People Success Toolkit

A DIBs Playbook

A people-centric approach to Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

GLINT®

A DIBs Playbook

Why it Matters

While more organizations understand the need to pursue greater inclusivity, most traditional diversity, inclusion, and belonging initiatives:

- Are owned by Human Resources
- Don't provide enough opportunity for employees to voice their concerns
- Fail to address the underlying issues employees face.

Key Insight

The relationship between an employee's sense of belonging and their happiness at work increased in strength by 12% since the beginning of the pandemic. Belonging has always been a top driver of happiness and engagement. This increase suggests employees' sense of belonging in their organization is now more important than ever.

Over the past five years, the number of diversity and inclusion roles listed globally on LinkedIn has increased by 71%. This is a good indicator that organizations are recognizing diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIBs) as critical to their growth and success. They are dedicating the time, resources, and focus necessary to prioritize DIBs initiatives.

Diversity, inclusion, and belonging manifest within an organization in a number of ways. Done well, diversity can show up as representation on all levels, and it signals an organizational culture that values uniqueness. Inclusion is the expectation, invitation, and assurance that everyone can take part in organizational life. These two pieces help build a foundation for a strong sense of belonging—the feeling that employees can bring their authentic selves to work and be accepted for who they are.

We must also acknowledge that equity—the promotion of justice and impartiality in an organization's systems—is another crucial component of DIBs work.

While our recommended DIBs survey approach focuses primarily on employees' sense of belonging, a high score on belonging does not always indicate the presence of other key DIBs aspects, like representation or an inclusive culture. For example, an organization mostly consisting of majority group members may have a strong sense of belonging, but it may lack an inclusive culture that accepts employees who are outside of the majority group. When an organization has a diverse employee population, fosters an inclusive culture, and embeds equity into its systems, the sense of belonging among its employees presages business outcomes like employee engagement.

This playbook will focus on four key habits that will help you make meaningful progress on your DIBs goals. These four habits can help organizations foster belonging by enabling support at all levels, while accounting for individual experiences and needs.

Where Organizations Get DIBs Wrong

Despite the heightened focus, huge gaps remain between organizations' DIBs-related visions and employees' lived experiences. A recent LinkedIn survey of more than 4,000 U.S. professionals found that almost half (48%) of Black professionals do not have someone they consider to be an ally at work, and a quarter (26%) feel isolated in the workplace. Organizations often fall short in one or more of the following places:

Superficial Commitment

When organizations commit to improving representation, the end goal often turns into filling quotas. DIBs programs that focus on "classify and count" diversity metrics to meet compliance targets, rather than measuring belonging and the drivers of employee engagement, are outdated. Instead, organizations must focus on not only representation, but also creating a culture where employees can bring their authentic selves to work.

Limited Ownership

Even when organizations think beyond compliance, responsibility for making progress is usually delegated to a DIBs team that sits within HR. Frontline managers are rarely responsible for improving diversity, and they lack the resources and accountability to build inclusive practices into their teams. As a result, DIBs initiatives become infrequent efforts with short-term impact. Without a personalized approach, initiatives can end up as broad stroke approaches toward an entire identity group, versus nuanced support that accounts for each individual's experiences, needs, and aspirations. Organizations should make DIBs the responsibility of all employees and embed changes that influence how teams operate day to day.

Narrow Focus

Finally, organizational leaders often regard DIBs as a standalone activity, separate from other talent initiatives across the employee lifecycle. Organizations lack understanding of how belonging impacts employee engagement, performance, and retention. Without these valuable insights, organizational leaders struggle to create meaningful and integrated initiatives that drive the behaviors that foster belonging. We recommend that organizations approach all processes and initiatives with a DIBs lens.

How to Drive DIBs More Effectively

Creating an organization that champions DIBs effectively requires a truly inclusive and equitable approach. These four habits—we call them People Success Habits—can help organizations foster belonging:

- Providing space for **frequent feedback**, and equipping managers with the resulting insights
- Having regular team and one-on-one **conversations**
- Creating **goals** that focus on progress over perfection, and meaningful growth over compliance
- Using employee input to encourage **learning and growth**

Habit 1

Seek Frequent Feedback

When it comes to understanding your DIBs strategy's successes and areas of opportunity, your employees are your best source of truth. Think beyond superficial diversity metrics, focusing instead on measuring whether your people actually feel a sense of inclusion and belonging. We recommend incorporating DIBs items into a frequent pulsing approach, which enables organizations to gather timely feedback to propel action at all levels.

What timing and planning considerations should we take into account with our DIBs survey?

When planning your pulsing approach, consider your need for a stand-alone survey, or how you might add DIBs-specific items to your current pulsing strategy to get more feedback related to DIBs at your organization.

While we do provide a standard DIBs survey design, it may not always make sense to launch a survey solely on this topic. We know that belonging is strongly related to employee engagement, so embedding a few DIBs items into your regular engagement strategy keeps the concepts front and center for managers and teams.

What should we ask?

Our research points to the following topics as key indicators of belonging, and you can use questions in these domains to survey your team or organization on an ongoing basis:

Topics

- ☐ Belonging
- ☐ Shared Purpose
- ☐ Opportunity for Success
- ☐ Day-to-Day Experience
- ☐ Inclusive and Open Leadership
- ☐ Diversity and Inclusion-Oriented Company

Learn more about Glint's recommendations for DIBs-focused pulsing on our website.

In your DIBs pulsing, Glint strongly recommends you use free-form comments to capture both employees' direct perspectives and their practical solutions to the challenges the organization faces. Artificial intelligence can quickly summarize tens of thousands of employee comments and categorize them into actionable insights.

What should we do if we don't survey?

Even if you don't survey, we encourage you to address this topic with your organization. At the organizational level, you may want to partner with your employee resource groups or align with DIBs work already underway. If you have not established a DIBs strategy, perhaps this is the time to consider what commitment you are willing to make. Start with the tone you want to set at the top and work to gain senior leadership buy-in. At the team level, encourage managers to have conversations with their team, using our Leader's Guide as a starting point.

Have Conversations

Having conversations about belonging, diversity, injustice, or any other complex and difficult topic may be anxiety-provoking, even for the most seasoned manager. Fear of saying the wrong thing can cause us to avoid difficult conversations. But these conversations are critical in illuminating the struggles your employees face. They create space for employees to share what they need to be at their best, and allow for more frequent, in-the-moment feedback and interventions.

Regular check-ins—both one-on-one and team-oriented—are the best way to build trust, ensure effective communication, surface concerns, and prompt ongoing action. These transparent conversations can help the organization shift to a culture that operates with a DIBs growth mindset, normalizing cultural humility and enabling teams to practice constructive discomfort.

See our Manager Conversation Guide for guidance on how to manage these conversations and create lasting impact on teams.

Habit 3

Set Effective Goals

Consider how creating an inclusive environment and a strong sense of belonging relates to your other business and professional-growth goals. It's important to start with small, tangible steps. Even if the goal feels too difficult to achieve, we can see real progress by taking one step forward, evaluating the impact, and taking another small step.

Goal setting is not just about responsibilities listed on a job description. It's intended to:

- Stretch and challenge people for self-betterment
- Maintain focus on what's most important
- Help organize time and energy.

To set effective and agile DIBs goals, managers should work with their teams to identify objectives and specific, tangible steps to achieving those objectives, as well as a timeline for reflecting on progress and making adjustments as needed. Managers with access to team-level engagement data can use dashboards to pinpoint the most critical objectives and use those insights as the beginning of a team conversation.

Goals should focus on taking one meaningful step forward. A few examples of team DIBs goals include:

Example DIBs Goals

☐   Dedicating one hour per week to building a habit of learning about a new DIBs topic, such as gender identity or an area in which you don't have lived experience.

☐   Creating team habits to drive more inclusive meetings, such as dedicated time for teammates to share new DIBs-related learnings.

☐   Building connection and belonging through new habits. This may be asking a "get-to-know-you" question at the beginning of your team meetings or creating a weekly "hang out" meeting (especially useful for remote teams).

Organizations that have adopted agile habits related to goal-setting and conversations are realizing the benefits today. Frequent touchpoints between managers and employees ensure people embrace priorities that reflect changing experiences and business strategies. As you implement DIBs goals, the same agile, ongoing approach should be taken. Remember, this is about progress over perfection.

Habit 4

Encourage Learning and Growth

We have more access to information created by DIBs experts, under-represented groups, and diverse perspectives than ever before, and the appetite to go along with it. In fact, since May 2020, we've seen a nearly 300% increase in the number of learners engaged with LinkedIn's Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging learning path.

Use this influx of content to continue to educate yourself, challenge your beliefs and assumptions, and seek exposure to different ideas and experiences. Consider what learning experiences you—as a leader, manager, and individual—can complete and how you can be more involved in your organization's DIBs-related initiatives.

It's important that leaders model, promote, and give their employees time for personal growth in this space. There are many resources that can provide support, including:

Glint Resources

- [A Leader's Guide to Employee Engagement, Diversity, and Belonging](#)
- [How Employee Engagement Can Foster Workplace Inclusion](#)

LinkedIn Learning

- [Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Learning Path](#)

Articles

- [The Intersectionality Wars](#) on Vox
- [Six Traits of Inclusive Leadership](#) from Deloitte

Books

- *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo, Ph.D.

Actions/Tips for Systemic Improvement to DIBs at Your Organization

Employees

☐ Take stock of where you need support. How are you really feeling right now?

☐ Communicate your needs, questions, and challenges to your manager. Ensure you are making time for self-reflection.

☐ Make a personal commitment that you feel passionate about. How can you drive inclusion within your own team? Consider how you can be an ally, or better yet, an accomplice.

Managers

☐ Be proactive and intentional about connecting with employees frequently and on a personal level. Be flexible in understanding that some people may not want to talk, while others may feel urgency to do so.

☐ Listen actively, and seek to empathize and understand. Conversations with your team are not a place to bring your own personal beliefs or to tone police. Your role is to be available, determine what support they need, and remove obstacles.

☐ Reflect on your leadership style, communication, how you assign work, and how you internally define what a good performer looks like. Do biases exist? Where could you be more inclusive? Where could you drive a stronger sense of belonging?

Organization

☐ Connect with employees through conversations, and get their feedback on how they are doing in your already-scheduled surveys.

☐ Consider how DIBs is important to your organization's success and culture. What outcomes are you looking to improve, and how can you achieve them through a DIBs strategy?

☐ Assess how organizational practices may be unintentionally exclusive (e.g. Do you still recognize Columbus Day? Do you acknowledge the holidays of minoritized group religions?).

☐ Make a commitment to remove bias from your processes. Carefully ensure biases against race/ethnicity, gender, nationality, and other forms of diversity are diminished. Specifically:
>   **Hiring:** Remove candidates' names, addresses, and personal identification from application materials. Write results-based job descriptions. Convert job descriptions to gender neutral language.
>   **Learning:** Consider how employees are identified for learning opportunities. Are the highly sought-after programs open only by nomination?