



Empowering Diversity in the Workplace



It's easy to have a page on your company website devoted to diversity and inclusion initiatives, but what good are these without commitment from your employees?

Diverse thinking is a necessary ingredient for a company to remain innovative. One of the many benefits of diversity and inclusion in the workplace is that there's never a shortage of creative ideas and different solutions to keep it moving forward.

Want to see your employees more involved in your organization's diversity and inclusion initiatives? Here are three ways to do so.

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

If you look at *DiversityInc's* Top 50 Companies for Diversity list, many of the organizations have something in common: employee resource groups. Allowing employees to not only join committees with a specific goal in mind internally or externally, but actually allowing the topics of these committees to be determined by employees is key. The “extracurricular” teams not only promote diverse thinking but also improve employee engagement and retention. It can be more of a fun group – an internal online forum for parents to connect on how they balance work and family or a committee that comes up with monthly exchange activities among employees globally – or an employee-driven resource group that’s tasked with innovating on a particular topic relevant to your work – like university recruitment or alternative sourcing, for a recruitment firm, for example. The employees participating on these committees are well-positioned to become subject matter experts (SMEs) and can then contribute to other internal committees, write blogs and share best practices as a company expert.

COMMUNICATION MEDIUMS

Offer a variety of communication mediums as options to encourage collaboration among employees. Everyone has a preferred method in which they’re most comfortable interacting with others and expressing their ideas. To gain a greater diversity of ideas from employees, utilize multiple tools so all employees feel comfortable contributing. At WilsonHCG, one of the most successful tools has been our internal community platform that allows employees to share ideas, collaborate and celebrate wins among our community. This tool allows employees to personalize their profile with their background, previous experience and specialized skills and interests. It has helped instill a sense of ownership for being a thought leader in certain areas for employees as well as encouraged collaboration among employees who have similar interests and want to get a movement started. It’s encouraged the circulation of new ideas and projects. When new employees join our organization, they immediately feel a sense of community and are engaged when they see their peers’ ideas being brought to life.

EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP

How do you start a movement? With a motivated individual willing to lead others with great ideas. When I started leading our internal diversity recruiting committee, I had a long-term vision in mind and was committed to achieving it, but I let the committee members dictate our path. Giving employees the tools they need to succeed not only motivates them but also shows them that their employer trusts them and values their opinions. Having a committee that’s purpose is to share ideas to help drive your company’s culture is what continues to fuel our passion for diversity in the workplace. As a leader of the diversity committee, I also have an executive team member as a “sponsor.” It is nice to have someone who is involved in the company strategy to bounce my ideas off of. Furthermore, an executive leadership mentorship program that pairs company thought leaders with executives will encourage the circulation of diverse thinking and bring to light new ideas.

Diversity and inclusion is not just a statement on a website. Employee engagement and creating an environment of collaboration is what drives innovation and growth.