



World Federation
of Advertisers



The Global DEI Charter for Change

Marketing needs to change.



Right now, one in seven say they would consider leaving their company and the industry based on a lack of diversity and inclusion.

The 2021 Global DEI Census results (wfanet.org/census) show we still have work to do. We call on leaders at all levels in marketing organisations and their agency partners to build an industry of true inclusion, one that measures its achievements and is open when it falls short.

From our learnings from the global census, ran in 27 countries around the world, as diverse as Japan, South Africa, Malaysia and Brazil, we strongly recommend the following **as the minimum requirements for all organisations, globally.**

Actions on leadership



1. Create a diverse leadership team

Leadership must reflect the diversity of our global consumers and the richness of our intersectional identities. Where groups are not represented, leadership must have strategies for short-term progress and beyond. Investment in sponsorship schemes, reverse mentorship programmes and smart succession planning can create career growth for those in the organisation and attract new diverse leaders as well.



2. Understand and democratise your company's data

Leaders need to understand the data of inclusion: who is being promoted at every level and what barriers are holding particular groups back. Measuring what you treasure is essential, however beware of bias in existing systems. Guidance on effective change can also come via continuous feedback, listening sessions and/or employee networks. Data should be accessible to everyone internally as part of a commitment to tackling the issues.



3. Create transparent policies and publish them

Organisations must strengthen anti-discrimination policies and be transparent in policies, expectations of leaders and employees, and how to escalate situations when needed. These approaches must consider the nuances of multiple identities and ensure policies are accessible and widely shared. Ensuring they are being implemented is equally critical.



4. Create psychological safety and support

Genuinely safe spaces allow employees to speak up candidly. Companies must invest in qualified facilitation for these spaces and have clear rules of engagement. Middle management is key, so provide training and continual support on managing diversity and running inclusive teams.



Actions around protected characteristics



Age

Why: More than a quarter of respondents, both younger and older, agreed that their company does not treat everyone equally when it comes to age.

Key actions: Providing continued coaching, mentoring, and career development for experienced and younger employees alike shows the organisation is committed to supporting and retaining all forms of talent, irrespective of age.



Caregiving

Why: More than a quarter of respondents agreed that their company does not treat all employees equally when it comes to their caregiving responsibilities, rising to 40% among women.

Key actions: Ensuring that decision-maker roles include leaders with caregiving responsibilities – for the young, but also for the elderly and the sick – can both serve as a positive example to others and encourage the adoption of flexible policies. Adding emergency caregiver support to employee benefits plans can actively support those with caregiving responsibilities.



Gender

Why: Women reported a low sense of belonging and more negative behaviours at work: a third said they felt undervalued and less than half believe that management do not discriminate when it comes to hiring or career advancements.

Key actions: Businesses need to understand and improve women's lived experiences. Support plans need to be tailored to the cultural differences and employment conditions in each market, so that women feel valued and empowered to progress their careers.



Race and ethnicity

Why: In 15 of the 21 markets where ethnicity was measured (regulation in some countries forbids questions about race), minorities were less likely to agree that organisations were taking steps to be more diverse and inclusive compared to their majority counterparts.

Key actions: Creating programmes and spaces specifically designed to support and empower ethnic minorities helps show commitment and progress to populations that usually report poorer experiences in the workplace.

Actions around protected characteristics



Disability and neurodivergence

Why: People with disabilities are under-represented in the industry and tend to report a lower sense of belonging.

Key actions: Businesses should prioritise actions which help normalise and improve understanding of all forms of disability. Accessibility needs must be discovered and accommodated as part of the employee onboarding experience.



Sexual orientation and gender identity

Why: 35% of LGBTQ respondents reported feeling consistently anxious in their jobs.

Key actions: Companies must have policies in place to protect but also support LGBTQ+ employees. Benefits including pay, bonuses, parental leave, health insurance should be explicitly available to same-sex couples. Non-binary identifying employees should have their chosen identity recognised.



Mental health

Why: Of all those reporting a long-term health condition, globally, 71% said it related to mental health. Moreover, a third of all respondents reported feeling stressed and anxious at work.

Key actions: Providing and continually promoting mental health benefits so that they are accessible and top of mind is important. People managers should be trained in how to respond to mental health issues and have supportive discussions around mental health with employees.

Ideas to steal

Go to wfanet.org/DEIcharter for ideas about how organisations are tackling these issues.

Join the Global DEI Census 2023

We are running a second wave of research on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in 2023. More countries and more companies are taking part than in the first wave, make sure your company is one of them. Find out more at wfanet.org/census.

