CHAPTER F – DEI Manager Training

What this is:
Training managers to deliver on corporate DEI strategy.

Why is matters:
Training managers on diversity and inclusion is one step to increase the return on all a company’s other DEI investments. If your leaders are not on board and practicing your company DEI policies, then your employees are much less likely to be doing so. You need to train your managers to be the role models and champions for your company’s DEI initiatives.

McKinsey’s research reaffirms this point: “Companies should place their core business leaders and managers at the heart of the [DEI] effort.” There is a wealth of research that demonstrates that an employee’s relationship with their direct manager drives employee engagement, and their work to foster inclusion and a sense of belonging has a substantial impact on that engagement (HBR). Manager training can help achieve this unified front from a company’s leaders, which will in turn create a more inclusive and productive workplace.

Content:
Developing and delivering a plan to train your managers on DEI matters is rooted in data and built on the foundations of each company’s unique values and existing management training resources. It is important that the training responds to each organization’s unique environment. It is also important to develop a training with a spirit of continuous improvement or growth as opposed to a punitive or compliance-only approach.
Effective Management.
The principles of DEI are at the core of effective management. Initially, training may isolate the principles of DEI as a means for managers to “catch up” on topics that have been traditionally overlooked in management training. Over time, however, the goal would be to re-integrate the foundational principles into training curricula for managers at key points in their development.

Continual Improvement.
One-time training on DEI issues almost never works. The factors that contribute to bias and the behavior that results are learned over a lifetime. Retraining the brain to acknowledge and welcome the many differences in the people we encounter will take time. This playbook is intended for companies to develop a suite of resources that are implemented over time, leading to higher levels of effectiveness.

Steps for developing training for managers around the principles of DEI:

→ **Identify your audiences**
  Depending on a company’s structure, different levels of management may need different types of training. It is also useful to consider the needs of various individuals, as managers representing unique, underrepresented groups may have different DEI needs than those in well represented groups.

  **Example:** Awareness training for an employee who is a member of an historically oppressed group may seem superfluous, but the training will provide consistent language for everyone to use in ensuing discussions.

→ **Define what success looks like for each audience.**
  Success will look different for different types of managers. Make goals to determine success, as these need to be measurable.

  **Examples include:**
  - The company sets accountability measures and trains managers on how to address issues related to equity and inclusivity when they arise.
  - For each open position, talent acquisition professionals share at least two resumes from candidates who are members of underrepresented groups.
  - Middle level managers need to have provided substantial professional growth opportunities to 15% more women and people of color who are up for promotion.
Assess manager training options.
There are many different ways to train your company’s leaders. Make sure those that are selected align with the company values and purpose. It is important to remind managers that this work should not fall on the shoulders of employees from underrepresented groups.

Foundational principles.
Since each organization is so different, the specifics of any training program should be suited to that specific organization’s needs and resources. That said, the following principles will suit a broad set of organizations that are interested in training their managers on DEI:

Start small.
Start with changes that can be made today without a tremendous amount of organizational lift. These common-sense, quick wins will help build momentum for bigger initiatives later on. They can also make a real difference in the lives of the people that they affect.

Consider a combination of strategic and tactical resources.
It is important to give managers an understanding of why it’s important to address DEI and how to incorporate it into the work environment. Strategic approaches may include mindset and data-driven research about the impacts of discrimination on the lives of the affected individuals. More tactical resources may include training on the language of DEI or how to handle microaggressions in a group setting. Examples of training opportunities may be internally or externally sourced.

Examples include:
- Ask your HR representatives to create a manager training program according to your needs.
- Ask your HR representative to conduct a survey to assess your team’s perception of the organization’s status on DEI issues. (Link to Playbook chapter on DEI Assessment)
- Sit down with your HR representative to assess that information and determine the highest priorities for your organization.
- For organizations that have resources to leverage external resources, bringing in a consultant to create your training program or subscribe to or purchase a pre-planned manager training program and include in your learning management system.
- Using the other documents from the HR Collective’s DEI playbook to help you create your training.
→ **Develop a plan to get started.**

Every organization should honor its current position and work from there. Starting with simple things first allows the team to build momentum and make progress. Recognizing that this is a long-term commitment, the planning group can start working toward one-year goals while still identifying longer-term benchmarks of progress to be met.

→ **Deliver on your plan and regularly measure your success:**

Once you have a solid plan for the different audiences you need to reach, it is time to implement. After establishing your initial training program, you should decide what your plan is for onboarding managers and consider having a yearly training and long-term plan. In addition, include a regular assessment of progress towards the goals set; this may be monthly or quarterly for some and annually for all metrics. Include a plan to share that with key stakeholders at your company.

→ **Continue with follow-ups on the training content:**

One-time training does not work. You need to continue to have these conversations and keep on measuring your progress. For example, host a monthly manager DEI check-in for groups of management staff to come together and share their findings and progress in the past month regarding DEI.

DEI manager training will work if you tailor them to your managers’ needs, have a long-term plan, and make sure the progress is being made by setting goals.

**Links to other resources:**

- [Are your DEI Efforts Helping Employees Feel Like They Belong?](#)
- [Corporate Diversity: If you Don’t Measure It, It Won’t Get Done](#)