

Diversity and Inclusion Survey Toolkit

Part 1: Pre-Survey Best Practices

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Part one of the toolkit covers the importance of D&I surveys and includes tips on how to maximize participation within a department.

Part 2: Conducting a D&I Survey

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Part two of the toolkit discusses conducting a survey. This section contains sample questions and measurable outcomes.

Part 3: Follow-Up and Interpreting Results

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Part Three of the toolkit explains the importance of pre and post survey follow-up, as a means to ensure overall success.

Diversity and Inclusion Survey Toolkit

Part 1: Pre-Survey Best Practices

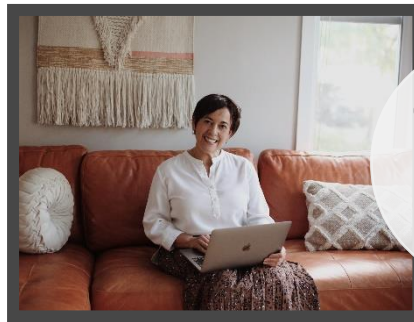
This toolkit is a resource for executive departments seeking to identify areas of opportunity to increase diversity and inclusion (D&I) in their organizations or to measure the outcomes of an already-existing D&I program.

Purpose of D&I Surveys:

Measures are necessary to identify where opportunities exist and if strategies are effective. While those trying to tackle diversity and inclusion in the workplace typically only think of *diversity* as measurable (demographic data, for instance), conducting a D&I survey can prove otherwise. Here are a few ways that surveys can maximize your D&I effort:

Choose your direction – Without solid feedback from the entire department, you could be wasting time and energy going down a path in the wrong direction. Let the feedback guide you.

Surveys allow for productive feedback – It can be extremely difficult to gauge how people are feeling. Some people may not feel comfortable sharing their experience or feedback. Surveys allow people to have a voice at their own pace.



63 percent of U.S. employees think their employer should be doing more to increase the diversity of its workforce. (1)

D&I means *everyone* has a voice – A survey with good follow-up is a great way to give everyone a voice and involve your entire department in the D&I conversation.

Measure your progress – Measurable outcomes help articulate what needs to change, setting goals, progress, and achievement. Tracking the measures can create motivation and transformation in the D&I journey.

Tips for Conducting D&I Surveys:

1. **Identify what is important to the department**– How can a survey help your department? What current challenges and how might a survey identify opportunities or solutions?

2. **Keep it short** – 5-10 questions are sufficient. **Tip:** For a better response rate, provide the completers with an estimate of how long the survey will take to complete.

3. **Ensure confidentiality** – Diversity and inclusion can be a sensitive topic. Ensuring confidentiality can give your respondents peace of mind that will allow for higher participation and constructive feedback.

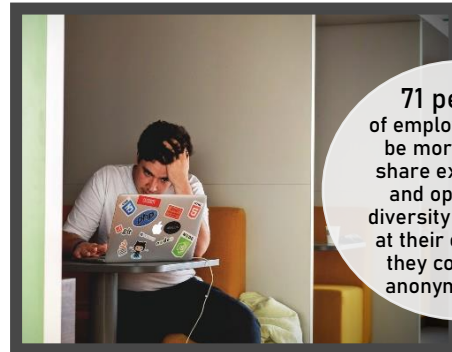
4. **Engage** – Identify D&I champions. These ambassadors can help others engage in the conversation.

Providing an incentive to complete the survey can boost the participation rate.

5. **Know your audience** – Consider using focus groups that represents the diversity of your department to provide input on the questions in the survey *before* it is sent out.

6. **Communication is key** – Think about *who*, *when* and *how* your survey is being promoted. Send out a notice that a survey is coming and why it is important. Don't forget to send out reminders. Lastly, don't forget to follow up (Part 3 of this toolkit).

7. **Avoid response bias** –Asking leading or confusing questions could return inaccurate results.



71 percent
of employees would
be more likely to
share experiences
and opinions on
diversity & inclusion
at their company if
they could do so
anonymously. (1)

Ex. Instead of simply asking “Are you satisfied with our departmental effort to discuss the importance of diversity,” give the respondents a set of options to *rank* their satisfaction:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
<i>How satisfied are you with our departmental effort to discuss the importance of diversity?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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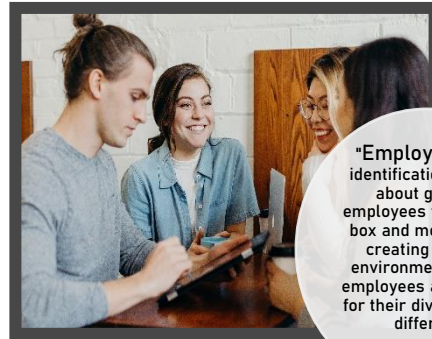
Part 2: Constructing a D&I Survey

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Sample Questions & Measurable Outcomes:

SELF-IDENTIFICATION –

There are multiple dimensions to diversity, including **age, caretaker status, citizenship status, disability status, ethnicity/race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic level and veteran status**. Looking at the survey responses through the lens of these dimensions may help your department pinpoint targeted solutions to improve a certain group's overall satisfaction, productivity and engagement in the workplace.



"Employee self-identification is less about getting employees to check a box and more about creating a work environment where employees are valued for their diversity and differing perspectives..." (2)

"Should my department ask about all of these groups?" Not necessarily. Each department's goals are different and the questions selected for the survey will depend on the areas the department has chosen to focus on.

Self-identification should not be mandatory to complete the survey. There should always be an option not to self-identify.

Example Structure of *Voluntary* Self-Identification Section:

1. Age: Choose an item.
2. Gender Identity: Choose an item.
3. Race: Choose an item.
4. Ethnicity: Choose an item.
5. Salary Level: Choose an item.
6. Please check all that apply to you:

These are fields your department can pull in SAM II.

<input type="checkbox"/> I am a caretaker of one or more children/adults.	<input type="checkbox"/> I am currently serving in a branch of the armed forces.
<input type="checkbox"/> I have obtained a post-secondary (college) degree.	<input type="checkbox"/> I am a veteran of a branch of the armed forces.
<input type="checkbox"/> I identify as a person with a disability.	<input type="checkbox"/> I was not a U.S. citizen at birth.
<input type="checkbox"/> I identify with a religious minority or am not religious.	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not own the home in which I currently reside.
<input type="checkbox"/> I identify as non-heterosexual (Asexual, Bisexual, Gay, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> I identify as non-cisgender (Trans, Non-binary, etc)

“Should I ask for employee demographics at the *beginning* or the *end* of a survey?”

There is no “right answer.” Consider how employees have engaged with demographic questions in the past? Consult those in your department, such as HR or middle management. Some factors to keep in mind are:

1. If you are surveying a specific segment of the workforce, place demographic questions at the beginning. Doing this puts the respondent in the mindset to respond as a member of the community in question.
2. Place demographic questions at the end if a segment of the workforce tends to react negatively or skeptically towards demographic questions. Respondents may be less likely to abandon the survey if the demographic question section is at the end.
3. Keep the questions relevant to the goals of the survey. If the data is not needed, don’t ask.

To protect the identity of respondents, do not publish results if less than 10 people fall into a category.

CATEGORIES & SAMPLE QUESTIONS -

In the following section are five broad categories of D&I topics, each containing sample questions and what your department could learn by surveying that category.

Diversity – “anything that sets one individual apart from another, including the full spectrum of human demographic differences as well as the different ideas, backgrounds, and opinions people bring” (3)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I see others like me at work.					
I see others like me in leadership positions in my department.					
My department values diversity and difference.					
I feel diversity is important to my immediate team’s success.					
I feel that work and recognition is spread evenly within my team, regardless of one’s identity.					

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES – Depending on the amount of demographic data collected in the self-identification portion of the survey, asking diversity-related questions can be invaluable in identifying where your department may be lacking representation, how particular communities within the workforce feel about their workplace experience, and where improvements such as diversity training, Employee Resource Groups and policy changes should be considered. In addition to diverse hiring, promotion and demographic numbers, a diversity survey can help quantify how satisfied your department’s workforce is concerning D&I, which is vital to employee retention and morale.

Inclusion – “the degree to which employees are embraced and enabled to make meaningful contributions” (4)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My opinion is asked for at work.					
My opinion is heard and respected at work.					
I am invited to contribute on my team.					

I am included in decisions that affect my work.					
I have experienced unwelcome, hurtful and/or offensive comments from someone in my department.					
I have experienced discrimination in my department, based on my background.					
People of all backgrounds have an equal opportunity to advance in this department.					
I am given the tools, resources and opportunities I need to succeed in my team.					
Rules within my department are applied fairly to everyone.					
The organization makes an effort to provide a level playing field for all to succeed.					

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES – Feeling included is vital to all employees' success and has a direct impact on performance, retention and striving to become a leader. In addition, employees want the tools they need to perform on a level playing field. This is especially true for employees of diverse backgrounds. Inclusion is an active process, and tools and knowledge like psychological safety, active listening, antidiscrimination trainings, and so on actively promote inclusion in the workplace. Moderate to high numbers of respondents disagreeing with the above statements could indicate that the department should put more effort behind promoting an inclusive workplace.

Belonging – “(the) feeling of being accepted as one’s authentic self without fear of different treatment or punishment” (6)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel my unique background is valued.					
I feel I am respected and treated fairly.					
I feel my career development is supported in my department.					
I feel comfortable talking about my identity at work.					
I have felt the need to play down or “cover” part of my identity at work.					
I feel that “extra work” is fairly divided within my team.					

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES – If inclusion is an action, belonging is a *feeling*. Belonging is the feeling that results from the workforce actively engaging in inclusion. When an employee feels as though they belong, they are able to bring their whole self to work, and studies show that they are more engaged, less stressed and their performance improves (6). Measuring belonging is essential to understanding whether your department’s inclusion efforts are taking hold and truly making a positive impact.

D&I & Leadership –

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Leaders in the organization see D&I as important.					

Leaders in the organization are comfortable admitting mistakes and learning from them.					
If I raised a concern, I know leaders in the organization would do the right thing.					
Leaders in the organization know how to effectively manage a diverse workforce.					
Leaders in the organization have a growth mindset – I am expected to make mistakes and learn from them.					

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES – Leadership commitment and vocal support for advancement of D&I efforts is essential. On the one hand this support makes D&I feel like a core value within the department and puts weight behind the entire effort: D&I will be viewed more as an imperative and less as an elective. On the other hand, employees want to know that their leaders practice what they preach. The above questions are a sample of how leadership is viewed in the context of D&I.

Feedback on D&I Efforts -

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I know why D&I is important to me and my success.					
I know why D&I is important to my team's success.					
I know why D&I is important to my department's success.					
I know how I could get involved or give feedback for my department's D&I efforts.					
I am satisfied with the department's D&I efforts.					
I know where to find my department's Workforce Diversity Plan.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
I know which individuals or groups are leading my department's D&I efforts.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
I have participated in [insert specific D&I effort] in the last six months.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES – It is vital to ensure that the D&I efforts a department undertakes reach the intended audience and that they are on board. The questions in this category are endless – satisfaction with current D&I efforts, feelings towards future D&I efforts and whether or not the broader workforce is understanding D&I.

OPEN FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

In addition, asking 2-3 optional open feedback questions at the end of a survey can allow respondents to give feedback and voice an opinion that cannot be expressed in a yes/no or Likert scale question.

Examples include:

1. What topic(s) concerning diversity and inclusion would you or your team like to learn more about?
2. What ideas do you have for events or initiatives to further diversity and inclusion in our department?
3. How can department leadership better promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace?
4. What additional feedback do you have for our department concerning diversity and inclusion?

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BEFORE FINALIZED RESULTS -

IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION

While sending out a D&I survey may feel like the finish line, there is follow-up work that must be done in order to achieve the best possible results. Before the survey deadline arrives and the results are in, it is important to **encourage the entire department to take the survey**. This will vary depending on the makeup of the workforce. This could include:

- Providing an incentive to complete the survey – *this also helps get results from everyone, not just those who want to air their grievances*
- Openly communicating the anonymity of survey results
- Sending reminders through various mediums (email, posters, virtual events)
- Champions reminding those around them through word of mouth (at meetings, in person)
- Making it very explicit how quick and easy the survey is to complete
- Coordinating time for employees that don't have an email address or a computer to access the survey
- Ensuring that team members with disabilities have the tools they need to complete the survey
- Making it apparent who the survey is coming from and answer any questions employees may have
- Ensuring transparency as to what the goal of the survey is, when the results will be shared with the department and what will be done with the results – and how everyone's voice should be heard!
- Making the survey a fun competition between teams and/or departments
- Thanking the workforce for completing the survey through something as small as a follow-up email or as big as a party

AFTER RESULTS ARE FINALIZED –

FRAMING

Once the results of the survey are available, it will be important to go into analyzing them with a few points in mind.

1. Sample Size: How many people completed the survey? If only a small percentage of the department took part, are the results truly credible? How can participation be increased for next time?
2. Causation vs. Correlation: It will be easy to quickly jump to conclusions when looking at the data, but numbers *can* lie. In the summer, both sales of ice cream and instances of sunburn increase, but eating ice cream doesn't cause sunburn. These two things represent a correlation, while hot, sunny weather in summer represents the causation.

BENCHMARKING

An important step that should be taken when looking at the results is **benchmarking**. This means comparing the results against a suitable measure, which varies depending on the circumstances. If this is the first time a survey has gone out, there may be some research involved to determine target. Asking the same questions over time to compare to previous measures is a strategy and allows you to track D&I progress.

Benchmarking and goal setting must be realistic. Setting unattainable goals can lead to loss of motivation and progress. A combination of ambitious long-term goals and realistic short-term goals is needed to make incremental advancement towards a diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce.

DETERMINE ACTIONABLE OUTCOMES

After comparing the survey results to departmental benchmarks, it is important that these results don't just sit and become a talking point in a few meetings, but rather help guide a department in determining where their D&I efforts are succeeding and what workforce diversity issues need addressed.

Whether addressed by a focus group, in a series of follow-up meetings of a department's D&I Council, or in a consultation with external subject matter experts, it will be important to determine appropriate actionable items based on the results of the survey, keeping in mind what other comparable organizations have done to create proven success. What these items are varies greatly depending on the department, but a few possible solutions include:

- **Focus Groups** –organizing a focus group allows more in-depth discussion and problem solving
- **Trainings** to address an identified opportunity
- Seek external **subject matter experts or consultants**
- Start a **mentoring initiative** or something as informal as a **coffee date program**
- **Leadership development** specific to D&I
- Gathering a group of people interested in serving on a **D&I Council**
- Starting **Employee Resource Groups** for both an increased sense of community and passion for improving the work experience of individuals of a particular background

SHARE RESULTS AND TEASE THE NEXT SURVEY

The final step of the D&I survey includes sharing the results with the broader workforce. Sending out a summary of the data, including both the positive and less-than-positive results, as well as the actionable items that resulted from the survey, will convey conviction and dedication to making positive change in the area of D&I. This could even be shared as a 3-in-6 plan. In addition, it would also be recommended to tease the next survey, which should take place either the following quarter or in six months' time, in order to emphasize that D&I is an ongoing responsibility, not a one-time event.

Thorough follow-up after the D&I survey will not only lead to useful results, but will also show the entire department that D&I is valued and a part of the department's mission, thereby planting the seeds for even more participation and enthusiasm when the next survey is rolled out.



Remember to be forthcoming and transparent with the survey results, and to have a diverse group of eyes interpret them!

Sources:

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