

*Power to Fly™*

# DEIB in the Global Workplace

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



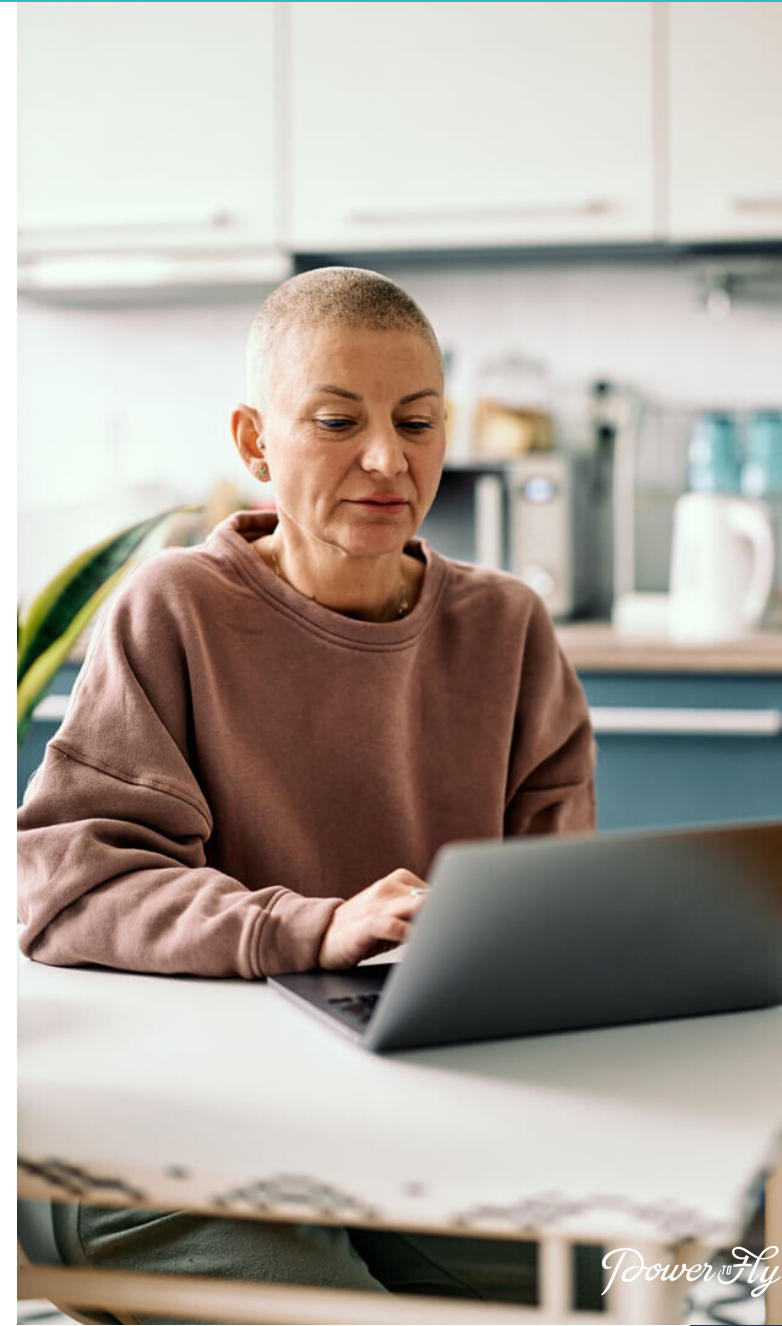
# Introduction

DEIB isn't a one-size-fits-all approach for any company. That's true even within similar industries. So how could it possibly be true that it works across countries?

That being said, many companies default to a US-based approach to DEIB. For example, they may focus heavily on a topic like race, while ignoring issues, such as religion or class, that are important in other regions where the company is based.

In this month's forum, we brought together leaders from across industries to participate in an off-the-record conversation about where DEIB's been and where it's going, especially as it pertains to companies with global teams. We invited [Jade Singleton](#), the co-founder of Johnson Squared Consulting and a Senior DEI Consultant at NASA, to speak on the topic. We also opened the floor to our participants and asked them to share their stories.

Our conversation was facilitated by our Global DEI Strategist & Trainer, Zara Chaudary.





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# The State of Global DEIB: An Overview



## Here's how our forum participants responded to questions about their companies' approaches to DEIB:

- **52%** of respondents would rate their company's approach to DEIB training as a 6 out of 10 or below.
  - **36%** rated it a 3 or below
  - Only **5%** of respondents gave their company a 10/10
  - The most popular rating was a 7/10, with **32%** of respondents rating their companies that way
- **55%** of respondents' companies do **not** adjust paid time off benefits by region, nor do they offer region-specific DEIB trainings (around 30% of companies do both)

## But across the board, companies are open to improvement:

- **82%** of respondents say that they encourage candid feedback from employees on how to better-support underrepresented team members (like in 1:1s, surveys, and group listening sessions)



# The Past, Present, and Future of DEIB



We started by exploring how DEIB has evolved over the past few decades, and where a US-centered approach falls short.

## ● Early efforts

- For the last [three decades](#), at least, corporate diversity training has included:
  - Outlining existing stereotypes
  - Circulating lists of workplace dos and don'ts
  - Taking and analyzing personality and bias tests and quizzes
  - Mandating anti-prejudice workshops
- This wave of training came out of equal employment laws passed in the 1960s.
- But many diversity programs didn't have their intended impact.
  - As a [2019 Harvard Business Review](#) study found, bias-focused training had little effect on the behavior of male or white employees, who typically hold the most power within an organization. Specifically, these mandatory training programs were sometimes perceived by employees as overly controlling and limiting.
- And too much training led, at times, to [diversity fatigue](#), which is when employees feel burnt out or “done” talking about diversity and doubt a DEIB program's value.

## ● Improvements—and limitations

- More recently, the evolution of DEIB has come to include more social and restorative justice, which can be traced to movements like [#BlackLivesMatter](#), [#MeToo](#), and [#StopAsianHate](#).
- But even as diversity programming gets more responsive to actual issues and centers more grassroots leaders, it's still entirely U.S.-focused.
- While racial and cultural identification make for a logical point of entry to DEIB topics in the U.S., other regions might need a different (or additional) focus. But a large majority of DEIB articles, studies, and online resources focus specifically on the U.S. and specifically on race.
  - Majority-demographics and marginalized groups are not the same everywhere...
  - ...but inclusion means inclusion for everyone, not just those in the majority office or headquarters.

## ● Focus areas for the future

- **Data collection.** Many organizations aggregate data on a global level. And while data is great, looking only at high-level trends erases regional nuance.
  - **To do:** Consider your legal requirements and attempt to create specific surveys and data collection methods for different regions. For instance, MENA (Middle East North Africa) is **not a well-known or defined group in the U.S.**, but it is in other areas of the world.
- **Cultural awareness and language.** One country's "minority" might be another country's "majority." And different racial and ethnic groups have different experiences in different places. For instance, it would be unfair to assume that the experience of Black people in the U.S. is representative of the experience of Black people in other countries.
  - **To do:** Carefully consider the words you use around DEIB and the assumptions you make in communicating your goals and your progress against them.
- **Training.** Training is a big part of an inclusion strategy, from understanding biases and privilege to learning how to challenge assumptions and beliefs. It's vital that training responds to regional needs. Otherwise, you get non-Americans who see very Black-and-white, race-centered coverage and say things like "We don't need training here—we have no diversity issues in our country!"
  - **To do:** Don't limit your training to seminars delivered in English by American facilitators and featuring generic modular instruction. Create consistent training, but with tailored nuances. Go beyond gender and race. And offer training in the native languages of your team. (We've done training in Spanish for companies with employees in Spanish-speaking regions, for instance, that have gone over very well).
- **Timely communication.** It's ideal when you can be proactive in responding to your global workforce's needs. But you may not know about every conflict and every situation.
  - **To do:** Familiarize yourself with issues in other regions, but also set up communication channels to regularly get updates on anything you should know about.





### 3 immediate next steps

There are three things leaders who want to support global diverse talent can start doing:

#### 1. Evaluate current DEIB programs and processes.

- a. Go beyond race, gender, and ethnicity. Survey your team to understand what aspects of identity are most important to them, including location, language, nationality, class, disability, religion, or other differentiators.
- b. Create one set framework that other global locations can build on. Be inspired by the show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, which has the same general approach but is adapted to different regions by the types of questions asked, the values of prizes, and the contestants.

#### 2. Implement regional-based training programs.

- a. For example, employ train-the-trainer sessions to learn things like:
  - i. In EMEA, religion should be a primary dimension of DEIB training
  - ii. In China, focusing on the urban-rural/North-South aspect is critical when discussing diversity
  - iii. In Mexico, socioeconomic status is a big part of region-specific DEIB training
  - iv. In India, class and educational background are key

#### 3. Continuously expand your knowledge.

- a. Stay up-to-date on global news
- b. Have conversations with international employees and find out what issues are important to them
- c. Participate in professionally-led global DEIB training



# On-the-Job Insight



As an experienced leader and consultant in DEIB, Jade Singleton knows the ups and downs of this work—and why it matters so much to get it right. Here are some insights from her presentation and Q-and-A session:

## ● Why DEIB work is important:

DEIB-related stumbles last forever, says Jade. “It’s critical that you’re doing that work and research and not waiting for calamity and crisis to hit you,” she explains. Otherwise, missteps can hurt your ability to recruit and retain talent.

## ● Why DEIB work is important:

In general, with more companies becoming more international as remote work makes it possible to recruit from anywhere, Jade is seeing issues around access and inclusion when it comes to what she calls “**proximity bias.**” “Individuals in hybrid companies, who have an offshore group—I hate that term, by the way—have more face-time and interaction with folks closer by,” she says. “You see pay differences and promotion differences for folks not sitting right there in the office.”

Jade has also seen companies in Silicon Valley and around the country with large teams in India ignore caste discrimination, to their detriment. “Because caste isn’t a protected class [under U.S. law], **caste discrimination** lingers on, and people are faced without any legal way to protect themselves,” she says. Companies can receive non-discrimination clauses to ensure caste is included.

## ● What highest-impact actions a company can take:

Focus on **pay equity**. Without dragging your feet or hiring dozens of outside analysts who work in a black box. “It’s way over-engineered. Just make data transparent, share it across the organization, and fix it,” says Jade.

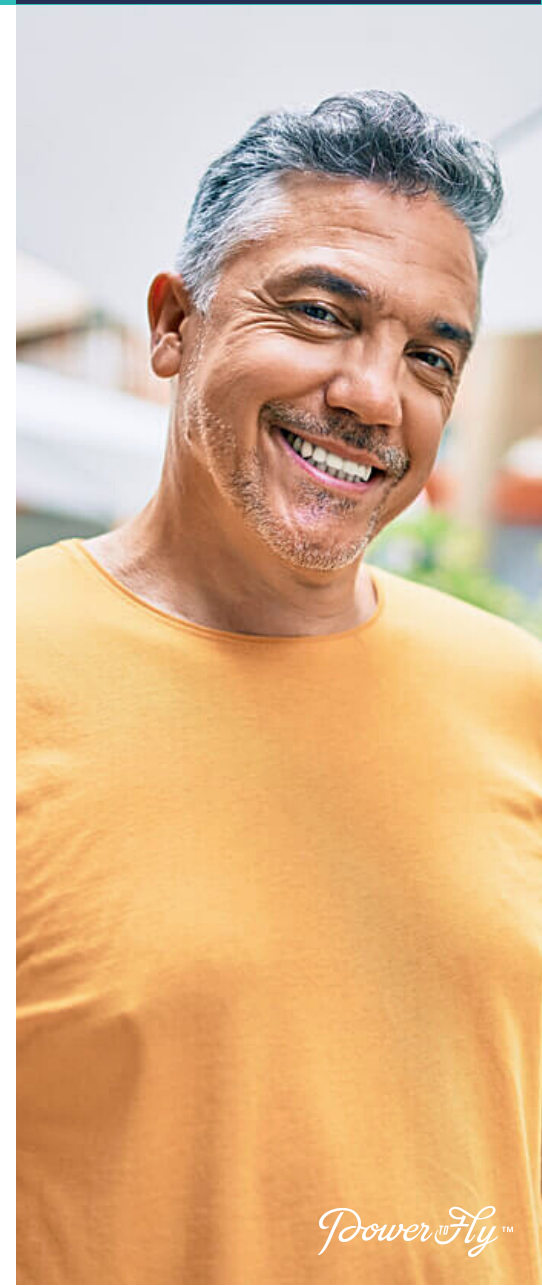
Connect your **company’s DEIB policy and its mission**. “What do you value? Grit, independence? Tie that to people’s struggles. No one is stronger than someone who has to get up and fight discrimination every day,” she says.



# Collective Wisdom: 3 Key Insights on Finding Success with Global DEIB

After our expert presentation and Q&A, we turned to our Executive Forum participants and asked them about their own experiences with global DEIB. They shared 3 key insights:

- 1. Sharing global resources helps employees learn about and with each other**
  - **Global ERGs can help create a more global mindset, but niche ones can help build on-the-ground community.** Participants were divided on the best way to set up ERGs to support global DEIB goals. But why not approach them both ways? Big, centralized, international ERGs for certain identity groups can help employees with shared experiences learn from each other. And local, micro ERGs can build deep community. For instance, one leader shared that they have an ERG for all Black employees and another one for Black employees specifically in the EMEA region.
    - One note: participants flagged that it often makes sense to have different ERGs for allies versus people who themselves are in a certain group, to keep a safe space and reduce the burden on the underrepresented group to have to educate the allies.
  - **Global diversity calendars help center international employees' experiences.** You can't avoid planning a meeting on a holiday you don't know exists. Several participants flagged that their companies have shared calendars of events, plus historical background on each entry, to help avoid defaulting to U.S. holidays and traditions. Others noted that they now celebrate big holidays for certain groups, like Lunar New Year, together as an entire team. When events are repeated, they celebrate both—like a company that celebrates both the U.S. (February) and the U.K. (October) Black History Months.
  - **Renaming and replanning events with a global audience in mind increases participation.** One company had lunch-and-learns that everyone in the company—even those abroad—were invited to. But that was at noon Pacific time, and some people were having breakfast or dinner or snacks. So they've since rebranded to "Food for Thought" sessions and are changing timing to make sure everyone who wants to participate is able to.





## 2. Connecting DEIB efforts to business goals increases success

- **Marketing and DEIB go hand-in-hand.** One participant flagged that their new Chief Equity Officer immediately pulled in peers from the EMEA and APJ regions of their company to learn more about the customer journey in those regions, how the company's mission and branding landed there, and what they could do to connect DEIB goals with specific experiences of that customer base.
- **Recruiting needs DEIB partnership to make candidates feel welcome.** One participant noted that their company now includes ERG screenings in the final stages of candidate processes, so that diverse talent can meet "someone that looks and feels like them" and ask questions about their experiences. Another shared that they are looking to hire more people of color into engineering roles, and they were advised by the group to have their ERGs help with that direct sourcing and referral process to make it feel authentic.
- **ERGs can influence product direction.** Diverse talent can help make sure that a company's products are well-suited to its diverse audience. One participant shared that their ERGs are now key parts of brainstorming new products and improving current products.

### 3. Gathering detailed data helps hold you accountable

- **Different regional demographics should be tracked alongside hiring data.** Depending on what city, state, or even country you're hiring in, your demographics will look different. As one participant noted, if you have an extremely low percentage of Muslim workers in a region with many Muslim people, you may have an issue in your pipeline to look into.
- **DEIB goals can be tied to compensation goals.** Once you have the data on how your hiring pipeline is doing, you can set goals for how to improve it. And it works well when you actually hold people accountable to achieving them, said one participant, whose managers must, together, achieve DEIB goals when it comes to hiring in order to earn their full bonus.
- **Pay and benefits data can help support DEIB progress.** One participant flagged that their company's talent base skews older, and that their benefits are thus set up for that base. (More prescription coverage, fewer child care stipends.) They were losing younger talent because they couldn't offer them what they needed. Digging into their demographics and comparing it to what equitable pay and benefits would be helped them address the problem. Other companies make sure that international employees or contractors know that unlimited PTO means they can and should take their own local holidays off.





# Recommended Resources

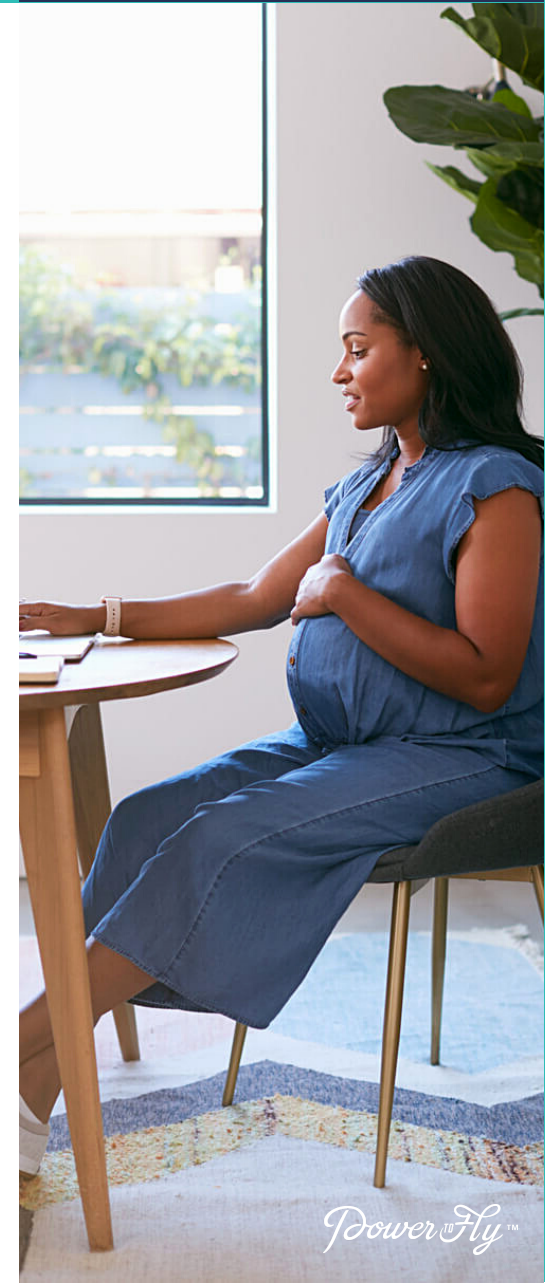
Participants shared these recommendations for further learning and exploration:

- [The 7 Habits of Inclusive Leaders, a Guilt-Free Guide](#), by Melissa Majors. This content can be consumed as a class or in a book—one participant said it’s one you can read in one 2-3 hour sitting—and provides “really, really good and comprehensive information on what to do next” when it comes to inclusive leadership.
- [This report](#) from The Conference Board Diversity and Inclusion Councils on challenges and opportunities in global DEIB—which includes the image below:



Artist: Brandy Agerbeck of loosetooth.com ([www.loosetooth.com](http://www.loosetooth.com))

For additional discussions and conversations on global DEIB, you can watch recordings from PowerToFly’s March 2022 Diversity Reboot summit [here](#).



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