

Diversity of Thought, Unity of Purpose

How Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Interact in the Business Space



Beyond Box-Ticking



As with so many things in business, anticipating change and being ahead of the curve can put you first in a competitive environment. Whoever you are, inbuilt biases and assumptions will follow you and if not analysed and confronted, may affect how your organisation performs. While there is a moral case for honestly assessing and exploring these aspects, they are also a matter for business. Operating to your best potential means being attractive to a diverse range of talent, with optimum performance dependent on their engagement with your mission. When thinking about diversity, equity and inclusion, we seek to address a core question - *are my assumptions holding my business back?*



The running of a company means that you necessarily come face-to-face with a diverse range of people, most of whom will have a sincere desire to do their best. It is also very possible that some of your team will come from a group that puts them outside of the majority, or even from a marginalised group. This will include different aspects in different territories, with cultural awareness and sensitivity a key area of thought. If you want your teams to perform to their potential, they will need to feel included, valued and considered inside the organisation. Failing to listen to their needs risks alienation and disinterest, harming their work and wellbeing and ultimately your business aims.



Running your organisation according to DEI principles can give you access to a wider range of talent and diversity of thought, allowing you to solve problems more easily and innovate more effectively. Diversity, equity and inclusion are often framed as a code of conduct and as a problem area, but they are as much a business strategy as anything. Pushing past discomfort and getting to the heart of why all this matters can give you a better idea of how your business can succeed. Including a range of people is fraught with subtle challenges and to explore and manage them requires sincere work. However, leaning into the difficulties and getting involved in the details pays dividends. Examining your company culture and affecting change, rather than just complying with legislation, is likely to put you at a serious advantage, both with your teams and in the perception from outside.



The Three Areas to Consider

The principals of DEI strategy overlap and interlock, with each having implications for your human resources and business purpose.

Diversity

Diversity encompasses all the ways that people can be different from, or similar to, each other. It is important that an organisation has access to a wide array of people and perspectives. Offering real and continuing opportunities to people with different characteristics, especially from communities that are underrepresented, gives a company a diverse base.

Equity

Equity refers to the outcomes that opportunity and advancement bring, free from suppression or exclusion. This ensures that everyone in an organisation has a stake in its success. It allows for fair access to resources, promotes justice and removes barriers and privilege. Equity is an outcome of diversity, rather than an initiative.

Inclusion

Inclusion means building a safe environment where everyone feels welcomed. An inclusive workplace means that difference is respected, while any intolerance or discrimination is treated seriously. All employees should feel that they can contribute and will be treated appropriately, whatever the facets of their identity.

What DEI Means Across Metrics

Diversity, equity and inclusion are not sticks designed to beat us with. While there are areas and industries where inclusion has historically been a problem, most industries are now aware of the pitfalls and advantages of putting their DEI under the microscope. DEI reporting sets measurements and guidelines that ensure fair and equitable access to employment, and to explore the many subtleties that this can take. These are both formal in employment law and advisable in business practice.

The landscape and relevance of the following areas will differ widely across territories, but almost all will have some bearing on your workplace and personnel. Action should be thought to encourage positive outcomes in the first instance, rather than framing as punishment for non-compliance.



Race

A workplace that is reflective of the racial demographics of your region and does not exclude on this basis. This is also relevant when considering ethnic group, religious group or national origin. While this includes hiring policies, it can also account for areas such as unconscious bias, workplace culture and cultural sensitivity, as well as access to opportunity in under-served areas and communities.



Sex

A balance of male and female employees, from the C-suite downwards. There are many initiatives already existing in this area, with the under-representation of women an acknowledged issue for many years, especially at more senior levels. Prejudice can also exist about maternity leave and other specific issues. Several boards have targets regarding male-to-female ratios, reaching up to true parity and female majorities, and some Praxity Alliance member firms are true leaders in this field.



Sexual orientation

This aims to ensure that LGB people are not excluded from the workforce and are not discriminated against in the workplace. This can include examining prejudice and educating about different and overlapping terms, as well as providing LGB individuals with a safe environment to work in. Social norms vary by jurisdiction, but this is an area where industry will continue to see significant change.



Gender identity

Ensuring that your firm keeps up to date with the modern world in terms of biological sex vs gender identity, while protecting gender non-conforming people from discrimination at work. This could include preferred pronouns, shielding from inappropriate comments or bullying, open communication channels, as well as having a robust reporting structure in place in the event of any issues.



Disability

To ensure that disabled employees are given an appropriate workspace and have labour that is commensurate with their skill level. For many careers, physical disability should be no barrier whatsoever, and things such as accessible workplaces, adaptable equipment and safety measures can be installed to make this possible. This can include lifts, ramps, magnetic hearing aid loops or large-print reading materials as examples. An inclusive environment to accommodate mental disability will be appropriate for some workplaces also, with accommodations necessary to enable individuals to do their best work.



Economic and social class

To enable access for people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and not to necessarily favour those with higher economic status. It's also relevant to consider whether there is discrimination by accent, dialect or residence. This is particularly pertinent when considering company culture or a candidate being "a good fit" which can, even accidentally, be used as a smokescreen for exclusion. While sometimes missing from discourse about DEI, economic factors can be huge barriers to the accountancy industry, preventing what would otherwise be excellent talent entering the workforce. There is an argument to say that socio-economic conditions are the primary driver of inequality, with every other factor in some way dependent on this metric.



Physical and mental health

This considers areas such as workload, working environment, company culture and work/life balance, to ensure that the physical and mental health of your people is not compromised. While usually considered as an aspect of ESG, allowing people to be their best self at work is also a function of DEI.



Neurodiversity

Neurodivergent people can add many skills to a company, but care must be taken to give people work according to their strengths and not their weaknesses. Neurodivergent people have historically had difficulty accessing opportunities that are suited to their skillsets. This can include areas such as autism and ADHD, distinct from but overlapping with mental health concerns, with individuals experiencing a disproportionate rate of joblessness and underemployment. It is important to know that neurodiverse people exist on a spectrum; there is a huge degree of diversity even within one area, and it would be a mistake to expect everyone to present in the same way.



Religion

Religious belief, a private matter of faith, intersects with the social reality of religious identity, which is more about cultural feelings of belonging and kinship. Education about religion and religious identities can have enormous benefits on a company, especially in a multinational organisation, where the same set of beliefs can have different manifestations in different areas. Considering observing religious holidays, dietary needs, sensitivities and taboos means that you are able to welcome a wide variety of people into your workforce. Education about this metric can also lead to your company being better informed throughout and even more competitive.



Age

Older professionals can be overlooked for positions where they would excel, and young people can be underestimated. Some equity is needed here; hiring on experience or pedigree can exclude new talent and block the pipeline to work, whereas an obsession with the new risks throwing out valuable experience from more senior people. Hiring from a range of ages is a key diversity metric.

Intersectionality

Diversity, equity and inclusion do not exist separately from each other, neither do the different facets of a person's identity. There is significant overlap and intersectionality. If we attempt to define a representative or average person, we can see that much of your team are likely to fit one or more of these categories. It's also true to say that while some differences are self-evident, some can be entirely invisible, undisclosed or even undiagnosed.

Allowing people to be themselves, to give them a chance according to their skill level, is what DEI measures are designed to facilitate. From a business perspective, this allows you to pull from a much wider talent pool. Demonstrating that your organisation is serious about Inclusion will attract many more people than its reverse. What's more, having a diverse team to draw upon is likely to drive innovation and put you ahead, with the ability to see different perspectives granting a crucial competitive edge.



DEI Standards and Frameworks

DEI Frameworks vary across companies, with each firm deciding internally where their own targets lie. This necessarily varies across regions, where demographics and work practices differ, and realistic targets can be set according to local conditions.

Larger firms may do annual DEI reports, recording what measures they have put in place and reporting hard data about these measures, including where they started and where they are now. Different metrics take precedence in different companies, but the broad idea is to demonstrate how the company is providing opportunity and equity to their employees, whatever their background or circumstances.

DEI standard recognition

DEI standard recognition is beginning to come into existence. For example, the DEI Standard in the US offers certification on 4 levels – Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum, based on survey data taken from employees. The DEI Data Standard in the UK offers a shared framework that companies can use to perform their own DEI assessments, while many international bodies offer guidance on concepts and areas of thought. Currently however, it is up to businesses themselves to decide how best to approach diversity, equity and inclusion, which is why seeing it as a matter of business is crucial.

The WEF Global Lighthouse Network

As well as region-specific guidance, there are also wider global initiatives around DEI. The World Economic Forum partners with McKinsey on the Lighthouse programme, which tracks DEI programmes and outcomes in business –

“A DEI Lighthouse is a corporate initiative that has demonstrated significant, scalable, quantifiable and sustained impact for (an) underrepresented group(s). They can be about diversity, equity and/or inclusion; about employees, suppliers, customers, and/or the broader community; and address any underrepresented group.” – *World Economic Forum, 2023*

The programme makes it clear that while the Human Resources case for strong DEI practice is clear, at heart these are business concerns that help companies perform better, with the data to back that up. The programme focuses on large multinational companies in the main, with accountancy firms PricewaterhouseCoopers and Ernst & Young among the top performers.

Human Capital: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

As of August 2022, the International Sustainability Standards Board has overseen the Human Capital: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion project to address DEI across 45 industries. This stems from the Human Capital Research Project by the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) that explored the financial materiality of diversity, equity and inclusion measures.

The consultation closed in September 2023, with the Board now looking at evidence and deciding what to prioritise in its next 2-year plan. This seeks to look at the following areas:

- Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services
- Human Capital
- Human Rights
- Integration in reporting beyond the requirements of incoming standards.

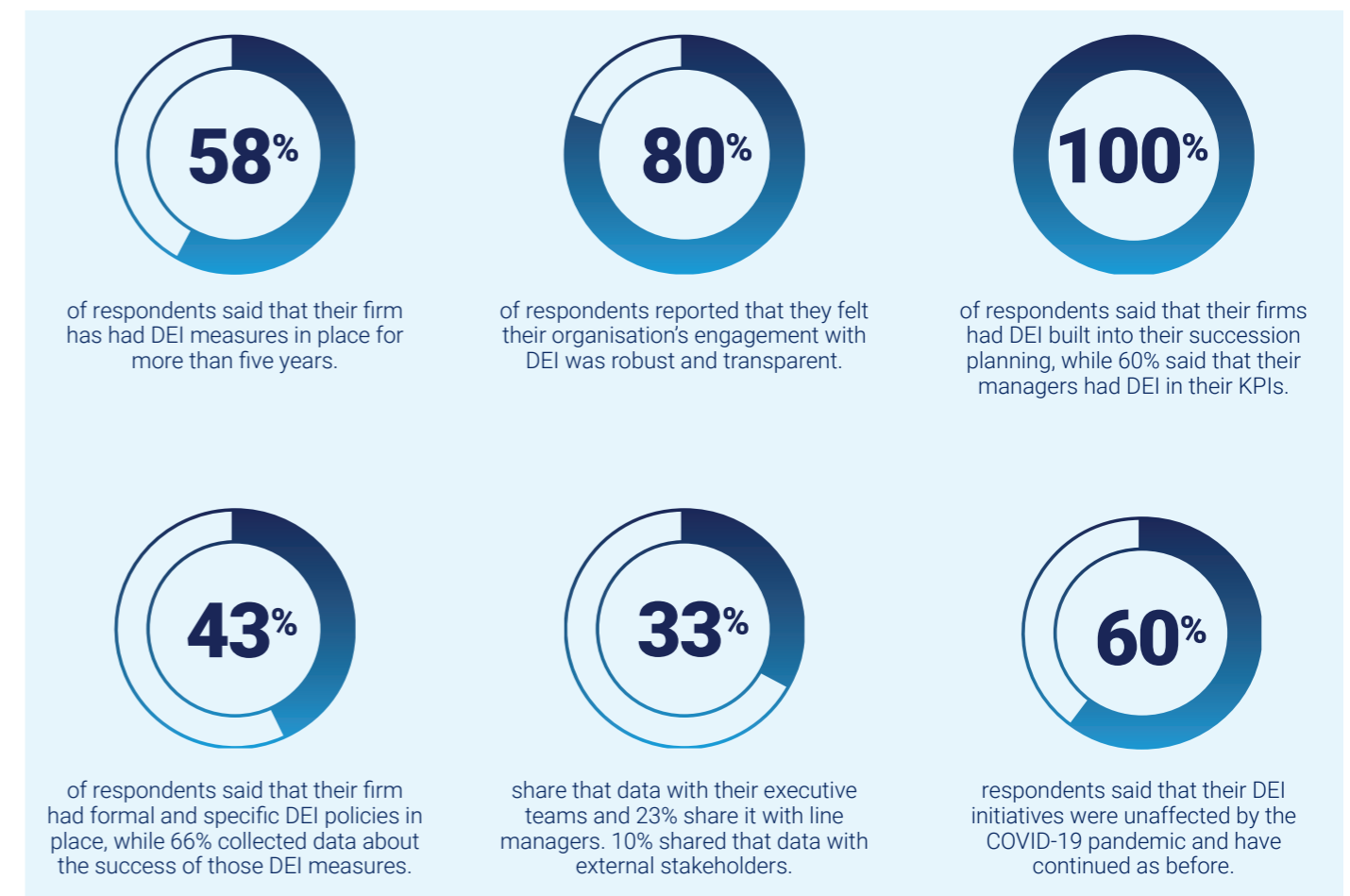
The aim of the research is to direct standard-setting DEI work, as well as to make the business case tangible and measurable.

It is clear from current reporting that senior figures are showing leadership on DEI. Acknowledging challenges and engaging with diversity, equity and inclusion honestly communicates moral clarity and purposeful leadership, speaking well of the firm both internally and externally. Quite apart from any ethical imperative, clear direction will be understood as cohesive and forward-looking strategy, with measurable business outcomes clear.

Current Progress is Encouraging

Many member firms are far exceeding current industry trends on DEI.

Our survey of Praxity Alliance member firms explored the different ways DEI is being handled across member organisations. In our internal results, Praxity Alliance member firms said that Gender Diversity was the most important metric that their DEI reporting was measuring, with Gender/Sex Equality and Neurodiversity and Disability following close behind. To this end, 41% of respondents said that their executive team consisted of 25-50% women, while 45% of respondents said that there were less than 25% women on their senior leadership team. This is clearly an area of close attention and of change among member firms.



Owing to the geographical scope and the diversity of size and resources within the Praxity Alliance, there is a great deal of difference in how diversity, equity and inclusion are handled across the board. However, there is clearly a sincere attempt to bring DEI into the conversation about business outcomes. If DEI measures are not relevant to an organisation now, they are likely to be very soon.

Unlocking

the Potential of a Diverse Accountancy Profession

Diverse companies outperform those that are not – the data is unequivocal. Research indicates that innovation and creativity is **20%** greater in companies with a diverse workforce, with risk identification increased by **30%**. Separate research suggests that a company is up to eight times more likely to achieve better business outcomes with an inclusive company culture.

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Opening up your organisation to a broader talent pool and embedding their needs in your company culture can give you a workforce with diverse talents, pushing toward a common goal. Far from being something that is imposed from the outside, it can be a powerful strategy for the continued success of your project

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Juliet Bourke

Which Two Heads are Better Than One?
How Diverse Teams Create Breakthrough Ideas and Make Smarter Decisions
(Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2016).



The basis of the Praxity Alliance is collaborating and solving problems across borders, using each other's expertise to find new solutions. This is impossible without a degree of diversity, which gives the collective experience substance and depth. If you know your firm's strengths and weaknesses, you can assess what you need to find elsewhere, and what you can offer as part of a broader alliance. This is a source of real power when achieving your aims.



The Accountancy profession as social mobility

The Accounting profession is a natural place for social mobility to thrive. Traditionally the industry is seen as an aspirational career, with a clear career ladder for progression along with above-average pay and good conditions. A career in accountancy has a certain accessibility “baked-in”, with both academic and vocational entry routes:

- **Academic:** via a bachelor's degree, with an accountancy qualification. While many universities offer degrees in accountancy, and a related subject such as mathematics would be helpful, increasingly any undergraduate degree is accepted for an entry-level accountant beginning their training. This allows a wide variety of skillsets through the door.
- **Work-based - apprenticeships:** Accountancy firms often take on apprentices for a chance to “earn while you learn”. This offers a less rigidly academic route for candidates, while mitigating the cost of higher education, which can be a huge barrier.
- **Work-based - vocational experience:** mentoring junior employees can be a fantastic way of preparing them for promotion through the firm, giving young accountants the chance to upskill and increase their earning potential.

A career in accountancy can be transformational. While always considered as a solid middle-class job, the simple act of knowing someone who is an accountant can be enough as a starting point, while not knowing any at all can be an obstacle. Bearing this in mind and opening up your hiring practices to new people can give you huge advantages. It also allows the whole industry to promote the profession as a way to make one's life better.

Cognitive diversity

Hiring people and incorporating talent via unconventional routes can give your organisation a broader range of ideas. This is independent of race, age, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other factor – it's simply about how people think. Having minds that approach a problem in different ways is self-evidently positive, and allowing this cognitive diversity the room to thrive gives your team a larger toolkit.

As an example of what this looks like in practice, The Harvard Business Review references The AEM Cube. A tool developed by Peter Robertson, a psychiatrist and business consultant, the Cube assesses differences in the way people approach change:

- **Knowledge processing:** the extent to which individuals prefer to consolidate and deploy existing knowledge, or prefer to generate new knowledge when facing new situations.
- **Perspective:** the extent to which individuals prefer to deploy their own expertise, or prefer to orchestrate the ideas and expertise of others when facing new situations.

Having a range of behaviours along these axes would seem to make perfect sense. However, there are traps that firms can fall into at times, even those with good DEI practices. If you have a firm full of accountants who all did the same course at the same small cluster of schools, the likelihood of “groupthink” is going to be increased. People with similar experiences may have similar viewpoints and ways of approaching things, especially if they have been taught to do so. Without thinking about how people are going to work together on a given problem, talent is not enough. Employing people who think differently from each other adds value to your business.

The chance to thrive

A diverse workforce pulling together towards a common goal, with a stake in their role and rewards for their work will improve your business prospects. Removing barriers for inclusion and giving people the resources they need leads to greater output and better results. This can also drive innovation and prevent stagnation not just in your office, but throughout the profession. A broader range of candidates means a broader range of abilities, while overlapping skillsets and different ways of problem-solving give you a greater knowledge base and greater agility.

Helping people thrive in their work environment is probably already a crucial tenet of your business model. Hiring and promoting along the lines of tradition, pedigree and unconscious bias will likely hamper growth, whereas a Board that sees the range of skillsets available will achieve their goals more quickly and effectively. Creating conditions for a genuine meritocracy, where difference is respected and put to work, can put a firm at a huge advantage, with DEI principles helping to refine these measures.

The Multiplier Effect

The multiplier effect refers to a trickle-down of boardroom culture. Greater diversity and representation in C-Suite and Senior roles are the most effective tools at your disposal, with diversity at the highest levels driving change. The tipping point figure is generally considered to be around 30% at Board level. At this proportion and higher, substantive change can be enacted. This figure is not universal and regions do differ, but transformation does seem to happen most robustly when it begins at the top.



Equity as a Business Matter

It's not only important that your people feel included in their workplace, but also that they recognise their responsibility in creating an inclusive workplace for others. While DEI initiatives may come from senior leaders, the root of the company is a great place to start your assessment of the necessary steps. Personal responsibility is a key measure here - an inclusive workplace is only ever about how your people interact and support each other, and each member of your organisation needs to be on-board with your DEI culture. Whatever your senior leadership decrees, there is always more that can be done day-to-day.

In many ways, addressing these aspects is unavoidable. Utilising your talent base means that you will necessarily encounter a wide range of people, and ensuring they feel included in company culture is crucial. A team that feels they have a stake in decisions and that they are integral is more likely to respond well to pressure. Promoting a diverse workforce and ensuring your teams can grow into their roles can help you attract and retain talent, making you a more attractive place to work. Joining up the dots between what your business is, how it interacts with the rest of the industry and how it behaves internally can unlock your full potential.

DEI and ESG

ESG and DEI cross into each other's remit very often. Diversity, equity and inclusion can be seen as an expansion of the "Social" aspect of a company's corporate direction. Exploring social responsibility and business impact on communities leads, by necessity, to DEI as part of the ESG conversation. Both reflect on senior leadership and management with some accuracy, affecting perception of your firm's stewardship and how the company sees the rest of society. Equity and inclusion play a huge part in how businesses meet their stated social aims and in how they interact with their workforce and community. DEI may be an aspect of the "S" in ESG, but its implications instruct what direction your ESG practices take. Hiring and retention, attempts to engage with underserved communities and the building of career ladders all feature under the ESG umbrella, with DEI touching many aspects of good governance.

What happens if we don't follow through on promises?

When it comes to DEI initiatives, trust must be earned and can be easily lost. Using a business case as the sole motivator risks alienating your staff, and a key objective of DEI is to foster trust in your direction. If people feel as if their presence is being used in a way that doesn't help them directly, they may feel stereotyped or disregarded, and the intent is lost. Business aims must be seen to go hand-in-hand with a moral imperative.

To make credible inroads into company culture, your organisation must be trusted to do the things you say it will and is willing to do the necessary introspection. To look honestly at what you are doing, what progress has been made and what more could be done requires bravery and honesty. The credibility of this affects both business outcomes and the firm's status among your employees, and any effective outreach depends on a willingness to listen, interact and learn. While legal frameworks such as the Equality Act (UK, 2010) are designed to protect against workplace discrimination, proper DEI initiatives aim to support businesses in positive ways rather than punish non-compliance.

How Can Accountancy Firms Take the Lead?



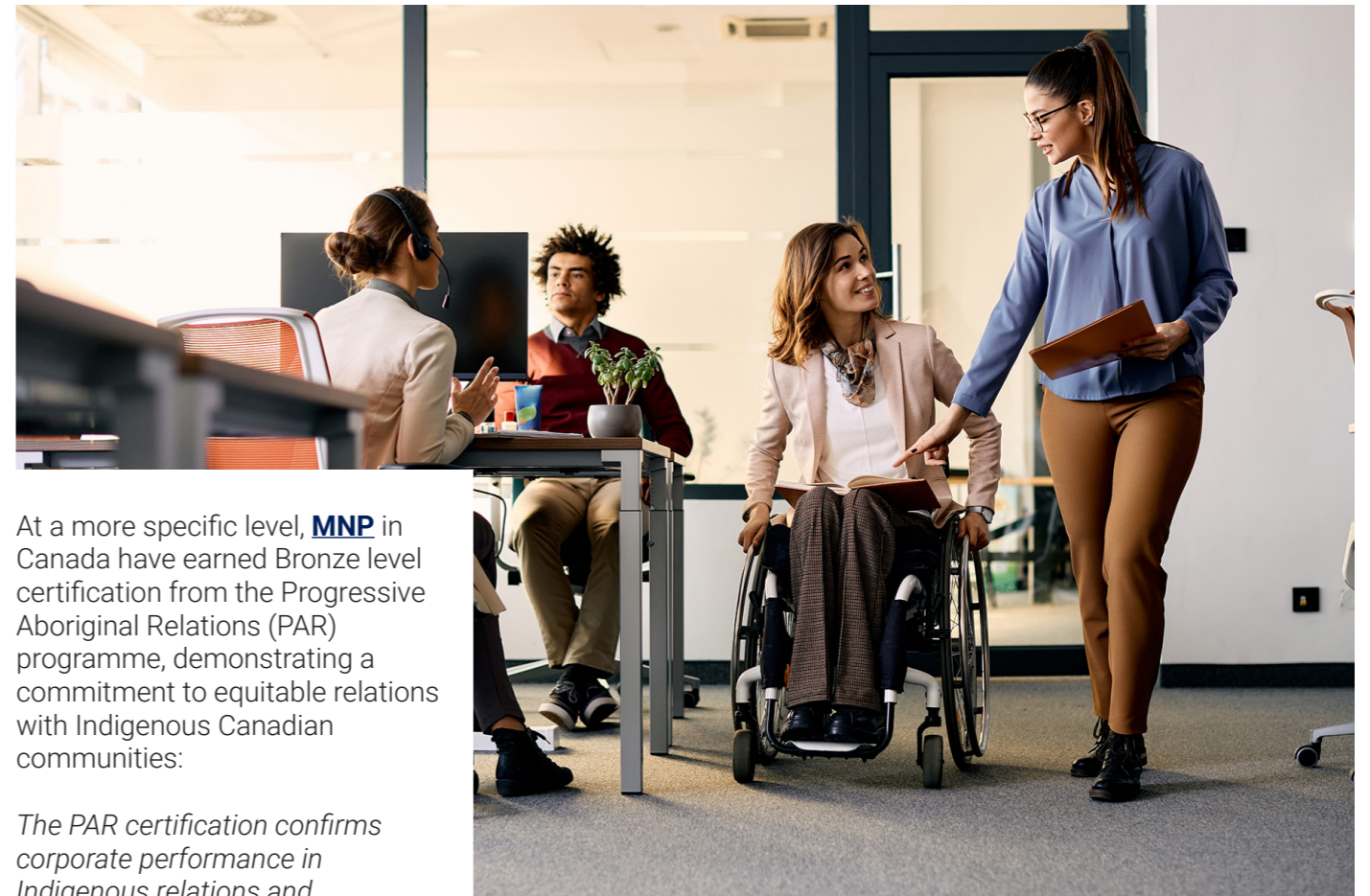
Diversity is built into business, but inclusion is up to us.

Praxity Alliance members are already working across borders and across a huge range of industries. By employing strategies to help develop and maintain this diverse workforce, many member firms are currently leading the race to include diverse voices and innovating in their field.

On a broad strategic level, **Moss Adams** in the USA report in-depth data about different diversity metrics, with a five-year plan based around what they call their 5 Bold Commitments:

- Foster a greater sense of belonging
- Have representation of diverse talent at all levels
- Instil accountability and transparency on inclusion and diversity efforts
- Build equitable structures, processes and practices
- Invest in our communities

These commitments are embedded in strategy, with the firm emphasising their I&D framework. This seeks to give clarity and support, along with improving information sharing throughout the company.¹



At a more specific level, **MNP** in Canada have earned Bronze level certification from the Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) programme, demonstrating a commitment to equitable relations with Indigenous Canadian communities:

*The PAR certification confirms corporate performance in Indigenous relations and recognises companies who are committed to being good business partners with Indigenous-owned businesses, recognise the value that Indigenous people bring to the workplace, and who promote the potential of Indigenous communities.*²

Of companies with Bronze certification, the **Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business** says:

*“Their strategic planning recognizes the mutually-beneficial impact of business development with Aboriginal-owned businesses, the value that Aboriginal people bring to the workplace, and the potential of Aboriginal communities.”*³

This is a clear case of a firm recognising a societal inequality and seeking to include that not just as part of their responsibility, but as part of their business strategy.

In Europe and across the world, **Mazars** make their DEI reporting data available to the public through their website, providing transparency and accountability of the senior leadership at the firm. Apart from collecting a huge volume of relevant data, the firm’s CEO Hervé Hélias and the Managing Director of Mazars in France, Olivier Lenel, co-signed the *Manifesto of the French Ministry in charge of Gender Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunities to protect women victims of violence*. This demonstrates a commitment to equity that goes beyond business purpose and into a supportive space for gender inclusivity.⁴

With a wide range of imperatives to assess and track DEI, Praxity Alliance members can look to each other for guidance and experience, with case studies and impact analyses readily available.

A rising tide lifts all boats

When DEI measures work as they should, the whole organisation does better on almost every metric, with everyone benefitting - a rising tide lifts all boats. Building trust and demonstrating competence and intent gives your employees confidence in the organisation, and by extension, this is true for the general public too.

Equitable outcomes are impossible to achieve without allowing people with diverse talents to contribute effectively. This creates a reciprocal relationship, in which the company creates an environment where everyone can give their best, so the company gets better work from their teams who trust that credible measures that are in place. This is beneficial to everyone and shows the simple elegance of DEI. Going beyond metrics and demographics sends you deeper into the equity and inclusion available to your employees.

Tapping different perspectives

It's not uncommon to see an organisation learning from its employees - the best way to get answers about DEI concerns in your organisation is to listen to your people. Having access to new perspectives can enrich an organisation and make it see its purpose differently. It can also help you gain an idea of how people outside your immediate company view what you do. In matters of hiring and succession, bringing this new seam of talent through your company structure can enable change at each level, eliminating invisible barriers.

The tendency to prefer candidates who are "like me" is a distinct barrier to hiring the best people. If you shine a spotlight onto potential, rather than onto pedigree, you may find that hiring decisions are different, and you find yourself bringing unexpected qualities into your business. It's not that the traditional routes into accounting have no meaning, more that in exploring new routes you may find new solutions. A business that has more than one way in will perform better than one that only hires technical specialists.

By giving people the opportunity to speak, to lead initiatives and to help steer company policies, you are not only empowering them to do their jobs more effectively, you are harnessing a powerful resource. Exploring bottom-up as well as top-down initiatives gives everyone a stake in the company and can keep you at the forefront of what the industry is doing.



Strategies for inclusion

It's not always necessary to use broad brush strokes or to be heavy-handed. Very simple things, such as celebrating dates or considering your team's needs can make a huge difference to how valued people feel at work. For example, when it comes to diversity of race and religion, a degree of cultural understanding and sensitivity can help more people to feel part of the company's mission and engine room. Marking religious holidays, honouring historic figures or highlighting leaders from marginalised communities are good and simple ways to engage across different backgrounds.

Hybrid working & related challenges

There are different ways to get the best out of different people. For example, the changes in working methods brought about by the 2020 pandemic, for all the problems it caused, have had unforeseen benefits. The rise of remote and hybrid working allows people who may struggle with 9-5 in the office to contribute effectively. Neurodivergent individuals may be able to contribute more effectively in a focused environment, while new parents are able to better balance their family and work lives. While this will clearly vary case-by-case and company-to-company, giving this some thought can help you access all that potential.

However, there is a reverse to this. Hybrid or remote workers may feel that there are fewer chances for networking, building relationships or for collaboration, which may affect their career advancement. This sort of two-tier system can be tricky to navigate. Management training and regular check-ins can help to mitigate potential problems, ensuring that employees can access the help they need and that they can contribute to the best of their abilities.

Thinking flexibly and being open-minded about change is essential to successful diversity initiatives. Truly there is no "one way" to make people feel included.

Each place and firm has a unique set of circumstances in which to decide what the best approach is. The ultimate aim of diversity initiatives is to get the best out of your people and to encourage their best work. Building confidence in your company's commitments to inclusion takes time and effort, and the desire to make improvements needs to be sincere. An investment in your human capital, ensuring you have a broad, valued and committed team, is the purpose of DEI measures.

Eliminating need

Diversity is an inescapable fact of working experience. When we talk about progress in DEI, we are really talking about the health and vibrancy of the industry. New talent needs to find a career in accountancy an attractive option, with good career progression and without the impression that it is a "closed shop". While a workforce that reflects local demographics is a reasonable expectation, looking beyond simple data and going deeper into how your team thinks and responds, including a broad range of opinions and capabilities, is just one of the enormous strengths in diversity.

The difference between tolerance and inclusion is an important one. People need to feel valued and empowered at work and need to

be given the right tools for the job. An inclusive and positive work culture improves job satisfaction and happiness, and Senior Leaders can set the tone for the whole company.



Exclusion

you are not welcome here



Tolerance

you can be here, reluctantly



Acceptance

I accept you even though you are different



Belonging

I embrace you as you are
(Deloitte Analysis)

Diversity of Thought, Unity of Purpose

Sources:

DEI principles are something of a journey without a finish line - the investigation is the point. Exploring these areas encourages constant growth and demonstrating commitment to the task inspires confidence in the leadership of your business. Furthermore, new direction and inspiration can be found in the search.

People with different skills have value to offer and combining these skillsets across different teams can give you a broad base from which to pull your expertise. Tapping this resource enriches your business offering and gives you incredible flexibility and resilience when addressing problems and innovating. When we explore this, we begin to unearth the real purpose of DEI - a diversity of thought and opinion, ready to turn its hive mind to any problem you may encounter. Your organisation is more ready for the future, more able to access top talent and more able to think clearly.

Collaborating across divides

When we understand each other better, we can work better together. Successful collaboration is key to the Praxity Alliance's model, but this counts internally in your firm too. Reassuring your team that they are valued, not just in word but in action, is vital to getting the best business outcomes. Promoting harmony throughout your workforce and dealing with any issues or shortcomings promptly and sincerely gives your workforce the impression that they're in the right place and with the right company.

Having leadership that really values diversity, equity and inclusion makes your firm more robust, able to both resist and harness changes in the market. Having cultural sensitivity and being aware of the world outside your immediate milieu will feed a strong vision and inspire commitment to your business aims. To make DEI part of your mission means that you can introspect honestly and courageously, look at shortcomings and successes, think about what can be done to improve things and communicate that effectively.

Putting together a firm that welcomes all people makes your business stronger. DEI should be a crucial part of your planning, showing that you want to promote growth, measure resilience and remain agile. Exploring who you hire, how they thrive and why that matters puts DEI measures in context, and any firm adequately exploring DEI will be at the forefront of rapid change.

1. Moss Adams, '2022 Inclusion & Diversity Annual Report'

<<https://www.mossadams.com/getmedia/81ac219b-cbbb-4bf8-a1ad-9f9bd90e0574/Moss-Adams-Inclusion-Diversity-2022-Annual-Report.pdf>>

2. MNP, 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion'

<<https://www.mnp.ca/en/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>>

3. Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, 'Companies in PAR'

<<https://www.ccab.com/programs/par-companies/>>

4. Mazars, 'Diversity and Inclusion'

<<https://www.mazars.com/Home/About-us/Diversity-and-inclusion>>

What is Praxity?

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We are an Alliance of handpicked, like-minded member firms which operate independently and are united by a shared commitment to high quality client outcomes and personal care.

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