



FAQs for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) champions

From civil rights to gender rights to labor rights, DEI is a centuries-old movement dedicated to upholding the freedom of all Americans to access life, liberty and happiness. Currently, there is a multi-pronged attack on DEI efforts taking place across the country that attempts to roll back years of progress and restrict access to the American Dream.

American Pride Rises is here to support DEI champions like you.
Below are key questions that we have been asked, plus answers that we hope will **empower you to take on tough conversations to defend DEI within your organization.**

Q1: I want to talk about DEI in a way that will resonate across the business.

What messaging should I use?

First, it is key that you communicate how vital DEI is to overall business strategy — it is not a “nice to have” that lives only within HR, but an engine for innovation and growth. (See next question & answer for more.)

Second, DEI is not a collection of recent policies that can be reversed without consequence — if we lose DEI from our businesses, we undermine the promise of America and our winning edge within each company and as a nation.

- **Diversity simply means all people.** Organizations that reflect the diversity of America are best positioned to tap into the brain power, resources and cultural capital that each community holds. Without diversity, American institutions risk losing top talent, relevance and loyalty in a fast-moving global economy.
- **Equity is fair access to opportunity.** America was founded on the idea that everyone should have a fair chance at success. Without equity, the promise of opportunity fades away for hard-working Americans everywhere — and if that promise fades, so does our country’s competitive edge.
- **Inclusion is participating in the American Dream.** We are made stronger when we use our collective knowledge and skills to move our nation forward. If we abandon efforts to strengthen inclusivity, we risk limiting our country’s talent pool in education and business, thus hindering progress, innovation and leadership. Inclusion is not the same as “preference” - simply because someone has an opportunity does not mean it was taken from another.

Q2: How do I tie DEI more closely into our core business strategy?

Ideally, DEI should be fully integrated into the business strategy. Moves to consider:

- **Make the business case for DEI clearly to business leads and hiring managers.**



- See [Mark Cuban on the power of DEI](#) for business: "DEI is not an 'ideology.' It is a set of business processes that when done well makes a company more profitable... When you broaden the scope of your recruiting as widely as possible, you find more qualified candidates, that's the D. When you hire someone, you try to put them in the best position to succeed, that's the E. And for all employees, making them feel confident with who they are is a plus for productivity, that's the inclusion."
- Refer to the [McKinsey report](#): More diverse companies were 36% more profitable than those with less diverse workforces.
- **The DEI position/office should report directly to leadership and decision-makers, such as the CEO and COO.**
 - Clearly define the position as a way to improve profitability and as an employee-retention tool.
 - Ensure that all staff understand the role and how it helps them succeed.
- **Track and collect data to quantify how DEI aligns with business success.**
 - Include this data in regular reports as a proof point.
 - Share this data in public filings or reports.
- **Tell stories that showcase qualitatively how DEI supports customer/stakeholder centrality.**
 - Identify stories that spotlight how your business has connected successfully with different communities within your customer/stakeholder/talent base by understanding their specific needs and targeting them with relevant products, services and communications.
 - Highlight how specific organizational DEI operations have contributed to the successful connections.

Q3: The term 'DEI' has become politicized. Should we stop using it?

No. By failing to use the term DEI, we give legitimacy to anti-DEI supporters who are working tirelessly to restore barriers to the American Dream.

DEI is hope for the American Dream: it widens the pathways to success for all and provides equitable opportunity for communities that are too often left out and left behind.

Our diversity is the key to America's strength — we should be proud of it because without it we are less powerful and less competitive as a nation.

Q4: Is it "too risky" to stand by DEI policies in the current legal climate? How should I approach this discussion?

There is no case law that prohibits organizational missions and goals tied to diversity. The Supreme Court has affirmed that organizations and governments can continue to implement strategies that expand opportunities for all communities using legally permissible ways to achieve DEI goals.

In light of the overall value DEI bestows, you must ask yourselves as a business:

1. Why are we considering scaling back or eliminating our DEI work? Is it due to misinformation, fear of litigation or another factor?
2. If we pull back on any of our DEI commitments out of fear, do we risk foregoing all the benefits that DEI provides?



3. Instead of operating from a place of fear or misunderstanding, can we implement legally permissible DEI solutions that align with our organizational goals and have a positive impact on our customers, stakeholders, employees, potential talent pool and communities?

Organizations should ask their legal counsel to clearly articulate the risks and consequences of existing policies - based on current laws. This exercise is important for every layer of the organization and can be a helpful tool for supporting operational decisions.

Q5: How can I help defend DEI and the American Dream?

- **Speak Up** – Tell us about your experiences: Are you facing pushback on DEI programs? Have you been the target of litigation? Your stories are powerful and help us to help you and others like you.
- **Stand Firm** – Do not retreat at the first challenge: Make the business case for DEI in your organization clear and make sure every anti-DEI claim or pushback is interrogated against business goals and what is permitted under the law (not levels of fear).
- **Stay In Touch** – Reach out to American Pride Rises and your fellow DEI champions for support and to share information and help build a cross-sector, nationwide coalition of DEI support.

We cannot afford to sit back and let the progress of American values and rights be halted by baseless attacks – anti-DEI legislation and litigation must be contested and DEI champions must be supported.

Speak Up. Stand Firm. Stay In Touch.

For more information go to www.aprnetwork.org or contact: info@aprnetwork.org