

Launch a DEI Committee

Brief Summary

A DEI Committee is a purpose-driven task force that helps to steer DEI decisions, strategies and actions in your organization. When a DEI Committee is set up for success from the beginning, it can create meaningful organizational change and help steward the DEI journey of your organization. Also referred to as a [DEI Council](#), it can take many forms. It can be a temporary task force that drives a specific initiative or an ongoing group that partners with leadership to support DEI efforts, be it operational or cultural, strategic or tactical. It provides [representation from different backgrounds](#) within the organization, it meets on a specific cadence to discuss DEI progress. Some committees play a large [decision-making role](#), while others function more as [advisors](#) to leadership.

[Establishing a DEI Committee enables your company to:](#) 1) create sustained organizational change, 2) align DEI efforts with the wider business goals, 3) guide policy and process infrastructure to support DEI initiatives, 4) foster wider accountability and engagement with DEI values & commitments through the entire organization.

Challenge

Without appropriate sponsorship, the committee may lack the power & authority to effect change.

It's challenging to establish safe environment inside the council for all its members (from staff level to C-level) to share their possibly conflicting views.

If the agenda, intentions, aims and goals aren't appropriately laid out, there will be differing and conflicting views meaning [success and effective use of time will be unlikely](#).

Lastly, a [DEI council](#) isn't a panacea for addressing [organizational gaps in diversity, equity, and inclusion](#). It only one tool in a full range toolkit of DEI best practices.

Recommendation

Before you begin, [consider the following questions](#):

1. Why does your organization need a DEI Committee? What was the catalyst for its creation?
2. What is already happening? How does your council fit into existing efforts?
3. What authority does your council have and what are its limits? There are typically 2 types of DEI Committees: **strategic & advisory**.
4. Who makes up your council? Try to balance [leadership, middle management, and staff level representatives](#).

Proposed Actions

- Involve your **leadership** - executive & senior management buy-in and support are critical to the success of your committee.
- Get clear about your committee's **mission, norms, engagement strategies & accountability system** (eg. cadence of meetings, who they report to, expected length of service in the council).
- Plan dedicated **resources** - it involves **staff hours** (setting aside time during the workday for committee meetings & tasks) and a **budget** (DEI consulting maybe needed or your council might decide on operational / infrastructural changes).
- Compile & analyse **data** about your workforce (age, gender identity, ethnicity, family status, disability, etc.) - you'll better understand the diversity of your employees, equity of your practices and any underlying trends.
- Define the council's **goals** & areas of concern - review the compiled data to identify problem areas.

Valued Guidance

Quick Read



CO—: [6 Essential Steps to Creating a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee at Your Company](#)

She+ Geeks Out: [12 Pitfalls to Avoid When Creating a Diversity & Inclusion Council](#)

NLC: [Why a DEI Committee is Essential for Your Nonprofit](#)

Watch / Listen



DiversityInc: [Executive Diversity Council Best Practices](#)

Learn / Study



SHRM: [How to Develop a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative](#)

Rise Mit: [Best Practices for Effective DEI Committees](#)



About the Author

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