# Inclusion Works Pulse Report

from Hive learning

## State of DEI 2020-2021

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

How 2020 transformed DEI....1
Our research: what smart organizations are doing....3
New dimensions and priorities....4
DEI became a C-suite priority....8
DEI became everyone's responsibility....16
How DEI went digital in 2020....24
2021 and the future of DEI....31
About Inclusion Works....36
Contributors....38

# How 2020 transformed DEI

**The events of 2020 put diversity, equity and inclusion at the forefront**




I Cant Breathe Black Lives Matter GIF by @INTOACTION via Giphy.

2020 changed the way we work. COVID-19 turned whole industries on their heads overnight and took a huge toll on people's personal lives. When working from home — or not working at all — became the only option for many, the line blurred between personal and professional life.

The murder of George Floyd and several Black Americans triggered social unrest and put the Black Lives Matter movement at the center of the world's stage. People started asking their leaders what they were going to do to break down systemic barriers in their organizations. More importantly, they wanted to know what they could do to help.

And suddenly workplaces were held accountable for breaking down the inequalities that society created, in a way never seen before.

Existing DEI strategies that were meant to serve businesses for five or ten years were scrapped or adapted as businesses focused on tending to people's immediate needs.

Much of the world's workforce was forced to go digital — some for the first time ever. DEI leaders pivoted to using online platforms with mixed levels of success.

The Black Lives Matter movement and the pandemic demanded a compassionate approach. We heard about DEI teams who stopped their work to tend to the needs of newly remote workers.

People struggled with the mental health impact of the pandemic and social unrest.

Expectations for organizations and those leading them changed — DEI was added to the C-Suite agenda as a matter of priority.

As Dow Jones' Vice President, Inclusion & Community, Allison F. Avery, said to us:

***"We have moved to a place where it is riskier not to talk about DEI. We have to talk about race. We have to talk about inequity. We need to be more specific, more contextual, and nuanced with our DEI objectives."***

It's clear that the state of DEI will never be the same again.

# Our research: what smart organizations are doing

Hive learning

2020 threw plenty of curveballs at organizations and DEI teams. COVID-19 created new and urgent people needs while putting many companies on rocky economic grounds. And the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement meant people wanted to have difficult conversations, but didn't know where to begin.

**We wanted to know how the most impactful DEI leaders tackled each challenge.**

And because these events triggered a desire for permanent change, we wanted to know how DEI leaders' plans for 2021 are shaping up.

So we sat down with 38 DEI leaders — at the helm of some of the world's largest and most influential organizations — and asked them two questions:

1. **What did you do in response to the extraordinary events of 2020?**
2. **How did that impact your focus for 2021?**

Then we distilled their insights into this practical pulse report.

The report contains insights on how 2020 altered the state of DEI forever, with important warnings and practical lessons to take forward.

If you're reading this, we hope you'll take away practical ideas and inspiration on developing a strategy that will serve your people and sustain real change in the year ahead. You'll be able to rest a little bit easier in the knowledge that you are not alone in tackling these difficult challenges.

# 2020 saw DEI take on new dimensions and reprioritize others

## Race was planted firmly on the C-suite agenda

The death of Black Americans at the hands of the police is not a new occurrence.

But the way George Floyd's killing was captured in stark witness videos and shared virally, compounded with lockdown measures removing distractions for people at home, meant that **George Floyd's death struck an unprecedented chord** in the US and far beyond.

The ripples felt from the untimely deaths of Black Americans followed people into work. They permeated public consciousness. And race was planted firmly on the corporate agenda, which was sorely overdue.

For organizations that had previously hung all of their diversity efforts on gender, **it became very clear that businesses can no longer tackle one diversity issue at a time.**

And while becoming an antiracist organization will likely be a priority for years to come, DEI leaders we spoke to urged us **not to forget the importance of intersectionality**. We must continue to create equitable workplaces that serve all underrepresented groups and the nuances of identity, like being LGBT+ as well as Black.

COVID-19 also added an entirely new dimension to DEI work — wellbeing. People worried about job security and were furloughed or laid off. The constant pandemic news contributed to a rise in anxiety levels.

Leaders had to make difficult decisions. It was up to managers to have **difficult conversations and treat their teams with compassion**.

## Working from home presented new challenges

Working from home became the norm and blurred the line between home and work life.

There were two sides to seeing each other differently.

Existing hierarchies were broken as employees dealt with the same WFH challenges.

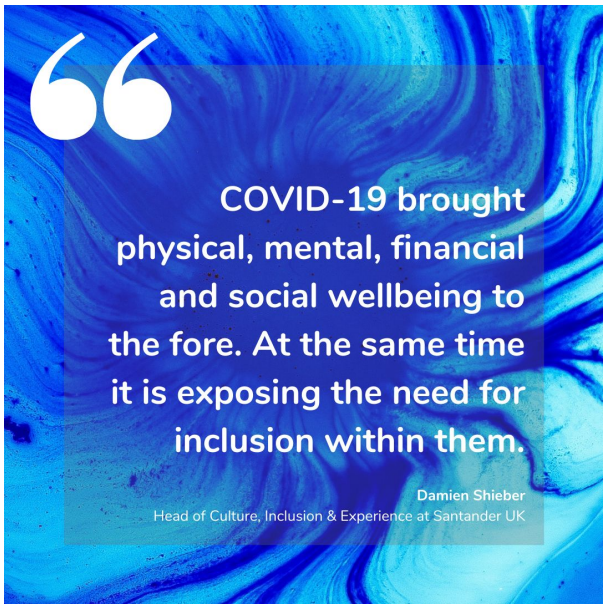
But **not everyone's experience was the same**.

People juggling caring responsibilities with work needed more support and flexibility. Those who couldn't work from home were furloughed or had to deal with the higher risk of being exposed to COVID-19 to do their job.

This revealed inequalities and added different dimensions to the DEI radar. For example, how inclusive are we of workers who can't work from home?

In response, organizations and wider society took on an approach anchored in empathy.



## Inclusion in the wider community took priority

At least five DEI leaders we spoke to are extending their compassion and scope for advancing equity beyond the walls of their organization. One business advanced cash flow to give women-owned and minority-owned businesses a lifeline as the pandemic threatened to wipe out a disproportionate number of these businesses. They also offer a program that teaches women and ethnic minorities how to do business with a federal agency.

Other DEI leaders like Myra Caldwell also drew attention to the importance of corporate responsibility to the wider community.




## People had to take a global lens on DEI

In 2020, COVID-19 ignited a feeling of global collectivism for businesses by connecting people over a common crisis. The Black Lives Matter movement has had global reach, too. It erupted in the US but has prompted people to think about injustice and dark colonial legacies in countries like Belgium and the UK.

Some experts we spoke to told us about their own train-the-trainer systems that ensure DEI programs are localized and relevant no matter where you work.




DEI leaders are urging businesses to **think global, act local**. They are taking critical reviews to their organizations' approach to inclusion to ensure they serve employees at a local level, and are sure not to prioritize a single nation's culture.



# DEI became a C-suite priority




2020 shook up people's perception of DEI. At most, it positioned DEI as an indispensable part of an organization's goals. At the very least, it put DEI on the radar for businesses that had little or no experience of it before.

## Budgets grew and DEI teams scaled

While uncertainty at the start of the pandemic forced many leaders to momentarily press pause, the need for DEI was clear and budgets and headcounts for DEI departments eventually grew to unprecedented levels. This was evident to DEI leaders who were new in their role and others whose teams were finally growing.

In fact, **half of our respondents told us their DEI budgets had increased**.

***"Before, there was no budget and the team was built around the passion of volunteers. Now the structure is clear with top management sponsors."***

***— Anonymous, Group Head of Diversity & Inclusion and Employer Brand at a digital technology company***

And more than a quarter of respondents told us that their DEI budgets had stayed the same.

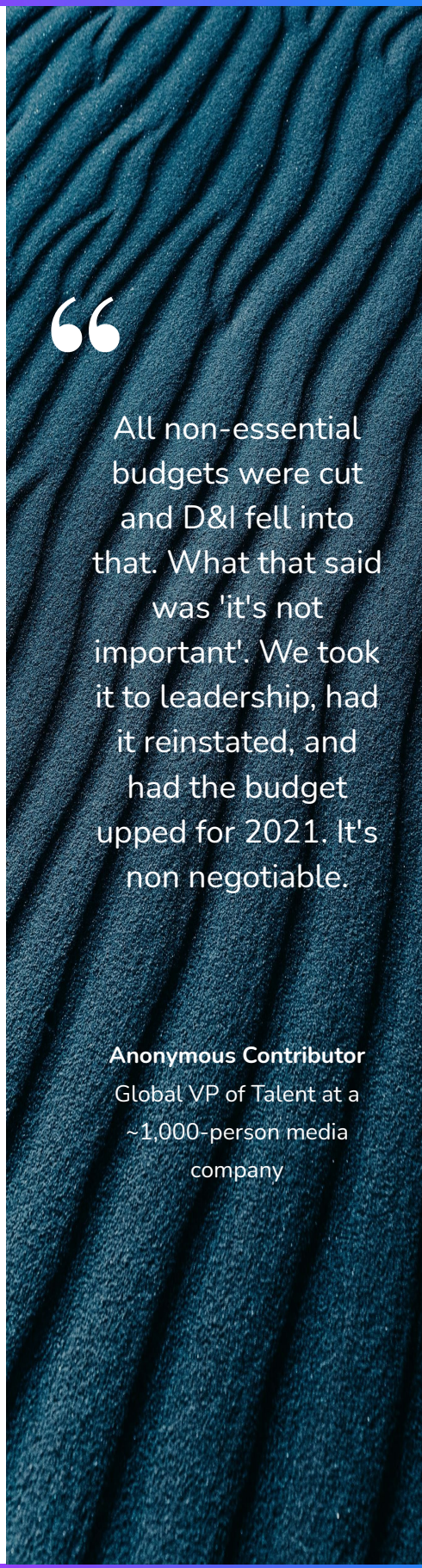
In some cases, where all areas of a business were affected by budget cuts, **DEI was protected**.

And in others, people told us they **were finding it easier to secure budget** for DEI initiatives.

These tangible examples prove that decision-makers finally 'get' the true value of DEI. DEI is no longer **a nice to have, but a need to have**.

Of course, the devastating effect of COVID-19 meant some businesses had to make cuts across all departments, including DEI. For some, it was telling whether their DEI operations fell into the 'non-essential' or 'essential' categories.

As much as we have made incredible progress in collectively recognizing the importance of DEI, it would be disingenuous to pretend that the issue has vanished. Some DEI leaders are still having to boldly fighting their corner:



"All non-essential budgets were cut and D&I fell into that. What that said was 'it's not important'. We took it to leadership, had it reinstated, and had the budget upped for 2021. It's non negotiable.

**Anonymous Contributor**
Global VP of Talent at a ~1,000-person media company

We hope this is a promising sign for DEI leaders, and that the seismic shifts of 2020 will make it easier for leaders to prove the value of DEI.

After all, as one DEI leader suggested, ***not* committing to DEI is inevitably bad for business**.

## ERGs received long-overdue support and recognition

As well as investing in growing DEI teams, employee resource groups (ERGs) were recognized and fairly rewarded for their pivotal role in creating meaningful progress.

Prior to this year, it was commonplace to see a disconnect between corporations who said DEI was important and the compensation they gave to those actually doing the work — this was especially true of ERGs. It goes without saying that unpaid labor can worsen inequities and the passion required to fuel this unpaid work is often unsustainable.

But this year we saw a shift.

We heard that ERG leaders were finally being given some of their paid time to do ERG work. Employees were given billable hours to work on DEI initiatives rather than being expected to do this as a passion project outside of their day job. And leaders even cited that a digital environment accelerated the impact of ERGs making them easier to access and interact with, and less siloed — a win for intersectionality.



## CEOs were held to account and publicly committed to the DEI agenda

The expectation from employees and the public on what organizations should weigh in on changed overnight. People wanted to know where their organization stood on the subject of social justice. **CEOs no longer had the option to stay silent.**

The 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report found that people were up to **4.5 times more likely to say a brand would earn or keep their trust by acting in response to racial injustice**.

While we saw flimsy statements and vague promises published, thankfully not all responses were simply lip service.

We saw CEOs and executive teams experience their own lightbulb moments right in front of us. They released public statements and set the bar for their peers. They asked DEI leaders for their counsel, and the role of senior leaders in DEI became crystal clear.

This was one of the most powerful shifts DEI work has seen in years.

As all DEI leaders are well aware, genuine buy-in from senior executives removes one of an organization's first — and often greatest — hurdles to becoming truly equitable and inclusive.



***"It's a strategic priority and I sit on the Cabinet, so I am absolutely allowed to ask for more resources. My philosophy is that all anyone can do is say no. But if you ask, they might say yes."***

*Tracey Ray Robinson*
*Ph.D., Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at West Chester University of Pennsylvania*

We were excited to hear about **CEOs who spelled out their intolerance to racism in company-wide emails.** Senior executives spoke about DEI as a focus in their strategy announcements. C-Suites agreed to review whole policies through the lens of DEI.

We heard a story where a white CEO emailed their entire New York workforce to acknowledge the devastating injustice for Breonna Taylor when those responsible for her death were not charged for it. It was the first time a CEO in this organization had made a statement like this.




But now, and for the foreseeable future, genuine and demonstrable commitment beyond lip service will be critical. Business leaders who were used as figureheads to lend their voice when it was convenient, but never authentically engaged with antiracist initiatives, will be held accountable by their people and the public.

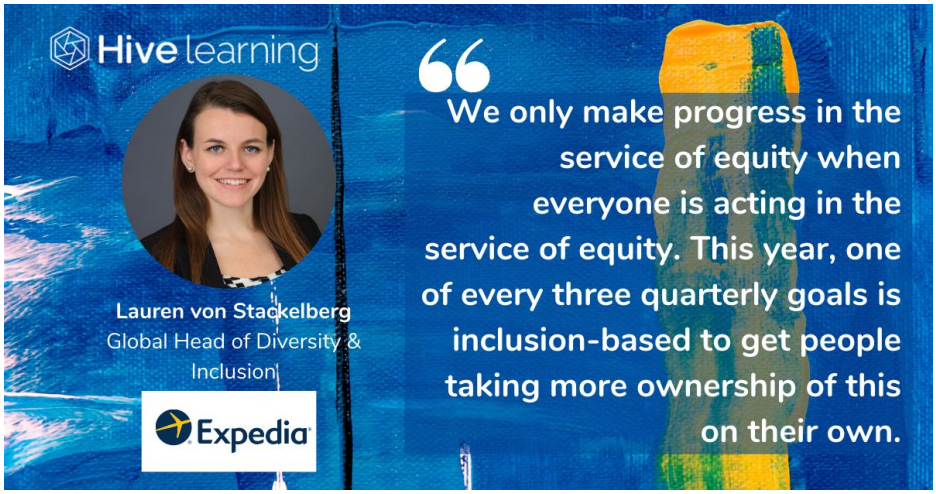



As businesses prove their commitment into 2021 and beyond, leaders will need to continue to communicate the value and purpose behind their organization's DEI agenda and ensure that they drive action.

## Businesses embedded greater accountability for DEI

> Now organizations are doing what should have been done a long time ago. More resources like FTEs, more structure, more integration. Now that this is happening, we'll start to see results that D&I practitioners have been pushing for all along.
>
> **Sheri Crosby Wheeler**
> VP, Corporate Social Responsibility, Mr. Cooper

Businesses with leaders who had experienced that lightbulb moment of understanding the significance of DEI are reaping the benefits. But realizing the need and taking responsibility doesn't mean that CEOs alone are now responsible for achieving the company's DEI objective. What it does mean is that they are better able to **rally everyone around a clear purpose and put DEI on the agenda for all employees**.




What's more, we've also noted that many businesses are holding leaders and managers at every level accountable for DEI and making progress.




***"Our goal is to continue building a robust I&D strategy and infuse it into the culture. What might this actually look like? If I&D is properly infused into our culture and programming then you would simply be a 'Leader at Expedia Group' because by our design a successful leader includes inclusivity!"***

*Zack Rubinstein, Senior Program Manager; Head of Global Inclusion Learning at Expedia*

And for those in agreement that a DEI strategy is imperative, it's back over to DEI execs to showcase the impact that their DEI strategies can deliver in the long term. We know that tying DEI initiatives to a tangible business priority like profitability helps keep both DEI and senior execs accountable.



# DEI became everyone's responsibility

### Employees ask what they can do to help

Before this year, leaders told us anecdotally they could expect about 30% of their teams to engage in DEI initiatives. They turned up to webinars, engaged with ERGs and read all the resources on offer.

But this year, something changed. Groups who previously didn't engage in DEI — in particular we were told, white men — asked what they could do to help and how they could contribute to building more equitable workplaces. They were ready to have uncomfortable conversations and recognized the role they may have played in reinforcing systemic biases.

People showed up to Town Halls, checked in on colleagues, and asked about their organizations' DEI strategies. They finally realized that DEI is not just 'HR's job'.

### DEI leaders made it clear that DEI is everyone's responsibility



Terms like **antiracism, white privilege** and **systemic racism** were added to the corporate vocabulary. And while Donald Trump's executive order threw a spanner in the works, DEI teams are working hard to ensure this doesn't hinder essential conversations.

**"Trump's executive order has us all awaiting clarification, but I don't believe what we're doing will be under threat. We have an inclusive leadership series and I hope its focuses will be sustainable no matter what."**

**Tracey Ray Robinson Ph.D.**
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, West Chester University of Pennsylvania

*As a side note, we hope that the executive order will be revoked under President-elect Biden. As it's in effect until January 2021, our guide can help you understand what it might mean for your DEI strategy.*

## Courageous Conversations became the norm

DEI leaders prioritized **making sure people felt heard** with listening sessions and open forums. They gave people a platform to ask questions, created safe spaces to get it wrong, and began to create a culture of continuous learning around DEI issues.

DEI teams organized discussion groups and internal talks. Where budgets allowed, guest speakers like Ibram X. Kendi and Ijeoma Oluo were brought in to speak to employees. Where they didn't, leaders pulled together thoughtfully curated sets of publicly available resources designed to spark difficult conversations and reflections.

DEI leaders shared resources digitally to reach workforces dispersed by the pandemic, and were careful not to burden Black colleagues with the expectation of helping everyone. Employee resource groups played a crucial role in mediating discussions and reviewing resources.

Some organizations even published their resources to help others who didn't have the resources to create content internally, citing the belief that **DEI should never be a competitive advantage**.

Expedia shared their Actions to be Anti-racist, Xaxis shared their Journey to Anti-Racism and we also published our own collection of antiracism content.

And because **senior leaders and managers were now expected to speak on social justice and DEI issues**, it became necessary to upskill them quickly so they could speak with confidence on these subjects.

Organizations that saw productive change were the ones in which senior leaders were honest and vulnerable. These leaders openly admitted where they felt incompetent and showed a willingness to learn and grow.

After all, leaders are spokespeople for their entire organization, and questions from a senior figure like "What is Black Lives Matter? I thought all lives mattered?" could cause immense damage internally and externally.

In one organization, "safe spaces" allowed staff to be vulnerable and ask questions. These judgment-free "safe spaces" cleared up common areas of confusion and **participants came away feeling bonded and more comfortable having these conversations.**

> "In the workplace everywhere there's an awful lot of people who know they should say something. No one is trained on how to take that correction from your colleagues. We need to get into the uncomfortable area of role-play, particularly the more senior people who need to understand that someone correcting them is a help, not an undermining.
>
> **Sue Unerman**
> Chief Transformation Officer at MediaCom




There's evidence to show that creating a positive feedback-action loop where employees feel heard and management acts on employee feedback boosts engagement, so creating spaces where people feel heard were invaluable.

***"We had conversations with people who had often been silent before. We know that anything that speaks to change can create fear and concern, but the Black Lives Matter Movement created awareness and now everyone in the C-Suite is involved."***

*Pamela Popp, President Retirement Services and Chief Inclusion Officer at Lockton Companies*

In encouraging leaders to have courageous conversations, people were equipped with resources giving them the language to proactively take part in discussions about race — rather than sitting and listening on the sidelines.

Leaders and managers were equipped with discussion guides like the 'Workouts' Hive Learning clients used as a framework for having interactive discussions about race and racism. Giving people the tools and permission to have these discussions is a vital part of the process, especially for subjects that have historically (and wrongly) considered inappropriate for the workplace.

Conversations like these were critical for helping people develop empathy and 'find their way' when it comes to equity and inclusion. But moving beyond conversations and into action will be critical for effecting lasting change.




## Moving from awareness to action

One thing we heard time and time again is the importance of turning the momentum of the Black Lives Matter movement into long-lasting, sustainable change. The central part of this is moving beyond awareness to action.

2020 could be described as the year people fell out of love with unconscious bias training. In a report we conducted in Spring 2020, 69% of DEI leaders said **unconscious bias training could only have a positive impact if it was coupled with other initiatives.**

The challenge with bias training, leaders shared, is that too often it tells people 'you have bias' and not 'here's what you can do about it'. The result? People feel guilty, powerless, and fail to take action.

What's worse is that this kind of training can fuel resentment, as we saw from Donald Trump, and DEI initiatives can be thought of as little more than blame-and-shame exercises.

This year, we noticed a marked rise in DEI training focused on helping people understand how to strip bias out of their processes and embed inclusion in their daily behaviors.

The most impactful organizations focused on **showing everyone what inclusive behavior looks like** and what the expectations are from them. How do they go about their day in an inclusive way? If a customer or client makes a racist remark, what do they do? Make sure your people are equipped to operate inclusively and know how to react to racism when they see it.

Hive Learning clients used checklists to help hiring managers debias hiring, gave people practical tips on how to be an ally, shared guides on talking about subjects like race and ethnicity, and equipped people with antiracist actions.

This is the key to driving greater accountability around equity.

***"It's not about headquarters telling people what to do. It's about a decentralized model of telling the business: 'Here are the expectations and here are the support frames. Now it's up to you to drive this forward.'"***

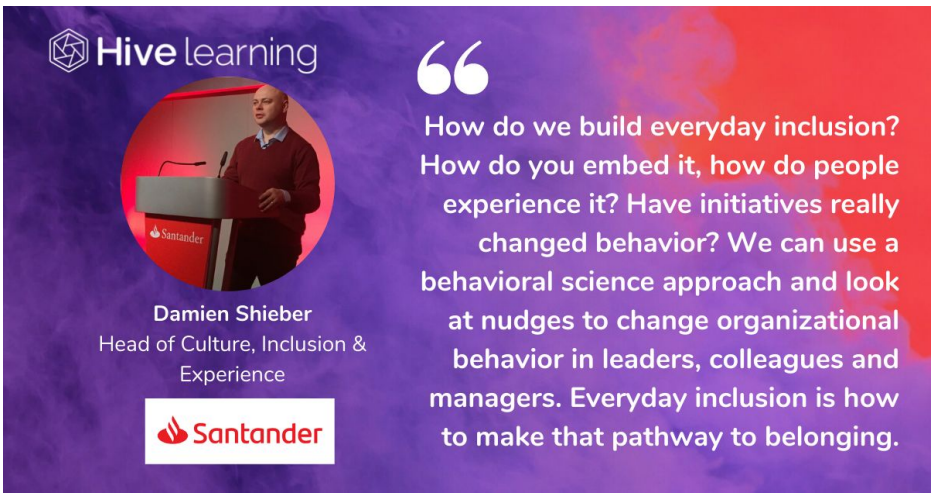
***— Anonymous, Group Head of Diversity & Inclusion and Employer Brand at a digital technology company***

In some cases, old structures have been scrapped in favor of systems that democratize DEI and focus on including the people who can really influence people and systems.

> "All companies need to do a deep-dive and identify the exclusive practices that surface across large internal processes. At Expedia Group, we are asking ourselves: At what points do we see systemic oppression in the employee and talent lifecycle? Are there unidentified barriers to creating inclusion during our hiring or exit processes? This will help to identify areas where inclusive interventions should be implemented.
>
> **Zack Rubinstein**
> Senior Program Manager; Head of Global Inclusion Learning at Expedia

> We've devolved D&I councils and moved away from people giving updates around a table. Now we have communities of influence made up influencers, ambassadors and allies from across the company. Influencers are people who are passionate, at all levels, who are drivers for change. It's not a talking shop — influencer is a verb. You have to be doing something.
>
> **Julie Thomas**
> Director, Inclusion & Diversity, Coca-Cola European Partners

It's clear that to create long-lasting change we must be proactive in reminding people and making it easy for people to play their part. Inclusion must become a habit. And in some cases, DEI leaders are looking to digital tools as the answer.




We worked with insurer Sun Life to drive an inclusive workplace culture using our digital inclusion program, Inclusion Works. By using peer learning to take participants on a journey from unconscious bias to conscious action, Sun Life is helping employees embed tiny but powerful acts of inclusion into their daily behaviors and routine. Ultimately, this helps their people own, accelerate and embed change — making inclusion become a habit more quickly.

The program delivered bite-sized, actionable content on topics like how to respond to micromessages, ways to be a better ally and how to build psychological safety. Leaders could consume, process and plan how they would take those actions in their day to day.

It created a huge wave of momentum and a pilot of 1,500 employees in North America and Asia resulted in **94% of learners feeling confident demonstrating inclusive behaviors** at work and **88% committing to taking action on what they learned**.

Following the pilot's success, Sun Life decided to launch the Inclusion Works program to their whole workforce. Find out more in the press release here.

From here on out, the most impactful DEI leaders are prioritizing **getting everyone involved in playing their part on the journey to building equitable organizations**.

This will be critical to ensure new DEI strategies aren't set up to fail — DEI leaders can no longer be expected to single-handedly carry what should be a business-wide responsibility.

# How DEI went digital in 2020

As workers were moved out of offices and factory floors, organizations were forced to move their operations online. It was an abrupt change that some were ready to make, while others weren't.

Even as people are given the option to return to physical workplaces, we know that attitudes to remote working have changed. A 2020 survey found that **86% of people believe that remote working is the future of work**.

**As they ventured into the world of doing everything online, the question to those new to this mode of delivery was: can DEI be done digitally?**

Every DEI leader we spoke to made resources accessible to employees from a distance. They introduced video calls, some uploaded content onto cloud-based services, others invested in tools like intranet solutions and some invested in peer learning solutions.

One person confided in us about how they had been skeptical about the efficacy of a remote and digital approach to DEI. But once they spoke to colleagues about the new format and saw the NPS scores, it became clear that it was working as well — if not better — than before.

Many of our experts reported similar levels of success. People generally adapted well, likely helped by the fact that the smartphones and gadgets we carry around in our pockets have made so many of us fluent in technology.

***"I believe one of the positive things that has come out of COVID-19 is that we've learned you can be as effective in a digital format as in person, allowing us to make important progress regardless of the circumstances."***

*Myra Caldwell, Chief Diversity Officer at Cadence Bank*

## Digital DEI: the cheaper and faster alternative?

The majority of our contributors said that taking DEI online meant huge financial savings. Because of pandemic restrictions, organizations were seeing how they could bring employees together to collaborate without the usual travel and event planning costs.

Not only did it save money, a crucial element of operations during COVID-19, but **a digital approach meant DEI teams were saving time** by cutting out the traditional demands of in-person events.

> There's really a big runway for us to be able to really leverage technology. It allows us more touch points with people and that can provide an experience that doesn't just match what we do live, but actually exceeds that. Now, we can pull together things in a couple of days that positively impact our inclusion culture.
>
> **Anonymous Contributor**
> Director of Equity & Inclusion at an American fast food corporation

Going digital had instant payoffs. It allowed organizations to reach unprecedented numbers of employees. People were able to tune into talks and webinars from front-row seats in their homes instead of struggling to catch information from the back of a conference room. This complemented the immediate need to gather colleagues to discuss the events surrounding 2020's Black Lives Matter movement.



Video recordings gave people the flexibility to consume information when and how it suited them — an inclusion win for the likes of parents and carers. We also heard how it opened up the conversation to those who had potentially been excluded by an in-person-first culture that favored extroverts.




Events that would have been held in headquarters or as single events in a major city were now accessible to all regional team members. Our leaders told us how people were connecting with those they hadn't been in the habit of doing so before.

A digital-first approach also allows for asynchronous work and connects people across different time zones, two things that put us in good stead for the inevitable growth of remote working.

## Short-term solutions vs long-term strategies

There's no doubt that doing DEI digitally unlocked exciting capabilities. Leaders are recognizing that **people don't have to be in a room together to learn and communicate**.

However, as we look to 2021 and consider the longevity of our digital DEI approach, there are some important questions DEI leaders are asking. For example, how do we continue to engage people as the novelty wears off?

Yes, people feel more connected when they can see each other's faces on a video call, but how inclusive is it to demand that everyone switches on their camera? A recent study also suggested that the shift to working from home could put us at **greater risk of social silos**.

Unless we do it right, remote working might threaten inclusion and belonging in our teams.

One contributor reminded us that now we're interacting virtually, we have to think about who we are actively seeking out and getting to know.

> Before, it was easy to tap on shoulders and have informal conversations. Now, in this virtual environment, we need to be strategic and intentional. How do you really get to know somebody in this environment? And who do you get to know in this environment? Ask yourself, hey, am I spending time with women leaders? Am I spending time with underrepresented minorities and other people of color?
>
> **Anonymous Contributor**
> Director of Equity & Inclusion at an American fast food corporation

A few leaders also talked us through their thinking around how **we can't just transplant DEI into a virtual format and expect it to work**. They know that what used to be an intensive face-to-face course over a few days can't just be transported into Zoom slots, demanding people are glued to their screens at home for hours at a time. After all, we've heard about Zoom fatigue contributing to burnout and disengagement.

If you're unsure about the positive impact of your digital approach so far, you're not alone. Our contributors were divided on how impactful they thought their tactics had been so far and admitted that it would take time.

The need for speed and agility meant digital strategies were set up hastily to meet remote working needs. These stopgaps fulfilled their purpose through the transition from face-to-face work to fully remote working.

What businesses need to ask now is: **how sustainable is the digital approach we've put in place?**

These questions need to be asked because we now know that we won't be going back to 100% face-to-face practices. Organizations will need to figure out what their sustainable digital solution looks like, whether that's fully digital or what our contributors referred to as a "hybrid" or "blended" approach.

The approach has to be longer-term to make it stick. We know the forgetting curve is real. We typically show a steep drop-off in how much we can remember something just hours after we've learned it. So, **we can't rely on sharing resources and expect that to change behavior**.

Then there's the piece around engagement. Or rather, disengagement. How do we watch out for people who might be disengaged virtually?




We heard from one leader whose company was using an LMS to share digital inclusion content found that it lacked depth and engagement. It's because of this that we work with our customers to create content and engagement plans that keep learners engaged and coming back to the Hive Learning platform.

## Can you build psychological safety online?

Two or three leaders were still skeptical at how inclusion can be effectively built through screens. There's no denying the intimacy you get from being in the same room and making eye contact. So how do we build psychological safety online?

We heard Daniel Danso, Global Diversity Manager at Linklaters LLP, share their take on the opportunities of moving DEI online in a Hive Learning panel discussion on scaling inclusion digitally:

> The thing I love about tech is that it gives me the tools to do things differently to how I normally would — it also give us the ability to ensure that participants have more opportunity to engage in ways that are safe for them. The difference in presentation styles needed for different groups in face-to-face situations can also be impacted by tech. I can use polls, quizzes and comments to get people to share and engage in a way that helps them transcend barriers to engagement, be they cultural or hierarchical.
>
> **Daniel Danso**
> Global Diversity Manager, Linklaters LLP

One example from our contributors was the "safe spaces" mentioned earlier. As people were working from home, these private discussions were held in virtual rooms where clear guidelines were set beforehand and participants were able to ask questions without fear of being chided for saying the wrong thing.

A Hive Learning client shared the same worry about psychological safety in a virtual format. What they found was that the familiar surroundings people were in contributed to participants feeling comfortable enough to open up.

Over time, we've seen the bravest among us model and normalize the practice of being vulnerable in places like LinkedIn. This might look like talking about an insecurity about knowing what to say, or admitting that you don't have the right answers and that you're all on a learning journey together.

**It's how we nurture this going forward that will shape our collective psychological safety in these digital spaces.**

This year, we worked with one of the UK's fastest growing FTSE 100 manufacturing companies who had already established a peer-learning culture with thousands of people engaged on a monthly basis. They needed a solution to equip their globally dispersed workforce with the tools to model inclusive behaviour every day — they needed to understand what good looked like, and then form an inclusion habit, so they could build an environment where diversity and equity could thrive.

It was the first of this kind of initiative, but the business knew **it was important for everyone to be headed in the same direction at the same time to make real progress and systemic change**. They sped up their journey to coincide with the momentum of the BLM movement.

We translated our bite-size and actionable digital inclusion program, Inclusion Works, into nine different languages — and ensured that delivery was localized by editing content with a cultural lens with the help of business champions. We trained a team of champions, equipping them with all the **tools they needed to drive continuous learning in their regions, functions and teams**.

The business delivered strong, aligned internal comms to employees on the platform, through posts from the CEO and timely content supported by drip-fed additional resources like BLM discussion guides and topical blog posts to spark conversation. The digital program has connected over 2,000 people across 59 countries so far and we've already seen over 4,400 contributions made to the online inclusion dialogue.

| 59 | 9 | 4,400 |
|---|---|---|
| countries connected | languages translated | learner contributions |

Hive learning

# 2021 and the future of DEI

2020 has been a year of pivoting, learning and acceleration for DEI. We wanted to know: **what are DEI leaders' biggest challenges and objectives for the year ahead?**

At Hive Learning, we speak to 100s of DEI leaders each week. And the most forward-thinking among them share the views of the changemakers we spoke with to compile this report.

We hope that everyone reading this can feel proud of how they and their leaders acted in 2020. It's how we keep the promises made in light of the BLM movement now that will define leadership legacies — and show us whether our actions improve the everyday lives of people in our organizations.

DEI leaders need to capitalize on the widespread passion and take action now, while employees are engaged and willing to be part of a shift in culture change.

> The cynical side of me says this won't last forever. That's why we need to get a good strategy in place now to see us through. It's going to be high on the agenda into next year, but then who knows?
>
> **Julie Thomas**
> Director, Inclusion & Diversity, Coca-Cola European Partners

It's unclear what 2021 will bring, but this pulse report lays out what actions organizations need to be doing:

✅ **Equip and empower everyone to have honest conversations.** Model this willingness and prioritization from the top. Create the space to have these conversations. Provide resources and tools that help build the psychological safety needed for people to have these conversations.

✅ **Hear and respond to everyone's voice.** Listen and act on what you hear. Speak to your employee resource groups about what is expected of your organization and what you have the capacity to do together. Democratize your DEI work to sustain the pull fuelled by the BLM movement through the changing newscycle.

✅ **Move from awareness to action.** Give people the permission, confidence and information needed to put what they've learned into practice. Show what inclusion looks like through everyday behavior and embed them as habits.

✅ **Think global, act local.** Look at best practice on an international level and benchmark your own against it. Test your DEI strategy to ensure it stands up locally and not just in your headquarters. Set up a process that includes people who can localize your DEI practice.

> *This time has created the opportunity to examine and identify how we can show up in a more impactful way, not just in the US, but across the globe.*

**Dr Angela Anderson**
US Head of Diversity and Inclusion, Strategy and Operations at Novartis

> *MediaCom has set up a global belonging council to ensure that we've got best practice everywhere in the world. It's been fascinating because the problems are not the same.*

**Sue Unerman**
Chief Transformation Officer at MediaCom

✅ **Use data for equitable outcomes.** Critically assess how you report on diversity figures. Avoid lumping underrepresented groups into larger categories like BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) and BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic). As Audre Lorde says, we need to "divide and empower". Ensure that reporting accurately reflects the needs and challenges of underrepresented groups so that they can inform equitable actions.

✅ **Create a code of conduct for dealing with racism.** Set expectations for employees and mandate your code of conduct from the top. Take a loud, no-tolerance approach and communicate it clearly to everyone in your organization.

✅ **Assess your digital DEI offering.** Will its purpose change as your organization settles into a new normal way of working? Do you have a solution that will create and sustain culture change? Measure the impact of your current approach and review it against the long-term needs of communicating and executing DEI priorities.

✅ **Use unconscious bias training as a starting point.** As some organizations are in the infancy of their DEI journey, we'll say it again. The consensus from DEI leaders and employees is this: unconscious bias training is only effective when paired with education on actions to mitigate that bias.



> "Having a much stronger data-driven approach and looking at diverse strands through metrics and reporting means we can be more targeted about D&I. Not every D&I initiative or program makes an impact so taking this approach will consider both prevention and promotion when it comes to building inclusion.

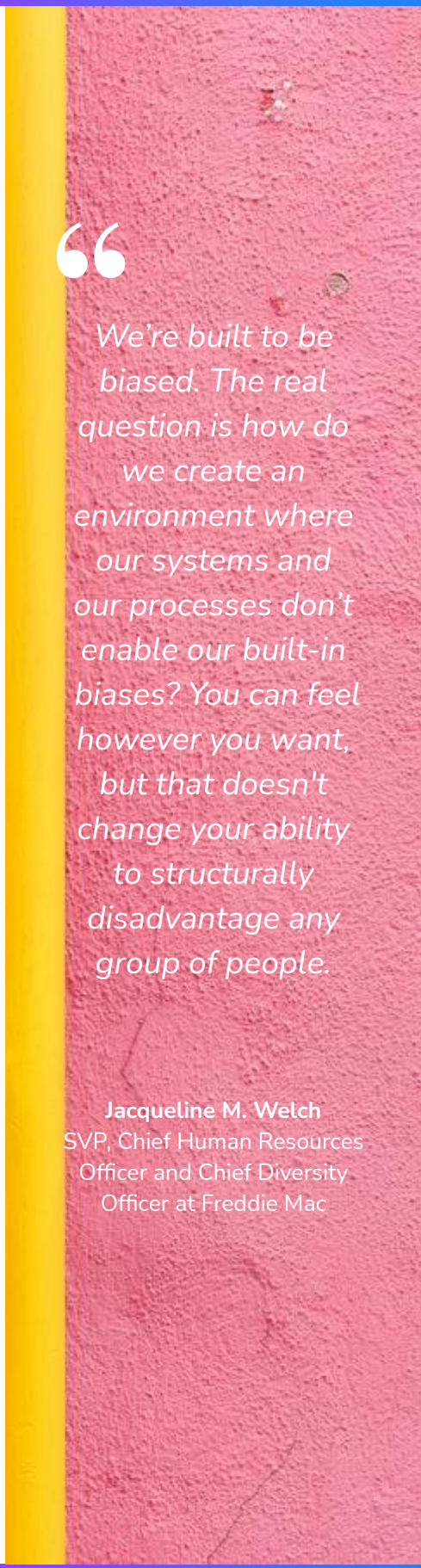
**Damien Shieber**
Head of Culture, Inclusion & Experience at Santander UK

✅ **Strip bias out of systems and processes.** We can't change outcomes if we don't address the flaws in the process. Review your talent and employee lifecycle. And if necessary, dismantle them and rebuild them through a DEI lens.

✅ **Educate and empower leaders.** Leaders need to be invested and up-to-date on what's happening in DEI because they play a pivotal role in advancing all business strategies, including DEI. Keep stakeholders informed and involved in key decisions and conversations and encourage them to add their voice as sponsors to a strand of diversity or employee resource group that resonates with them.

We want to develop and take our leaders through a learning journey from awareness to action. We view this development as critical and know our leaders are key influencers to Expedia Group's processes, systems, and policies.

***Zack Rubinstein***
*Senior Program Manager;*
*Head of Global Inclusion Learning, Expedia*



*"We're built to be biased. The real question is how do we create an environment where our systems and our processes don't enable our built-in biases? You can feel however you want, but that doesn't change your ability to structurally disadvantage any group of people.*

**Jacqueline M. Welch**
SVP, Chief Human Resources Officer and Chief Diversity Officer at Freddie Mac

✅ **Add DEI to everyone's agenda.** Make DEI work accessible to everyone. Set clear expectations through quarterly goals and company values. What does DEI work look like at your organization? Give people actions to take to help move the needle in their everyday life. Don't have a large DEI budget? Task other departments to allocate some of their budget for DEI work to root it as a shared responsibility.

**2020 has been a bittersweet turning point for DEI.**

We need to learn from its challenges and review the way we've always done things to create a more equitable world.

There is still plenty of work to do, and it's up to businesses and the people within them to accept their new role.



> "At ABB, we recently launched the D&I Strategy 2030, covering diversity of all dimensions. Our strategy is built on a three pillar model: inclusive culture and leadership, governance and partnerships. It takes all of us to succeed, starting from the top and, at the end of the day, everyone needs to be joining us on this journey of change. Every day.

**Heidi Robertson**
Group Head of Diversity & Inclusion and Employer Brand at ABB

Hive learning

# ABOUT Inclusion works from Hive learning

We all know that diverse teams deliver better results, and that inclusion creates the conditions for diverse teams to thrive. But until now progress in creating equitable workplaces has stalled.

We believe that's because D&I initiatives too often focus on driving awareness rather than action. They focus on winning hearts in the moment rather than changing processes for good.

Inclusion Works from Hive Learning is a peer learning program designed to take your people on a journey from awareness to action in as little as three months. As the world's only digital solution for accelerating culture change, Inclusion Works gives your people the tools to be more inclusive every day through habit-forming nudges and conversations.

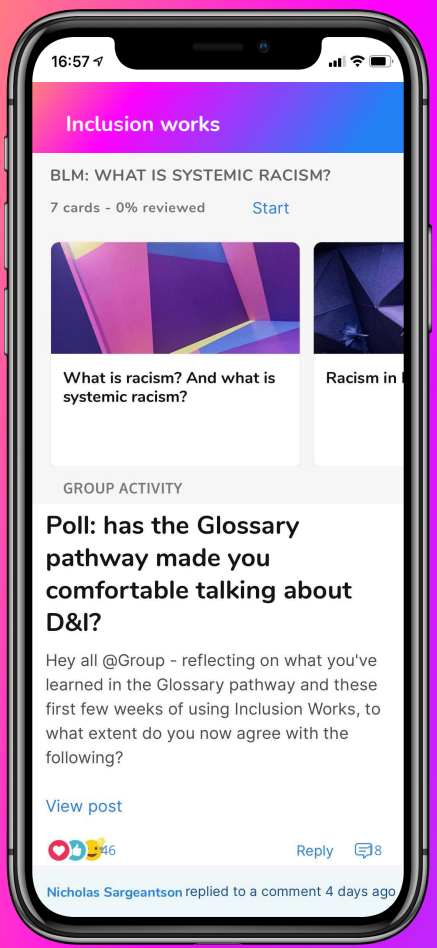
We combine the power of peer accountability, activated network science and nudge theory to help organizations create ripples of long-lasting change. In our programs, 88% of participants take action against bias and two thirds of participants create an inclusion habit in under 90 days.

If you want to find out how the likes of Sun Life Financial, Legal & General and Deloitte create culture change at scale, get in touch by emailing nicholas.sargeantson@hivelearning.com

# Inclusion works

from Hive learning

## The world's first digital toolkit for building inclusive culture




Take participants from awareness, to action, to lasting change

Create an inclusion habit with practical advice and powerful nudges

Additional pathways added regularly

Fully customizable program design and delivery

88% of participants take action against bias

+90% learned clear actions they could apply right away

**inclusionworks.co**

### Building business-critical skills in the world's leading businesses

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