Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
How can technology advance DEI
in the workplace?

A collaborative project between
UVic Co-op and Career Services
and
Patricia Maedel and Jackie Topolewski

Interim Report

July 2023

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Introduction

In 2021, a collaboration between the [Co-operative and Work-Integrated Learning Initiative (COWIL)](#), UVic's Engineering and Computer Science Co-op and the Canadian Technology Supercluster explored the digital technology gap (Phase I). One of the outcomes of this project highlighted the rising importance of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace.

In 2022, Patricia Maedel, project manager for Phase I and her colleague, Jackie Topolewski, approached UVic Co-op and Career with a proposal to further research how technology could support the advancement of DEI in the workplace. Thus, Phase II of the original project was created and sponsored by residual funding from COWIL and a private funder from the Vancouver Foundation. Phase II began with a literature review entitled *[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within STEM in Canada,](#)* which followed by a survey of [co-op students](#) and [co-op employers](#) on the importance of DEI in the workplace and culminated in selected co-op employers piloting two software platforms. While the literature review was focused on STEM related industries, the scope of the project was broadened to include co-op employers from all industries as DEI efforts in the workplace is not limited STEM industries.

The project has been extended to October 2023. This report summarizes the project activities and findings to May 2023.

Project Timeline and Activities
Original Timeline

Project Timeline

Sept/22	Oct/22	Nov/22	Dec/22	Jan/23	Feb/23	Mar/24	Apr/23	May/23	Jun/23
Literature Review									
Software Research	Secure Software								
Surveys									
	Participant Recruitment	Participant Commitment	Participant software training		Diversion Surveys & Analysis	Participants Implement D&I Solutions			Impact Surveys
				Applied Testing					Final Project Report

Literature Review

Review of literature, by UVic graduate student Nabila Kazmi, on DEI in STEM industries revealed that diversity is essential to a company's success as a diverse workforce supports creative problem solving which in turn can result in profitability and economic growth of the country. Our research highlights the need for Canadian STEM companies to focus on hiring from the equity-deserving groups or people who might belong to more than one of these groups. Diversity hiring includes practices targeting the unconscious and implicit bias within companies and the recruiters. Our research suggests different ways of doing this – anonymized resume screening, inclusive job descriptions, fair assessment practices and diverse recruitment sourcing.

It has also been highlighted that with the widespread use of accessing companies based on their social media presence, companies need to work on building a reputation of being diverse, inclusive, and equitable. This is likely to result in access to more diverse talent. It is important that this conversation takes the form of how, at the intersections of different identities, some people find themselves disadvantaged and marginalised. This impacts their access to positions within STEM. The conversation around diversity hiring also needs to take into consideration the efforts that companies

make in creating a culture of equity and inclusion. This is important not just for retaining employees but also hiring new diverse talent, given that access to digital media has provided candidates the ability to understand the priorities of companies before applying for jobs.

Our research establishes that software solutions to diversity recruitment and the use of AI for hiring can automate the processes thereby reducing the chances of implicit and unconscious bias within the hiring process. There is certain software that offer some features that assist in diversity recruitment, some of which are discussed in the review noted above. However, there exists no one software application that does it all. This establishes the need to look towards continuing to develop software solutions that support DEI hiring within STEM. This becomes even more important in the context of Canada, where diversity hiring efforts are still met with resistance and the lack of legislation to support it. DEI recruitment is in nascent stages with the STEM sector in Canada. Collie, M. from Global News writes that "Canada's federal diversity plan (Employment Equity Act) is outdated and does not hold employers accountable for discriminatory hiring practices. The Act also applies exclusively to the public sector and federal govt. organizations. In comparison, the US Affirmative Action has checks in place to eliminate discrimination among applicants and applies to workplace and education." On Diversity and Inclusion in Canada, Deloitte writes that "Most Canadian companies have not evolved from a compliance (views diversity as a problem and has diverse talent only for legal requirement to show numbers) state to a more evolved, mature state of hiring and retention of diverse talent." It is important that software solutions continue to be developed and used for diverse, equitable and inclusive recruitment and retention practices within the country.

As a result of findings from the literature review, research into DEI software was added to the project.

UVic Co-op and Career Student and Employer Surveys

An essential part of this project was Co-op and Career Service student and employer engagement. It was important to hear from these two groups on the importance of DEI in the workplace and how it impacted decisions on careers and business processes. The questions and data from these surveys can be found on the UVic Co-op and Career Services website.

The surveys were administered in Fall 2022 to all current co-op students and students who accessed career services from 2020 to 2022 and all co-op employers in BC or those who have offices BC and who hired students in the past two years from across all UVic Faculties.

Student Survey Summary

The students' survey focused on their perspective on DEI importance and priorities for future employers.

Student Demographics

A total of 1,604 students responded to the survey. Undergraduate students made up 83% of the respondents in addition to 10% graduate students and 7% alumni (alumni are represented through career services). Engineering and Computer Science students was the largest group of respondents (37%) followed by Business, Science and Social Sciences students (ranging from 11-13% each). Fourth year students made up the largest respondent group (34%) followed by years 3-1 in declining order (25%, 20% and 9% respectively). A large majority of the respondents (81%) were co-op or work experience students with 62% having completed anywhere from 1 to 3 work terms and 10% having completed more than 3 work terms.
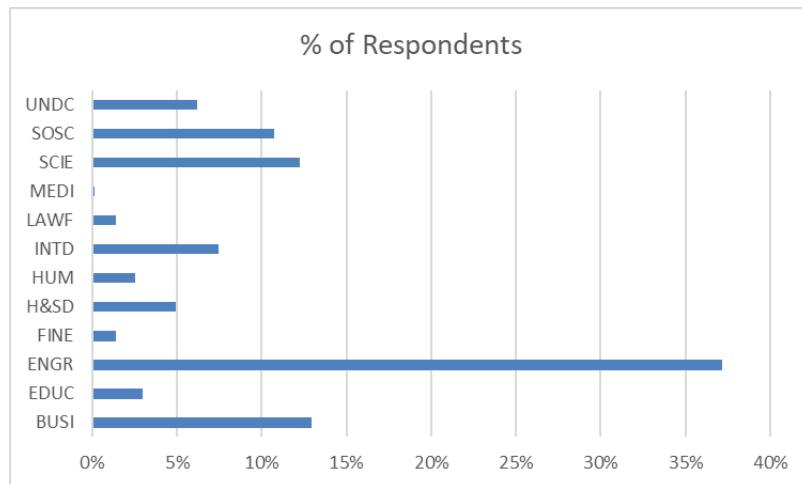
% of Respondents

Students from underrepresented groups were identified most significantly by women (54%) then visibly minorities and LGBTQIA2S+ (20% each) followed by persons with disabilities (21%) and Indigenous Peoples (2%). 26% of respondents did not identify with any of the underrepresented groups.
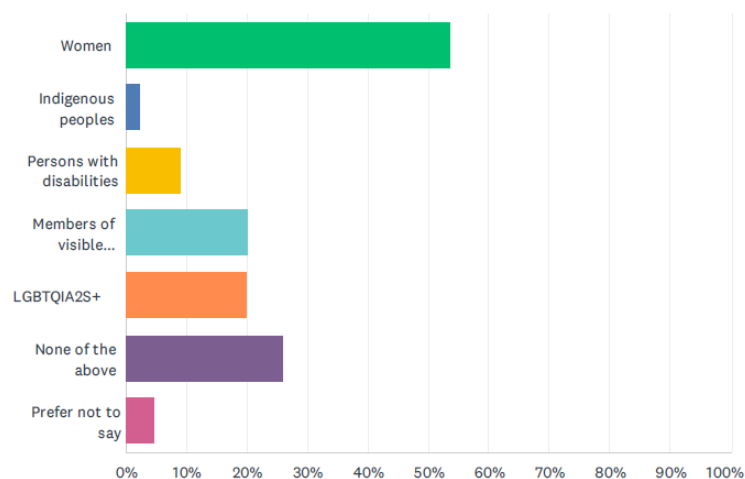
Importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in future employers

89% of respondents attribute some level of importance for future employers to have DEI policies and procedures with a majority of that group (59%) indicating it was either of high importance or essential with an additional 33% indicating that it is of medium importance. However, even though DEI of future employers is on most students' radars, 77% of them say they have not sought out DEI information on a prospective employer.

Of the 355 respondents who did seek DEI information on prospective employers, it seems to be quite even in terms of what they are looking for:
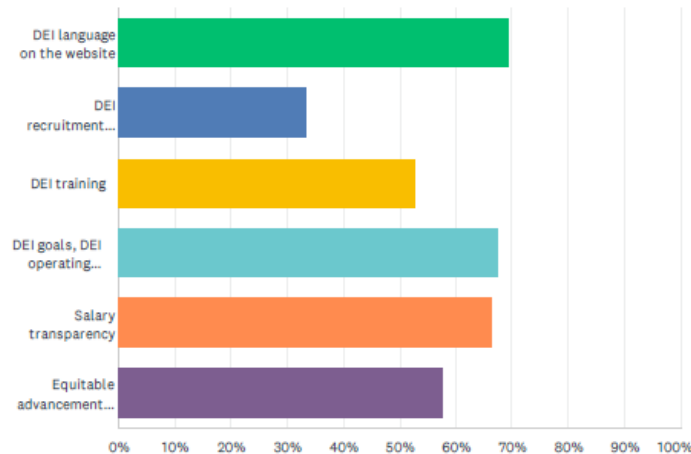
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
DEI language on the website	69.58%	247
DEI recruitment practices like anonymizing resumes	33.52%	119
DEI training	52.68%	187
DEI goals, DEI operating policies and procedures such as employee resource groups (ERGS), employee engagement surveys, etc.	67.61%	240
Salary transparency	66.48%	236
Equitable advancement opportunities	57.75%	205
Total Respondents: 355		

Other factors students looked for in prospective employers was the diversity of company leadership on boards, inclusive language in the job description and interview process, and ability to see themselves reflected in the recruitment materials.

Anonymized resume review is one of the ways that employers can remove unconscious bias from their recruitment process. When students were asked if they thought anonymized resume review would increase their interview opportunities 37% of respondents agreed. While 63% did not think it would help them gain interviews, almost 30% of the No's indicated it was because their name identifies them as "white male" or "Caucasian" or they have a unisex name. Further, 17% of the No's expected to be evaluated on their skill and experiences.

When it comes to student respondent DEI priorities, salary transparency and equitable advancement opportunities were the top two priorities.

Employer Survey Summary
Employer Demographics
A total of 211 employers responded to the survey. The survey focused on the importance of DEI to employers and how it is evidenced in the organizations. There was representation from companies of all different sizes with the largest group in the small 11-50 employee category and almost equal representation from micro, medium and enterprise.
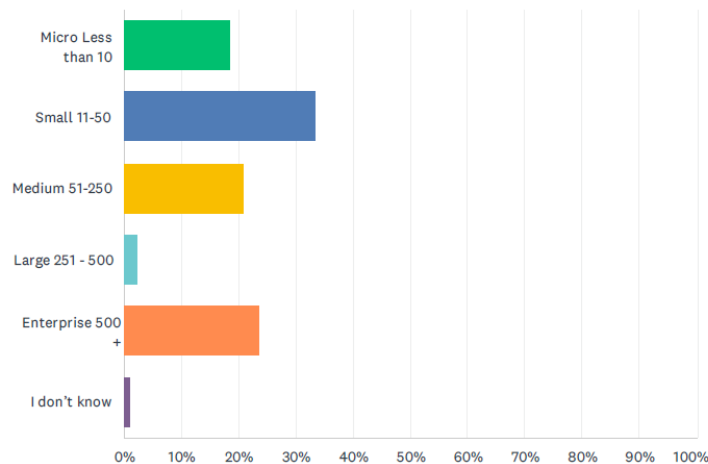
72% of employer respondents indicated that DEI was either of high importance or essential to their organizations with 47% saying they currently have diversity goals and another 29% planning to set those goals in the next year or two. Just over 50% of respondents confirm that their DEI commitment is evident on their website. 62% of respondents have DEI recruitment practices in place for hiring from underrepresented groups. 55% of respondents have structures in place to support employees from underrepresented groups while 27% say they will establish these in the next year or two. These statistics are encouraging but what makes the biggest difference is how these efforts are operationalized which means there needs to be resources targeted are supporting them.

Only 18% of respondents said their company had a position designated to DEI efforts. This means that most DEI efforts are being supported by employees with other responsibilities in the organization. Even those companies who responded that they had a position designated to DEI efforts describe their designated resource as committees of various names, or a senior professional employee of colour who provides guidance to other, or in once case "everyone's responsibility" who is part of the organization. While the last example is an excellent principle, it does take resources to develop, implement and maintain DEI efforts. As it turns out only 22% of 210 respondents were able to confirm that they had budget earmarked for DEI efforts. Of those who indicated budget was available, the most popular use of those funds was for marketing.
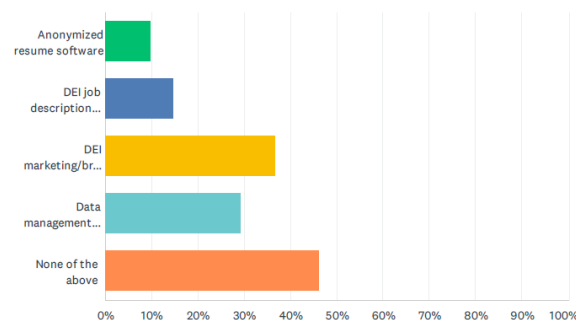
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Anonymized resume software	9.76%	4
DEI job description software (identifies language biases)	14.63%	6
DEI marketing/branding service	36.59%	15
Data management software that measures and tracks company DEI benchmarks	29.27%	12
None of the above	46.34%	19
Total Respondents: 41		

Those respondents who selected "none of the above" described various other expenses for DEI such as external sources for DEI training and auditing, supporting immigrant employees to maintain ties with family and business connections with their country of origin and manually redacting personal details from job applications. When respondents were queried on priority spending for DEI if funds were available there was no clear preference between the options provided.
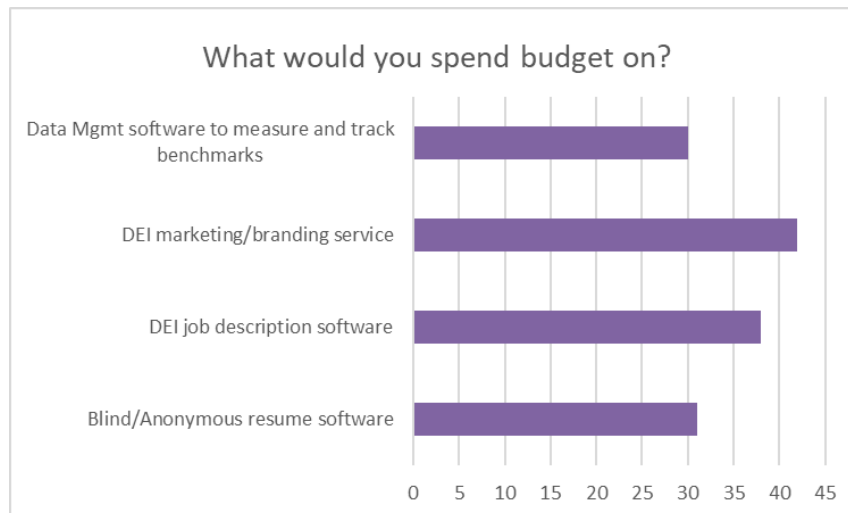
Debiasing Recruitment and Measuring Diversity and Inclusion

As with many projects, the end goal is often revised as the project progresses. Through the research material and other information gathered and considered by the project managers, it became apparent that to improve diversity and inclusion within an organization, one must be recruiting a diverse workforce. To retain a diverse workforce, an organization needs to be equitable (fair) and inclusive. The only way to know how diverse and inclusive and organization is, is to create metrics to analyse the DEI composition of the workforce. Analysis of good data will identify what an organization needs to focus on to improve DEI. With this in mind, the pilot project focused on how software applications could further diversity and inclusion efforts in two different areas: 1. debiasing the recruitment process; and 2. measuring diversity and inclusion by using software.

Debiasing the Recruitment Process

A 2020 Glassdoor survey identified that, *most employees and job seekers (76%) see a diverse workforce as a major factor when they're considering companies to work for.*

Reducing unconscious bias in the hiring process is important for several reasons:

Fairness and Equality**:** Debiasing helps ensure that all candidates have an equal opportunity to compete for a job based on their qualifications and merits, rather than being influenced by irrelevant factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics. It promotes fairness and reduces discrimination in the hiring process.

Diversity and Inclusion: A biased recruitment process can result in a lack of diversity within organizations. By identifying and eliminating biases, recruiters can attract and hire individuals from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.

Talent Acquisition: Biases in the recruitment process can inadvertently exclude qualified candidates who could contribute significantly to an organization's success. By debiasing the process, employers can tap into a broader pool of talent and increase their chances of finding the best candidates for the job. This expands the talent pipeline and enhances the overall quality of the workforce.

Employees who feel they were hired without [bias are more likely to be satisfied with their job and less likely to leave the company](). By reducing unconscious bias in the hiring process, companies can reduce employee turnover and save on costs associated with recruiting and training new employees.

The recruitment process in most cases, consists of a series of steps.
1. Developing the job description (JD) or posting. In some cases, JD is a detailed description of the role and includes requirements such as experience and education and the posting is a summary of this same information. In other cases, the two are one of the same.
2. Sourcing. This is how the employer attracts applicants for the role and includes posting it to various job boards, the company website careers page, networking, referrals, etc.
3. Applicant review. This process includes reviewing information submitted by an applicant to determine if they meet sufficient criteria to move to the next recruitment process step.
4. Candidate assessment. This is evaluation of the applicant and can include tests.
5. Interview. An opportunity to meet face to face with the candidate either in person or virtually to further evaluate their suitability for the role.
*Depending on the organization, the order of steps 4 and 5 can be interchanged.
6. Data and insights. This step may include reference checks, hiring committee discussion, comparing evaluation processes, etc.
7. Decision or selection. Based on the previous steps, a candidate is selected and offer the job.

Measuring Diversity and Inclusion
Workplace diversity is important for several reasons:

Enhanced creativity and innovation: Diversity brings together individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. When people with diverse viewpoints collaborate, they can generate a broader range of ideas and solutions fostering creativity and innovation within the organization.

Improved problem-solving and decision-making: A diverse workforce can offer a variety of insights and approaches when tackling challenges. Different perspectives and experiences can lead to more thorough analysis, better problem-solving, and well-rounded decision-making helping organizations make more informed choices and adapt to changing environments effectively.

Increased adaptability and resilience: In a rapidly changing world, organizations need to be adaptable and resilient. A diverse workforce can bring a range of skills, knowledge, and experiences that can help the company navigate uncertainties and respond to evolving market conditions more effectively.

Expanded market reach and customer understanding: Diversity in the workplace can mirror the diversity of the customer base. This can provide a deeper understanding of different customer needs, preferences, and cultural nuances. By having a diverse workforce,

organizations can better tailor their products, services, and marketing strategies to cater to a wider range of customers.

Attraction and retention of top talent: A diverse and inclusive workplace fosters an environment where all employees feel valued, respected, and included. This helps attract and retain top talent from diverse backgrounds. When employees see that their organization values diversity, they are more likely to feel motivated, engaged, and committed to their work.

Improved reputation and brand image: Embracing diversity and inclusion can positively impact an organization's reputation and brand image. Companies that prioritize diversity send a message to their stakeholders that they are committed to fairness, equality, and social responsibility. This can attract customers, investors, and partners who align with these values.

McKinsey & Co. and others have identified a clear link between companies that have diverse and inclusive leadership teams and improved financial performance.

While a company may be able to recruit a diverse workforce, retaining that diverse workforce will be a challenge if the organization does not have an inclusive workplace environment. Many companies are actively working to improve corporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, both from an ethical standpoint and as a business imperative. Some of these efforts include setting diversity goals, engaging in training and education about unconscious biases, cultural sensitivity, and inclusive behaviours, and setting policies and procedures to prevent harassment and bullying in the workplace.

A common mistake is that companies engage in these efforts without data. Baseline data is crucial for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts because it provides a starting point and a clear understanding of the current state of diversity and inclusion within an organization or a specific context. Baseline data is key to successful DEI change for the following reasons:

Identifying disparities: Baseline data allows organizations to assess the representation and participation of various demographic groups within their workforce or community. Further, by collecting data on characteristics such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and other dimensions of diversity, organizations can identify disparities and gaps in representation. These data points provide evidence of any underrepresentation or overrepresentation of certain groups, enabling organizations to identify areas that require attention and improvement.

Setting goals and measuring progress: Baseline data serves as a benchmark against which progress can be measured. With clear data on the current state of diversity, organizations can set specific, measurable goals and objectives for enhancing diversity and inclusion. Progress can then be tracked over time by comparing new data against the baseline. This allows organizations to assess the effectiveness of their DEI initiatives, make data-driven decisions, and hold themselves accountable for achieving desired outcomes.

Targeted interventions and resource allocation: Baseline data helps organizations identify areas that need targeted interventions and resource allocation. For example, if data reveals a lack of diversity at senior leadership levels, organizations can focus efforts on implementing initiatives that promote diverse talent development, mentoring, or leadership

training programs. Baseline data helps in directing resources and efforts where they are most needed to drive meaningful change.

Transparency and communication: Baseline data provides transparency and promotes open communication about diversity and inclusion. Sharing data with employees, stakeholders, and the public demonstrates an organization's commitment to addressing diversity issues and fosters trust. It enables organizations to communicate progress, challenges, and initiatives effectively, fostering a culture of inclusivity and demonstrating a commitment to diversity beyond mere rhetoric.

Evidence-based decision-making: Baseline data provides a factual basis for decision-making. Rather than relying on assumptions or anecdotal evidence, organizations can use data to inform their strategies, policies, and practices. Data-driven decision-making helps overcome biases and ensures that actions taken are grounded in objective information, increasing the likelihood of successful DEI initiatives.

Overall, baseline data serves as a critical starting point for organizations to understand their current diversity landscape, set goals, measure progress, and inform targeted interventions. It allows organizations to identify disparities, allocate resources effectively, promote transparency, and make evidence-based decisions to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Power of Data to Drive Outcomes

Good leaders know that what gets measured gets managed. Executives who want to improve DEI use data and analytics in the following ways.

Establish a baseline and set goals for the future. Understanding their baseline helped DEI leaders at Boston Beer Co. determine the organization's readiness and capabilities to make sustainable change—a necessary step to set achievable goals.

Measure progress on a regular basis. Forty-seven percent of respondents to the Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey measure progress toward their diversity and equity goals at least twice a year. Forty-three percent measure progress toward inclusion goals at least twice a year.

Communicate progress widely. Sharing DEI metrics with all employees reinforces commitment and accountability. DEI leaders are twice as likely as laggards to do so (47% compared with 24%).

Go beyond high-level metrics to identify areas for intervention. Being able to segment data by individual departments or units makes it possible to identify areas of concern hidden in otherwise positive trends. The same idea applies to specific intersections of identities (e.g., the experience of Asian women might be very different from that of women overall or Asians overall).

Hold the organization accountable. Being able to view DEI data at the department level makes it possible to hold people accountable for results. However, incentives should be introduced with care in order to drive the desired outcomes, according to experts interviewed for this report. Currently, very few organizations surveyed (12%) offer financial incentives for DEI improvements.

Harvard Business Review Analytical Services
Research Report, Creating a Culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:
Real Progress Requires a Sustained Commitment
May 2021

Software Selection

For recruitment, the project managers searched for a software that would provide support to debias the process from beginning (job description development) to the end (interviewing candidates). For diversity and inclusion, software criteria included mechanisms for collecting and analyzing data. It was critical that the software selected be founded on empirical research.

The table below shows the various software platforms considered.

Software Review

Software Name	Audit Area		Other	Customizable for project	Origin	Budget	Addition Notes
	Recruitment Process	Corporate Metrics					
Pulsely		√	Leadership		UK	Not available	Not responsive
Lever	√		Recruitment Process	Yes but cost prohibitive	USA	Over budget	ATS software
Mathison	√	√	Recruitment Process & Corporate Metrics	Yes but not for more than one pilot participant	USA	Over budget	
Textio	√		Recruitment Process	Yes but they were not interested for the size of this project	USA	Over budget	Took several emails and zoom meetings - not interested in our project
Greenhouse	√		Recruitment Process	Not for a pilot project, ATS software with embedded DEI tools so participants would have to adopt the ATS	USA	Over budget	Good software
Untapped	√		Recruitment process	All in one ATS platform	USA	Not available	Software built for recruitment agencies and focused on GenZ talent
Gap jumpers	√		Interview process		UK	Not available	Small company - difficult to connect with
Jonko			DEI awareness		Asia N/A in CA	Not available	Software tool matches underrepresented talent with companies seeking to increase diversity
Knocerki			Interview process	Difficult implementation for short term project	CA	Not available	Difficulty getting calls returned

Note: there were many other DEI software platforms reviewed but were not included unless they addressed recruitment or metrics in some way.

Pilot Participant Selection

Of the 211 employers who responded to the survey, 60 indicated they were interested in receiving information about the software pilot and 12 indicated they were interested in participating in the pilot. 12 employers were selected for pilot participation to provide a range of industries and company sizes as well as representation from both private and public companies. Six employers committed to the pilot.

Employers were provided with the following requirements for participation:
- Designating a company employee to work with the project managers as the direct point of contact for three to four months beginning in November. Time commitment would be approximately 4-6 hours per month over the duration of the project to meet with the project managers or collect and share information for assessment.
- Providing the project with company demographic data for assessment such as number of employers per department, various job levels in the company, gender breakdown etc. All this data would be anonymized.
- Sending a survey to employees (5 questions) using the selected retention and inclusion software at the beginning of the project and again 3 – 6 months later as an impact assessment. The employee responses would be anonymized.
- Providing the project with information on the company's existing recruitment and retention practices, procedures, and policies.
- Collaborating with project managers to determine which job descriptions would be most suitable for assessment through the recruitment software (up to a maximum of four job descriptions).
- Participating in the pilot project assessment process at the end of the project through survey and interview.

The identity of pilot participants would be kept confidential so project outcomes and observations could be reported without adversely affecting participants.

Employer pilot participants' industry and company size representation were as follows:

Industry	Company Size
Engineering	650
Construction I	120
Construction II	200
Hospitality	140
Technology Manufacturer	300
Sustainable Energy Storage	30
Post-secondary service unit	80

Pilot Project Process for Selected Participants

Project participants were expected to participate in a two-part pilot focused on: 1) Debiasing the Recruitment Process; and 2) Measuring Diversity and Inclusion.

Debiasing the recruitment process included the following components:

a) A branding review of the company's website and social media presence through a DEI lens conducted by the project managers. The website review looked for diverse and inclusive images, company team images for diversity, and documentation of diversity or inclusion. The social media review looked for incidents (photos and comments) on platforms such as Twitter and Instagram related to diversity and inclusion.

b) Participants using the selected debiasing recruitment software called *Applied* to recruit for open positions in the company.

Measuring Diversity and Inclusion included the following components:

a) Participants using the selected software called *Diversio* to collect baseline data on the diversity of their workforce and survey their workforce on employees' perceptions of corporate inclusivity. Once the data was collected, the software application provided participants with in-depth analysis of the data and identified areas where the company could make improvements (points of pain).

b) Once the data analysis was reviewed and discussed with project managers, participants could choose to have project managers provide solution options for addressing their points of pain. Project managers encouraged participants to select at least one solution for implementation.

c) If participants chose to implement solutions, project managers provided support for this process and participants were offered an opportunity to engage in an impact survey three months after solution implementation to see if the solution implementation changed employees' perceptions of corporate inclusivity.

Recruitment Software Selected- *Applied*

What is *Applied*?

It is a talent acquisition software platform that aims to deliver impact by removing bias in each step of the recruitment process to increase diversity of qualified job applicants and streamline the recruitment process.
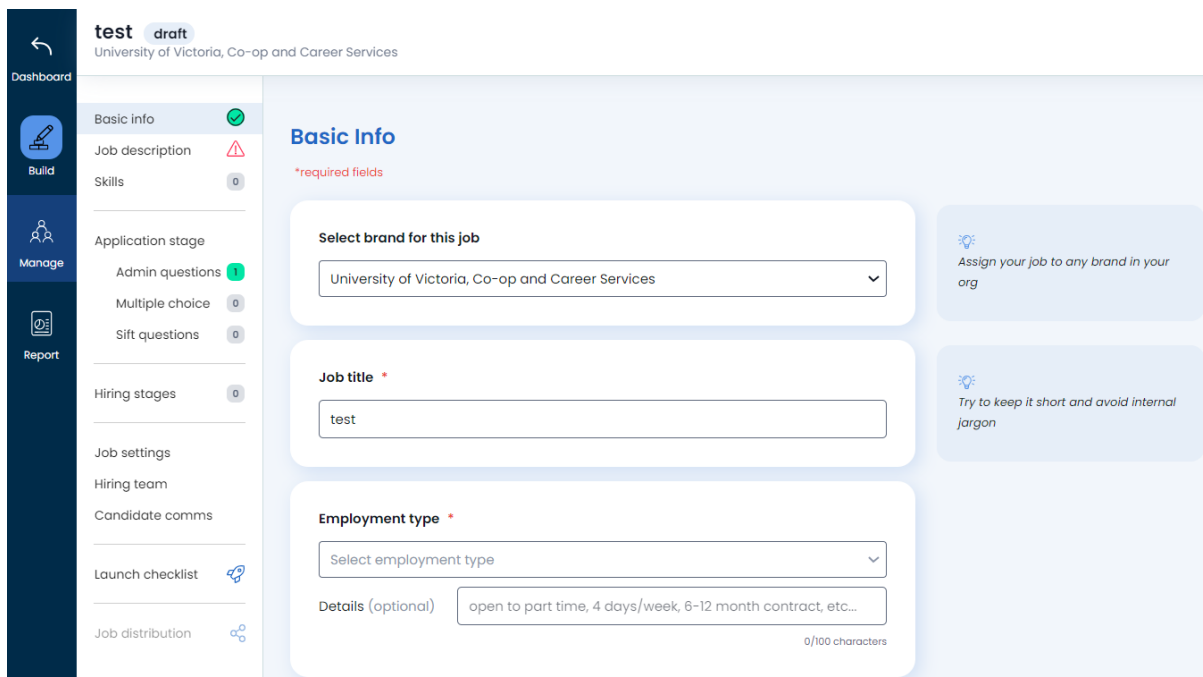
Applied Features

The *Applied* software builds anonymity into the recruitment process to ensure a fair hiring process. The platform is built on 50+ years of research and behavioural science (UK Behavioural Science Institute). *Applied* encourages employers to avoid using resumes to assess whether candidates qualify for interviews. Instead, it provides a series of options for assessment while the applicants are able to remain anonymous. See Steps table below.

Anonymous and randomised applications
We remove unconscious bias triggers such as name, gender and education when reviewing applications.

Powerful bias-removing software
Candidates' answers are randomised to guarantee fairness.

Inclusive job descriptions
Remove gendered language and reading burden with our Job Description Tool.

DEI focussed reporting
Live data insights throughout the process, across all aspects of diversity.

Why *Applied*?

Applied was selected because the platform addressed all stages of the recruitment process from creating unbiased and inclusive job description to developing structured interviews. It is a one-stop shop. The company representative took a keen interest in this project and worked hard to develop a service contract to fit within the budget and provide the project with add-ons and direct support for the project managers as well as customizing the program to allow for multiple participants.

Applied provided good onboarding education and videos for the project managers as well as virtual support. The dashboard seen below was easy to understand and use.

A valuable add-on feature provided by *Applied* was the Job Description (JD) Analysis Tool where the text of an existing JD was analyzed, a rating generated, problematic language identified and suggestions for improvements were offered.

How Participants Used *Applied*

Each pilot participant was provided a presentation on how *Applied* works, and they were guided through how to use the software by the project managers. The project managers worked very closely with the designates from each participating organization to support them in learning how to use the software as well as doing as much of the work as possible in developing content for each step and managing the process. The project managers were very cognizant of how busy their contacts were and made every effort to mitigate the time commitment required to use the software.

Each participant was able to use *Applied* to recruit up to four roles. Developing a role for posting required numerous steps.

Step	Participant Responsibility	Project Managers' Responsibility
Select Role	Participants were asked to provide the PMs with the most recent JD for the role and the posting if applicable	• Run the JD through *Applied*'s Job Analysis Software • Revised the JD according to *Applied*'s JD template/guide • Analyze the revised JD for improvement • Review original and revised JD analysis with participant • Work with participant to finalize the JD for posting
Applicant Assessment	The *Applied* process includes the ability to create administrative, skills and sift questions (first level of applicant evaluation) for each applicant to complete on an anonymous basis	Based on the JD, PMs created or worked with the participants to create suitable questions for assessing applicants.
Sourcing	Advised PMs on where you would normally post the role	PMs supported participants in posting roles to sources and then provided suggestions for additional sources
Applicant Review	The participants did this on their own with their hiring team	Once the posting was live, PMs monitored the progress along with participants and prepared them for how to assess applicants PMs provided support as necessary
Candidate Assessment	The participants did this on their own with their hiring team	PMs provided support as necessary
Interview	The participants did this on their own with their hiring team	PMs provided support as necessary
Data/Insights	The participants did this on their own with their hiring team	PMs provided support as necessary
Decision	The participants did this on their own with their hiring team	PMs provided support as necessary

Applied Outcomes

The project experienced some unexpected challenges with use of the *Applied* software which unfortunately resulted in limited use of the available postings made available for the participants (four postings each). No participant posted more than one role through *Applied*. The table below shows participant activity in *Applied*.

Participant by Industry	Job	JD Analysis	JD Revised	Assessments	Sourcing	Candidates				Comments
						All	Submitted	Reviewed	Hired	
Sustainable Energy Storage	Electrical Engineer	Yes	Yes	Skills -8 Admin- 3 Sift -6	Linkedin	90	38	14	0	Top Candidate used Chat GBT to answer questions and then ghosted company when an interview was offered.
Construction I	Apprentice Plumber	Yes	Yes	Skills-5 Admin-10 Sift-3	Indeed	4	1	0	0	
Construction II	Corporate Accountant	Yes	Yes	Skills -7 Admin-5 Sift-5	Indeed LinkedIn	11	8	7	0	
Engineering	Building Information Model Technologist /Structural Drafter	Yes	Yes	Skills - 6 Admin- 4 Sift- 3	Indeed Not on Internal Job Board	8	6	0	0	Job selected had been previously posted . The previous posting did not result in a candidate for the job. Could not post on their internal website (would cost company too much money to get the web design company to post on their career page). Decided against posting on their internal website.
Hospitality	Room Attendent	Yes	Yes	Skills-6 Admin -7 Sift-3	No	1	1	0	0	
Technology Manufacturing	None	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Participant declined participation in the project February 2023. It was too late to replace them.
Post-secondary service unit	Not able to participate									

Pros:

1. Excellent onboarding instructions for the project managers. This included the rational behind the different recruitment steps and processes used by *Applied.*
2. Additional guides on best practices also available to project managers.
3. Easy to provide participant access to the software.
4. Easy elimination of ineligible or unqualified applicants that was controlled by sift questions determined by the employer. This saved the employer time spent on reviewing resumes and doing first round telephone screening interviews.
5. Easy to track applicants and follow them through out the recruitment process.
6. Excellent ability to communicate with not just one applicant or candidate but groups of them as they proceeded through the recruitment process.
7. Excellent communication templates available to the employer.
8. *Applied* Support team tried to deal with the time difference when challenges arose and was generally very responsive to project manager queries.

Cons

1. Steep learning or process curve for participants.
   - Rethinking the job description and posting. Even with an existing job description and support from project managers to analyze and rewrite the job description, employers had to spend time reviewing and approving the new job description for posting.
   - Identifying the skills and qualifications necessary for the role. In most instances, this required them to consider selecting only the most critical skills from their original "shopping list" of skills and qualifications.
   - Creating of administration questions that would allow the software to eliminate applicants who were not eligible or did not meet the basic qualifications.
   - Creating sift questions (approximately 6 questions) which would be used as criteria for applicants to be shortlisted. In addition to creating these questions, employers needed to also create the evaluation guides that would be used by the hiring team to evaluate applicant responses.

While project managers supported and assisted employers in every step of this process, it required a significant time commitment from company recruiters. Often the recruiters would need to consult with others in the organization such as unit leads or managers.

2. The *Applied* software was hard to integrate with participants' existing applicant tracking software (ATS) and/or Career page websites. This required additional work from the HR staff for each posting. In larger organizations this required numerous conversations with technical/support departments. Many of the ATS not only tracked job applicants but also managed job postings on the company website and automatically posted jobs to selected job boards. It proved to be a significant challenge in most cases to interrupt the ATS cycle. While workarounds were created, they were not efficient.

3. The participants were hiring in a tight job market where applicants had many choices so the time required to try the new software was a problem when the old job posting could literally be posted in seconds. Employers expressed concern over tight competition and losing potential applicants to a new way of doing things. In addition, it is possible that a virtual or partially virtual recruitment process is not suitable for some industries or jobs.

4. Chat GPT (artificial intelligence software). During the course of the project Chat GPT was making its appearance. One participant discovered that Chat GPT was used by one of the applicants to complete the sift and work example questions. Prior to this discovery the candidate was selected by the hiring committee as the top candidate for interview. In the end the candidate "ghosted" the employer. While the participant and its hiring team liked capabilities of the software, the ability to use Chat GPT to answer online questions was a critical flaw.

Software for Measuring Diversity and Inclusion Selected - *Diversio*

What is *Diversio*?

Diversio uses an academically validated 5 Metric Inclusion Framework (survey) to assess employee experience at organizations. An organization receives an Inclusion Score, which indicates the level of inclusion of all employees within a workforce. The 5-underlying metrics, or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), that contribute to the overall Inclusion Score are: Workplace Harassment, Inclusive Culture, Fair Management, Workplace Flexibility, and Career Development. To assess how inclusive an organization is, *Diversio* accounts for general employee experiences across the 5 KPIs as well as assesses any significant differences in experience across demographic/identity groups within a company.

Why *Diversio*?

Diversio is a Canadian company, and the software was developed based on research in collaboration with the University of Waterloo and the University of Toronto. *Diversio* was very interested in this project and worked hard to develop a service agreement to meet the projects budget and needs. The dashboard is simple yet powerful enough to allow participants to dive into their own data and analysis. Survey implementation was very easy for the participants and survey completion by respondents was approximately four minutes. The collection of data is anonymous and *Diversio* protects respondents' privacy. *Diversio* not only collects and analyses diversity and inclusion data but identifies "points of pain" with the organization and provides solutions (from a library of 1,200 validated solutions to address those points of pain.)

Diversio Dashboard

Inclusion Score

69.2

▲ 1.3 points higher than the industry average

People Surveyed

67
Total

Manager	53%
Support	20%
Associate	17%
Director	5%
Entry-level	2%
Executive	2%
VP	1%

Diversio Certification

DIVERSIO
CERTIFIED
2021

Signal your commitment to Diversity & Inclusion with Diversio Certification.

Contact Us

Learn More

Diversity Composition
Self-identified demographic traits.

Race & Ethnicity	▬▬	Industry Average
Prefer not to answer	6%	1.3%
Racial and Ethnic Minorities	28.3%	28.6%
White	65.7%	70.1%

Chart categories: Gender, Race & Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Disability / Mental Health

● ▬▬ ● Industry Average ○ Minimum threshold not met

Inclusion Scorecard
Performance on 6 Inclusion Metrics based on survey responses.

	Inclusive Culture	Fair Management	Career Development	Workplace Flexibility	Workplace Safety	Recruiting & Hiring
Industry Score	7.1	6.8	6.2	6.7	7.2	=
Your KPI Score	6.8	7.1	6.5	7.2	7.0	8.5

■ Strength ■ Pain point ⬭ Minimum threshold not met (XX) Previous Score

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Top 3 Pain Points

Career Development	Inclusive Culture	Workplace Safety
6.5/10	**6.8**/10	**7.0**/10
Measures whether respondents have mentors and sponsors within the organization that create opportunities and invest in their success.	Measures whether respondents feel like they are a part of a team, and can meaningfully contribute alongside peers.	Measures whether respondents experience sexual, physical, or mental harassment in the workplace.
Determined through responses to "Is there someone in a position of influence in your company who is invested in your growth and development?"	Determined through responses to "Do you feel your opinion is valued by your team?"	Determined through responses to "In your experience, is your workplace free from harassment?"

Heat Map

Overview	Inclusive Culture	Fair Management	Career Development	Workplace Flexibility	Workplace Safety	Recruiting & Hiring
Industry Score	7.1	6.8	6.2	6.7	7.2	—
Your KPI Score	6.8	7.1	6.5	7.2	7.0	8.5
Dominant Group ❔	7.9	8.2	7.4	7.9	7.4	6.4
Women And Non-Binary	7.5	7.6	7.2	6.9	6.5	9.9
Racial And Ethnic Minorities	4.0	5.4	4.7	6.5	5.8	10.0
LGBTQ2+	—	—	—	—	—	—
Physical / Cognitive / Mental Conditions	7.7	8.3	7.3	6.7	6.5	10.0

Tabs shown: Overview, Department, Office / Region, Level, Year, Tenure

How Participants Used *Diversio*

Similar to the *Applied* software, pilot participants received a full review of the capabilities of the *Diversio* platform. They were able to review the survey questions and edit some of the questions relating to the organizations structure. Participants were able to choose when the survey was conducted within the timeline of the project, context of communication with the employees with advice and guidance from the project managers and templates available through the software.

Once the survey was completed, project managers reviewed in detail with the participants the analysis of their data. Project managers then requested participants to choose of one point of pain for which recommendations for improvement would be provided through *Diversio*'s resource library. Pilot participants were able to choose if they wanted to implement solutions for their pain points. If they did choose to implement solutions, they were encouraged to then commit to an impact survey three months after solution implementation.

Diversio Outcomes

Industry	Survey Population	Response %	Overall Inclusion Score	Inclusive Culture	Fair Management	Career Development	Workplace Flexibility	Workplace Safety
			Participant Score / Industry Comparator					
Engineering	83/190	44%	(65.7/63.5)	(7.1/7.1)	(6.4/6.8)	(6.2/6.2)	(6.1/6.7)	(7.0/7.2)
Construction I	70/119	59%	(73/67.9)	(7.5/7.1)	(7.0/6.8)	(6.9/6.2)	(7.8/6.7)	(7.3/7.2)
Construction II	67/180	37%	(69.2/67.9)	(6.8/7.1)	(7.1/6.8)	(6.5/6.2)	(7.2/6.7)	(7.0/7.2)
Hospitality	declined participation							
Technology Manufacturer	declined participation							
Sustainable Energy Storage	30/30	100%	(87.9/61)	(8.9/6.4)	(8.9/6.0)	(7.8/5.3)	(9.0/7.3)	(9.4/5.5)
Post-secondary service unit	59/78	76%	(65.1/64.1)	(6.6/6.7)	(5.8/6.6)	(6.3/5.7)	(7.4/7.1)	(6.5/7.0)

Pros

1. From a project perspective, *Diversio* was able to provide numerous accesses so each participant would see only their own dashboard and the project managers could access and see all.
2. Respondent privacy and confidentiality protected (including minimum respondent threshold within data sets).
3. Excellent onboarding information and client support.
4. Survey was short but covered all the necessary metrics.

5. Industry comparative benchmarks.
6. Analysis was available within the hour.
7. Dashboard provided clear and easily understandable data.
8. Dashboard was automatically populated with definitions and explanations.
9. Dashboard permitted participants to drill into their own data and customize queries
10. Participants could download data.
11. Solution and resource library accessible by project managers had 1,200 solutions.

Cons

1. Some participants found the diversity demographic questions too invasive or not specific enough.
2. Premium package of services (each additional item with its own cost) is necessary to make good use of this tool. There were a number of services that project managers were not made aware of when the contract was created. Some of them were added on after the fact (industry specific comparators) but others could not be (editing some of the organization questions).

Pre-Pilot Observations

- Time required to secure software contracts took longer than expected.
  The task of finding software to meet the needs of the project as well as a supplier that was willing to negotiate on the price to access the software and customize for the pilot project took longer than expected. Some of the companies approached were either not willing to discuss the cost, not interested in the project or not able or willing to customize to meet the project needs. Project managers were keen to source Canadian software, but those companies were difficult to find.

- Time required to vet pilot participants took longer than expected.
  Approximately 200 co-op employers expressed interest in participating in the pilot project during the survey. Reducing that initial interest down to selected and committed participants took longer than expected. Project managers endeavoured to select interested participants from a variety of industries, company sizes and types. Once selected participants were notified there was a significant drop in interest to those who were able to commit for various reasons.

Pilot Project Observations

- Participant availability
  Each company that committed to the project was asked to designate a point person to be the project contact and to work with the project managers. In all cases, these were human resource employees or recruiters. We discovered that all our direct contacts were extremely busy, and the time required to participate in this project was above and beyond their regular workload. In some cases, they required approval from leadership or needed to consult with colleagues to process with certain steps. The project managers were sensitive to this issue and did not push project deadlines resulting in the project timeline needing to be extended.

- Participant Attrition
  The project started with 6 committed companies. One company dropped from the project in February 2023 before engaging with either software platforms. It was too late to replace

them. The participant was engaged with an external recruiter who was responsible for all the company's recruitment. While there seem to be interest from the company contact, the external recruiter did not agree that using software could improve their recruitment process and therefore the diversity of the organization.

- *Applied*
The difficulties encountered with integrating the software with participants' existing ATS required a significant amount of project management, participant, and software support resources (several weeks). Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier in this report, the solutions were not successful and created frustrations for all involved.

  Another difficulty encountered was the tight labour market employers were experiencing, at least for the industries represented in the project. The competition for employees was fierce and participants could not risk making dramatic changes to their hiring process at such a highly competitive time. And as mentioned earlier, the time required to prepare a job description for posting was considerable.

  For these reasons participants declined using *Applied* to post additional roles that were available to them.

- *Diversio*
Only 2 of 7 participants achieved the 60% response rate goal for the survey. The low response rate could be attributed to a few factors:

  - Poor communication by the employer as to the purpose and importance of the survey. While the project managers offered support for communications, it was up to the participants to decide exactly how the participation in the survey was framed or messaged.
  - Some of the participants would not commit to sharing the survey outcome with employees and transparency is key for gaining trust in the process.
  - Some participants had also surveyed their workforce within the last year.
  - Email is not always the best way to distribute information to a workforce depending on the industry. The participant with the most success used a slack channel to invite participation as opposed to email. For some industries with many trade employees, email may not have been the most effective form of communication or could have been supplemented by an additional method of communication.

  Unfortunately, a low response rate means a lack of confidence in the data. One participant chose to not implement solutions because of the low response rate.

  One participant declined the survey due to labour negotiations and concern that it may interfere with their business process.

Learnings

There are two main factors that will make a true change in a DEI organizational culture: commitment from leadership and commitment to data.
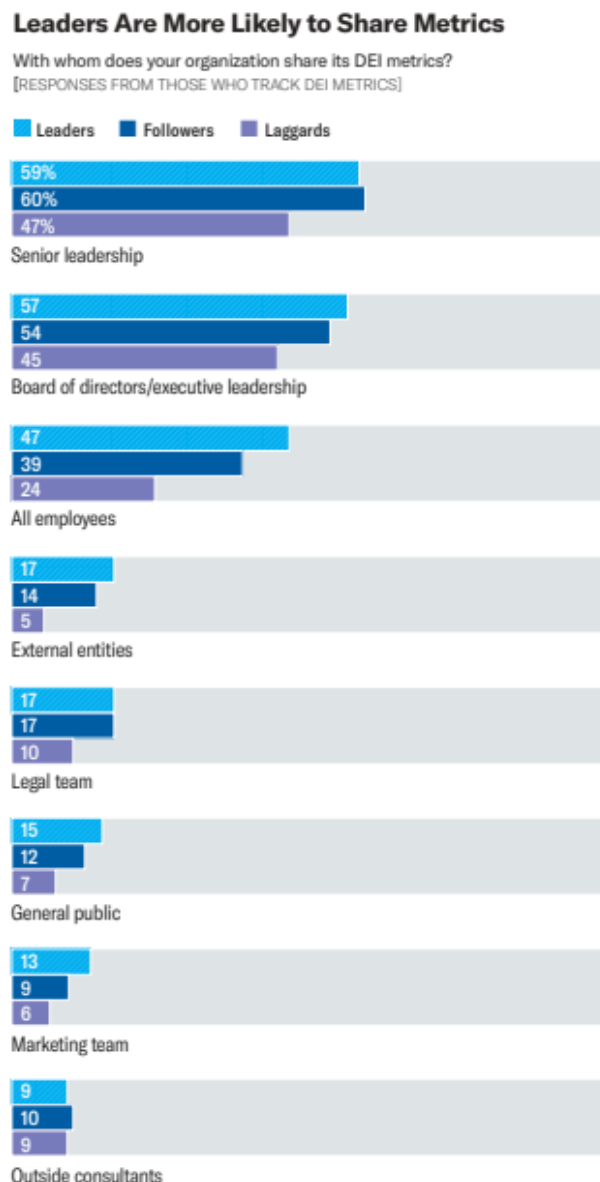
> *"Leadership engagement is really critical……the CEO needs to be personally involved in driving that."*
>
> Kelly Enderes, VP Research, The Josh Bersin Company

In this project, there was only one participant where an executive or someone in a leadership position (CEO) was personally involved and in fact was our direct contact. This participant had the most success with both *Applied* and *Diversio*. The participants that dropped out during the project or did not commit to sharing survey data did not seem to have leadership buy-in.

In most cases, our direct contact was either head of People and Culture or recruitment or we worked alongside the recruiters. In these instances, it was clear that leadership was not fully supportive of participation. They were also not prepared to be transparent with the workforce about survey findings. The two participants who committed to sharing survey findings with the workforce had the best response rates (75% and 100%) and have committed to implementing multiple solutions.

The data from below from Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey, May 2021 sums this up nicely.

Leaders Are More Likely to Share Metrics

With whom does your organization share its DEI metrics?
[RESPONSES FROM THOSE WHO TRACK DEI METRICS]

■ Leaders ■ Followers ■ Laggards

59%
60%
47%
Senior leadership

57
54
45
Board of directors/executive leadership

47
39
24
All employees

17
14
5
External entities

17
17
10
Legal team

15
12
7
General public

13
9
6
Marketing team

9
10
9
Outside consultants

Source: Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey, May 2021

DEI must be part of the fabric of the organization and therefore imbedded into its everyday operations. It cannot be achieved off the side of human resources staff desks (those already overburdened in this tough recruitment environment) nor can it be a one-time effort.

The Power of Data to Drive Outcomes

Good leaders know that what gets measured gets managed. Executives who want to improve DEI use data and analytics in the following ways.

Establish a baseline and set goals for the future. Understanding their baseline helped DEI leaders at Boston Beer Co. determine the organization's readiness and capabilities to make sustainable change—a necessary step to set achievable goals.

Measure progress on a regular basis. Forty-seven percent of respondents to the Harvard Business Review Analytic Services survey measure progress toward their diversity and equity goals at least twice a year. Forty-three percent measure progress toward inclusion goals at least twice a year.

Communicate progress widely. Sharing DEI metrics with all employees reinforces commitment and accountability. DEI leaders are twice as likely as laggards to do so (47% compared with 24%).

Go beyond high-level metrics to identify areas for intervention. Being able to segment data by individual departments or units makes it possible to identify areas of concern hidden in otherwise positive trends. The same idea applies to specific intersections of identities (e.g., the experience of Asian women might be very different from that of women overall or Asians overall).

Hold the organization accountable. Being able to view DEI data at the department level makes it possible to hold people accountable for results. However, incentives should be introduced with care in order to drive the desired outcomes, according to experts interviewed for this report. Currently, very few organizations surveyed (12%) offer financial incentives for DEI improvements.

Harvard Business Review Analytic Services
Creating a Culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Real Progress Requires Sustained Commitment
September 2021

While it is not possible to draw conclusions from this pilot project with the limited number of participants, it is evident that the experiences and challenges in this project support existing research and literature.

At the time of this report, four participants are implementing solutions and 2 have committed to conducting impact surveys in the September. This report will be updated and finalized after the impact surveys have been concluded.