

How to Write a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

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How does your business communicate its diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts? Maybe you've got a few lines about DEI on an old about page, or perhaps you posted an International Women's Day solidarity post on social media? A good start! But to show the real impact of your DEI work, you need to create a diversity, equity and inclusion statement.

When well-written, a DEI statement sends a powerful message about what a company stands for and its priorities. But despite its importance, some companies don't advertise their diversity commitments — leaving stakeholders, customers, and employees at a disadvantage and potentially impacting recruitment efforts and the bottom line.

What is a diversity, equity and inclusion statement?

A diversity, equity and inclusion statement is a written declaration that describes and details a company's DEI commitments. The statement outlines the company's pledges to create an

inclusive and diverse workforce and explains how this correlates with its values, mission, and vision.

A well-written DEI statement will confirm the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion, share the current state of diversity, identify primary focus areas, and detail the steps it takes to create a more powerful and inclusive workplace.

If you want to position your company as progressive and show your commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, writing a solid DEI statement is your first step. Here's how to get it right.

How to write a robust DEI statement

You'll first need to loop in key stakeholders to help bring the project to fruition. Writing a diversity, equity and inclusion statement is not the job of your junior copywriter — it takes a village to craft a meaningful message and powerful diversity statement, so include the following stakeholders to tackle the task:

- Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- Chief Diversity Officer (CDO)
- Chief Marketing Officer (CMO)
- HR Director/Head of HR
- Employee representatives (preferably from your DEI committee, if you have one)
- Brand strategist/lead creative

Once you've assembled your key stakeholders, work together through the following steps.

Explore your company mission, values, and vision

There's no fast-track way to write a DEI statement. You can't peek at another company's statement because no two DEI statements are the same — each company will be working toward different goals. To tune into writing a diversity statement that's true to your business, you need to look at your own company and its mission statements. Ask yourself:

How does DEI align with your overarching company mission?

What will improving DEI do to help achieve your company vision?

How can you align your company values with your DEI actions?

How can you weave diversity, equity and inclusion into your business strategy?

By starting with exploring who you are as a business and linking this to your DEI statement, you're putting yourself in the best possible position to understand why a diversity, inclusion and equity strategy matters and how it'll impact your broader business goals, community, and employees.

Create an action plan and first draft

Now you understand how a DEI statement impacts business results and ties into your mission statement, aim to gain clarity with your key stakeholders on the following topics.

What's the DEI purpose?

Seek to find the 'why' behind focusing on diversity. For example, explore why DEI is important to your business, think about how you'll take responsibility to implement initiatives and consider what you want customers and employees to know about your DEI commitments.

Where do your DEI priorities lie?

Think about what to prioritize when it comes to DEI. For example, do you struggle to hire women or women of color? Have you found gaps in employee age, and you're mainly hiring millennials while overlooking the benefits of Gen-Z in the workplace? Or perhaps you have a male-dominated c-suite and need to diversify your leadership team?

How will you achieve your DEI goals?

Discuss how you'll make DEI initiatives happen and how you'll achieve your DEI goals. For example, you could start with something simple like mandatory diversity training for all leadership teams or spending time reevaluating your hiring practices to attract more diverse candidates.

Next, collaborate in a Google Doc and create a first draft of your diversity statement. Remember to use positive language creates a sense of purpose, and it's perfectly acceptable to ask a lead copywriter to wordsmith a final draft statement to ensure it conveys the right message in the right brand voice and strikes the right tone.

Finally, be sure to include a plan for how you will fund your DEI efforts, and who will be responsible for overseeing them.

Share your DEI statement

A diversity, equity and inclusion statement is more than a Google Doc hidden away on the company-only Internet. It's a commitment and promise to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce, so shout about it loudly.

According to Glassdoor, 76% of job seekers report that a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers, so you must ensure that your diversity statement is easily accessible.

Include a link to your full DEI statement in the About Us section of your website or as a standalone link in the footer of your company homepage, and ensure that the link is indexable by Google and other search engines. Otherwise, the page won't be shown when searches look for your company online.

You can also distribute your DEI statement on social media or in a company newsletter. Remember to add a link to the statement or include a copy of your statement on all job postings and career pages.

Make good your commitment

There's no point in writing and sharing a DEI statement if you don't follow through with the commitment. So make sure that your whole company understands and commits to your DEI plan of action and that employees are on board with helping the statement come to life.

If you're having trouble getting leadership onboard, Katee Van Horn, Founder & CEO at Bar the Door, says to focus on data that shows why diversity and inclusion are important (hint hint: it creates happier, more productive workplaces) and touch upon the human aspect to "make it more real for people who may not understand that the employee experience is not the same for everyone at the company," which can be done by creating "more awareness" to "open people's eyes to how great the organization could be for everyone."

A good way to keep employees informed and engaged with DEI is to create a diversity, equity and inclusion committee that meets regularly to discuss how DEI is going, what steps need to be taken to achieve diversity and inclusion goals, and actively collaborate to improve workplace culture.

If you distribute a DEI statement and don't follow through on what you've shared, you could impact your hiring efforts and have your DEI efforts labeled as performative.

Aubrey Blanche, Senior Director of People Operations & Strategic Programs at CultureAmp, spoke to Human Resources Director Magazine and said, "The workforce is becoming more diverse, so employees have very different expectations about the type of environment and social responsibility that businesses are taking... companies that aren't investing in DEI or are just doing performative things won't be good enough. They'll be out-competed in terms of talent acquisition, talent development, and talent retention."

By following these steps, focusing on tying your DEI statement back to your company vision, and committing to following through on your diversity efforts, your company will find value in writing a robust and meaningful diversity, equity and inclusion statement.