MEASURING THE INVISIBLE

WHY AND HOW YOU SHOULD MEASURE INCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

A growing number of leading organizations are prioritizing Diversity, hiring D&I officers and investing in related initiatives — and for good reasons. It's more than the "right thing to do." The benefits of diversity are well documented.

Diversity has been repeatedly linked to improved business performance.[1] Reports by Mercer,[2] Forbes,[3] Catalyst and others[4] have all concluded that a diversified workforce drives greater innovation and business growth. It can also help your team stand out to potential candidates, recruit top talent[5] and improve retention.

Diverse companies are 35% more likely to financially outperform the market

Organizations are spending billions of dollars[6] in an attempt to move the needle. They're publishing diversity reports and investing in unconscious bias trainings, pay analyses, interventions in recruiting processes, employee surveys and more.

But within most organizations these diversity initiatives, while well intentioned, are failing to effect significant and lasting change. Even with clear values, commitment from leadership and access to resources, very few companies can point to significant, quantifiable progress. A study conducted by Boston Consulting Group[7] found that 97% of respondents reported that their companies had a D&I program in place, yet only 25% of them felt they had personally benefited from it.

Current approaches simply aren't enough.

MEASURING DIVERSITY IS NOT ENOUGH

"Hiring people from diverse groups is easier than successfully addressing the deep-rooted cultural and organizational issues that those groups face in their day-to-day work experience."

Boston Consulting Group

Business leaders often ask us for specific suggestions on what they can do to increase diversity. Sometimes the answer surprises them: *increasing diversity should not be your goal.*

This isn't to say that diversity is not important; however, in order to drive meaningful and lasting change the focus needs to shift away from diversity and toward inclusion.

Consider your typical diversity report, that highlights the demographic breakdown of a team by a few dimensions such as gender, ethnicity, LGBTQ+, veteran status, age and disability. Collecting this data, tracking your growth (or lack of growth) year-to-year and reporting your progress publicly can be positive signals to candidates or employees from underrepresented groups. But a diverse team isn't necessarily an inclusive one. What's more, these reports, and the initiatives put in place in response to them, often don't take into account intersectionality, the concept of overlapping and intersecting identities that can affect the likelihood of experiencing bias and discrimination.

MEASURING DIVERSITY
IS NOT ENOUGH

Setting arbitrary goals and hiring candidates to simply improve the numbers reflected in diversity reports isn't going to serve those individuals or the organization well. Newly hired candidates from underrepresented communities often feel like they don't fit in and aren't provided the same opportunities to grow within the organization. As a result, they may have low job satisfaction, low engagement and decreased performance. Eventually, they will leave. This affects your company's churn rate, overall employee satisfaction and performance, and can spark "diversity fatigue"[8] and backlash.

These unintended, negative ripple effects are all too common. Without a concerted approach that considers inclusion as well as diversity, organizations risk focusing on the wrong metrics and investing in the wrong pieces of the puzzle.

Making your company inclusive is a key ingredient of your organization's success. In fact, it is inclusion that drives diversity and business performance.[9]

INCLUSION → **DIVERSITY**

INCLUSION → **BUSINESS PERFORMANCE**
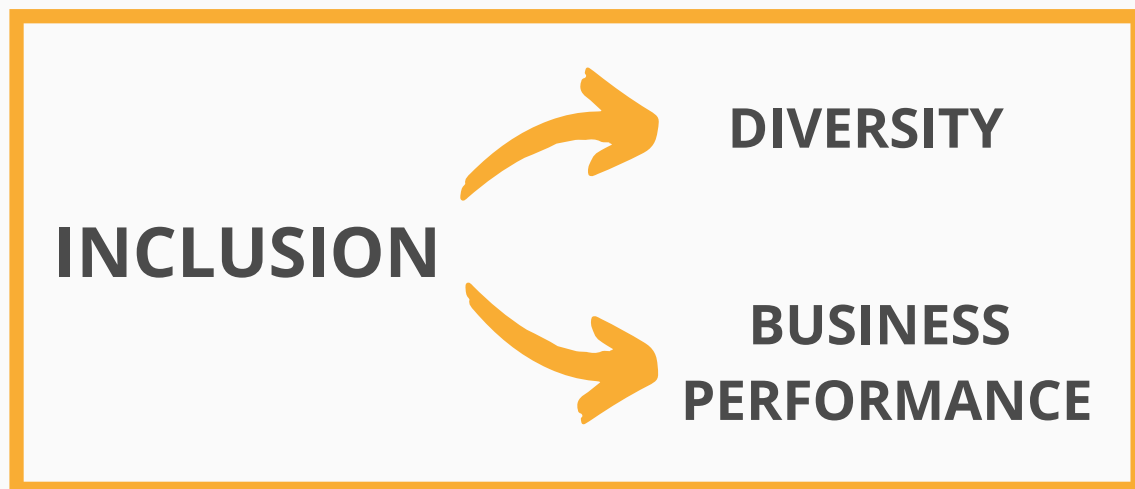
UNDERSTANDING INCLUSION

The words "diversity" and "inclusion" are often referenced together as if they are one concept. But that's not the reality and minimizes the importance of each one on its own.

Diversity is easy to define as a measure of how an individual's personal characteristics differ from those of the normative majority of their organization. Inclusion, on the other hand, is more difficult to understand. While some formal studies have attempted to give a clear definition of inclusion,[10] more often than not inclusion is defined in qualitative terms, such as this oft-quoted phrase by Vernā Myers: "diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance."

Part of the challenge in defining it, is that inclusion is largely invisible. Oftentimes, as discussed in a recent study by Catalyst,[11] one only notices inclusion in its absence, when one is feeling excluded. This is a primary reason why business leaders tend to be less aware of biases within their organizations. Inclusion is particularly invisible to those who enjoy it.[12]

But if inclusion is invisible, how do we measure it?

DIVERSITY

A measure of how an individual's personal characteristics differ from those of the normative majority of an organization

INCLUSION

The act of ensuring that people's experiences within an organization are not impacted negatively as a result of their personal characteristics

INTERSECTIONALITY

The recognition that differing from the majority along multiple personal characteristics (e.g., race and gender) compounds the negative impact of being excluded within an organization

QUANTIFYING INCLUSION

Aleria has developed a framework for quantifying inclusion and uncovering inclusion-related challenges and opportunities that exist within your organization.

Our framework effectively categorizes individual workplace experiences that affect the satisfaction, engagement and performance of each employee. In particular, we look to identify specific "incidents of exclusion", *i.e.*, negative situations that employees experience as a result of their ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability or other personal traits.

We then categorize these experiences into Categories of Inclusion.

> **When you visit a doctor's office they don't just ask you "on a scale of 1 to 10, how healthy do you feel?"**
>
> Instead, they give you a questionnaire that includes a lengthy list of symptoms and diseases, and ask whether you are currently experiencing or have previously experienced any of them. This information helps the doctor assess your overall health and, more importantly, it helps the doctor diagnose specific problems and suggest recommended courses of action.
>
> When measuring inclusion within an organization, we use a similar approach to uncover the most pressing concerns and the best initiatives to prioritize for impact.

An effective way to assess the level of inclusion within your organization is to ask your employees whether and how often they experience the incidents captured by the Categories of Inclusion. This can be done through a survey or interviews.

Our 9 Categories of Inclusion are a great starting point for unlocking the full potential and impact of inclusion within your organization.

CATEGORIES OF INCLUSION

Access & Participation

Being able to speak with anyone in the organization, access to leadership and resources, ability to interact across silos, accessibility is prioritized in the creation of spaces and procedures

Skills Use & Assignments

Being included in projects that leverage your skills, clear metrics and processes for assignment distribution, tasks being assigned based on skills or capability, participation in strategic initiatives

Learning & Growth

Regular and consistent performance reviews, support for professional development, support to attend conferences and professional events

Compensation & Benefits

Clear and transparent compensation structure, being paid adequately for performance, salary increases with promotions or increased responsibility, having access to higher-paying roles

Career Opportunities

Clear, consistent and fair promotion processes, leadership willingness to discuss career opportunities, support for lateral moves within the organization, access to higher roles

Work-Life Balance

Availability of flex time and remote work options, assistance with caregiving (child care, elder care, etc.), comprehensive family leave policies

Recognition

Appreciation for tasks indirectly related to your role, recognition of contributions during performance reviews, acknowledgment of participation and contributions in meetings

Respect

Diverse perspectives are encouraged and respected, being comfortable sharing your unique personal traits openly, not being the subject of microaggressions, not being subjected to sexual harassment
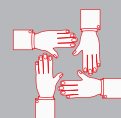
Workplace Interactions

Not being interrupted in meetings, having your opinion count, making sure that administrative tasks are assigned equally, assurance that one's role is as significant as the roles of colleagues

BENEFITS OF THIS FRAMEWORK

There isn't a one-size-fits-all solution for Diversity & Inclusion. Each organization is unique and must analyze its processes, policies and procedures to identify the greatest opportunities to foster inclusion internally.

Our framework was designed to help leaders determine the level of inclusion within their organization, and its impact on overall performance. Quantifying inclusion in this way uncovers the specific experiences that impact individual employees on a day-to-day basis, strategically categorizes them and then pinpoints which of them most affect overall employee satisfaction.

Instead of reactive interventions and generic trainings, organizations can intentionally and strategically improve the experiences of their entire workforce and build a stronger, more connected culture that fosters greater employee satisfaction and superior company performance.

Using our framework, you will be able to focus your resources on the Categories of Inclusion and specific inclusion initiatives that will drive the most significant improvements. As a result, your organization can:

Reduce the cost and risk of trial and error approaches to D&I

Estimate how much money you can save by implementing inclusion initiatives

Attract & retain diverse talent, improve employee satisfaction and reduce churn

INCLUSION ASSESSMENT

Is your company committed to improving Inclusion and increasing employee satisfaction? Our Inclusion Assessment can help you identify the opportunities that exist within your organization.

1	2	3	4
Introductory Workshop	***Discovery Workshop***	***Exploration & Analysis***	***Inclusion Report***
Learn key concepts and leverage our methodology to engage and educate stakeholders	Collaboratively uncover and discuss biases, interactions and experiences that could be causing individuals to feel excluded	Gather and organize knowledge, expertise and data, using our software simulations as a guide	Clarify how your organization can leverage inclusion to increase overall performance & employee satisfaction

This 4-part process was designed to:

- Engage your entire organization in creating an inclusive culture
- Establish a consistent, foundational understanding of the value of D&I
- Uncover structural and procedural biases that are negatively impacting your employees' satisfaction and business performance
- Examine the unique day-to-day experiences of individuals within your organization
- Identify where your team should focus for the most meaningful impact

To learn more, click below or visit https://aleria.tech/inclusion-assessment.

LEARN MORE

RELATED RESOURCES

Looking for more? These articles explain our approach in more detail:

- ▶ **Companies Should Stop Focusing on Diversity**

- ▶ **Eight Reasons Why We Need To Focus On Inclusion Rather Than Diversity**

- ▶ **Inclusion is Invisible: How to Measure It**

- ▶ **Inclusion is Invisible: What You Should Measure**

If you found this guide and the articles above useful, you'll likely enjoy our weekly, hand-curated D&I newsletter. Each Tuesday we highlight new reports and studies, interesting insights, valuable resources and upcoming events and opportunities. **To ensure you receive future issues, click the box below or visit https://aleria.tech/newsletter.**

SUBSCRIBE

About Aleria

We take the guesswork out of Diversity & Inclusion.

Our human-centric approach was developed out of years of research and uniquely leverages behavioral science and computer simulations to impact the way people think about Diversity & Inclusion, and, more importantly, what they do about it.

Have questions? Send us an email at info@aleria.tech.

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