

Become an Active Ally

Brief Summary

The usage of the word “allyship,” despite being present in English language since 19th century, has become especially popular in political activism since the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Elected the word of the year for 2021 by dictionary.com, [allyship](#) describes the actions of a privileged in-group to actively use their position, voice, and influence to address the challenges and advance the interests of marginalized groups. It is critical for fostering an inclusive culture in all contexts, including workplaces.

The Change Catalyst study “[State of Allyship Report](#)” found that more than 50% of people learn about the need for allyship through someone else’s negative experience. If we can create spaces and opportunities for employees to learn from one another, we can build an allyship culture from the bottom up.

Challenge

Some say that “[ally is a verb](#)” - it demands action. Many employees think of themselves as allies but few engage in specific allyship actions.

Lack of knowledge tops the list of challenges to being an ally. Reflecting on how we might have been privileged by systems that disadvantage others is [uncomfortable](#), but necessary to equalize opportunity.

Recommendation

The key to becoming a true ally is to building listening skills in work relationships to gain a real understanding of challenges we, ourselves, do not experience.

Dedicate time to understand your own existing beliefs, feelings and attitudes with an open mind and critical lens.

Do your research - become informed about the workplace challenges underrepresented groups face; learn about the histories, cultures and other concerns of these groups. Ask what you can do to support them and do it.

Proposed Actions

- Take personal ownership to learn about the challenges of minorities. Read, learn, engage in conversations with humble listening so that your allyship is focused on addressing real issues and not your assumptions.
- Actively intervene to create space for underrepresented voices using inclusive language, either in physical or online meetings, and especially in hybrid situations.
- Address microaggressions such as interrupting, dismissing or taking credit for someone else’s ideas, stereotyping, and using racist, sexist, or ableist language.
- Practice microaffirmations like inviting someone to speak, recommending them for a job or promotion, or otherwise being their champion.

Valued Guidance

Quick Read

Culture Amp: [Four practices for being an equality ally](#)

Idealist: [Allyship At Work](#)

Tulane University: [Allyship: What It Means To Be An Ally](#)

To Watch/Listen

Right Track Learning: [Is Allyship the Key to Unlocking the Power of Diversity?](#)

Wellbeing lab: [Do You Know How To Be A Good Ally? \(podcast with Dr. Meg Warren\)](#)

To Learn/Study

Seramount: [Being an upstander against racism](#)

Change Catalyst: [The State Of Allyship Report](#)

LinkedIn Learning: [How to Support Colleagues from Underrepresented Groups by Maxie McCoy](#)



About the Author

[Betsy Bagley](#) is Pulsely’s Co-Founder and DEI Director.

