

# Professional Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Industry Standards

*A Technical Document That Establishes Industry Guidance, Performance Requirements, and Inclusive Excellence*



# STANDARDS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

*For the industry, by the industry*

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# Agenda

Background & Purpose

General Description of DEI Jobs

The Evolution of Diversity @Work

A Path Forward



# SWOT ANALYSIS

## Strengths

- Human-centered approach
- The value of diverse perspectives
- Current language feels evergreen
- Focus on strategy
- Connection to enterprise values
- Expert collaboration in defining the work
- Expanding the concept of Diversity and its integration within enterprises/systems

## Weaknesses

- Too much variety in how DEI is viewed and implemented across entities
- Theory-to-practice gap
- Self-assessment may have methodological limitations
- Knowledge of stakeholder responsibilities
- Funding for corporate DEI vs. social justice/equality efforts
- Identity group ownership and cohesion
- Distinguishing between terminology/ideology
- Lack of accurate or relevant data/proper sources
- Broad knowledge of local laws and cultural practices globally

## Opportunities

- Shape our own narrative and vision for the future
- Develop shared language across administrations/nations
- Distinguish between DEI & HR
- Narrow our scope
- Create stakeholder education series
- Provide guidance for HR, operations, and other bodies
- Disseminate evidence-based examples
- Influence undecided/independent stakeholders

## Threats

- The change in enterprise language impacts stakeholder trust (i.e., removing equity, diversity, etc.) and collective action
- Performative DEI by practitioners and employers
- Political threats and constant policy shifts
- Political weaponization (e.g., book bans)
- AI Bias and automated discrimination
- The intentional distortion of DEI terms/practices on social media (e.g., woke, calling people DEI hires, etc.) to manipulate public opinion

# Purpose of DEI Industry Standards



Submit practices to government agencies that demonstrate DEI leaders & employers operate within guidelines that are consistent, safe, and reasonable



Provide a specialized career path, as well as technical specifications that indicate professional quality, reliability, and innovation

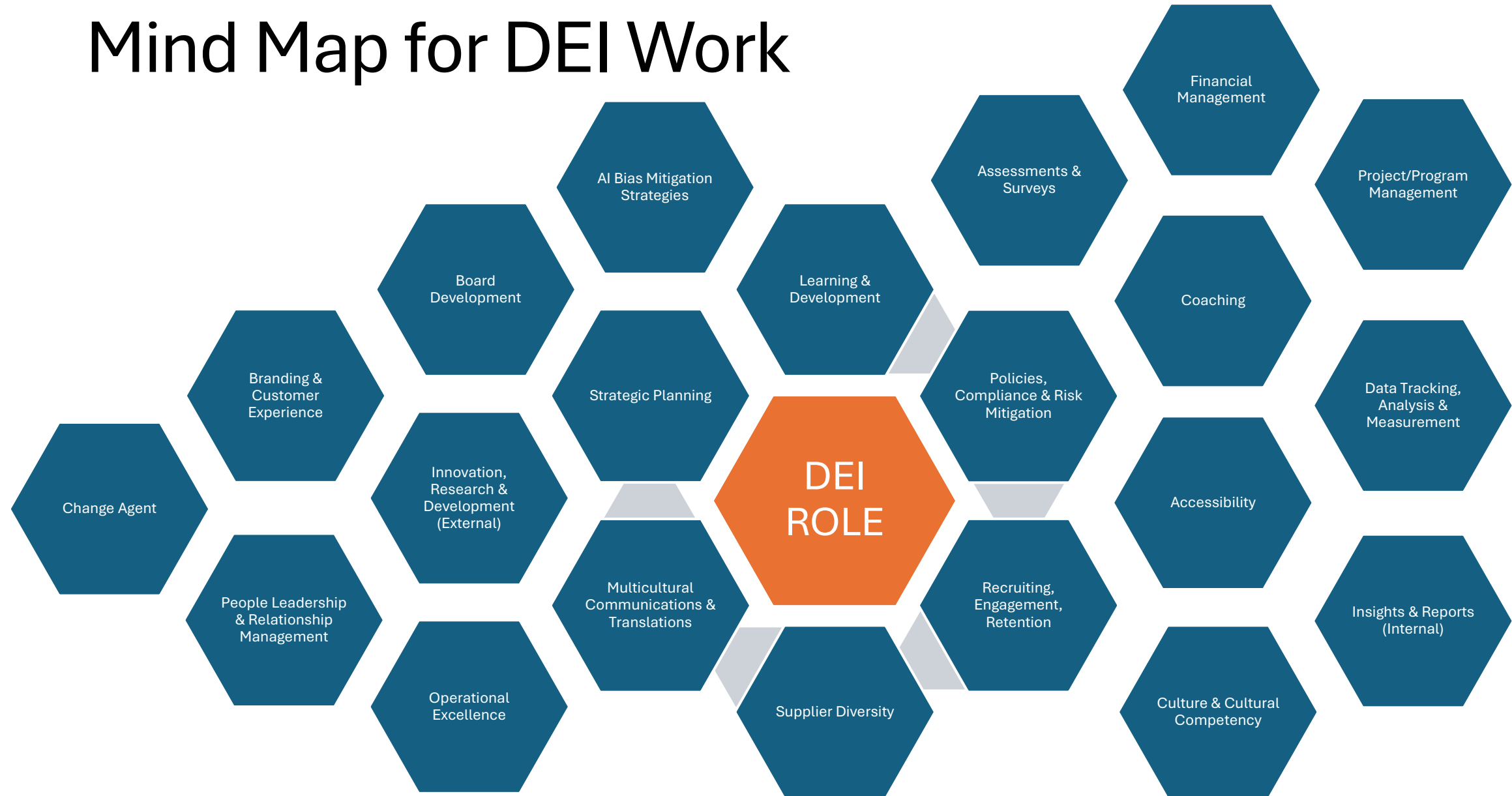


Equip employers with a professional evaluation framework for effective, fair, and sustainable DEI efforts that are performed by a highly skilled leader



Calibrate the global DEI industry for consistent performance, positive human experiences, and bottom-line impact

# Mind Map for DEI Work



# General Description of DEI Work

## **PROFESSIONAL** - Director of DEI, Diversity Manager, Inclusion Leader, Culture & Inclusion Advisor, Diversity Coordinator, etc.

- Professionals execute diversity, culture change, and/or inclusive excellence strategies
- Professionals may:
  - Perform administrative functions related to DEI (e.g., attending events, overseeing ERGs/BRGs, etc.),
  - Support the collection and analysis of data,
  - Develop reports on KPIs, ROI, etc.,
  - Establish the DEI priorities via short-to-medium term deliverables,
  - Implement programs that promote belonging, psychological safety, perspective shifting, allyship, collaboration, engagement, etc.,
  - Design training initiatives that facilitate awareness and advance the organization's DEI strategies,
  - Engage in problem solving, relationship building, and risk management activities.
- May report to the CDO, CHRO, CEO, or other C-Suite leaders

## **EXECUTIVE** - Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), SVP of Diversity, Global Head of DEI, Managing Director, Executive Director, etc.

- Executives are visionary, senior-level strategists with decision-making authority, budgetary and risk management roles, and supervisory responsibilities
- Helps an organization adapt to change and improve operational performance
- Prepares teams to be agile amid human complexity, disruption, changing demographics, the political climate, competitive pressures, and socioeconomic contexts
- Reports to the CEO; Partners with HR/IT/AI and other C-level executives; Board-level interaction is required
- Serves to bridge organizational values and human-centered experiences with the mission, vision, goals, and bottom-line impacts

# General Description of DEI Work

## Professionals

- 3-Pronged, Layered approach:
  - Connectors
  - Integrators
  - Programmers
- Strategic Considerations
  - Capital/budget
  - Capacity
  - Expectations for results (e.g., outputs, ROI, timeframe, purpose)
  - Barriers preventing safety, engagement, high performance, productivity, accuracy, fairness, system failures, etc.
  - The Organization's Stage of DEI Maturity

## Executives

- Systems Focus:
  - Unique Human-centered Experiences
  - Thought Leadership
  - Insight into Systems Data & Business Performance
  - Futuristic work models (e.g., engagement, flexibility, accessibility, WFA, continuous improvement, etc.)
- Strategic Considerations
  - Build the infrastructure vs. fix it
  - Develop strategy based on depth of experience, expertise, and influence
  - Cuts within every aspect of the organization and its ecosystem
  - Essential C-Suite role in all Future Enterprises
  - Vertical & horizontal administration and development

# Skills Required for DEI Work

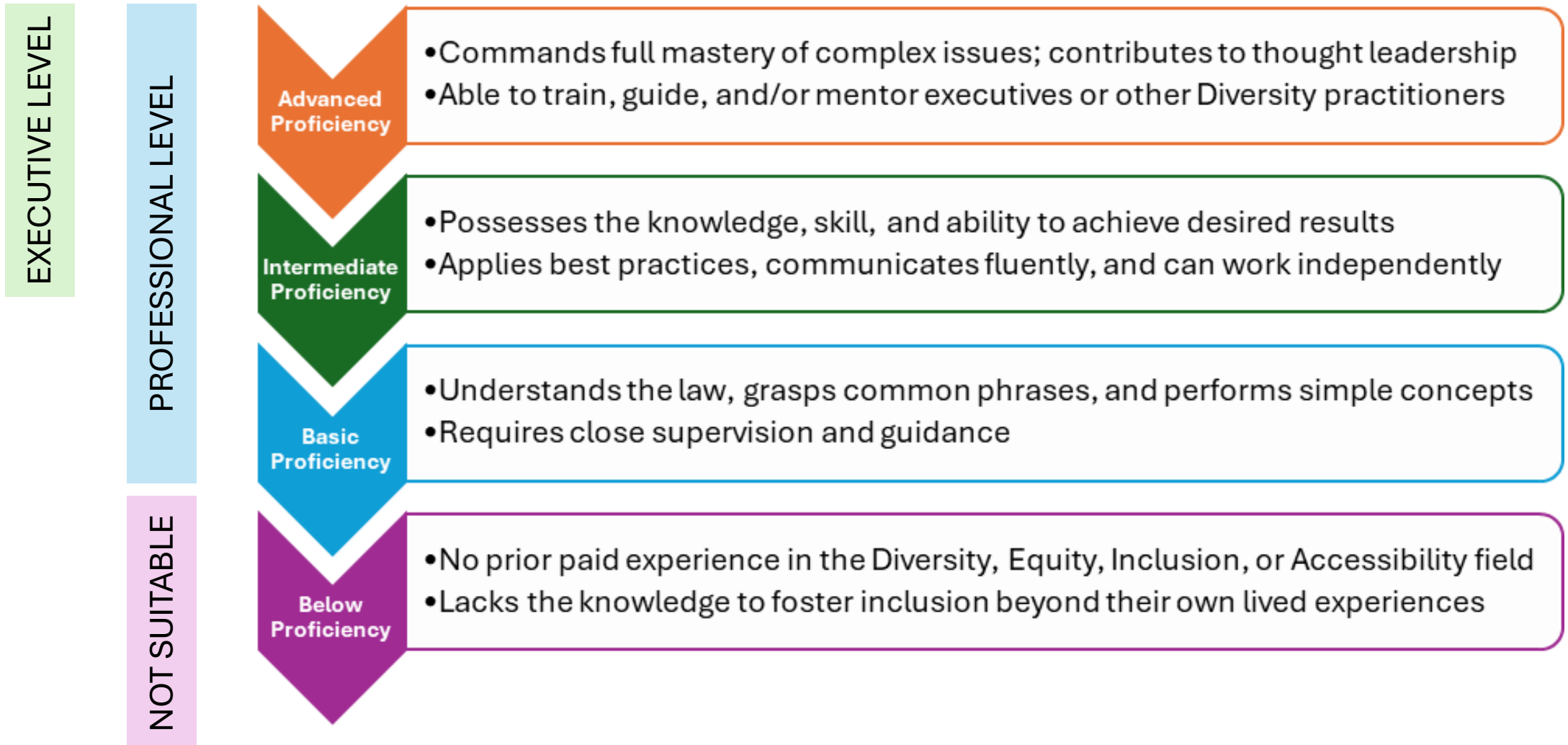
## Professionals Must Be Able to:

- Optimize sensitivity to, and respect for, a wide-range of disciplines, interests, and constituencies
- Conceptualize a blueprint for the business case and strategic plan
- Understand systems thinking and change management principles
- Comprehend and interpret global/regional laws
- Apply Project Management skills
- Manage cross cultural exposure and competence
- Analyze internal and external, end-to-end stakeholder experiences
- Facilitate training, coaching, and/or educational programs
- Coordinate crisis management strategies
- Develop and/or utilize proper assessment tools
- Evaluate and measure outcomes
- Connect DEI with AI and emerging technologies

## Executives Must Be Able to:

- Understand systems thinking and the science of DEI work
- Translate DEI efforts into ROI, P&L, KPIs, etc.
- Align the DEI strategy with the business strategy
- Identify the signals of change and/or engage in futuristic thinking
- Guide policy analysis and influence procedural decisions
- Interpret data from systems failures and/or design flaws
- Spearhead government relations and compliance with global/regional laws
- Oversee cross cultural exposure and competence
- Navigate the financial landscape, in respect to generating profit, budgeting, negotiating deals, etc.
- Guide the crisis management planning and response process
- Systematize change management principles
- Benchmark, measure, and report outcomes
- Orchestrate the integration of DEI with emerging technologies, as well as direct efforts to mitigate AI bias

# DEI Leadership Proficiency Standards



# Education, Training & Credentialing Guidelines



*Organizations must have High Standards and be selective about Inclusive Excellence Leaders*



Lived Experience (e.g., race/gender) is not a substitute for professional credentials



Both Certification + Professional Experience are Required



Credentials should come from a credible body with a rigorous level of coursework over time

# Education/Training/Credentials Requirements

- Educational Background: sociology, psychology, management, finance, marketing, organizational development, political science, coaching, human resources, legal/compliance, etc.
- Certification: Certified Diversity Professional (CDP)<sup>®</sup> or Certified Diversity Executive (CDE)<sup>®</sup> Credentials, Consisting of a High-Stakes Knowledge Exam and Peer-Reviewed Professional Work
- Work Experience:
  - 2+ Years for Professionals
  - 5+ Years for Executives
- Ongoing Commitment to Regular Training and Professional Development

# The Evolution of Diversity @Work

Stage	Circa	Ideology	Focus	Driver	Benefits	Foundation
<b>Affirmative Action</b>	1960's	Remedial	Equal opportunity and Compliance	Laws	Targeted groups	Assimilation model
<b>Valuing Diversity</b>	1980's	Idealistic	Appreciation of differences	Ethics	All employees	Diversity model
<b>Managing Diversity</b>	2000's	Practical	Building skills and changing policies	Corporate strategy	The organization & all employees	Synergy model
<b>High Performance</b>	2010's	Inclusive	Growth, continual change, and tangible impact	Globalization and demographics	The organization, employees, shareholders, vendors & partners	Integrated business model
<b>Sustainability</b>	2020's	Collaborative	Acquiring actionable enterprise insights and engineering business process transformation	The Knowledge and Experience Economy	Society	Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) model
<b>AI Integration &amp; Accessibility</b>	2025's	Accessible	Intersectional demographics and scalable Tech	Complex market pressures & economic transformation	Humans and Machines	Automation model

# The Future of DEI Work: An Evolution in Progress

- The tenets of DEI work are human-centered vs. compliance-based-- distinguishing between **infrastructure barriers** (e.g., space constraints, lack of access, inadequate systems, environmental hazards) and **human constructs** (e.g., money/economics, race, social norms, laws, institutions)
  - As a thought-partner, the tenets are the substance of the work; the results are the policies/procedures, behavior/attitude changes, etc.
  - The DEI executive leads the human-based agenda
- Connects High Performance Knowledge Work (i.e., Peter Drucker's management philosophy) with Positive, High Quality Stakeholder Experiences
- Shifts the DEI framework from divisive ideology to solutions for human-centered complexity (e.g., thinking/neurodiversity, biometric data, behaviors, expectations, attitudes, needs, motivations, learning styles, identity-related characteristics, cultures, etc.)
- Addresses components in both the workplace and marketplace

# Examples of the Shift in Language

## Post-George Floyd Era Terms

- DEI
- Victim
- White Supremacy Culture

*Remember the universal or global application of some terms. Also take the time to explain and repeat the updated language.*

## Use Updated, Multifunctional Terms

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Survivor or Target
- Dominant Group
- Human-Centered Complexity
- Context Complexity or Nuance
- Customized or Personalized Experiences
- Unique or Different
- Inclusive Excellence
- Merit-based or High Performing
- Biometric Data
- Values Alignment

# Overcoming DEI's Present Challenges

- Apply a Multi-faceted, Layered Approach to Identifying and Removing the Barriers (e.g., Social/Mass Media, Misinformation, Backlash, Resistance, etc.)
- Use AI-powered tools to rebrand DEI work (e.g., sharing positive results, strategies, tools/tips, etc.)
- Capitalize on DEI's Assets (e.g., Knowledge, Trust, Psychological Safety, Collaboration, Sustainability)
- Communicate the Business Risks and Opportunity Costs
- Control and Improve the Messaging (e.g., Defining the Terms, Providing Facts, Inclusiveness)
- Align DEI with the Mission/Vision/Values/Culture
- Build the Business Case for Ongoing Coaching, Education, etc., vs. viewing these tools as Professional Deficiencies
- Redesign Leadership Training (e.g., Do-Gooders, Bandwagoners/Opportunists, Black Beneficiaries of DEI, "Others")
- Partner with Nonprofits for Meetings, Town Halls, Community Listening Sessions, Educational Workshops, etc.
- Improve Gen Z and Generation Alpha Outreach, Communication & Engagement
- Map Broader Initiatives to Prevent Duplication of Effort and Facilitate Wide-Ranging Support