

Build Allyship among Leaders

Brief Summary

Elected the word of the year for 2021 by dictionary.com, [allyship](#) describes the actions of a privileged in-group to reject discrimination and advance the interests of marginalized groups. Fostering an inclusive, equitable, and diverse workplace through allyship is an imperfect and lifelong journey that starts with active listening. By connecting to different or new perspectives we can learn to be mindful of who is talking and create spaces for underrepresented voices.

In today's workplace, we should recognize and support the role of allies, creating opportunities to identify, reward and bring together individuals who are ready to become change agents.

Those in leadership or management positions have a unique platform to model [allyship in the workplace](#): speaking up, allocating resources, and effectively transferring privilege.

Challenge

[Research](#) has shown that more inclusive companies have a 2.3x higher cash flow per employee, and are 1.7 times more likely to be innovation leaders in their field. Employees in less inclusive companies are less able to contribute to innovation.

It's essential that leaders own and role model inclusion because DEI policies alone don't shift culture. Only [allies](#) inspire others to act as change agents.

Fear of uncomfortable conversations, assuming you know the solutions needed, and [performative allyship](#) are some of the main barriers to promoting an [allyship culture](#).

Recommendation

Provide managers with spaces and/or tools with which they can understand their existing beliefs and become informed about the issues underrepresented groups face.

Dedicate resources and time for training, and ensure that your team has opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and confidence to speak up and become active allies.

Create a safe environment where employees can identify specific ways the organization and leaders can take impactful action.

Proposed Actions

- Use inclusive language.
- Create space for underrepresented voices in virtual and in-person meetings.
- Establish and transparently share DEI metrics.
- Sponsor and mentor employees from underrepresented groups.
- Welcome reverse mentoring.
- Become an executive sponsor of an ERG.
- Secure resources for DEI programming.
- Actively listen with empathy and humility in discussion spaces to learn about the experiences of others.
- See Something, Say Something: normalize and role model addressing inappropriate behavior.
- Hold self and other accountable for inclusion.
- Set an example of allyship by top leadership.



About the Author

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Valued Guidance

Quick Read



Forbes: [Why Allyship Is Good For Business](#)

Gender Economy: [Allyship is Leadership](#)

Forbes: [Allyship - The Key To Unlocking The Power Of Diversity](#)

Watch / Listen



Lean In: [Allyship in Practice](#)

TED: [3 ways to be a better ally in the workplace](#)

Learn / Study



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

LinkedIn Learning: [Leading Your Org on a Journey of Allyship](#)