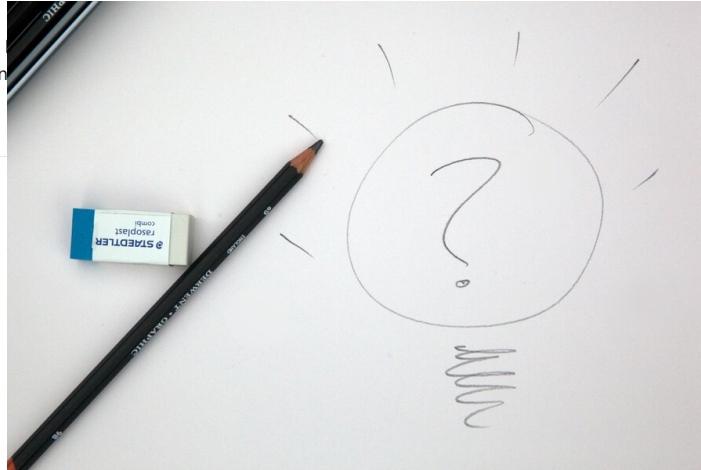


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5 Reasons DEI Initiatives Fail



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Open Immersive Reader

With the exception of a few organizations that are nailing it, DEI efforts across the board have spotty, and sometimes completely ineffective results. This isn't just bad for POC, women, and other marginalized groups - it's bad for business and it's bad for the future of DEI. If DEI is seen as pointless or ineffective, the traction it's gained over the past few years will be lost. Here are 5 reasons DEI commonly fails, and what to do about it:

1. Your plan is shortsighted. A training or a "diversity hire" here and there is not a long term plan. DEI strategy means that DEI is folded into your business model and existing goals in a way that will take time, but will also make a legitimate and long lasting impact. Play the long game. Inclusive culture and top to bottom diversity doesn't happen overnight and might not be glamorous and "Instagram worthy", but the investment is worth it.

2. Ignoring the "I". Achieving diversity is a good first step. Equity is great, too. But do all your employees feel included? Is your organization a cohesive team? You've given everyone a seat at the table, but does everyone have a meal? In other words, hiring a diverse team is only the first step. Everyone should have the tools and knowledge to be successful, and the ability to grow and receive promotions and raises. This may mean different things for different employees. Everyone has different barriers to success, and inclusion means figuring out what they are and how to overcome them. Inclusion involves evaluating your culture, creating space for everyone to speak up and express their needs, and clear communication of expectations.
3. Not enough/the wrong resources. DEI trainers and training programs are a dime a dozen these days. The market is filled with generic videos and training material, and it's easy to play a power point at your next team meeting and call it a day. But DEI requires more than that. Time is also a vital DEI resource, and if you don't have someone on staff with a wide open schedule to dedicate to developing DEI, you don't have that resource. You can't just assign DEI to your HR manager who already has a full plate and expect results. For larger organizations, creating a DEI coordinator position may be the best bet. Otherwise outsourcing and gaining an entirely new perspective from a DEI professional will help your entire company work smarter, not harder.
4. Lack of commitment. How are you holding yourself accountable to your DEI commitments? DEI should be no less important and well thought out than any other business goals. It needs to be embraced and modeled by leadership. Additionally, committing to DEI means a commitment to creativity and thinking outside the box. If current hiring processes aren't yielding a diverse candidate pool, the solution is to pivot and get more creative about hiring, not to give up.
5. Lack of communication. At FIG, we talk a lot about "Bob". Bob is a white, male employee or manager that just can't get behind all of these DEI initiatives. Why?

Because Bob feels left out, and he also thinks employees of color are getting too much attention or unearned raises and promotions. In short, he feels threatened by the new “inclusive” culture in the organization and as a result, he challenges everyone regardless of validity and refuses to be a team player. But what if someone actually talked to Bob and got his input? Does Bob even understand the “why” behind these initiatives and mandatory diversity training, or did everyone assume since they don’t directly involve Bob, he wouldn’t care? Talk to your employees and give them a reason to buy into DEI. Explain the benefits of DEI and explain the consequences of ignoring DEI.

DEI has become imperative for success. Companies that can't implement a good DEI policy will pay for it, and their culture will suffer. Job seekers are more empowered and aware than ever, and consumers are similarly dialed in to the brands they support and the establishments they frequent. Taking the time to ensure your DEI strategy is set up for long term success is imperative and well worth it.

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