

Diversity Equity Inclusion and Access

The Benefits and Pitfalls of DEIA Training

By Robert Dodds

I have come to understand why the letters DEIA (in that order) give some people pause. If we rearrange these letters to IDEA then problem solved. We all love a great IDEA. However, I challenge you to find that same affection for DEIA. I've found DEIA has caused some uneasiness because of how it may have been introduced to you. The intention for DEIA is to help foster growth. That growth could come in the form of business, volunteerism, or just basic understanding of people.

Before I continue – allow me to apologize to anyone out there who attended a DEIA training and felt belittled, unworthy, inadequate or any other negative feeling at the conclusion of that training. There are some “trainers” who believe that you must make people feel bad to advance DEIA. This is 180° out of sync of the intention of DEIA. If you're reading this and have been put in this situation or know of someone who was put in this situation, call me so that we can show the proper way to hold a DEIA training.

DEIA is a way to help you grow your business and mindset. Most businesses want to grow; however, the lack of Executive Sponsorship limits the pace at which a company can grow. 60% of companies have metrics in place to measure the success of their diversity and inclusion efforts.

There have been studies to show that DEIA, implemented the proper way, can help you grow your business. “Cognitive diversity can enhance team innovation by up to 20%.” As stated by Quantumworkplace.com. DEIA can increase opportunities for your organization as well.

DEIA gives voice to people who may not be heard because they hadn't been Included in the past. 61% of staff believe diversity and inclusion strategies are beneficial and essential. Allowing Access to information can help give a fresh perspective to any situation. Different backgrounds are one of the keys to DEIA. People of different backgrounds gives Diversity of thought and helps supply a well-rounded view of a given circumstance.

Allow yourself to see DEIA as a place where you can develop leadership traits in people by allowing them to fully participate within your organization.



When you help people understand how your organization makes decisions, those same people can take the lead on projects. Now you have more people involved (in very significant ways) to help grow your business. Instead of Executive Leadership having to take the lead on all projects, they can guide and instruct the additional leaders you've commissioned.

“Include People in the decisions that impact them” Charles Pulliam.

One of the other factors where DEIA can have an impact is on the health of your staff. Today, people are changing jobs at a higher frequency than ever before. One of the reasons for this is health related. The stress of not being in the know or not being included in key decisions

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causes anxiety to some. However, what if you don't know how to foster an inclusive workplace? A company's investment in DEIA training can go a long way towards a healthier environment. It will take more than a 90-minute session to change the culture into one of Inclusion. I suggest contracting with a firm that not only fully understands DEIA but has a curriculum to go with it.

On the other hand – a healthy DEIA scenario fosters cooperation and collaboration, has less turnover, has less poaching of staff and more cross-training of staff. The climate of sensitivity is lessened, and people feel freer to speak their minds. However, this doesn't mean they can use disrespectful language or actions.

You are also fostering an environment where people can bring their whole selves to work. 48% of employees believe that respect is the

most essential factor for a culture of inclusion. This is when you see higher and more efficient levels productivity. The competition for advancement is increased and most of all, your organization is ready to promote from within instead of going outside of the company.

WARNING: Do not let anyone come into your company to do DEIA training who has not asked pertinent questions about the culture of your organization. This is where those negative feelings are compounded. If I don't know where you are as it relates to your culture, I can't create a curriculum to help you. DEIA training is not a one-size fits all scenario. If you are not sure what a full plan looks like give **Solushiens** a call to help you establish a healthy DEIA plan.

Statistics supplied by Quantum Workplace.