

## Understanding DEI

In today's ever-more global economy, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts have lots of "buzz". Beyond the conversation, however, measures to diversify your workforce are proven to offer competitive advantages. When you make DEI a priority, every facet of your organization benefits, including the bottom line.

### What is DEI?

**Diversity** is the representation and recognition of psychological, physical, and social differences –the uniqueness of individuals. The meaning of diversity has become more complex than simply different genders, ethnicities, and racial backgrounds. A truly diversified group includes variety across multiple categories, such as:

- Educational backgrounds
- Skills and abilities
- Culture
- Language
- Sexual orientation
- Religions

**Equity** ensures that everyone has access to the same treatment, opportunities, and advancements. It means that bias and intolerance are not permitted, and instead, you strive to identify and eliminate barriers so that everyone can equally participate.

**Inclusion** means welcoming every individual's involvement and valuing their distinct contributions. Employees are more likely to thrive as they feel heard, accepted, and encouraged.

### Additional DEI concepts

**Implicit bias** is an unconscious attitude towards or stereotyping of a group related to gender, race, religion, etc. It can show itself in one-on-one interactions, the workplace, legal system, healthcare system, in media and across communities. Take a step back and examine if you are showing bias in your daily conversations. Practice not making assumptions about individuals based on appearance. Be willing to hear other's opinions. Doing so will open the door to exploring and accepting new perspectives and celebrating diversity.

**Anti-racism** is making a conscious, active effort to identify and eliminate intolerance, support equality and inclusion and be an ally to those marginalized. This requires ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection as you move through life. When you make the choice to welcome acceptance of other cultures and ideas and encourage equity, you will be nurturing more human connections and authentic relationships.

## Benefits of DEI

Embracing changes related to diversity in the workplace will take your team (and as a result, your entire organization) to greater heights. Tangible benefits include:

### Increased creativity and innovation

Employees who feel like their input is appreciated are more likely to open up and contribute. Exchanging unique perspectives, sparking fresh ideas, and better representing your customers' and users' needs all contribute to growth and sustainability.

### Reduced conflict and improved relationships

Stronger connections are built when individuals understand and respect each other's experiences and ideas. Active inclusivity provides a forum for all voices, alleviating friction and creating opportunity to identify and solve problems earlier.

### Better emotional and physical health

When the work environment is welcoming and collaborative, feelings of stress, anxiety, loneliness, and burnout can be reduced. Stronger emotional wellbeing can, in turn, help employees be more resilient in the face of business-related challenges.

In addition to creating a more cohesive environment, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts have been shown to improve employee satisfaction and morale, reduce turnover and improve productivity.

With a greater understanding of DEI and how you can apply it at work or in your community, you can help foster an attitude of inclusion that celebrates diversity and all that it offers.