



unitedminds
a Weber Shandwick consultancy

How Chief Diversity Officers are Meeting the Challenges of Today and Tomorrow

Insights Into The Shifting Role, Responsibilities And Priorities Of The Chief Diversity Officer

OCTOBER 2021

Introduction

In 2019, United Minds partnered with KRC Research and Weber Shandwick to [explore the role of the Chief Diversity Officer](#) (CDO) after evidence was mounting for the need of a dedicated leader to spearhead diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) and ensure organizational efforts were aligned to business strategy.

But in just two years, the world has drastically changed.

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on individuals, families and communities across the globe. Millions of lives have been lost, and the long-term health implications to survivors remain unknown. Additionally, the pandemic’s disproportionate impact on global communities of color has laid bare the health, education and economic inequities that have existed in society for too long. While businesses continue to recover from the shock and impact to their bottom line, leaders are asking big questions about the future of work and the workplace.

On top of all that, in May 2020, Minneapolis police killed George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, sparking a wave of racial and civil unrest across the United States, which quickly carried over into protests around the world. As tension and frustration boil over, organizations have quickly realized that the old DE&I playbook doesn’t work; consumers and employees are demanding real change.

While our earlier study focused primarily on the roles and responsibilities of CDOs (or those who held the senior most DE&I position in their organization) and the benefits of DE&I functions being well-aligned with the business, our latest study dives deeper into how the function has continued to grow and strengthen its presence within organizations. We also evaluate how the external environment has – and hasn’t – shifted priorities as DE&I leaders face more opportunities and challenges than ever before. And different from the 2019 study, this study expands focus beyond the United States (US) to include the United Kingdom (UK) and Canada.

This study also serves as a companion study to our 2021 benchmark that measures employees’ perceptions of DE&I within their organizations: [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: A People Imperative](#).



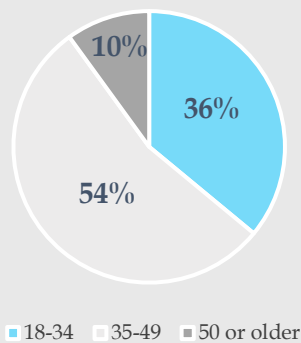
The hard work is happening now.

What we measured

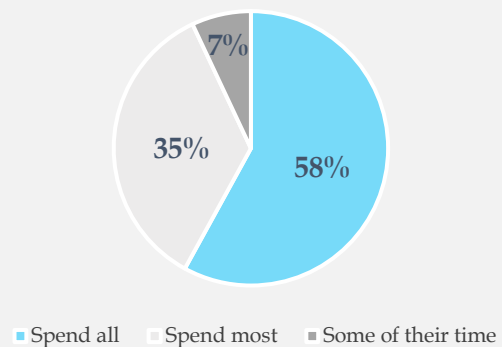
United Minds, in partnership with KRC Research and Weber Shandwick, conducted a survey of 227 senior-most professionals responsible for DE&I at their organizations. The survey included professionals in three countries: 128 from the United States, 49 from Canada and 50 from the United Kingdom. Most respondents in our survey are responsible for DE&I strategies and activities across their companies' global operations.

Respondents were screened to qualify as follows:

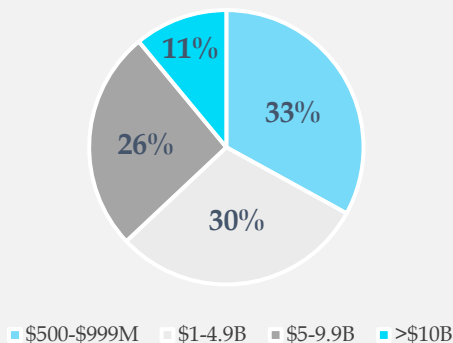
Are age 18 or older



Spend at least some of their time on the job dedicated to DE&I



Employed 30 or more hours per week for organizations with an annual revenue of at least \$500 million

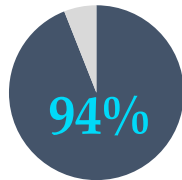


Our 2021 survey builds upon our March 2019 survey of 500 US-based DE&I professionals, which included a sample of 168 senior-most DE&I professionals. In this report, we track changes from our benchmark survey to present.

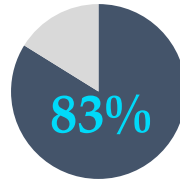
What we learned

IN THE FACE OF SIGNIFICANT ADVERSITY, THE CDO ROLE AND FUNCTION HAS CONTINUED TO EVOLVE AND ESTABLISH ITS IMPORTANCE TO OVERALL BUSINESS SUCCESS.

COVID-19 and other external factors have shifted priorities:



Agree the political and social environment has impacted DE&I efforts



Report an increase in responsibilities over the past year

AS RESPONSIBILITIES INCREASE, SO DO RESOURCES:

2.6X

more likely to hold a C-Suite position*

86%

say company is investing sufficient resources

4.5X

more people focused directly on DE&I*

77%

report budgets of \$10M+ (25% more than in 2019*)

BUT CHALLENGES PERSIST...

54%

report unfair treatment (discrimination, harassment, and/or microaggressions) at their organization in the past year

78%

agree that DE&I isn't prioritized unless there is a visible or public problem

91%

report challenges

Top 3:

1. Staffing
2. Visible outcomes
3. Functional integration

< 1/2 (45%)

strongly agree that the CEO views their position as a "must-have"

AND RECRUITING & RETAINING DIVERSE TALENT IS AT RISK.

Recruiting , retaining talent dropped from **#1 to #5** on the list of priorities*

Developing talent dropped from **#1 to #7** most useful solution to address DE&I challenges*

1 in 3 resignations are attributed to DE&I dissatisfaction

Ultimately, optimism remains high.

84% of senior DE&I leaders say they're optimistic about the future of DE&I, a **10% increase** since 2019.*

*Note: Comparisons between 2019 and 2021 reflect US-only data.



Building on a Strong Foundation

The Profile Of Today's Chief Diversity Officer

Within our survey, we examined the profile of today’s CDOs and those who hold the senior-most DE&I position in their organization. In fact, senior-most DE&I professionals have a wide variety of titles. For reporting, we will refer to this group as “senior DE&I leaders.” Throughout, “Total” refers to data from the US, Canada and the UK.

AVERAGE TENURE & BACKGROUND

Length of time spent within current position:	2021 Total: 5.8 years	2021 US: 5.9 years
Internal vs. external hire: The majority of senior DE&I leaders in our study were hired from within, which could be attributed to their in-depth knowledge of the organization and key challenges and opportunities	2021 Total: Hired from within company 87% Hired from outside company 13%	2021 US: Hired from within company 92% Hired from outside company 8%

CURRENT JOB TITLE

The number of senior DE&I leaders with a C-Suite title in our study have increased significantly – by 2.6X – in the past two years.

CURRENT JOB TITLE	2021 TOTAL	2021 US ONLY
Any C-Suite Level Position	61%	56% (+40% pts)
CEO	19%	12%
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer	13%	14%
Chief Diversity Officer	12%	15%
Chief Human Resources Officer	10%	11%
Chief Operations Officer	6%	3%
Chief People Officer	1%	2%
VP/Director of Operations	13%	15% (+11% pts)
VP/Director of Diversity and Inclusion	11%	13%
VP/Director of Human Resources	5%	5% (-19% pts)
Director, Non-Specific	4%	4% (-17% pts)
Vice President, Non-Specific	3%	4%
Head of Inclusion	1%	-

■ Indicates significant **decrease (-10%)** since 2019

■ Indicates significant **increase (+10%)** since 2019

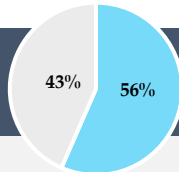
Note: Total data from 2019 not available.

Demographics

Like 2019, senior DE&I leaders in our study continue to skew male and white. However, today's senior DE&I leaders are increasingly Millennials vs. Gen X or Boomers and are more likely to hold postgraduate degrees.

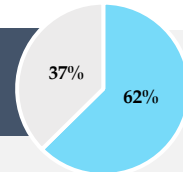
Gender

2021 US:



■ Male □ Female

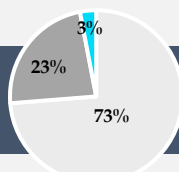
2021 TOTAL:



■ Male □ Female

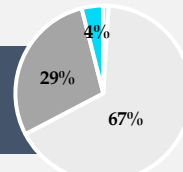
Generation

2021 US:



■ Gen Z □ Millennial (+11% pts.)
■ Gen X ■ Boomer

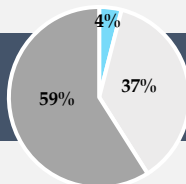
2021 TOTAL:



■ Gen Z □ Millennial
■ Gen X ■ Boomer

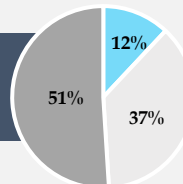
Education

2021 US:



■ <Bachelor's degree/equivalent
□ Bachelor's degree/equivalent
■ Postgrad degree (+24% pts)

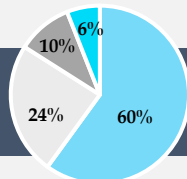
2021 TOTAL:



■ <Bachelor's degree/equivalent
□ Bachelor's degree/equivalent
■ Postgrad degree

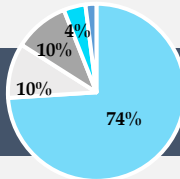
Race

2021 US:



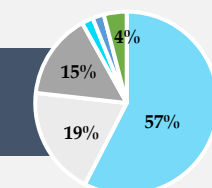
■ White
□ Hispanic
■ Black/African American
■ Asian

2021 UK:



■ White
□ Asian or Asian British
■ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
■ Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
■ Prefer not to answer

2021 Canada:



■ White
□ Asian
■ Aboriginal
■ Black
■ Latin American
■ Other

REPORTING STRUCTURE

Most senior DE&I leaders in our study report into the CEO or Board, but since 2019, we increasingly see reporting lines into the Chief Corporate Social Responsibility Officer.

TITLE OF PERSON SENIOR DE&I LEADER REPORTS INTO DIRECTLY	2021 TOTAL	2021 US ONLY
Any C-Suite Level Position	75%	78%
Chief Executive Officer	36%	40%
Chief Diversity Officer	20%	20%
Chief Financial Officer	17%	21%
Chief Corporate Social Responsibility Officer/ Chief Sustainability Officer	15%	23% (+13% pts)
Chief Human Resources Officer	12%	15%
Chief Legal Officer	12%	16%
Chief Operating Officer	11%	16%
Chief Communications Officer/Head of Corporate Affairs/Head of Public Relations	10%	11%
Chief Marketing Officer	7%	6%
Chief Compliance/Ethics Officer	6%	6%
Business Unit Head	23%	28%
Board of Directors, Executive Board/Council	27%	31%
Corporate Foundation, Social Impact Council	9%	11%
President	12%	13%
Vice President	8%	9%

 Indicates significant **increase (+10%)** since 2019

Note: Total data from 2019 not available.



SKILLS & EXPERTISE

HR and extensive DE&I experience continue to be cited as the most important skills to succeeding in the role

Ranking of skills diversity leaders cited as one of the top 3 most important:

1

Human resources experience

2021 TOTAL: 29% 2021 US ONLY: 32%

2

Extensive experience/
background in DE&I

2021 TOTAL: 28% 2021 US ONLY: 28%

3

Technology or digital experience

2021 TOTAL: 25% 2021 US ONLY: 26%

4

Data/analytics/research expertise

2021 TOTAL: 22% 2021 US ONLY: 20%

5

Senior level leadership experience

2021 TOTAL: 19% 2021 US ONLY: 17%

6

Global work experience

2021 TOTAL: 19% 2021 US ONLY: 23%

7

Programming, events experience

2021 TOTAL: 16% 2021 US ONLY: 19%

8

Advanced degree
[beyond bachelor's degree]

2021 TOTAL: 16% 2021 US ONLY: 19%

9

Local community work/activities

2021 TOTAL: 16% 2021 US ONLY: 12%

10

Psychology,
counseling experience

2021 TOTAL: 16% 2021 US ONLY: 16%

Since 2019, technology or digital experience moved up the list most, from #5 to #3, whereas senior leadership experience fell from #3 to the #5 most important skill.



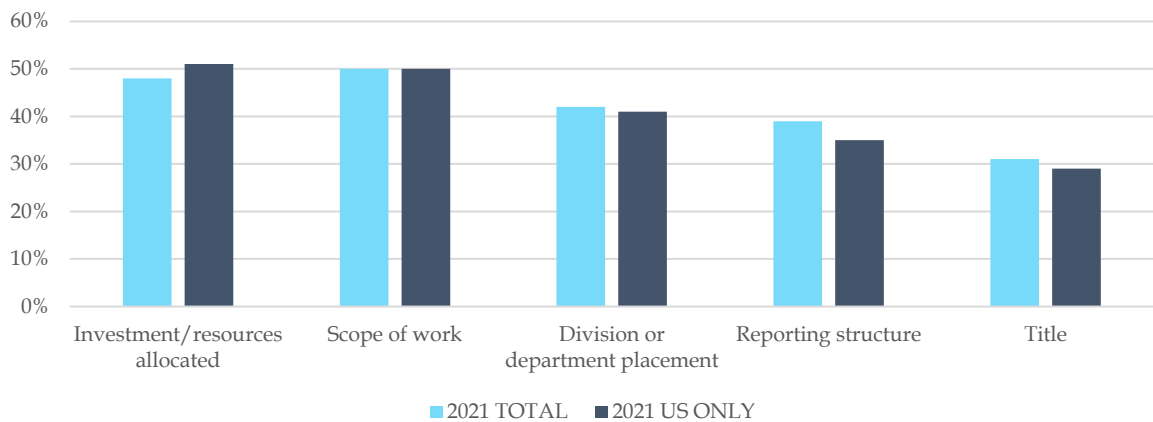
The Evolution of the Job

Priorities & Perceptions Of DE&I, Post-2020

AS DE&I FUNCTIONS CONTINUE TO BECOME MORE EMBEDDED, RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SENIOR DE&I LEADERS ARE INCREASING...

83% of senior DE&I leaders report an increase in responsibilities over the past year (90% in the US)

WAYS IN WHICH ROLES HAVE EVOLVED:

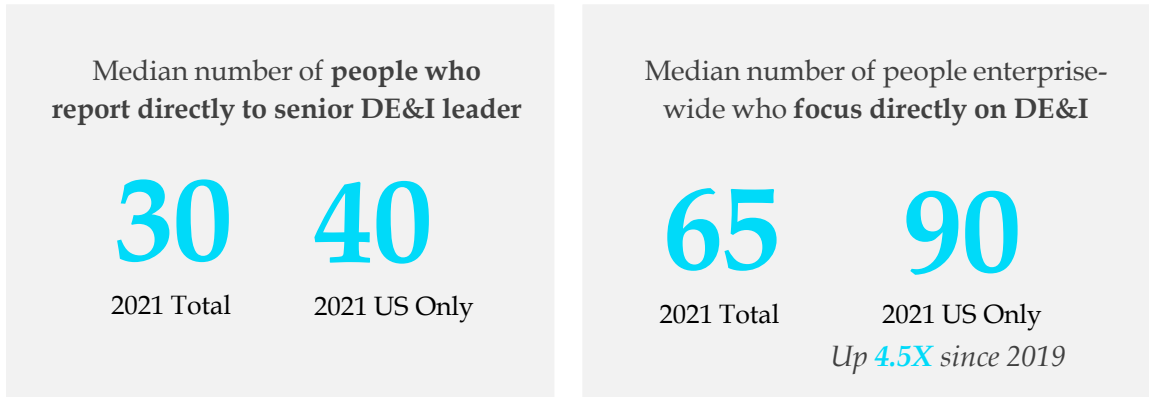


The COVID-19 pandemic was a frequently cited contributor to the increased focus on and responsibilities around DE&I. From more focus on equity during the shift to remote work, to early workforce constrictions that later resolved in the need to reverse and instead grow hiring, for many, COVID-19 has accelerated the role of senior DE&I leaders.

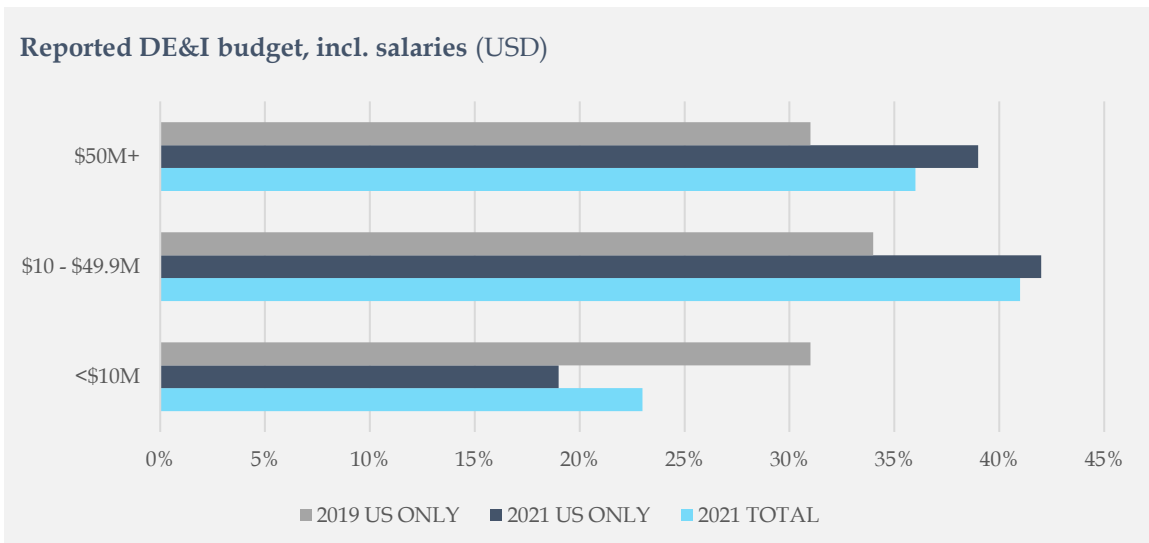
“The COVID crisis has changed everything. [We are] more in tune with diversity and inclusion than before.”

AS SENIOR DE&I LEADERS' RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE INCREASED, SO TOO, HAVE THE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THEM:

The number of people directly supporting senior DE&I leaders is significant, with even more headcount at least partially dedicated to DE&I initiatives across an organization increasing since 2019.



Budgets are also up significantly, in part to support the increase in headcount. Since 2019, 24% more senior DE&I leaders in the US report budgets between \$10-\$49.9M and 26% more report budgets of \$50M+ when compared to 2019. Over the same period, 39% fewer senior DE&I leaders report budgets of less than \$10M.



EVEN WITH THE INCREASED INVESTMENT,
IT CAN STILL BE AN UPHILL BATTLE TO PRIORITIZE DE&I

Public issues drive action

78%

of senior DE&I leaders agree that DE&I isn't prioritized unless there is a visible or public problem (82% in the US)

Role seen as a "nice to have"

45%

Less than half of senior DE&I leaders strongly agree that the CEO views their position as a "must-have" (44% in the US)

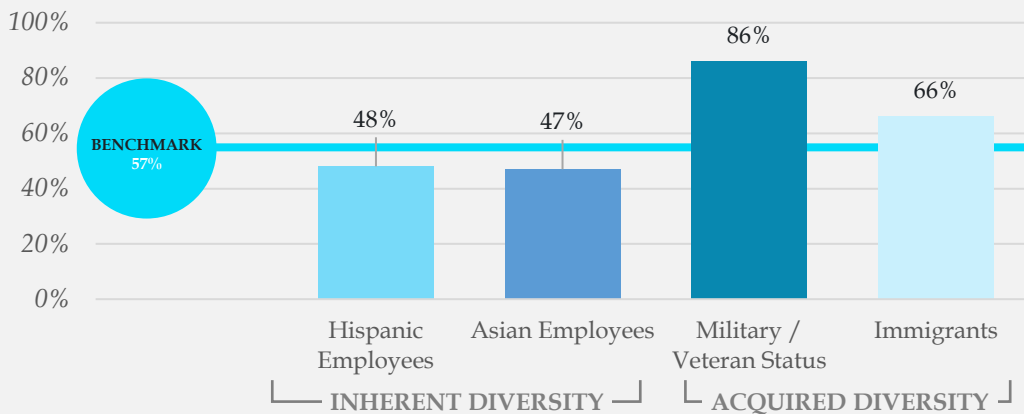
DE&I is often viewed as a wasted effort*

19% - 26% - 29%

Many employees strongly agree that DE&I is a waste of organizational time, effort and money: 19% of employees, 26% of managers, 29% of leaders

*And only half of employees are very satisfied with their organization's approach to DE&I**

WITH SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG SELECT EMPLOYEE POPULATIONS:*



*Source: United Minds, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: A People Imperative, 2021

POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITY HAS NARROWED

Most senior DE&I leader responsibilities span international borders, but the majority of their focus is centered on North America (particularly the US) and Europe. Narrowed perspectives could lead to unintentional blind spots across the organization.

REGIONS WHERE ROLE HAS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR DE&I	2021 TOTAL	2021 US ONLY
US only	29%	50%
North America	54%	49%
Europe	34%	15%
Middle East	11%	12%
Latin America and the Caribbean	9%	10% (-10% pts)
Asia-Pacific	8%	3% (-12% pts)
Africa	2%	2%

Indicates significant decrease (-10%) since 2019

Note: Total data from 2019 not available.

RESPONSIBILITIES OUTSIDE OF DE&I CONTINUE

Many senior DE&I leaders in our study have other areas of focus that they must juggle, potentially taking time and energy away from DE&I-specific efforts.

OTHER AREAS OF FOCUS	2021 TOTAL	2021 US ONLY
Human resources	54%	54%
Strategy/operations	45%	41%
Corporate responsibility/ESG/sustainability	44%	38%
Finance	43%	45%
Communications	36%	34%
Compliance/risk	34%	32%

YET DE&I HAS REMAINED A CENTRAL PART OF THE ROLE
Senior DE&I leaders continue to be dedicated to DE&I, saying it is the focus of all or most of their time

2021 Total

93%

2021 US

95%

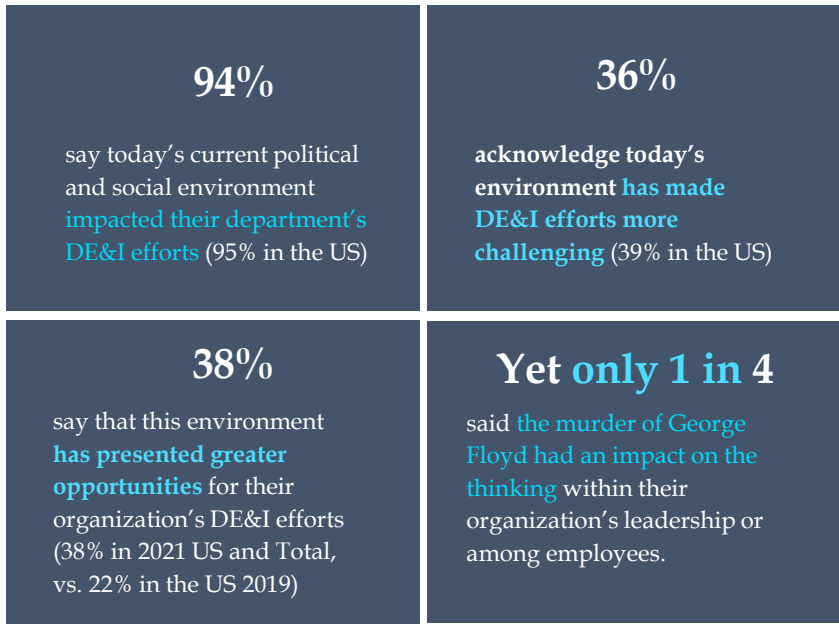
2019 US

96%

say all/most of their time

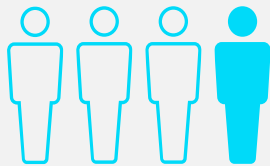
Priorities are Shifting

The impacts of COVID-19 and the current political and social environment seems to have shifted priorities.



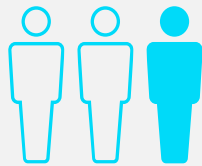
Priorities [have] changed as the emphasis was placed on compliance, greater equality, and justice outside of race."

And skepticism remains among employees.*



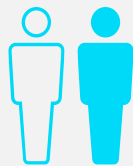
More than a quarter

doubt that their organization was working hard to build a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture **prior to the racial unrest** in 2020



Nearly 1 in 3

employees say their organization still **isn't investing sufficient resources** in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion



Only 1 in 2

employees believe their organization is **currently diverse, equitable and inclusive**

*Source: United Minds, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: A People Imperative, 2021

DE&I training, learning and development continues to be #1 priority, with racial equity/equality claiming the #2 spot

Meanwhile, we saw drops in other priorities compared to 2019, with the most significant being recruiting and retaining diverse talent, fostering a diverse and inclusive culture and establishing organizational diversity goals.

DE&I PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS	2021 TOTAL	2021 US ONLY
Diversity, equity and inclusion training, learning & development	34%	37%
Racial equity/equality	27%	29%
Demonstrating ROI for diversity, equity and inclusion or proving the business case	23%	24%
Overseeing Employee Resource Groups or affinity groups	22%	25% (+12% pts)
Recruiting and retaining diverse talent	21%	22% (-11% pts)
Better alignment with the company's overall business strategy	20%	20%
Communicating diversity, equity and inclusion activities to stakeholders outside the company	19%	14%
Ensuring suppliers and vendors are diverse	19%	20%
Establishing organizational diversity goals	18%	15%
Fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace culture	18%	15% (-18% pts)
Adhering to government and compliance policies	16%	17%
Mentoring or counseling employees	16%	20%
Communicating diversity, equity and inclusion activities to employees	15%	16%
Employee career advancement and succession planning	15%	14%

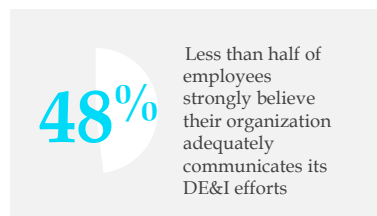
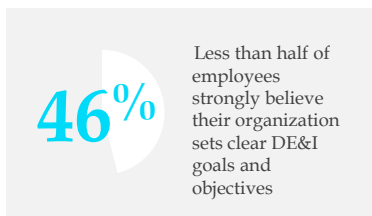
 Indicates significant decrease (-10%) since 2019

 Indicates significant increase (+10%) since 2019

Note: Total data from 2019 not available.

Interestingly, based on our companion study of employee perceptions of DE&I within their organizations, in many cases employees are seeing and calling out where some activities have been deprioritized.

For example:*



*Source: United Minds, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: A People Imperative, 2021

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and Affinity Groups have risen as a priority and opportunity

98%

say ERGs, trainings and tools offered to advance DE&I are effective (97% in the US) but only 64% consider them VERY effective, and - while increasing - only 22% consider them the #1 priority

Primary

remit for ERGs is **retaining/advancing talent, community involvement and volunteering, and partnering with the business to advance DE&I efforts**

100%

see **employee benefits to ERGs**, with the top being: networking opportunities, executive visibility and sense of inclusion

51%

say ERGs are allotted time in their day-to-day responsibilities for participation and **44%** receive additional pay (54% and 48% in the US respectively)

While it is encouraging to see increased prioritization of ERGs and Affinity Groups, the impact that these communities have suggests that they should be prioritized even higher.

Based on our companion study of employee perceptions of DE&I within their organizations, members of ERGs are:*

More satisfied with their organization's commitment to DE&I, and more satisfied with their job overall (86% vs. 77% are satisfied, including 27% vs. 17% who are extremely satisfied)

Better able to contribute to their full potential (69% vs. 54%)

More likely to feel their perspectives are included in decision making (61% vs 43%)

More likely to feel accepted for who they are (75% vs. 57%)

More likely to feel respected, included, valued and appreciated (~70% vs. ~57%)

All of this is in spite of the fact that ERG members are MORE likely to have experienced unfair treatment, including discrimination (28% vs. 22%) and harassment (25% vs. 16%).

*Source: United Minds, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: A People Imperative, 2021

Unfair treatment represents a significant threat

54%

of diversity leaders report incidents of discrimination, unfair treatment, harassment, and/or microaggressions at their current organization in past year. Leading factors reported:

- Age (50%)
- Sex (42%)
- Race/ethnicity (34%)
- Sexual orientation (31%)

37%*

of employees report having experienced discrimination, unfair treatment, harassment, and/or microaggressions. This number is even higher in underrepresented communities, including:

- 39% of females
- 39% of ethnic/racial groups
- 47% of LGBTQA+ employees
- 55% of employees with disabilities



Focusing Our Efforts

Pressing Challenges & Possible Opportunities

Challenge #1

91% OF SENIOR DE&I LEADERS ARE AWARE OF COMPANY-WIDE CHALLENGES STANDING IN THE WAY OF DE&I (89% IN THE US)

Employee engagement continues to be the most pressing challenge, along with leadership changes, customer demands and crises and issues.

Meanwhile, organizational culture, which claimed the top spot in 2019, dropped to #8 in 2021.

DE&I fatigue also dropped precipitously, ranking third in 2019 and last in 2021.



Potential risk: Crisis and risk management experience was ranked #13 on the list of skills and experience diversity leaders have identified as critical for success.

CHALLENGES STANDING IN THE WAY OF COMPANY DE&I GOALS	2021 TOTAL	2021 US ONLY
Employee engagement	34%	38%
Change[s] in the company leadership	29%	26%
Customer demands for diversity, equity and inclusion	28%	27%
Diversity, equity and inclusion crises and issues	27%	29%
Structural changes in the company	27%	30%
External cultural/societal/sector shifts	26%	29%
Organizational crises	26%	28%
Organizational culture (#1 in 2019 in the US)	25%	28%
Employee demands for diversity, equity and inclusion	24%	22%
Diversity, equity and inclusion fatigue	21%	19% (-10 pts)

 Indicates significant **decrease (-10%)** since 2019
Note: Total data from 2019 not available.

Opportunity #1

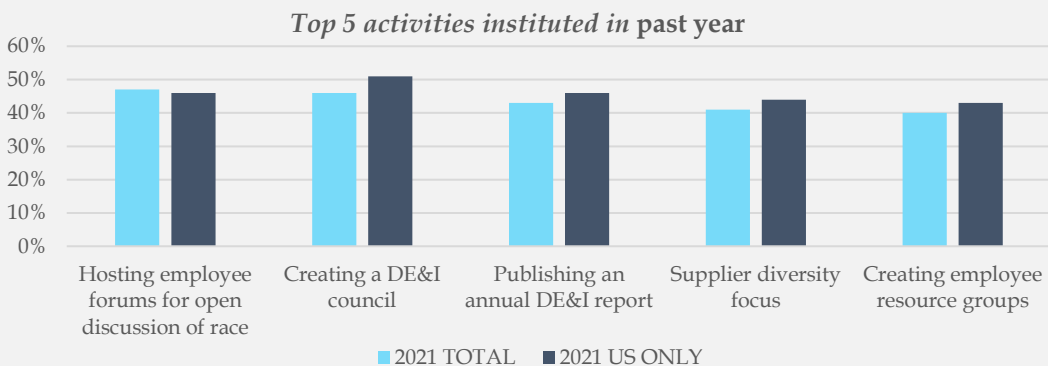
THE AVAILABILITY OF NEW DATA-BACKED RESOURCES IS INCREASING, WHICH CAN HELP CREATE THE CASE FOR WHERE MORE SUPPORT MIGHT BE NEEDED

Better **management of company profiles** on career and employee sites was cited as the most useful way to address challenges, rising 11% since 2019. **Enhanced metrics and reporting systems and better external communications** also trended upward, while developing talent saw the most significant drop – moving from the #1 most useful solution in 2019 to #7 in 2021.

MOST USEFUL SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS DE&I CHALLENGES	2021 TOTAL	2021 US ONLY
Better management of company profile on career or employment sites such as Glassdoor, LinkedIn, Indeed, etc.	31%	39% (+11% pts)
Better technology or artificial intelligence (AI) applications	30%	31%
Improved metrics or reporting system	30%	34% (+10% pts)
Better internal communication on priorities and initiatives	29%	31%
DE&I training	28%	30%
Better external communication on efforts/investments	28%	30% (+10% pts)
Developing talent (#1 in 2019 in the US)	26%	30%
A more defined or better executed employer brand	25%	26%
Support for navigating internal political structures	25%	29%
A larger team	23%	30% (+12% pts)
A customized business case	22%	24%
Effective tools for social media analytics	20%	19%
A global team	18%	19%
Board support	16%	18%
Buy-in/investment from key decision-makers	15%	14%

■ Indicates significant **increase (+10%)** since 2019
Note: Total data from 2019 not available.

We also saw a rise in the number of companies organizing “safe spaces” to discuss race.



Challenge #2

91% OF SENIOR DE&I LEADERS ACKNOWLEDGE FACING PERSONAL CHALLENGES

The primary personal challenges cited include limited staffing, making DE&I values and outcomes visible externally and integration with other functions.

The good news is that making the business case for DE&I, meeting leadership demands, and budgetary constraints have become less of a challenge – indicating there may be more awareness of the value of DE&I.

CHALLENGES PERSONALLY FACED IN ACHIEVING DE&I GOALS	2021 TOTAL	2021 US ONLY
Lack of integration with other functions/ diversity, equity and inclusion is siloed	30%	28%
Making diversity, equity and inclusion values or outcomes visible externally	27%	26%
Limited staffing	24%	31%
Making the business case for diversity, equity and inclusion	23%	22%
Lack of global resonance of diversity, equity and inclusion focus areas	20%	25%
Not aligned, or not well-aligned, with the overall business strategy of the company	19%	17%
Ambiguity of my role or responsibilities	18%	16%
Leadership demands for diversity, equity and inclusion	18%	16%
Undefined or inaccurate metrics for success	17%	23%
Budgetary constraints	16%	15%
Lack of adequate C-Suite support	15%	16%

Opportunity #2

GROWING ALLYSHIP ACROSS THE BUSINESS, WITH ALLIES IN IT, HR AND THE OFFICE OF THE CEO LEADING THE WAY

Leaders in IT have catapulted to become senior DE&I leaders' top allies. However, there's been a significant decrease in HR allyship; a concern given the top company-wide challenge cited as standing in the way of DE&I efforts is employee engagement. Senior DE&I leaders are also strengthening relationships with the Board of Directors and Finance.

More than half of senior DE&I leaders (57% total and 63% in the US) strongly agree that **internal support is integral to DE&I success**

More than half of senior DE&I leaders (57% total and 65% in the US) strongly agree that **DE&I works best when embedded in major business units**

GREATEST DE&I ALLIES	2021 TOTAL	2021 US ONLY
Information Technology [IT]	43%	53% (+16% pts)
Human Resources [HR]	38%	37% (-12% pts)
Office of the CEO	32%	36%
Board of Directors	28%	33%
Finance	22%	26% (+11% pts)
Business Units	21%	26%
Learning and Development	20%	25%
Research and Development	19%	23%
Communications	18%	17%
Marketing	17%	16%
Investor Relations	16%	15%
Legal and compliance	16%	16%
CSR or Sustainability	15%	17%
Foundation or Philanthropy	14%	17%
Government and Public Affairs	12%	10%

 Indicates significant **decrease (-10%)** since 2019
 Indicates significant **increase (+10%)** since 2019
Note: Total data from 2019 not available.



Potential risk: Lower levels of allyship with CSR/Sustainability, Foundation/Philanthropy and Government/Public Affairs colleagues could be a barrier, knowing community support and proper handling of regulatory affairs can have a significant reputational impact.

Senior DE&I leaders are also able to tap key groups across the organization

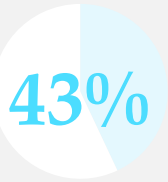
86%
have an Executive DE&I Council (total, compared to 76% in US in 2019)

73%
have ERGs (total, compared to 74% in US in 2019)

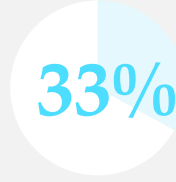
68%
have BRGs (total, compared to 69% in US in 2019)

Challenge #3

RECRUITING AND RETAINING DIVERSE TALENT IS FALLING FROM THE LIST OF PRIORITIES



of senior DE&I leaders say company turnover partly due to DE&I dissatisfaction has increased (45% in the US)



of resignations senior DE&I leaders believe are due to DE&I dissatisfaction, despite COVID-19 (in the US this is 39%, an increase of 23% since 2019) – which can be costly and inefficient

No. 5

Yet, recruiting and retaining diverse talent has decreased in priority, ranking #5 on the list (from 33% in 2019 to 21% in 2021), which could be due in part to pandemic-related hiring freezes

Opportunity #3

IN THE ERA OF THE GREAT RESIGNATION, DE&I EFFORTS CAN HELP ORGANIZATIONS STAND APART

Employees consider commitment to DE&I important to their workplace experience as well as critical business initiatives.*

86%

agree that it is important to work for an organization that has zero tolerance for harassment and discrimination.

79%

agree that having a diverse, equitable and inclusive organization attracts high quality talent.

72%

strongly believe initiatives to make their organization more diverse, equitable and inclusive improve the bottom-line.

82%

agree it is important to work for an organization that values diversity.

80%

believe that initiatives to make their organization more diverse, equitable and inclusive improves the organization's reputation among customers.

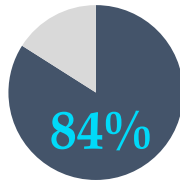
*Source: United Minds, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: A People Imperative, 2021



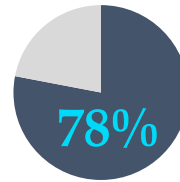
Optimism Remains High

A Look Into The Future

As DE&I functions continue to grow their presence and influence, optimism for DE&I is high among senior DE&I leaders



say they're optimistic about the future of DE&I (89% in the US)



say their organization is equitable, inclusive (78%) and diverse (75%) (85%, 83%, 88% in US respectively)

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH EFFORTS REMAINS HIGH AMONG SENIOR LEADERS



Overall: 82% say they're satisfied with their organization's efforts to build a DE&I culture (86% in the US)



Communication: 59% strongly agree their organization adequately communicates its DE&I efforts (64% in the US)



Sharing Progress: 58% strongly agree their organization shares DE&I progress updates (63% in the US)



Accountability: 56% strongly agree that employees at all levels are held accountable for advancing DE&I (62% in the US)



Role Clarity: 56% strongly agree that employees at all levels are clear on their role in advancing DE&I (62% in the US)



Business Alignment: 48% strongly agree that DE&I at their company is well-aligned with the overall business strategy of the company (54% in the US)

AND THERE IS CONTINUED MOMENTUM INTO 2022

TOP 5 ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE COMING YEAR	2021 TOTAL	2021 US ONLY
Speaking out on societal issues	20%	18%
Developing a strategy to increase board diversity	19%	20%
Speaking out on legislation tied to social issues	19%	19%
Creating employee resource groups	18%	19%
Offering DE&I trainings with a broad focus	18%	18%

As people demand more from their employers, we expect to see an increase in companies taking a stance on societal issues.

TOP 5 PRIORITY TALENT GROUPS

Talent groups senior DE&I leaders expect to concentrate their DE&I efforts on in the next 12 to 18 months:



#1 Women

Remains top priority and trending upward (57% in 2019 and 63% 2021)



#2 Ethnic/Racial Groups

Consistent in ranking, but trending downward (54% in 2019 to 46% in 2021)



#3 People with Disabilities

Consistent in ranking and percentage (45% in 2019 and 2021)



#4 Immigrant Groups

Increased one spot, but decreased in overall percentage (40%/ #5 in 2019 to 37% in 2021)



#5 LGBTQA+

Increased two spots, but decreased in overall percentage (35%/ #7 in 2019 to 26% in 2021)



Military Veterans

Represent the biggest drop in ranking and percentage (from 42%/ #4 in 2019 to 23%/ #9 in 2021)

Note: Comparisons between 2019 and 2021 reflect US-only data.

Top Considerations and Recommendations

UNDERSTAND EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS AND WHAT THEY VALUE. In today's rapidly changing and complex environment, senior DE&I leaders must establish a baseline to understand employee perceptions regarding DE&I and identify where the biggest opportunities lie within their organization. These insights can then inform where senior DE&I leaders spend time, energy and resources to drive meaningful change.

#1

THE OLD PLAYBOOK IS OUT - ORGANIZATIONS MUST PUT A STAKE IN THE GROUND AND DEMONSTRATE REAL PROGRESS. Employees are skeptical of DE&I progress to-date, and today's racial justice movement is intensifying the pressure companies face to take a stance on key societal issues. We expect to see a trend over the next few years in organizations not only speaking out, but also taking action and holding themselves accountable.

#3

AS THE WAR FOR TALENT ESCALATES, REPRIORITIZE RECRUITING AND RETAINING DIVERSE TALENT. Even though senior DE&I leaders believe that turnover due to DE&I dissatisfaction has increased in the past two years, recruiting and retaining diverse talent has gone down on their list of priorities. While it may be too soon to know if the Great Resignation will persist, one thing we know for sure is that coming out of the pandemic, employees are rethinking what matters most - and aren't afraid to take risks or quit their jobs to find purpose in their personal and professional lives. So, as the war for talent continues to heighten, organizations must actively prepare and plan for how they'll stand apart from the competition.

#2

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE! As expectations for companies to act increase, so does the need for companies to communicate about these actions; transparency and accountability are king. Key to retaining and attracting top, diverse talent is articulating the organization's investment in DE&I and engaging employees in the journey. While communication and accountability is lacking according to senior DE&I leaders, they also list communications- and marketing-related solutions as critical to advancing DE&I efforts.

#4

EVEN THOUGH EXTERNAL DRIVERS ARE SHIFTING THE DE&I LANDSCAPE, TRUE CHANGE MUST START FROM WITHIN. DE&I needs to be built from and live at the center of every organization with broad and deep accountability for continued commitment and advancement. Senior DE&I leaders should build DE&I strategies for long-term impact, with the most reliable results occurring when internal stakeholders are educated and well-equipped to practice inclusion, understand their role in building an inclusive culture and always make decisions through the lens of DE&I.

#5

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