strategic governance and oversight of the rollout and operation of an organization's diversity and inclusion strategy.

» The leaders make a visible commitment and are accountable for driving diversity and inclusion throughout the organization.

» Led by an organization's ED/CEO/CDO/CHRO, the Diversity Council is made up of executive representation from each of the organization's units/divisions/business/ functions, thereby embedding diversity and inclusion across the organization.

» Members are accountable for progress of the organization's diversity and inclusion strategy, and Council members create plans for embedding diversity and inclusion in their units and report on progress.

» The council, through its mandate and goals, will increase the competence of individuals and organizations to interact effectively in the context of many similarities and differences.

» To align the organizational and diversity and inclusion goals, the council will determine what actions to take to optimize personal and organizational performance.[5]

Benefits to human resources, talent and diversity departments

» A single point of contact at the leadership level for Diversity/Human Resource leaders of an organization's diversity and inclusion strategy.

» A Diversity Council is a foundational best practice for an organization, which will enable diversity practitioners/ leaders of the strategy to extend their reach into the many layers across an organization.

» Improved efficiency and reporting on diversity and inclusion initiatives to influence well-informed decision making.

» Compliance of laws and regulations that indicate how people inside and sometimes outside are expected and/or required to behave[6.]

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[5] O'Mara, Julie, and Alan Richter. "Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks. Standards for Organizations Around the World." *The Diversity Collegium*, 2016, http://diversitycollegium.org/usertools/GDIB-V- 03072016-3-2MB.pdf. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

[6] O'Mara, Julie, and Alan Richter. "Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks. Standards for Organizations Around the World." *The Diversity Collegium*, 2016, http://diversitycollegium.org/usertools/GDIB-V- 03072016-3-2MB.pdf. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

» Provides diversity/HR with a wide scope/pulse of the organization by having all organizational units represented; strategies/initiatives can be tailored to meet the direct needs of the units.
» Efficient point of contact that represents the entire organization.
» Report on strategic goals per organizational unit/division/business line/function per quarter – dashboards are created for each function and include function-specific goals/targets to make progress.

Benefits to employees

» Employees see the leadership team as visibly committed to diversity and inclusion, creating a culture of inclusion that will enable them to reach their full potential in the organization.
» Another escalation point for employees to raise concerns, provide feedback and have their feedback heard.
» Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and or Business Resource Groups (BRGs) could use this forum as an opportunity to report on their progress quarterly.
» Top down, bottom up approach to sharing employee feedback about an organization's progress towards an inclusive workplace culture – council listens to employee feedback, council shares feedback directly with employee-led groups like ERGs.
» The council works towards inclusion, social justice and fairness for all employees - treating people equitably and ethically.[7]

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[7]   Ibid.

Checklist for establishing a diversity & inclusion council

Checklist for establishing a diversity & inclusion council[8]

A. Leadership commitment

- » How committed are your organization's leaders?

B. Diversity and Inclusion objectives

- » Do you have a diversity and inclusion business case or imperative document?
- » Do you have a diversity and inclusion strategy?
- » What are your diversity council's objectives?
- » Are your objectives practical, realistic and measurable?
- » How will a council further the objectives?

C. Council parameters

- » How long will the council relationships last?
- » What types of issues and concerns are within the scope of the council?
- » How much time should leadership and council volunteers spend?
- » What should diversity and inclusion activities include?
- » How much money should your organization spend?

D. Procedures and criteria for creating a diversity and inclusion council

- » What is the time commitment required for council members?
- » What criteria will be used to select leaders and members?
- » Will organization leaders select committee members?

E. Diversity committee management

- » Who will be your council coordinator?
- » What duties will the coordinator perform?

F. Council onboarding and development

- » How will you onboard and prepare your council for success?
- » What will you include in your council training curriculum?
- » Who will provide the training?

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[8] "Diversity and Inclusion Tool Kit." *DRI The Voice of the Defense Bar*, 2015, http://www.dri.org/docs/default-source/dri-white-papers-and-reports/2015-16-diversity-toolkit.pdf?sfvrsn=12. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

» When will you provide the training?

G. Ongoing support

- » What kind of support will the council need and who will provide it?
- » How will the council be monitored?
- » How will the success or failure of the council be measured?

H. Evaluation

- » How and when will the council be evaluated?
- » Who will do the evaluation?
- » How will individual experiences and contributions be evaluated?

I. Incentives

- » How will you reward people who engage in the council?

J. Leaders and members of the diversity council

- » Who are the potential leaders in your councils?
- » What competencies will you look for in potential leaders?
- » Who can be members?
- » How will leaders be recruited?
- » How will members be recruited?
- » Will you have term limits for council members?
- » What is the plan for when council members leave the council or leave the organization?

K. Written guidelines

- » Do your written guidelines and bylaws cover all essential elements of the council?

L. Pilot project

If you are launching the council as a pilot project:

- » Which individuals, groups and offices will be included?
- » How long will the council pilot project last?
- » What procedure is in place to monitor and adjust?
- » How will it be evaluated?

M. Marketing the council

- » What communication vehicles will you use to market the council?
- » Do your materials inform and promote?

» Are your marketing and communications materials designed to attract leaders and members?
» Will you partner with external D&I experts on this project?
» How will you launch your program?
» How will you educate your employees and other stakeholders about the council?

N. Integrating professional development activities

» Is your council program coordinated with other professional development and leadership develop initiatives?
» Will the council coordinator organize any other aspects of professional development/ leadership development?
» Will your organization play a role in coordinating any other professional development activities?

Taking the first step

Taking the first step

Launching a diversity and inclusion council[9]

Launching anything new is tough.[10] Though every project launch is unique and presents an unpredictable set of challenges, following these six steps will help the launch be a succcess.
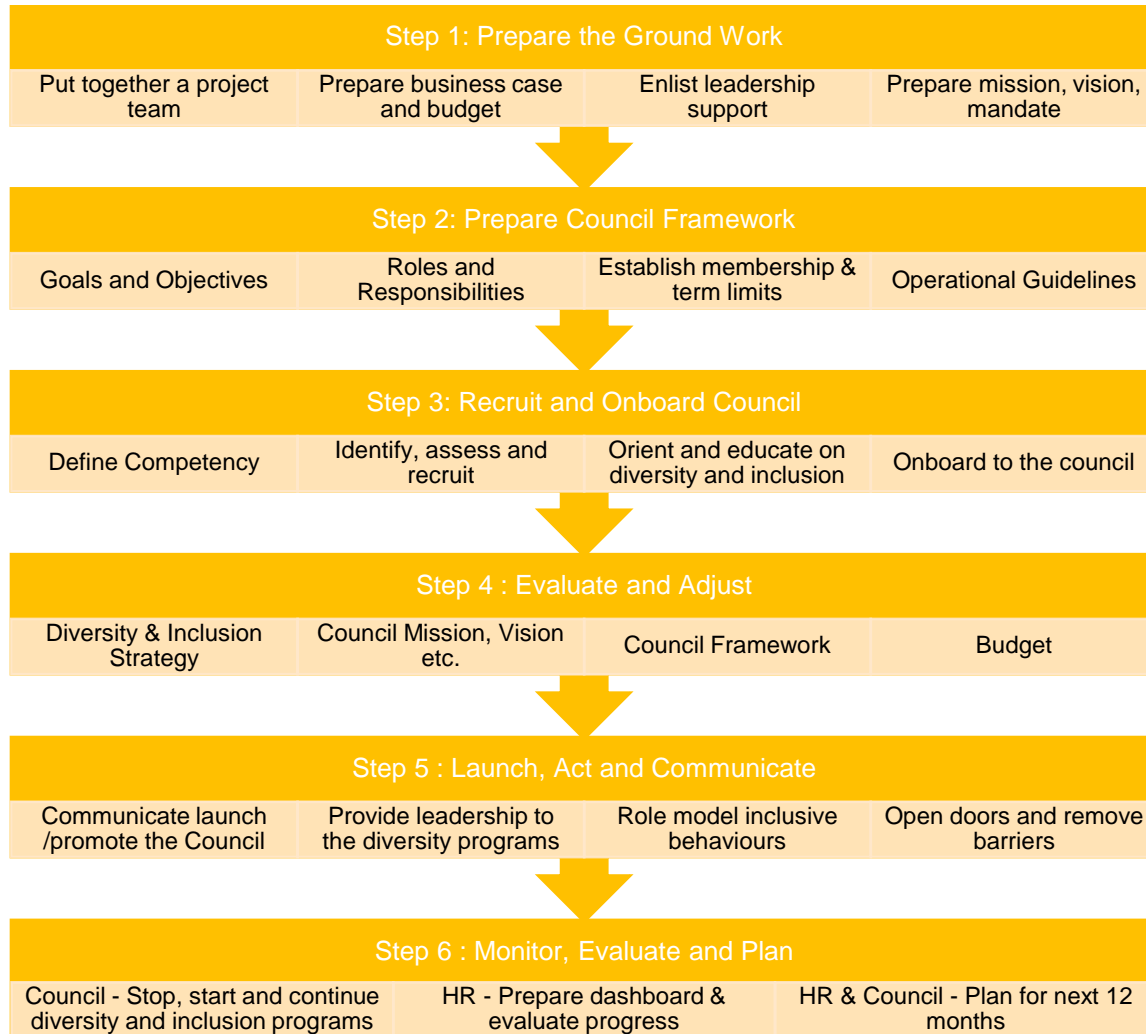
Step 1: Prepare the Ground Work			
Put together a project team	Prepare business case and budget	Enlist leadership support	Prepare mission, vision, mandate

Step 2: Prepare Council Framework			
Goals and Objectives	Roles and Responsibilities	Establish membership & term limits	Operational Guidelines

Step 3: Recruit and Onboard Council			
Define Competency	Identify, assess and recruit	Orient and educate on diversity and inclusion	Onboard to the council

Step 4 : Evaluate and Adjust			
Diversity & Inclusion Strategy	Council Mission, Vision etc.	Council Framework	Budget

Step 5 : Launch, Act and Communicate			
Communicate launch /promote the Council	Provide leadership to the diversity programs	Role model inclusive behaviours	Open doors and remove barriers

Step 6 : Monitor, Evaluate and Plan		
Council - Stop, start and continue diversity and inclusion programs	HR - Prepare dashboard & evaluate progress	HR & Council - Plan for next 12 months

Figure 4. Steps to launch a diversity and inclusion council

9   "Diversity and Inclusion Tool Kit." *DRI The Voice of the Defense Bar*, 2015, http://www.dri.org/docs/default-source/dri-white-papers-and-reports/2015-16-diversity-toolkit.pdf?sfvrsn=12. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.
10   Hyatt, Michael. "7 Steps to Launching your Next Big Project." *Michael Hyatt*, 16 Feb. 2012 https://michaelhyatt.com/7-steps-to-launching-your-next-big-project.html. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

Step 1: Prepare the ground work

a) Start by putting together a team that is focused on launching the council. This team could include your chief diversity officer or the most senior person in the organization with responsibility for diversity and inclusion. Make sure the team that will launch the council has cross-functional representation (not just diversity/HR people).

b) Prepare a business case and proposed budget. Get leadership buy in and support. Use information from this toolkit about the benefits to the organization to present the business case to your leadership.

c) Articulate the mission, vision, values and mandate of the council. Be cognizant of the type of council and its purpose. Ensure that the council's mission, vision, values and mandate are in scope for the type of council you are launching. It is recommended that you call this a draft version and engage the newly formed council in reviewing and revising its mission, vision, values and mandate. Members will have more ownership if they are engaged in creating these foundational guiding principles.

Step 2: Prepare the council framework

a) Think about, discuss and articulate the goals of the council, so that everyone is aligned with the type of council that is created. It is recommended to have about three to five goals. These goals should be written using the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) format. To help achieve the goals, articulate specific objectives that are to be achieved in the current year and next two years. A rolling plan for two to three years can be prepared.
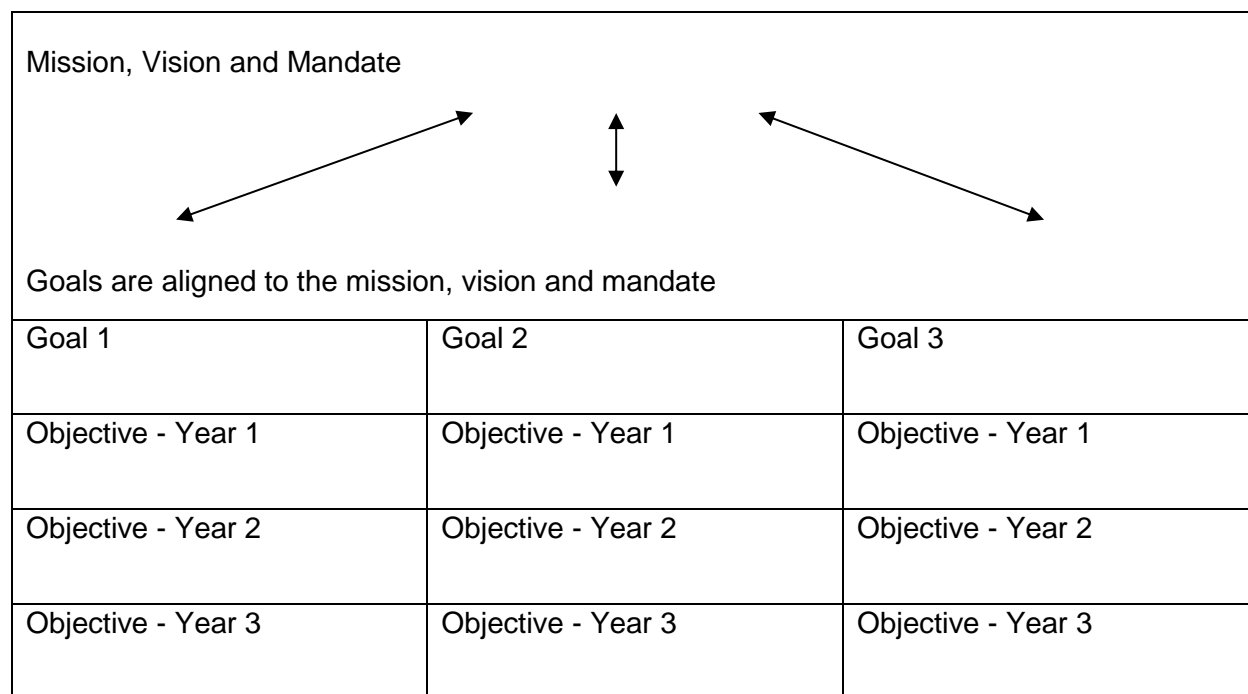
Mission, Vision and Mandate

Goals are aligned to the mission, vision and mandate

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
Objective - Year 1	Objective - Year 1	Objective - Year 1
Objective - Year 2	Objective - Year 2	Objective - Year 2
Objective - Year 3	Objective - Year 3	Objective - Year 3

Figure 5. A framework for council goals

b) Informed, committed leadership as well as a shared responsibility and individual accountability are essential for the success of the council. The effectiveness of the council depends on each member fulfilling his or her role. In addition to members fulfilling their roles, the diversity and inclusion team must also provide guidance, resources and support.[11] An overview of roles and responsibilities of council members is shown in Figure 6 below:

Some roles are chair, co-chair, vice-chair and secretary.

Position	Role and Responsibilities[12]
Chair	To manage meetings of the council. The chair can only take on other specific roles if he/she has been authorized to do so.
Co-chair/vice-chair	To manage meetings of the council in the absence of the chair. The co-chair/vice-chair can only take on other specific roles if they have been authorized to do so. Some councils will rotate managing the meetings if there is a co-chair or vice-chair.
Secretary	Organising and taking council meeting minutes. Finalizing the agenda and sending pre-reads one or two weeks prior to meetings.
Council Member	Councils find it useful to have members take on specific roles at meetings and or deal with matters in implementing the goals of the council and diversity and inclusion. All council members take equal and shared responsibility for the councils' work. Council members can only carry out specific aspects if they are authorized to do so.

Figure 6. Roles and responsibilities of council members

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[11] "Diversity & Inclusion: Framework & Implementation Plan." *The City of Edmonton*, https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/Final_Diversity__Inclusion_Framework__Implementation_Plan.pdf. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

[12] "Roles on the Board." *NCVO Knowhow Nonprofit*, 24 November 2016, https://knowhownonprofit.org/leadership/governance/governance-structure-and-roles/roles-on-the-board. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

c) While it is important to set the criteria for who becomes a member, the length of their term (e.g., 2 to 3 years) and the number of terms allowed (e.g.,1, 2 or 3), it is practical to use judgement and flexibility when managing the council.

d) To enable the smooth operations of the council, key operational guidelines should be articulated. Will the council follow the organization's financial year or Gregorian calendar year? How often are meetings held and on which day and week of the month? It is helpful to clearly set expectations by stating when, either within 1 or 2 weeks prior to meeting, the agenda and pre-meeting reading material will be sent to council members. How many hours are council members required to commit for meetings and events - internal and external? What will be the decision-making process of the council? Will there be a required quorum? Who will be responsible for coordinating the meeting and taking minutes - diversity and inclusion or secretary?[13]

As mentioned in Step 1, it is a best practice to create the framework as a draft that the newly formed council can review and revise.

Step 3: Recruit and onboard the council

a) Leverage the organization's competency framework when recruiting for council members or refer to the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks[14] Leadership and Accountability category to define council competencies. Communicate the council competencies with organizational leaders and interested council members. Socializing the competency needed to be selected to the council will set the standard of the kind of talent that is being targeted for selection.

b) Based on the competencies required to be council members, attract top talent and identify the best people objectively and efficiently leveraging or partnering with the organization's leadership/talent management functions to identify, assess and recruit council members for internal councils. Tap into and partner with diversity and inclusion professional associations (e.g., CCDI) and other networks to recruit external council members. Recruitment can be time-consuming and costly – especially if you get it wrong.

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[13] "Council Committee Structure, Responsibilities & Operational Guidelines." *Cedar Rapids City of Five Seasons*, 2016, http://www.cedar-rapids.org/local_government/city_council/city_council_committees/about_city_council_committees.php. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

[14] O'Mara, Julie, and Alan Richter. "Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks. Standards for Organizations Around the World." *The Diversity Collegium*, 2016, http://diversitycollegium.org/usertools/GDIB-V- 03072016-3-2MB.pdf. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

c) Deepening on the organization's diversity and inclusion journey, internal and external stakeholders' awareness of the diversity and inclusion strategy and goals may vary. Therefore, design and implement an orientation program that covers topics like definitions of diversity, inclusion, employment equity; the organization's diversity and inclusion business case or imperative, strategy, goals, the journey so far, dimensions of diversity, benefits of diversity and inclusion, etc. The orientation can be in person or virtual, half-day or one-day. It could involve a facilitator from the Learning Team or an external expert. Orientation lays the foundation and provides accurate information on the organization's perspective on diversity and inclusion.

d) Set the stage for long-term council members' success through onboarding. Partner with the learning team or an external expert to design the onboarding program. Topics to cover: the role of a council, accountabilities of council members, overview of D&I in the organization, operational details - time commitment, frequency of meetings, internal and external events, inclusive behaviours, etc. This can be done in person or virtually for half a day. Done well, onboarding translates directly to greater council productivity.

Step 4: Evaluate and adjust

It's important that the new council has an opportunity to evaluate and adjust. This will result in better buy-in and ownership. Set aside time and facilitate a council meeting to get members' insight and input on the organization's diversity and inclusion business case and strategy, the council's mission and framework, budget, etc. Based on the feedback, make necessary adjustments. It is recommended that the first council meeting be used to reiterate that it's more than just adjusting, it's evolving into something that the council will own. [15]

Step 5: Launch, act and communicate

a) Launching the council provides visibility of the organizational/leadership commitment to diversity and inclusion. Start by writing down the most important things you want to accomplish from the launch event. These notes will help make other crucial decisions down the line a bit simpler:

» If it doesn't add value for your invitees or help you reach your key goals, do you really need it?
» Decide on a date and venue.
» Determine list of invitees both internal and external.

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[15] Murphy, Brian Gerald. "Plan, Execute, Evaluate, Adjust, Iterate." *Brian Gerald Murphy*, https://www.briangerald.com/plan-execute-evaluate-adjust-iterate/. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

- » Draft an invitation that provides details of the diversity and inclusion event, mission and goals.
- » Prepare a narrative. This is where it gets (more) fun, and trust me, don't move forward without this! Work with your council to prepare the narrative.

Here's how to incorporate the thinking you've done so far and build a thorough brief that will guide you and all those involved with your event. Answer the following questions:

- » What are we? Keep it simple and easy to communicate quickly.
- » Why are we hosting a launch event?
- » To whom are we talking? Think of their mindset, lifestyle, personality, etc. What makes them tick?
- » What do they currently think?
- » What do we want them to think?
- » Get inside their heads! What little (and huge) things can you do to set the perception you want?
- » What's the single most important thing we can tell them?
- » Just one thing! Think tagline.
- » Why should they believe it?
- » What's in it for them?
- » Get some factual support.
- » What should the event feel like?
- » What shouldn't it look like?[16]

Plan the promotion and marketing of the launch using the internal and external communications team.

Before you start, make sure a budget has been assigned and approved.

b) Now that the launch has been successful, focus your energy on engaging the council to lead the various diversity and inclusion initiatives, encourage the council members to display inclusive behaviours (provide training if needed to council members), and leverage council's access and position of influence to open doors and remove barriers to the implementation of the diversity and inclusion strategy.

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[16] Anaejionu, Regina, and Amy Minor. "How to Plan a Killer Business Launch Event (In 6 Steps)." *By Regina*, 31 May 2014, http://byregina.com/killer-business-launch/. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

Step 6: Monitor, evaluate and plan

a) Confront your biggest fears - measure success. Do a start, stop and continue exercise about the council framework and operational guidelines. Is it working effectively and efficiently? What changes and adjustments are needed? Use a scientific approach - both quantitative and qualitative data - conduct a survey, focus group and interview the members.

b) Prepare a dashboard to measure if the set goals have been achieved. Often, this is frightening. Refer to point 8 - Measuring Success.

c) Plan for the next 12 months for the council and the diversity programs/initiatives.

While launching your initiative is a one-time event, constant and never-ending improvement is ongoing. As we said at the beginning, launching any new initiative is tough. But if you understand the steps, it's easier to overcome the resistance and be successful.

Insights from our Community of Practice events

Insights from our Community of Practice events

CCDI facilitates interactive Community of Practice[17] events, which are designed to meet the needs and interests of diversity and inclusion, human rights and equity and human resources professionals. They are also relevant for others who aren't diversity professionals, but might be diversity champions and/or leading diversity councils or networks, for instance. The format blends a presentation with roundtable discussion workshops for experiential peer learning.

CCDI would like to thank all those who participated in our Diversity Council events in Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver. Participants shared valuable insights that we are delighted to share with you here:

What is missing from your diversity and inclusion councils?

» Lack of leadership commitment and involvement in diversity and inclusion and its councils.
» Missed opportunity to clearly demonstrate and communicate the business advantage gained when diversity and inclusion is leveraged.
» Lack of consistent and common body of knowledge on diversity and inclusion at the various levels and functions of an organization.
» Employees sporadically connect and disconnect with how diversity and inclusion enables better self-understanding, introspection, interpersonal and team dynamics as well as organizational competitive advantage. Line of sight is missing.
» Sharing and communicating diversity and inclusion success and impact in a similar language, terminology or dashboard that are used to share organizational/business/ department results.

What needs to be done to improve?

» Leverage the D&I Council platform to involve and engage senior leaders in the organization.
» Design and build a multi-pronged communication plan to inform, educate and inspire internal and external stakeholders to embed diversity and inclusion as a way of operating an organization.
» Identify and develop subject-matter expertise on all aspects of diversity and inclusion across the organization.

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17 "Community of Practice." *Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion*, http://ccdi.ca/events/community-practice/. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

» Tell the diversity and inclusion story in a way that connects and sticks. A simple story is more successful than complicated one. A story, if broken down into the simplest form, is a connection of cause and effect.

The above insights helped shape and influence the contents of the next section.

Maintaining and leveraging diversity councils

Maintaining and leveraging diversity councils

It takes the efforts of multiple stakeholders to maintain and leverage diversity and inclusion councils. These stakeholders help sustain the momentum and success of the diversity and inclusion strategy.

Organizational leadership

The organization leaders - executive directors, CEO, etc., play a critical role by being involved, informed and enthusiastic about diversity and inclusion. They see diversity and inclusion as critical to organizational/business success and the council as a forum through which results can be achieved. Organizational leaders have the authority to allocate resources needed for a council to be successful. Therefore, they need to support the council by providing the necessary financial support, people/human resources, and most importantly, position the diversity and inclusion council as key to organizational success. Organizational leaders should leverage the council and its members to get feedback on organizational strategy and involve the council to execute organizational/business initiatives.

Driving organizational success

Leadership and members of the council need to be self-motivated, passionate and willing to involve and connect with multiple stakeholders both within and outside the organization to drive the diversity and inclusion strategy. They need to understand the strategy/programs/initiatives and the challenges. Then they need to be the agents of change, to remove roadblocks and open the necessary doors. Sometimes, they may be holding the keys. While in their organizational roles, they should look for ways to embed the letter and spirit of the diversity and inclusion strategy to make it relevant and aligned to organizational success.

Program management- diversity and inclusion professionals/human resources

Keeping the diversity and inclusion mandate uppermost in the minds and on the agenda of leaders and employees is the role that the program managers play. They are the supports for the diversity and inclusion strategy through researching, providing subject-matter expertise, connecting to multiple stakeholders, and engaging the council and organizational leaders. They must strategically influence and manage the council(s) to help achieve the goals of the strategy and keep the council(s) accountable to its goals.

Employee resource groups (ERGs) and business resource groups (BRGs)

In some organizations, ERGs and BRGs are part of the diversity and inclusion councils. In this case, the leaders of each ERG sit on the council. They need to use this opportunity to be the voice of employees at the council and leverage their position to bring about the change needed to create an inclusive culture within their organizations. They can also assist in rolling out key

aspects of the diversity and inclusion strategy. They should be prepared to report on progress to their appropriate council on a regular basis.

People managers

Employees experience inclusion everyday through their immediate manager and colleagues. People managers play an important role in encouraging employees and teams in their departments to participate in councils, ERGs, and other diversity and inclusion initiatives, which contribute to the overall strategic goals of the organization. People Managers should be aware of the needs of employees as well as the structures for diversity and inclusion in the organization. They can help communicate concerns to organizational leaders through the various forums/platforms/mechanisms that exist within an organization. People managers can also leverage councils and ERG's as potential developmental opportunities for their employees in the performance review process. A concerted effort should be taken throughout the organization to educate and inform people managers of the benefit of diversity and inclusion to the organization and their role in supporting it.

Employees[18]

There should be a concerted effort to inform all employees about the D&I Strategy and its importance to the organization. Employees should participate in employee engagement surveys and respond as openly and honestly as possible. Employees should be encouraged to actively engage in the diversity and inclusion efforts by joining or starting an Employee Resource Group or getting involved in other initiatives. If an organization has a diversity mentorship program, employees could join as a mentor or mentee. Employees should be encouraged to develop cultural competence to learn about different cultures, races, religions and backgrounds represented by their colleagues. They should be encouraged to drive positive change in the organization and be spokespeople for diversity issues.

Organizational communications[19]

Diversity and inclusion work is a journey, not a destination. It takes time, patience, and perseverance.

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[18] Pedrelli, Robin. "10 Ways Employees can Support Diversity and Inclusion." *Profiles in Diversity Journal*, http://www.diversityjournal.com/14154-10-ways-employees-can-support-diversity-inclusion/. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017

[19] Berk, Wendy. "Diversity and Inclusion: A Case for Communication." *Linkedin*, 17 March 2016, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/diversity-inclusion-case-communication-wendy-berk. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

Organizational communications teams can play a crucial role in sharing the case for diversity and inclusion and how it impacts success throughout an organization. Communications teams play an important role in achieving key diversity and inclusion goals: attract and retain talent, position the organization as an employer of choice and organize operational/marketplace campaigns and conference sponsorships. Best practices include incorporating a diversity and inclusion lens on all communications and ensuring that diversity and inclusion content is woven into multiple types of communications, not just communications specifically about diversity.

Organizational communication introduces employees to a variety of resources and programs designed to benefit them - employee resource groups, diversity talent development and employee engagement surveys. Intranet and other tools are leveraged to showcase diversity and inclusion within the organization.

The organization's external website is often an under-utilized tool. Use it to communicate to prospective employees, clients and customers the great work on diversity and inclusion. This will help build the organization's overall brand.

A multi-channel communications plan is a vital component of the diversity and inclusion strategy.

Measuring success

Measuring success

To measure success, it is important that we map the activities of both the diversity and inclusion programs or initiatives and the councils that lead and support these programs.

Also, it is important that these measurements look at both quantitative and qualitative data, as it can help to interpret and better understand the complex reality of diversity and inclusion.

Diversity and inclusion councils have an opportunity and responsibility to push for the design, collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data so, that, they can make better, informed decisions and measure success.[20]

Diversity and inclusion dashboard

Metrics are key because, as we know, what gets measured gets done.[21]

Success of diversity and inclusion programs or initiatives is possible when organizational leaders are well-informed and make decisions based on both quantitative and qualitative data.

The D&I dashboard[22] is a progress report that provides longitudinal data of the programs and changes made that align to the goals and objectives of the diversity and inclusion strategy.

Figure 7. shows the various data points/types that provide metrics on the success of diversity and inclusion programs or initiatives:
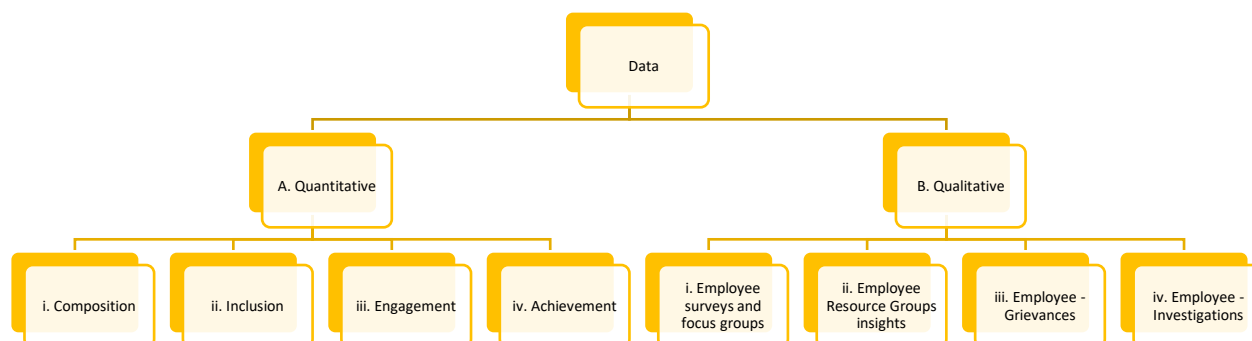

Figure 7. Data points that provide metrics on the success of diversity and inclusion programs

20 Landsinger, Diane, and Barbara Deane. "The Diversity Councils Best Practices Study*." DiversityCentral*, April 2005, http://www.multiculturaladvantage.com/recruit/diversity/diversity-council/diversity-council-best-practices-study.pdf. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

21 Connolly, Katherine, and Boris Groysberg. "Great Leaders Who Make the Mix Work." *Harvard Business Review*, 27 Oct. 2014, https://hbr.org/2013/09/great-leaders-who-make-the-mix-work. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

22 "Diversity Dashboards." *Cornell University Division of Budget and Planning*, http://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/university-factbook/diversity. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

Measurement Tools

Measurement tools can help organizations collect data on the metrics seen in Figure 7. Listed below are a few examples of CCDI Workplace Solution products that can support an organization in this data collection process.

1. **Diversity Meter** (A CCDI Workplace Solutions product)

Diversity Meter™ is both a quantitative and qualitative measurement tool that evaluates two aspects of your workforce:

» Representation of diverse groups (based on self-identification), and
» Feelings of inclusion (based on a Likert scale and on open-ended comments.)

This on-line census and survey is based on the latest research and methodology for measuring representation and feelings of inclusion to support organizations in making evidence-based decisions about their diversity and inclusion strategy.

2. **Maturity Meter** (A CCDI Workplace solution product)

Maturity Meter™ is a qualitative measurement exercise that evaluates the maturity of an organization's diversity and inclusion strategy. In other words, it gives the organization a third-party perspective on the progress or maturity of its efforts to embed a diversity and inclusion approach in its business processes. This on-line questionnaire and survey is largely based on the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks© (by the Diversity Collegium), combined with other recognized standards on specific aspects of diversity in the workplace.

3. **Culture Meter: Identity Assessment** (A CCDI Workplace Solutions product)

Culture Metre™: Identity Assessment is a measurement using a qualitative approach that gathers information on the perspective of individuals in the workforce based on one of the following identity-based groups:

» Leaders
» Women
» Men
» Racialized people
» Aboriginal/Indigenous people

» Persons with disabilities
» LGBT2sQ+
» Newcomers to Canada
» Straight white able-bodied men

This is achieved either through individual interviews, focus groups or a combination of both.

Achievement

Tracking change over time can help an organization assess its progress in achieving certain targets.
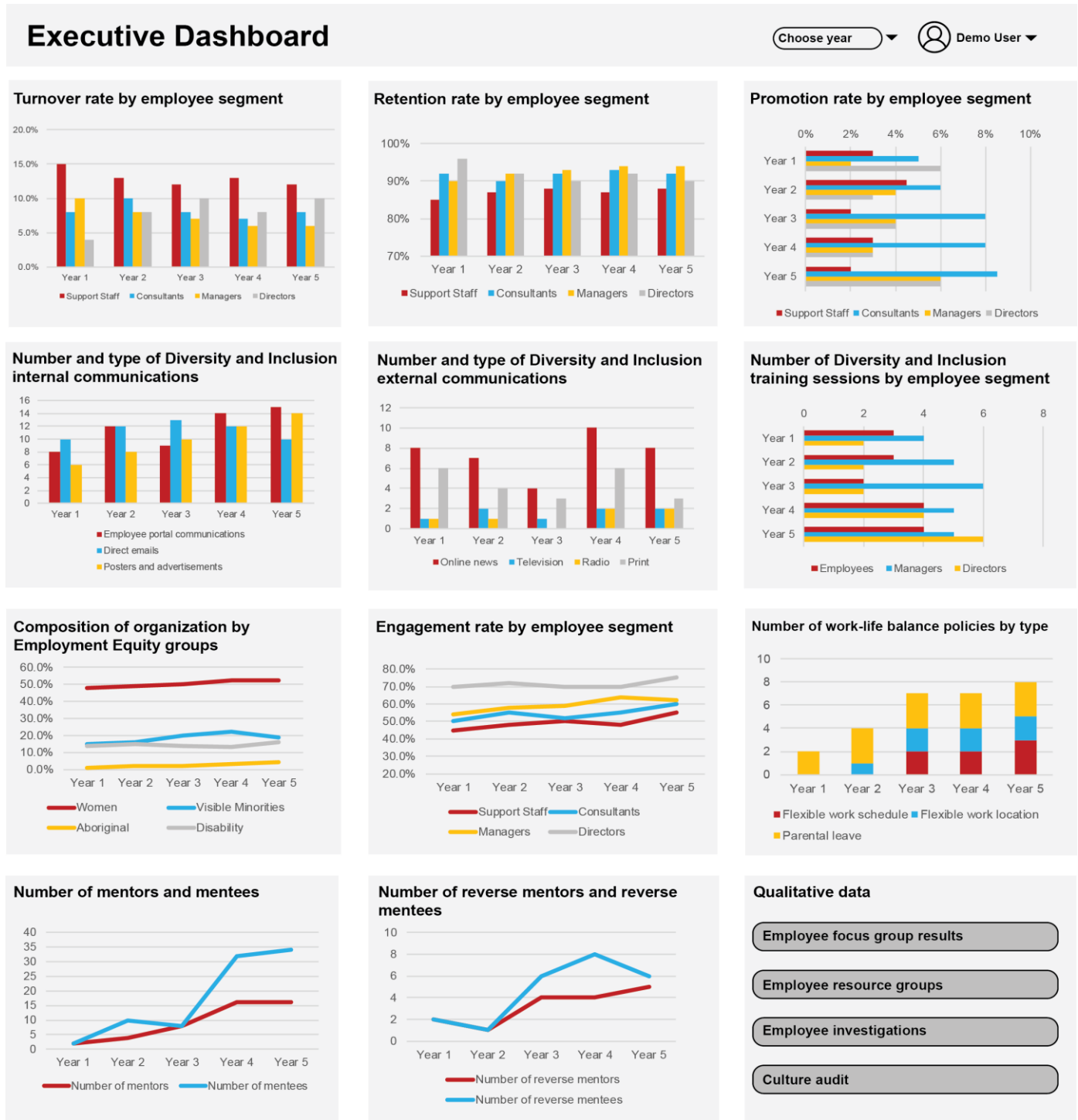

Figure 8. Sample dashboard of various data points that show change over time

Qualitative[23]

Qualitative data is typically descriptive data and verbatim comments, and as such is harder to analyze than quantitative data. Qualitative data is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of groups of populations. It provides information about the "human" side of an issue – that is, the often-contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals.

When starting to build a D&I initiative or when reviewing and assessing it, an in-depth insight in the perception of your employees is key. This is when a specific type of (qualitative) tactic e.g., focus group, surveys and individual interviews becomes relevant. These qualitative measures help to detect detailed dynamics and shortcomings in the organizational and leadership culture. Open and in-depth dialogues about specific aspects of life always generate insights, e.g., about unwritten rules or biases that are embedded in the culture, which otherwise would not have been possible to gain.[24]

Members and leaders of Employee Resources Groups, can also be asked for insights and feedback on diversity and inclusion issues and initiatives.

Grievances, complaints and investigations are a great source of qualitative data as well. We learn from them and use the insights and facts to design, develop and improve diversity and inclusion. Once aggregated, qualitative data can determine overarching themes. See Figure 9. for an example.

Theme	Percentage
Gender bias or exclusion based on Gender	20.00%
Comment about survey itself	18.95%
Leadership is not diverse	12.63%
Perception of reverse discrimination	9.47%
Racial / ethnic bias or exclusion based on Race / Ethnicity	9.47%
Diversity and / or Inclusion initiatives not implemented properly	8.42%

Figure 9. Sample table of overarching themes found in qualitative data

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[23] Mack, Natasha et al. *Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide.* Family Health International, 2005.
[24] "Metrics for 'Inclusion': Employee engagement surveys provide baseline data." *European Diversity Research & Consulting*, 17 Sept. 2015, http://en.diversitymine.eu/metrics-for-inclusion-employee-engagement-surveys-provide-baseline-data/. Accessed 17 Feb. 2017.

Measuring the diversity and inclusion council

Is the council diverse? Are council members engaged with the program? Are council members learning about D&I? Are they enjoying the journey, experience and responsibility? How do we know? Both qualitative and quantitative data will provide the necessary information to the diversity and inclusion team and help to redesign and realign the operations of the council.

Quantitative:

In addition to collecting data on council composition (i.e. which demographic groups are represented in the council in terms of gender, ethnicity, LGBT2sQ+, disability, Indigenous people, etc.) it is recommended that council's success be tracked by using the actual metrics aligned with the specific actions and initiatives identified in your diversity and inclusion strategy. One of the main goals of a diversity and inclusion council is to lead and support the operationalization of the strategy. So, ensuring the goals of the strategy are met is a good way to track the success of the council.

Qualitative:

Document the council members' experience through surveys, interviews, focus groups and the various suggestions and grievances communicated to the diversity and inclusion team. Some data points to capture in this process may include:

1. ***Council Engagement***: How involved and engaged are council members in the council? Are they skipping meetings? Are they achieving action items from previous meetings?
2. ***Council inclusive behaviours***: What specific inclusive behaviours did they learn and are role modeling after joining the council? Are you aligning these behaviours with the organization's diversity and inclusion competencies?
3. ***Council Achievement***: What have the council members achieved both personally and professionally by being part of the council? What is their knowledge and awareness of D&I topics? Do they require additional professional growth and development?

Conclusion

Conclusion

Leaders who commit to diversity build a strong business case that has far-reaching implications for the organization's strategic goals, operational success, corporate citizenship, competitiveness, financial strength and position the organization for success in this ever-evolving marketplace.

Diversity councils can help create and communicate the business case and bigger picture. They serve a powerful purpose of assisting the company's leadership by becoming a trusted advisor and a resource to help accelerate results. Diversity councils provide insight and information that's reflected in the organization and beyond, and they are a sounding board that managers can engage to accelerate the advancement of inclusion and diversity efforts.

Councils provide a means to broadening the horizontal reach of the CEO, the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) and other top leaders across the organization. Middle managers provide the vertical depth of inclusion and diversity into the organization.

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Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)

CCDI has a mission to help the organizations we work with be inclusive, free of prejudice and discrimination – and to generate the awareness, dialogue and action for people to recognize diversity as an asset and not an obstacle. Through the research, reports and toolkits we develop and our workshops, events and workplace consultations, we're helping Canadian employers understand their diversity, plan for it and create inclusion.

CCDI's leadership has a proven model that's cultivated trust as an impartial third party. Our expertise is focused on the topics of inclusion that are relevant in Canada now and the regional differences that shape diversity.

A charitable organization that thinks like a business, we have created a niche with our innovative research technology and data analysis that brings a deeper understanding of Canadian diversity demographics and mindsets at any given moment.

CCDI is grateful for the support of over 100 Employer Partners across Canada.

Contact us

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CCDI is grateful for the ongoing support of its Founding Partners.

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