Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Metrics  ·  9 min

# 9 Ways to Measure the Success of Your DEI Strategy in 2023

How is your DEI strategy measuring up?

*by* **Sharon Hurley Hall** *on* **December 16, 2022**

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## QUICK TAKE

**Embed DEI into your business and always consider intersectionality**

**Teams should measure dollars spent on DEI, employee participation in initiatives, and retention of diverse employees**

**Leadership involvement and buy-in can be measured and tied to compensation**

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In the past two years, the area of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) has become top of mind for many executives. But how do you know if you're doing it right? See insight from DEI professionals on what you should be measuring and why.

## Before You Start Measuring — Think About Intersectionality

As DEI has continued to evolve, one issue that more chief diversity officers should pay attention to is intersectionality, says former CDO and founder of DSRD Consulting, Dr. Sam Rae. "To use a lens of intersectionality means to center those who are most marginalized. In other words, focusing on those who have the most intersecting need of resources and accommodations allows you to create equity for everyone and create a comprehensive strategy."

This means consistently reviewing, auditing, and assessing policies and practices, via some of the metrics shared below. Dr. Rae adds, "Using intersectionality as a focus in your DEI strategy can help you create a more inclusive and equitable workplace that better meets the needs of all your employees and customers."

In addition, think about aligning DEI into your business strategy, rather than thinking of it as an "initiative," says workplace inclusion strategist Christie Lindor, CEO of Tessi Consulting. "DEI concepts shouldn't be seen as something separate but rather interconnected, core values that help drive everything done within the company."

She adds DEI needs to be a "team sport," with everyone playing a role in creating an equitable and inclusive organization — not just DEI executives or the HR department.

Next, have your DEI committee set benchmarks. That includes recording which applications your team uses, insights into the hiring process, current diversity in the workforce, and more. With that baseline, you can easily figure out where you need to improve.

With that in mind, there are a lot of areas you can measure. See the best places to start

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# 1. Dollars Allocated to DEI

While DEI is not all about the money, creating a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion takes funding. In fact, Syndio reports that for 81% of companies, workplace equity programs will maintain or increase importance in 2023. Significant and consistent funding, coupled with tangible achievements, is one way to measure success.

# 2. Number of Diverse Employees Across the Organization

Companies often focus on pipeline initiatives, aimed to increase the number of applicants from underrepresented groups. However, this metric is not enough. More importantly, companies should measure what percentage of underrepresented candidates get hired.

Dr. Rae also suggests: "Analyze your hiring and promotion data to identify any disparities or gaps based on intersectional identities. And conduct regular surveys or focus groups with employees from underrepresented groups to gather their feedback and input on DEl initiatives."

To broaden the hiring process, you can post ads on sites that cater to the audiences you want to attract, like publications for minorities in business or job boards at historically Black colleges. You can also include language that specifically encourages applications from people who might not tick all the boxes.

Be aware that diverse disabilities, gender identities, sexualities, and even ethnicities aren't always easy to categorize or see.

# 3. Percentage of Diverse Employees in Leadership Positions

If all your employees from underrepresented groups are in entry-level roles, your company isn't getting it right. Look to champion diversity at every level of the organization — including senior leadership. In fact, diversity at the top has business benefits. If your leadership team includes people with different backgrounds and

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experiences, your company is more likely to perform better financially. According to a McKinsey & Company study, diverse companies are [36% more profitable](#) than less diverse companies. Potential hires will also be looking at these metrics, as [Glassdoor](#) research reveals.

"This work doesn't end until each and every person feels reflected in their leadership," says Horacio Rozanski, [Booz Allen Hamilton](#) CEO and president. The technology consulting company states that eight of nine leadership team members and eight of 11 board members are women and/or people of color.

As part of your push towards being more inclusive, ask yourself:

> How many people from diverse backgrounds are making it to leadership roles?
> How long is it taking them to do so?
> Is there a difference between the average career trajectory of white employees and other employees?

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## 4. How Long Employees Stay with the Company

One of the best metrics of how your company is doing on DEI is increased retention and engagement, says Mylena Sutton, founder of employee training company Voltage Vista. If your employees from diverse backgrounds tend to stick around, it means that they're happy and see opportunities within the company.

Retention is particularly telling in organizations lacking diversity. "In largely homogenous organizations, employee feedback…may not be reliable sources of information because people believe…that their feedback can't be given anonymously and fear retaliation," Sutton explains. "Therefore, their feedback shows up as their decision to leave, especially if they have options [at other companies]."

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## 5. Number of Mentorship Programs and Hours Spent on Mentorship

[The Association for Talent Development](#) points out that mentoring is a proven way to create more inclusive work environments, help employers meet their DEI goals, and increase diverse representation in leadership. Leading companies offer mentorship programs designed specifically for minority employees. For example, Duke University Health System offers an annual ["speed mentoring" program](#) through its affinity group, [Women Executives: Learning, Empowering and Developing](#), as part of their mission to help advance females to leadership roles in the workplace.

[Michelle Crockett](#), chief diversity officer of law firm [Miller Canfield](#), also recommends tracking the total [number of hours](#) mentors spend with mentees. That can help determine how often mentorship programs are utilized.

## 6. Number of Incident Reports

Do employees feel comfortable reporting racism and other -isms, microaggressions, hate speech, and bullying? It's important to note these incidents. You'll want to see the numbers of reports decline each year, as your DEI training and strategy take root. Incident reports are one metric that speaks to the employee experience, which we'll look at in more detail below.

## 7. Participation In and Impact of DEI Training

While every DEI strategy includes [some form of training](#), teams must make sure that sessions lead to organizational change. To measure impact, Lindor says, teams must discuss how the training will be assessed, reinforced, and used on an ongoing basis after the session ends.

Gartner, a technology research and consulting firm, recommends that teams track employee and leadership participation, number of training courses offered, and ratings of the different courses. See more suggestions in the Gartner's [DEI Metrics Inventory](#).

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> Related article: **DEI Training Topics: 7 Conversations Your Workforce Should Have**

## 8. Employee Experience — From Anecdotes to Number of ERG Participants

Booz Allen Hamilton, voted one of the [top companies for diversity](#), surveys its employees regularly to gauge the employee experience. Another way to keep a pulse on the employee experience is to track the numbers of employees participating in employee resource groups (ERGs). You can do this through surveying tools and [ERG software](#) — which may be useful for larger companies, rather than manually sending out event invites. Additionally, you can conduct feedback surveys with a net promoter (NPS) score after ERG-held events to determine their effectiveness.

> Related article: **Guide for Building Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)**

Beyond qualitative data, employee anecdotes provide a valuable way to understand diverse employee experiences.

"When we ask employees if they feel included at work and if they see themselves represented in leadership, when we see consistency in a majority of the responses from employees across gender, age, race, location, departments, etc…we know we are working with an organization that is truly leading with DEI," says Lindor. This work doesn't end until each and every person feels reflected in their leadership.

## 9. Senior Leadership Buy-In and DEI Achievements

In rolling out a DEI strategy, leadership commitment and accountability are key. "Organizational development and human resources leaders must be aligned," Sutton explains. "HR needs to help leaders hold the organization accountable for living real values and translating that into performance measurements."

According to Gartner, leadership commitment can be gauged by the percentage of leaders sponsoring a resource group, leadership attendance at DEI events, and DEI achievements

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within each leaders' teams.

## Next Steps in Measuring Your DEI Strategy

As diversity executives look to the future, there are a couple of exciting developments that could help make it even easier to measure the success of your DEI efforts.

Dr. Cheryl Ingram is CEO of Inclusology, an all in one AI DEI measurement platform for companies. It measures DEI in five levels — from lowest to highest: inactive, reactive, proactive, progressive, and best practice — based on the global diversity equity and inclusion benchmarks, and pulling in data, frameworks, best practices, and insights from their customer community.

Dr. Ingram reports that, at a longstanding nonprofit client with 100+ employees, they "let the data and benchmarking inform how they created a strategic plan. They adjusted the plan based on employee feedback. They used the data to set up learning plans/training for their employees, and they were transparent in sharing the data with the employees to let them know that their voices were being heard."

This has made a difference, comments Dr. Ingram: "When [the nonprofit client] first started with us, they were inactive or reactive in every category, and in many of the categories they have moved into the early measurements of best practice. It's been a great journey to be a part of."

In addition, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has published a diversity and inclusion standard outlining prerequisites, accountability, responsibilities, suggested actions, and potential outcomes for DEI. Linda Espinosa Valencia, co-founder of equity consultants Ventura Collective, is certified to apply the framework. She says, "The ISO 30415 is embedding DEI into the organization, not as an afterthought but as part of everyday procedures. It gives an actionable way to change or enact policy, set goals and expectations, assign responsibilities and accountability."

Apart from these tools, companies can also record their DEI benchmarks and goals in a scorecard. This can be as simple as creating a spreadsheet with a line for each metri

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PowertoFly offers a sample scorecard you can use to get started. Review goals and DEI metrics periodically and share the data with your employees for feedback on whether you're moving in the right direction.

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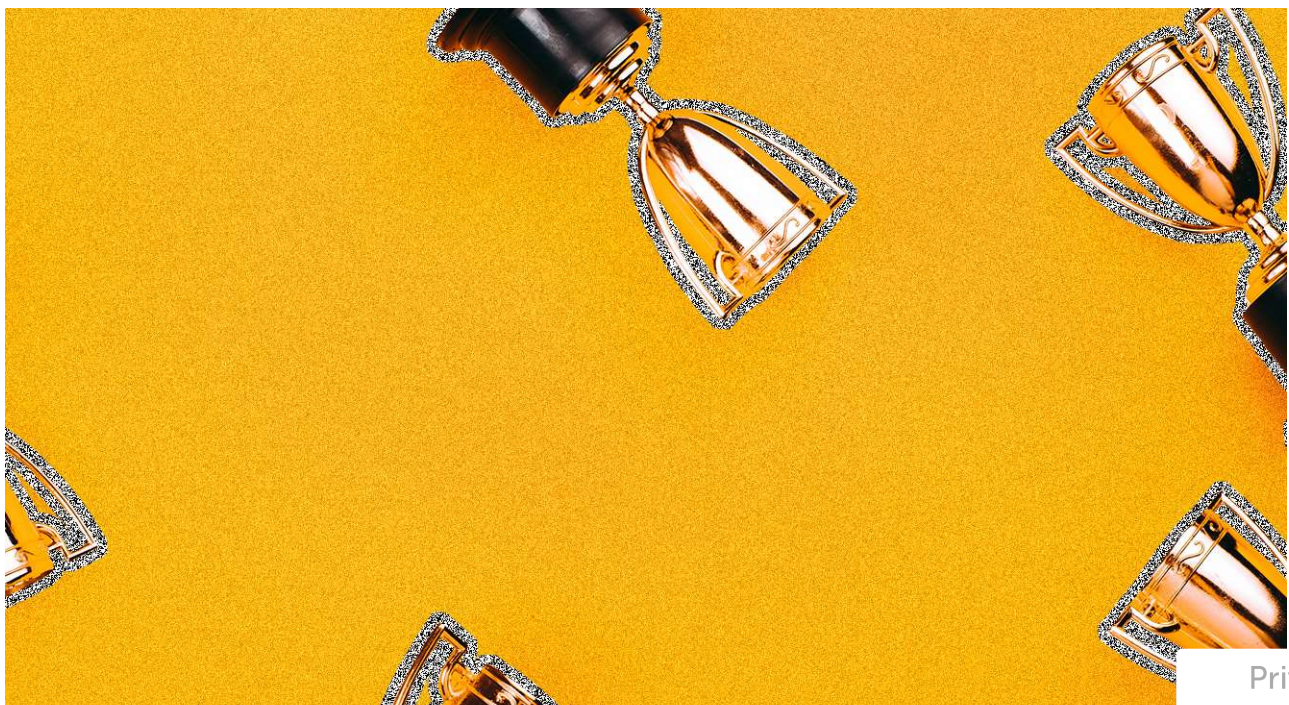
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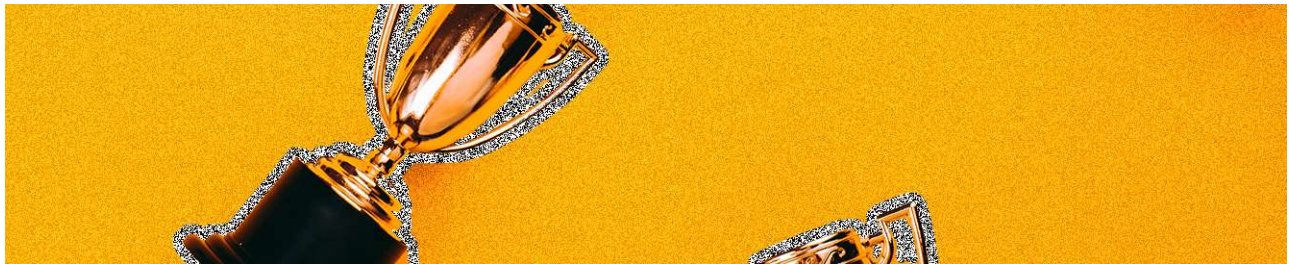## Your Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Calendar for 2023



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