

HOW CEO'S SUPPORT DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PLANS

Why should businesses have a plan for Diversity & Inclusion?

Businesses are figuring out that a Diversity & Inclusion strategy is important for their bottom line. D&I provides more perspectives, which results in creative thinking and problem-solving.

What do company CEO's say about the value of D&I?

Dr. Shirley Davis, a Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer for several major global organizations and a consultant on strategies for building a more diverse and inclusive workplace, says "I am pleased to announce that more and more of them ARE making it a priority inside of their organizations, and they are holding their leaders accountable."

There are many CEO's who also get it.

In an interview with CNN's Poppy Harlow, **Rosalind Brewer, CEO of Sam's Club**, declared Diversity as a priority for her organization.

Brewer said, "It has to start with top leadership. I can tell you that even with myself, I have to live it also. My executive team is very diverse and I make that a priority. I demand it of my team and within the structure. And then every now and then you have to nudge your partners. And you have to speak up and speak out, and I try to use my platform for that to remind people. I try to set an example. I mentor many women inside my company and outside my company. Because I think it's important."

Ben Silbermann, CEO of Pinterest, has also spoken about Diversity as a priority. Pinterest was one of the first tech companies to openly discuss the lack of Diversity in the tech world and to be transparent about their internal demographics.

Figures from Google, Yahoo, and LinkedIn showed their workers are more than 60 percent male; 2 percent of its workers are black; 3 percent are Hispanic; and 30 percent are women. Google executives said the transparency about its workforce is an important step toward change.

Silbermann said, “(Gender) is the place where (Pinterest) decided to start, even though Diversity means a lot of things. As we grow we want to make sure we’re looking wide and far for the best people from lots of different backgrounds.”

These are particular initiatives that Pinterest is taking:

- Mentoring female programming students
- Recruiting at events for female, African-American, and Latino engineers
- Conducting training on unconscious gender and racial bias
- Prioritizing hiring goals: 30% new hires to be females; 8% to be underrepresented ethnic minorities
- Working with a consultant to measure the impact of D&I initiatives

Andrew McKenzie, CEO at BHP Billiton, says, “We will harness the enormous potential that a more inclusive and diverse workplace can deliver.”

BHP Billiton has prioritized D&I as one of the company’s key strategic objectives. The organization’s 2013 Employee Perception Survey showed that increased Inclusion correlates with increased performance.

The organization has instituted a number of initiatives:

- Establishing Inclusion and Diversity councils throughout the organization
- Providing unconscious bias training on a large scale delivered to all leaders and employees
- Identifying qualified women in succession plans for key leadership roles as well as piloting a senior executive female sponsorship program
- Instituting female retention and recruitment targets for each financial year, including a focus on recruiting female graduates
- Establishing inclusion and diversity as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the scorecards of all leaders across the company

Indra Nooyi, CEO of PepsiCo, is also pioneering a movement to increase her company's Diversity. As one of the most powerful female CEOs in the world, she believes it is "imperative" to promote female Diversity.

Nooyi says, "Whether you are a male or female CEO, it is a business imperative. If you look at graduating seniors from colleges, more than 50% are women. If you look at the best grades, they are being gotten by women. So if you really want companies to be successful, we have got to draw from that entire pool, not try to say we are going to exclude a portion of the population."

These are the initiatives PepsiCo has implemented:

- Endorsing the United Nations Women's Empowerment Principles— Equality Means Business. The Principles offer insight to companies with regard to empowering women in the workplace, marketplace and community.
- Creating an organization called The Pinnacle Group as an effort to grow the number of female leaders. The organization was created as a way to increase retention of PepsiCo female sales talent, and strengthen and diversify future leaders.
- Creating eleven employee resource groups, including Valor, which supports veterans, the military and their families as they transition from the military to the civilian workforce.
- Implementing "Growing Together, a Journey with Our Hearing-Impaired Team," an innovative program developed with the help of 40 hearing-impaired associates who developed solutions for their own needs, offering ongoing sign language training for associates, executive forums, and new partnerships with institutions that will allow training, certification and opportunities for hearing-impaired associates.
- Creating two internal honors to recognize individuals who actively support greater diversity and inclusion in the workplace.