



Inclusive Leadership:

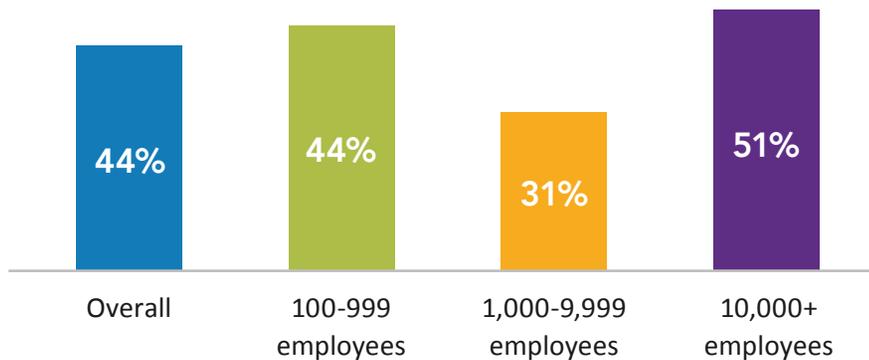
6 Strategies
for Success

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3	3. Commit to Training on Inclusive Leadership at All Levels of the Organization.	21
Current State	6	4. Adapt the Culture and Processes to Support Inclusion throughout the Organization.	23
Complexities	9	5. Create or Strengthen Diversity Council and Employee Resource Groups.	24
Inclusive Leadership Behaviors	10	6. Assess Inclusion through Critical Business Metrics.	26
Inclusive Leadership Strategies	11	Demographics: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look	28
Measuring Impact	12	Authors and Contributors	29
Consequences	13	About Brandon Hall Group	30
Critical Questions	14	About Orange Grove Consulting	31
Brandon Hall Group/Orange Grove Consulting Points of View	15		
1. Strengthen High-Level Ownership of Inclusive Leadership Development.	15		
2. View Inclusion through Your Employees' Eyes.	18		

Executive Summary

Organizations Demonstrating Inclusive Leader Behaviors to a High Degree



Rating 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale

Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting

Most employers (76%) are receptive to improving the level of inclusion and inclusive leadership in their organizations and 56% rate it as important, according to the research study, *How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside*

Look, conducted jointly by Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting. Despite this good news, less than half of employers are having success in effectively training leaders to demonstrate inclusive leadership.



THE CHALLENGE?

Driving greater inclusion and helping leaders adapt to a more inclusive leadership style require culture change, which must occur at all levels for an organization to be successful.

Our study showed that less than 41% of employers are training on inclusive leadership at any employee level, from individual contributors to the C-Suite.

Inclusive leadership involves many different behaviors. It is difficult to be fully inclusive without leaders who can role-model inclusive

competencies. Overall, the study showed that inclusive leadership behaviors most likely to be developed are authenticity, empathy, collaboration and awareness of unconscious bias. Gaps include unconscious-bias mitigation (or taking action on bias) and motivation — a key ingredient in facilitating culture change.

Measuring results is a struggle in most areas of human capital management and measuring the effectiveness of inclusive leadership training is no exception.

Some organizations are succeeding. The research showed a strong correlation between organizations with a high degree of emphasis on developing inclusive leaders and increases in key business metrics such as customer satisfaction, employee engagement, talent retention overall and retention of diverse talent. These organizations are reaping the benefits of inclusion and finding a competitive edge.

Organizations that emphasize developing inclusive leaders are 2.25 times more likely to have at least 40% of top leaders from diverse groups.



The challenge has consistently been implementation. Organizations that want to develop more inclusive leaders as a strategy toward becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization must consider several questions. They include:

What are our greatest barriers to having a more inclusive culture?

Do our leaders consistently demonstrate the values of our organization?

Do we have leaders who actively seek to understand those around them — including people from different cultures and backgrounds — and listen, empathize and adapt to their points of view?

Do we have an influential leader or leaders who “own” DE&I efforts? Do they have enough authority or time to help the organization reach its DE&I goals?

Are there specific strategies or behaviors that require attention more than others?

From the research, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting developed six high-level recommendations for improving inclusive leadership:

- 1 **Strengthen High-Level Ownership of Inclusive Leadership Development.**
- 2 **View Inclusion through Your Employees' Eyes.**
- 3 **Commit to Training on Inclusive Leadership at All Levels of the Organization.**
- 4 **Adapt the Culture and Processes to Support Inclusion throughout the Organization.**
- 5 **Create or Strengthen Diversity Council and Employee Resource Groups.**
- 6 **Assess Inclusion through Critical Business Metrics.**





Current State

In today's multicultural and multigenerational workforces, inclusion and collaboration are critical for success. Leaders are not expected to have all the answers as they did in the top-down, command-and-control leadership cultures of the past. Inclusive leaders are expected to enable their teams to adjust and thrive in environments of ongoing change and disruption.

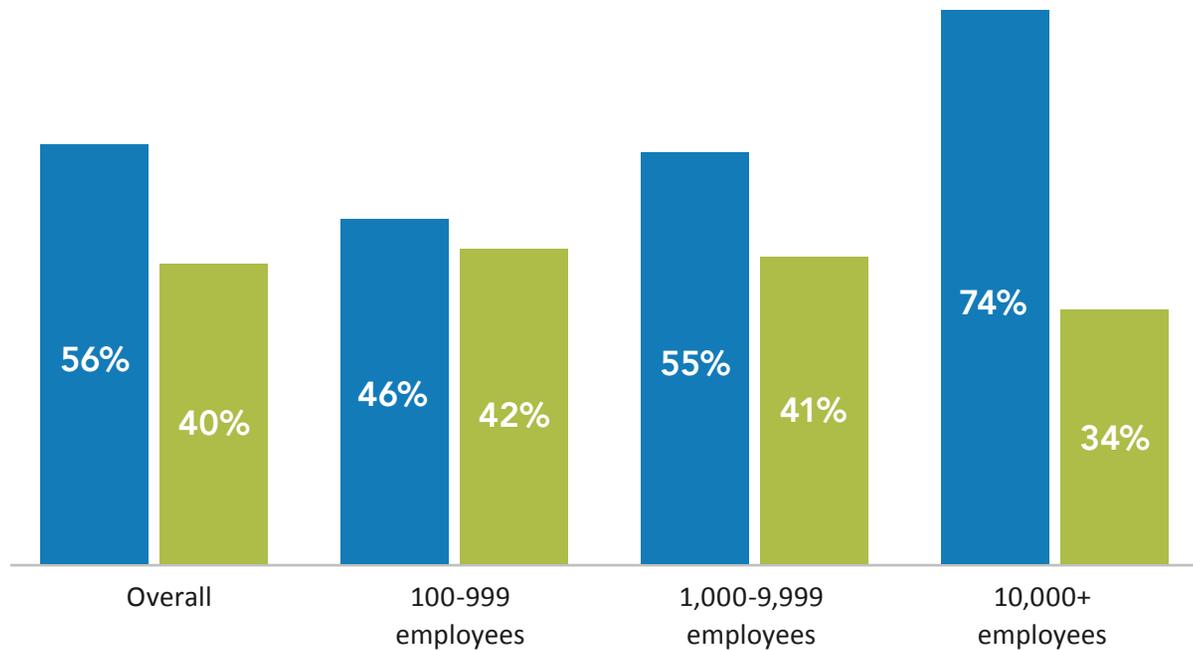
Becoming an inclusive leader doesn't happen by taking a class. It's a journey to self-awareness through a variety of experiences that build humility, empathy and the ability to grow and change. It also requires taking risks and having

conversations that are not always comfortable.

Most employers (76%) are receptive to improving the level of inclusion and inclusive leadership in their organizations and 56% rate it as important, according to the new research study, *How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look*, conducted jointly by Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting. But less than half of companies, regardless of the size of the organization, are having success in effectively training leaders to demonstrate inclusive leadership. The differential is especially large for organizations with more than 10,000 employees.

Inclusive Leader Training: Importance* vs. Effectiveness*

● Including Leader Training is Important ● Including Leader Training is Effective



*Importance and effectiveness percentage based on rating 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale

Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting

Greater support from top management was most often cited as necessary to drive the effectiveness of inclusive leader training. That was echoed by comments from survey respondents who said their organizations were moderately or highly resistant to changing strategies, processes and behaviors to become more inclusive. While these sentiments are not widespread, they illustrate the importance of leaders modeling desired behaviors to drive inclusion and the negative impact of rhetoric that is unsupported by actions.



Research Respondents' Comments

"I believe, as an organization, we say we are not resistant and a lot of our midlevel leaders and below would make that statement true. However, senior leadership is where I see the resistance."

"Top leaders are not open to changes for themselves with new strategies, technology or new learning."

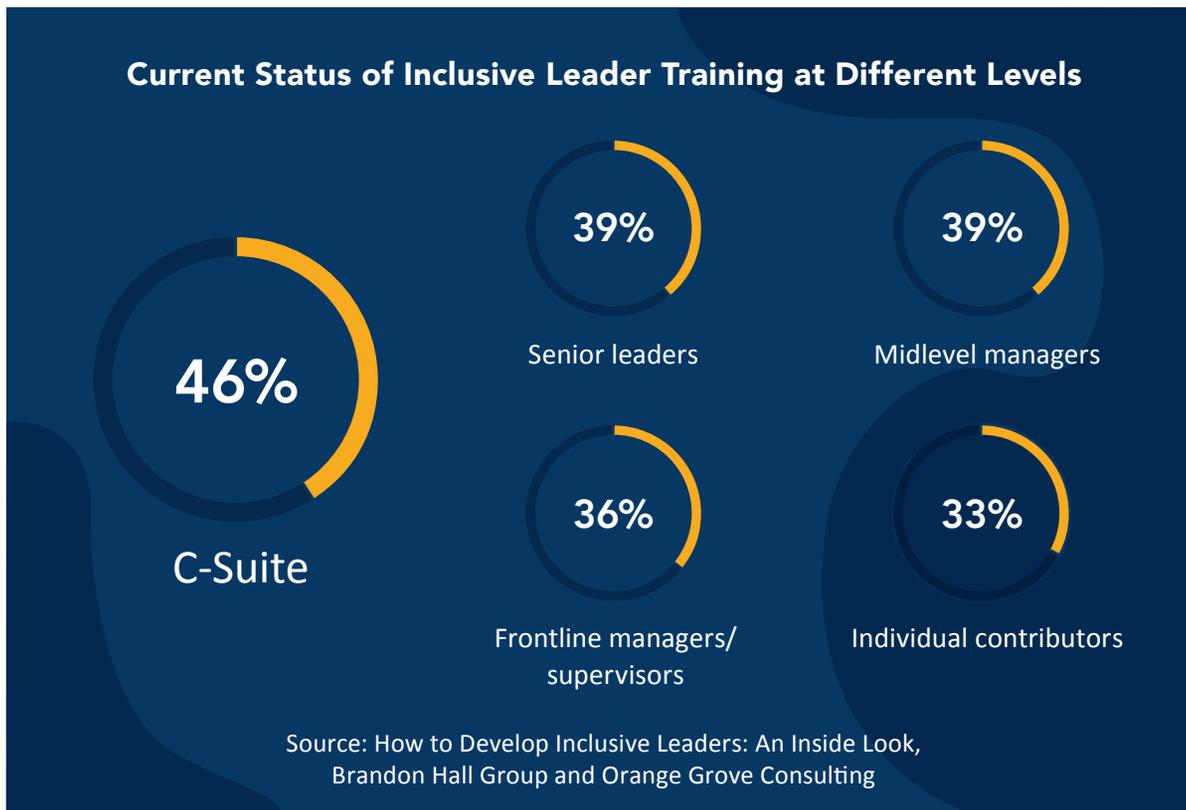
"There is a clear display of disinterest in any suggestion that does not conform to our usual cultural norms."

"There is a traditional, hierarchical approach from top leadership, which does not 'walk the talk.'"

"Leaders in the majority want to continue in the same manner they always have, and their privilege is very visible."

Complexities

Driving greater inclusion and helping leaders adapt to a more inclusive leadership style amount to culture change, which must occur at all levels for an organization to be successful. However, our study showed that no more than 41% of employers are training on inclusive leadership at any employee level. This focus drops even more as you go further down the organizational level.



Notably, 48% of organizations that say their leaders demonstrate a high degree of inclusion, are training frontline managers and individual contributors, compared to only 25% of organizations that rate themselves as demonstrating low levels of inclusion. What the 48% found is that the integration of inclusion across all levels fosters demonstration of inclusion.



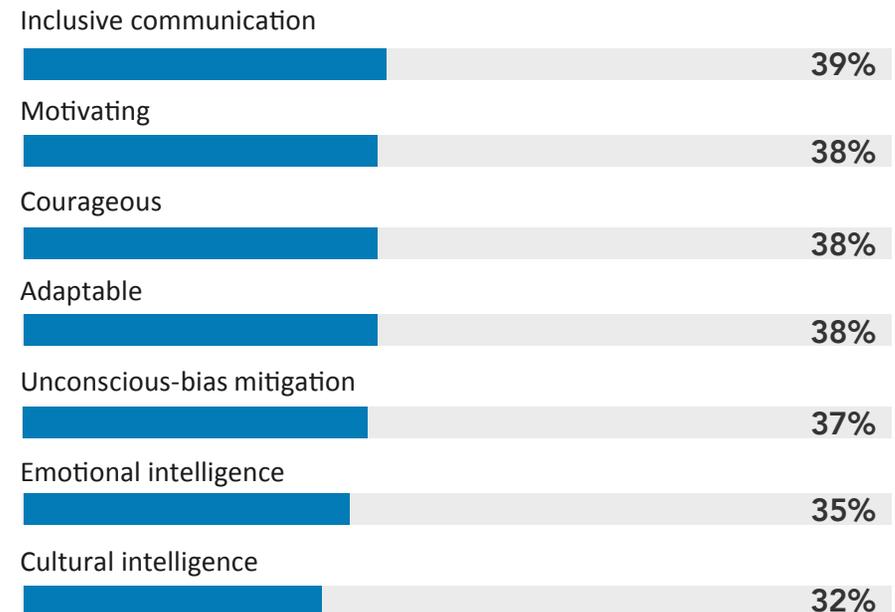
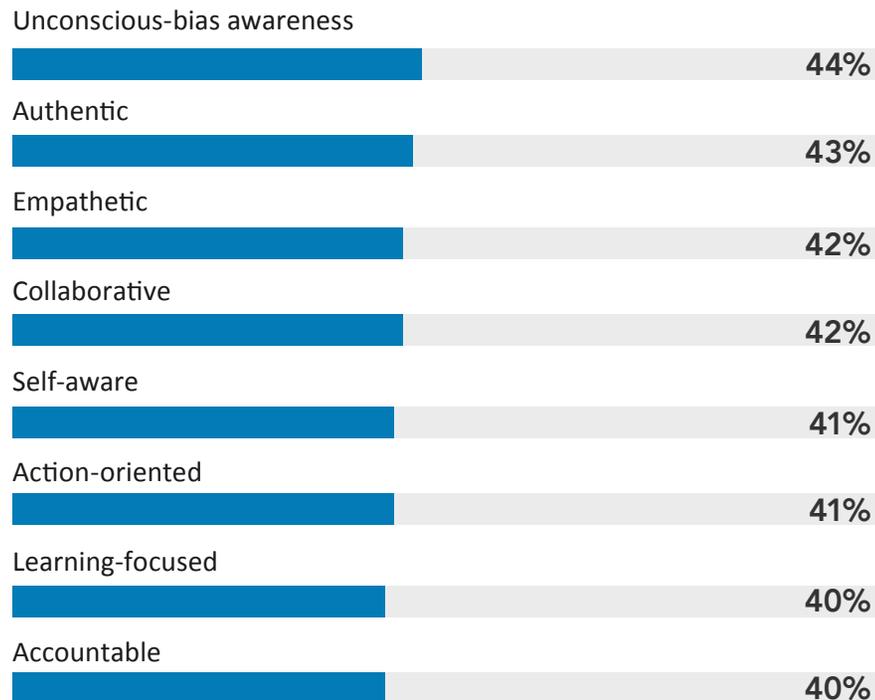
Inclusive Leadership Behaviors

Inclusive leadership involves many different behaviors. It is difficult to be fully inclusive without leaders who are competent in all of them. Overall, the study showed that inclusive leadership behaviors most likely to be developed

are authenticity, empathy, collaboration and awareness of unconscious bias. Unconscious-bias mitigation (or taking action on bias) and motivation — a key ingredient in facilitating culture change, as well as emotional intelligence and

cultural intelligence — tended to rank toward the bottom of the 15 inclusive behaviors we surveyed. These are skill areas critical to foster cultural change and enable the level of employee support required for inclusion.

Development of Inclusive Leader Traits

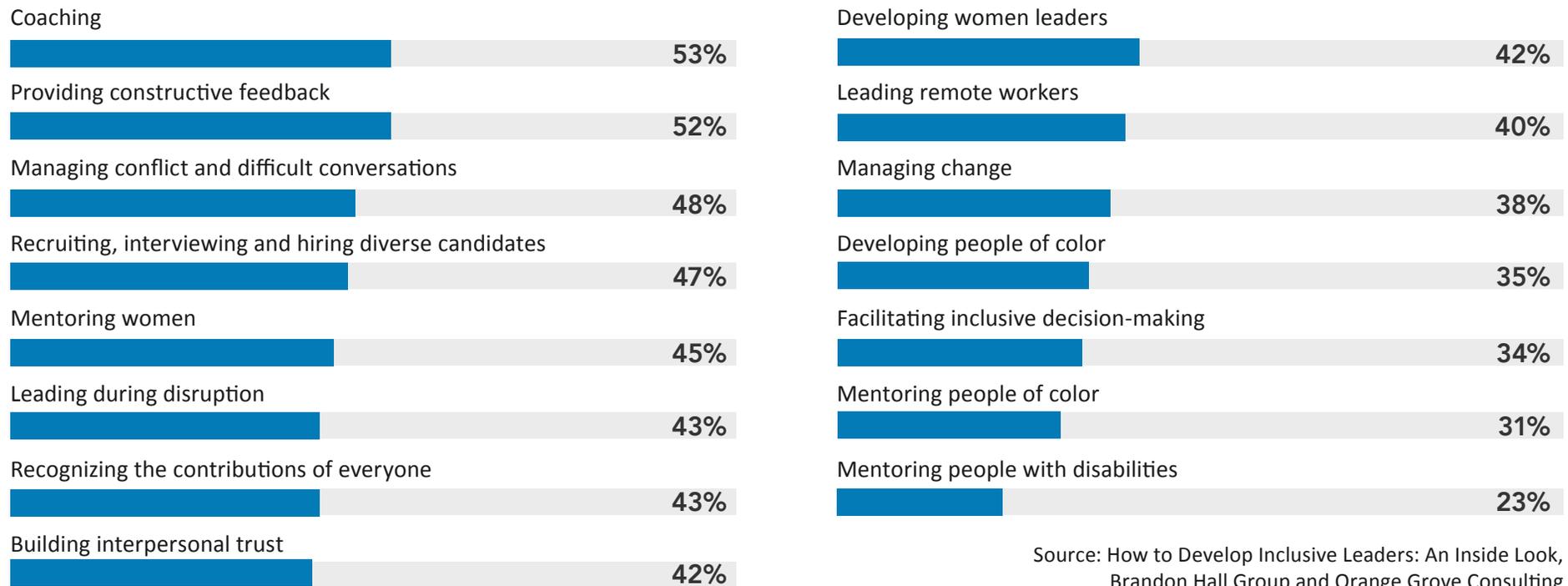


Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting

Inclusive Leadership Strategies

Use of inclusive leadership development strategies varied widely among organizations of different sizes. But generally, more organizations focus on coaching, feedback and managing conflict. Developing and mentoring people of color and people with disabilities ranks low in priority despite low levels of representation of people of color within the organizations' leadership ranks.

Development of Inclusive Leader Strategies



Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting



Measuring Impact

Measuring results is a struggle in most areas of HCM and measuring the effectiveness of inclusive leadership training is no exception. Across the respondents, low levels of measurement reflect a lower level of focus on the areas that lead to inequity. Again, metrics varied by organization size. But overall, equity of compensation and

promotions were most often measured and equity of performance evaluation and various forms of training ranked toward the bottom. These two aspects are prerequisites to promotion. Measuring these areas provides an early warning on inclusion effectiveness and can help HR leaders enable people to move more equitably up the ladder to promotion.

Use of Metrics to Evaluate Inclusion of Diverse Groups*

- 49% Compensation and benefits equity
- 41% Promotion equity
- 39% Diversity of workforce by demographic groups
- 38% Diversity of external talent recruitment by demographic groups
- 37% Engagement scores comparison by demographic groups
- 35% Diversity of new hires by demographic groups
- 34% Performance rating equity
- 34% Equity of recognition
- 29% Equity of participation in cross-functional teams
- 29% Equity in participation in various forms of training

**Includes women, people of color, veterans, LGBTQ+, nationality and all other demographic groups*

Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting

Consequences

The research showed a strong relationship between organizations with a high degree of emphasis on developing inclusive leaders and increases in business metrics such as customer satisfaction, employee engagement, talent retention overall and retention of diverse talent. Consistent with other research, inclusion positively impacts organizations. Because of their investment in inclusion, these organizations can realize competitive advantages.

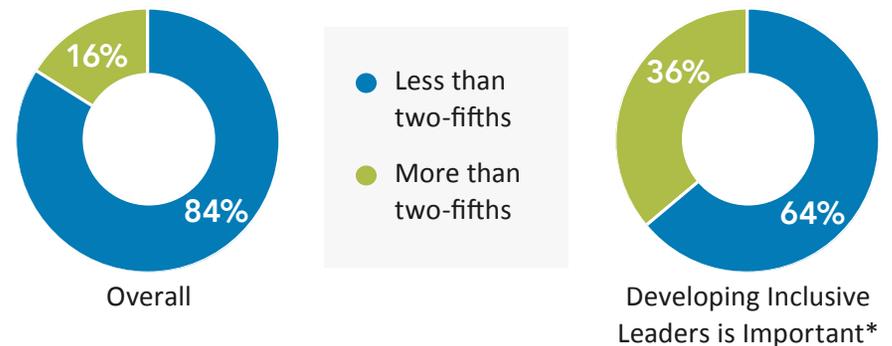
Emphasizing inclusive leadership also enables more diverse leadership at the top of the organization, which then helps sustain a commitment to inclusive

leadership. Organizations that emphasize developing inclusive leaders are 2.25 times more likely to have at least 40% of top leaders from diverse groups than other organizations. Overall, however, the research shows that 41% of organizations have less than one-fifth of their senior leaders (VP and above) coming from diverse groups.

This includes women, people of color, LGBTQ+, veterans, people with disabilities and other diverse populations. This lack of diversity at the top signals to lower levels that leadership is less likely and can contribute to lower retention and a reduced sense of belonging.



Percentage of VPs and Above from Diverse Populations



**Important = Survey respondents rating importance of inclusive ratings at 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale*

Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting

Critical Questions

Organizations that seek to develop more inclusive leaders as a strategy toward becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization must consider several questions. They include:

Culture

- How does our culture support or block efforts toward more inclusion?



Leadership

- What are our greatest barriers to achieving a more inclusive culture?
- Do leaders consistently demonstrate our organization's values?
- Do our leaders have the interest and ability to truly tap into the talents and motivations of their teams to collaborate, empower and inspire rather than wielding their authority?
- Do we have leaders who consistently demonstrate their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and will challenge the status quo when necessary?
- Do we have leaders who actively seek to understand those around them — including people from different cultures and backgrounds — and listen, empathize and adapt to their points of view?

Implementation of DEI within Processes and Behaviors

- Do we have an influential leader or leaders who “own” DE&I efforts? Do they have enough authority or time to help the organization reach its DE&I goals?
- In which areas are we seeing the most negative impact? Which specific strategies or behaviors need more attention?
- How can we make inclusive leadership and diversity, equity and inclusion a strategic priority embedded within our other business goals?

Brandon Hall Group/Orange Grove Consulting Points of View



Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting developed **six** strategy recommendations to help organizations increase inclusive leadership.

1. Strengthen High-Level Ownership of Inclusive Leadership Development.

Inclusion is a business imperative with a powerful impact on the business. It requires a commitment from top leaders to own it and drive accountability. Effective change leadership is critical to long-term success; lack of commitment sends a message that inclusion doesn't matter to the business.

As illustrated by comments from several survey respondents ([see page 8](#)), lower-level leaders and individual contributors will not believe a change initiative such as inclusive leadership is real if top leaders do not show demonstrative support.

Greater support from top management and specific ownership of inclusive leadership initiatives are among the top actions that would make development of inclusive leaders more effective, our research shows.

What Would Make Development of Inclusive Leaders More Effective?

50%

Greater support from top management

49%

Better measurement

39%

Specific owners of inclusive leadership development/initiatives

Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting



Some of the resistance of leaders is due to not fully understanding the business benefit.

Business leaders tend to support initiatives that can have real business impact. The research shows that organizations demonstrating a high degree of inclusive leadership are 56% to 138% more likely to see increases in key metrics, including customer satisfaction and employee engagement. Tying these benefits directly to inclusive leadership can illustrate to business leaders the full potential impact they could realize with increased visible support for inclusive leadership initiatives.

Business Impact of Inclusive Leadership



*High degree of inclusive leadership defined by respondent rating it as 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale
 **Lower degree of inclusive leadership defined by respondent rating it at 1, 2 or 3 on a 5-point scale
 Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting



HR leaders have a key role to play in getting buy-in from top levels of the organization. Inclusive leadership is not always fully understood. Inclusive leadership supports a free exchange of ideas and opinions, which can lead to greater innovation. It also builds engagement because more employees feel a sense of belonging and feeling valued. The value of inclusive leadership must be consistently marketed and communicated to gain the support of skeptics and ensure a consistent message that demonstrates commitment. HR leaders have the opportunity to become the change drivers around inclusion, directly impacting their organizations.



2. View Inclusion through Your Employees' Eyes.

When evaluating inclusive leadership and the level of inclusion, it is important to try to see what employees experience in the organization through their eyes. Our research shows that most leaders believe their organization is inclusive without understanding that messaging and management actions may send a different message to employees than what was intended.

Most organizations view employees' experiences through the lens of business. To truly understand what it takes to keep employees highly engaged and motivated, employers should listen to how employees feel about their experiences in the organization through surveys, "stay interviews," check-in

sessions with managers, focus groups, diversity councils, employee research groups and other methods.

Through quantitative and qualitative research, we divided employee experiences into six buckets. For employees to feel included, they must:

- Believe the organization cares about their well-being.
- Have a strong sense of belonging.
- Feel valued.
- Believe the organization will help them develop their capabilities.
- Believe the organization cares about their career advancement.
- Be aligned with the organization's values, mission and goals.



Here are more details on how employees can feel more included, divided by experience buckets.



WELLNESS/WELL-BEING

Employees should feel:

- The organization is fully invested in their wellness and well-being.
- The organization supports their involvement in the community.
- Confident they can perform during work hours in environments that suit them as long as they meet the organization's needs and expectations.



BELONGING

Employees should feel:

- Managers are invested in their performance and success.
- Empowered to connect with peers across the organization.
- They have access to coaches and mentors when they need them.
- The workforce is diverse and top leaders represent the composition of the workforce.
- They can make contributions to the organization outside of their specific jobs.
- The organization provides them with the technology they need when they are asked to work remotely.



FEELING VALUED

Employees should feel:

- Fairly and equitably compensated through wages/salary and additional bonuses and performance-based rewards.
- They have the best affordable technology to do their work.
- Appreciated and recognized for their contributions.
- They have reasonable autonomy to do their work in their own way.
- The organization wants their opinions and values them.
- They receive constructive feedback that helps them reach their potential.



EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Employees should feel:

- Fully supported in fulfilling their job responsibilities.
- The organization is committed to developing their potential through a variety of programs and initiatives.
- They have access to learning at any time on any device.
- There are opportunities to practice new skills or competencies in a safe environment.
- Confident of their ability to collaborate effectively in teams.



CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Employees should feel:

- Performance goals are collaborative and designed to help them succeed.
- They have a clear development path that can be updated as needed through collaboration with their managers.
- Empowered to chart their own career paths and take ownership of their careers.
- They have an accurate and up-to-date view of available mobility opportunities.
- They have avenues, either through live coaching or technology, to obtain career advice.



ALIGNMENT WITH VALUES, MISSION, GOALS OF ORGANIZATION

Employees should feel:

- They have a full understanding of the expectations of the organization and their manager.
- The organization supports and helps employees value diversity and is inclusive.
- Their feedback to the organization will be acted upon.
- Their employment provides them with considerable value beyond their compensation.

Organizations that address experiences that may be lacking can significantly improve employees' feelings of inclusion. Inclusive leadership across the enterprise drives these experiences and sustains inclusion.

3. Commit to Training on Inclusive Leadership at All Levels of the Organization.

Our research shows that organizations are more likely to **train the C-Suite on inclusive leader training than any other employee level.**

While starting with the C-Suite to ensure buy-in and support is wise, training can't stop there. Inclusive leadership in many organizations amounts to

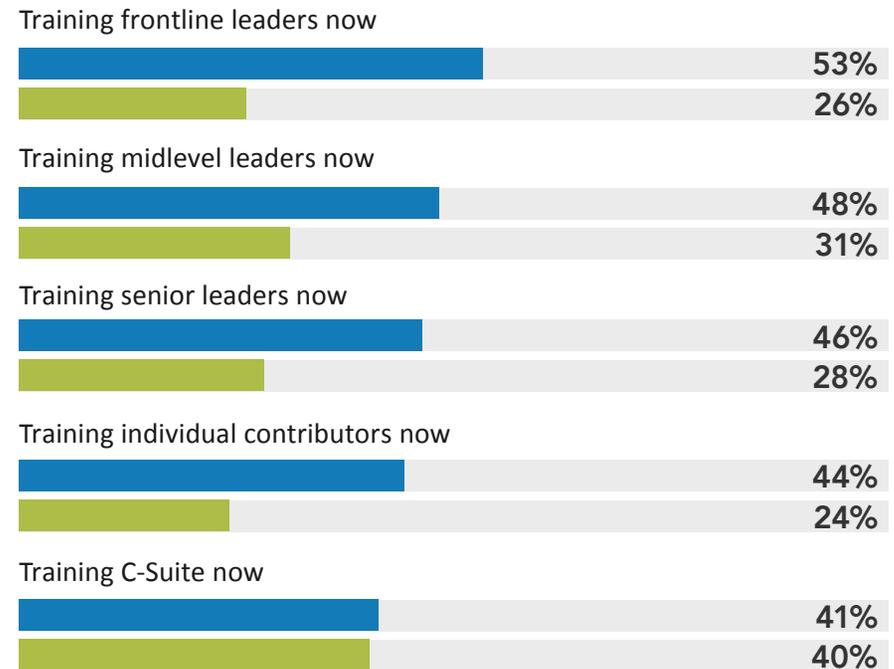
wholesale culture change, which needs development across the entire organization.

Not everything can be done at once, however, so we recommend prioritizing frontline and midlevel leaders, who have the most contact with the employee base.

Our research shows that organizations demonstrating a high degree of inclusive leadership are more than twice as likely as other organizations to train frontline managers on inclusive leadership. Training across the organizational hierarchy enables inclusive skills to become embedded within the organization and demonstrate what is valued.

Inclusive Leader Training at Different Leader Levels:

- High Degree* of Inclusive Leadership vs.
- Lower Degree** of Inclusive Leadership



*High degree of inclusive leadership defined by respondent rating it as 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale

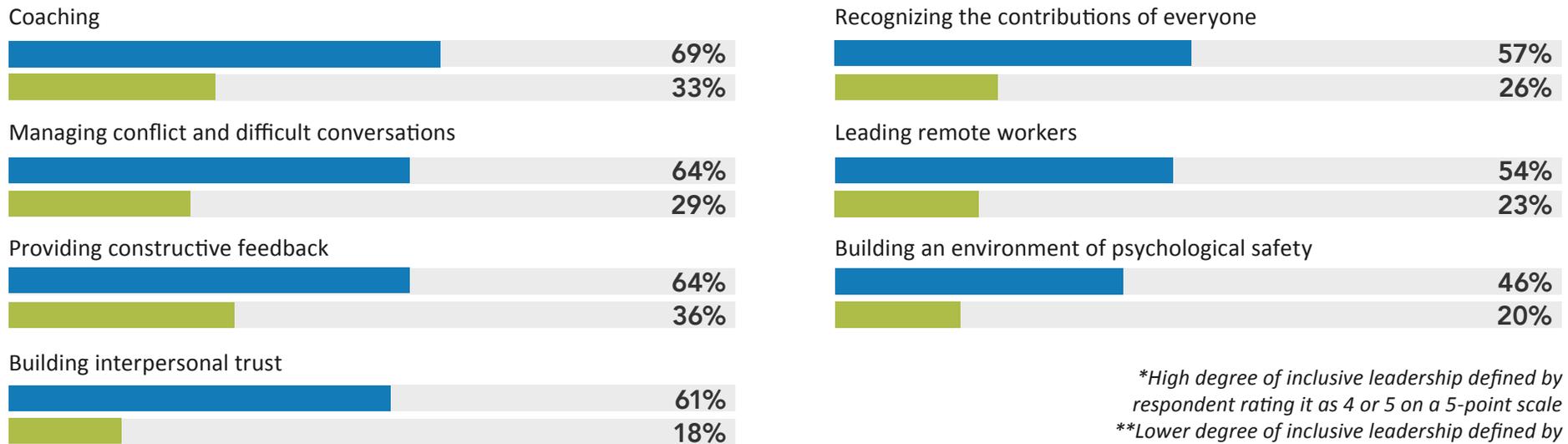
**Lower degree of inclusive leadership defined by respondent rating it at 1, 2 or 3 on a 5-point scale

Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting

Organizations that prioritize development of inclusive leadership are also significantly more likely to train on the following behaviors and strategies than other organizations. The variances illustrate that low-inclusive organizations struggle across multiple areas of effective employee management.

Training on Inclusive Leader Behaviors and Strategies:

● High Degree* of Inclusive Leadership vs. ● Lower Degree** of Inclusive Leadership



*High degree of inclusive leadership defined by respondent rating it as 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale
 **Lower degree of inclusive leadership defined by respondent rating it at 1, 2 or 3 on a 5-point scale
 Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting

Because inclusive leadership training involves so many topics, it is important to focus on groups, behaviors and strategies with the most potential impact. While these vary among organizations and industries, this data shows a strong connection between certain types of training and organizations with a higher degree of inclusive leadership.

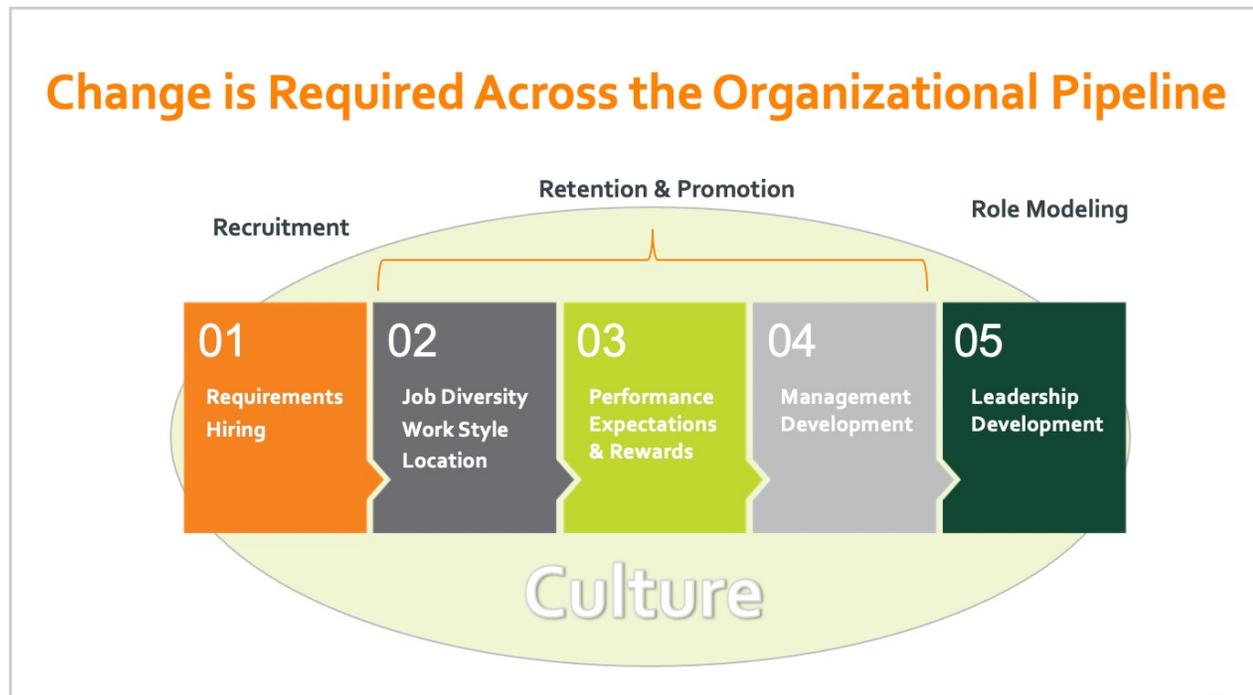
4. Adapt the Culture and Processes to Support Inclusion throughout the Organization.

Lack of inclusive behaviors arises because processes and culture are done by default rather than evaluating to determine the most effective approach. For example, organizations often hire people within

their networks. If those networks are not diverse, hiring diversely is challenging, often with leaders responding that they “can’t find anyone diverse.” Instead, by looking strategically at the culture and processes to identify how they are unintentionally exclusive, the opportunity to make the process work for all employees becomes available.

Many organizations have made progress in diverse hiring at the entry level. Evaluating specific areas of growth opportunities enables companies to focus their resources on those that will yield the highest value. Each of the areas listed here illustrates those in which many organizations find challenges to inclusion.

Changing these processes and culture takes investment and a willingness to make required changes. Avoiding change here means that inclusion will remain a peripheral activity that will not fundamentally change behavior or foster inclusion. This research suggests that one place to start for those organizations who are behind is to train inclusive leadership across their organization.



Source: Orange Grove Consulting. All rights reserved

5. Create or Strengthen Diversity Council and Employee Resource Groups.

Building a true culture of inclusion depends heavily on involving the entire organization. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) Councils and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are effective approaches to drive a culture of inclusion, including championing and modeling inclusive leadership.

DE&I Council

A DE&I council is a common form of governance and can be extremely effective if it is well-conceived, organized and executed.

The council can play a vital role in making DE&I initiatives more effective in improving business outcomes. Council members assist the company's leadership by becoming trusted advisers and resources to accelerate results.

Diversity councils provide insight and information that's reflected in the organization and beyond, and they are a sounding board that managers can engage to accelerate the advancement of efforts around diversity, equity and inclusion.

Diversity councils are often chaired by the CEO, jointly by the CEO and chief diversity officer or solely by the CDO or by the CHRO if there is no CDO. In all these cases, the CEO should visibly champion the council's work.

Having the right members is as important as the active involvement

of top leadership. Typically, council members are bullish on the business benefits of DE&I and are well-connected, well-respected and highly influential leaders. However, since the leadership in many organizations is not diverse, councils often lack the insight needed to truly understand varying perspectives and barriers to DE&I and how to address them. Either a council should include diverse representation from many levels of the organization or it should have an advisory council, committees or ERGs with diverse representation from all levels of the organization to inform and educate the council.

ERGs

Created and run correctly, ERGs can do a great deal to energize employees around issues of interest to them and the organization, which helps drive a culture of inclusion.

Leaders should have a firm understanding of the purpose of ERGs, the importance of aligning ERGs with organizational mission and how to participate and advocate for ERGs and their goals. It's important to create structure and governance, with a charter for each ERG. This sets the groups up for success and underscores their importance.

ERGs Definition

Voluntary, employee-led groups that foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organization mission, values, goals, business practices and objectives. Other benefits include the development of future leaders, increased employee engagement and expanded marketplace reach.

Examples of ERGs

- Women's network (and even more focused, such as women leaders, women in technology, etc.)
- Network for people of color (and additional groups for specific minorities)
- LGBTQ+ network
- Working parents support group
- Veterans support group
- Network for people with disabilities
- Mental health advocacy group
- Mentorship group
- Young professionals network
- Community impact and volunteerism committee

The possibilities are endless as long as they align with organizational values.

Organizations that want to accelerate inclusion and inclusive leadership should listen to employees about their challenges and opportunities, as discussed previously, and leverage tools such as diversity councils and ERGs to expand and diversify the commitment to inclusion.



6. Assess Inclusion through Critical Business Metrics.

The challenge of inclusion is that it must be reflected in every aspect of operations. We previously discussed employee experience and understanding how employees feel about inclusion through their own perspectives.

But there is also a bottom-line element to inclusion. The goal is for inclusion to drive business results, so it must be reflected in key business metrics, such as:

- Pay equity across the employee population.
- Equity of promotions and promotion velocity between different populations.
- Equity of the activities and opportunities that lead to promotion.
- Equity in performance evaluations.
- Level of engagement among different demographic groups.
- Equitable inclusion of diverse groups in all levels of leadership.

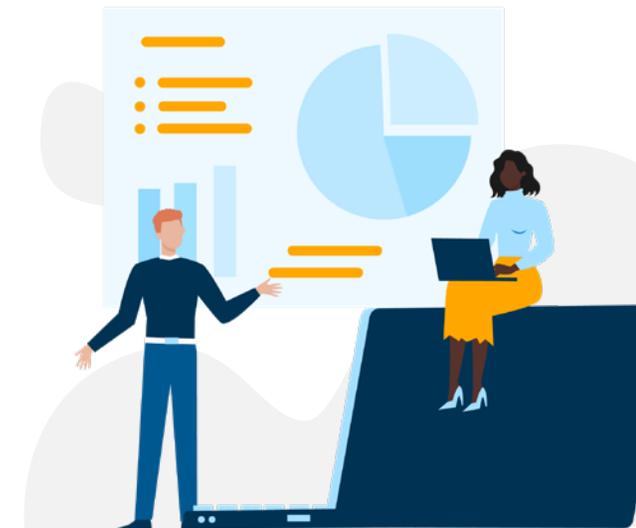
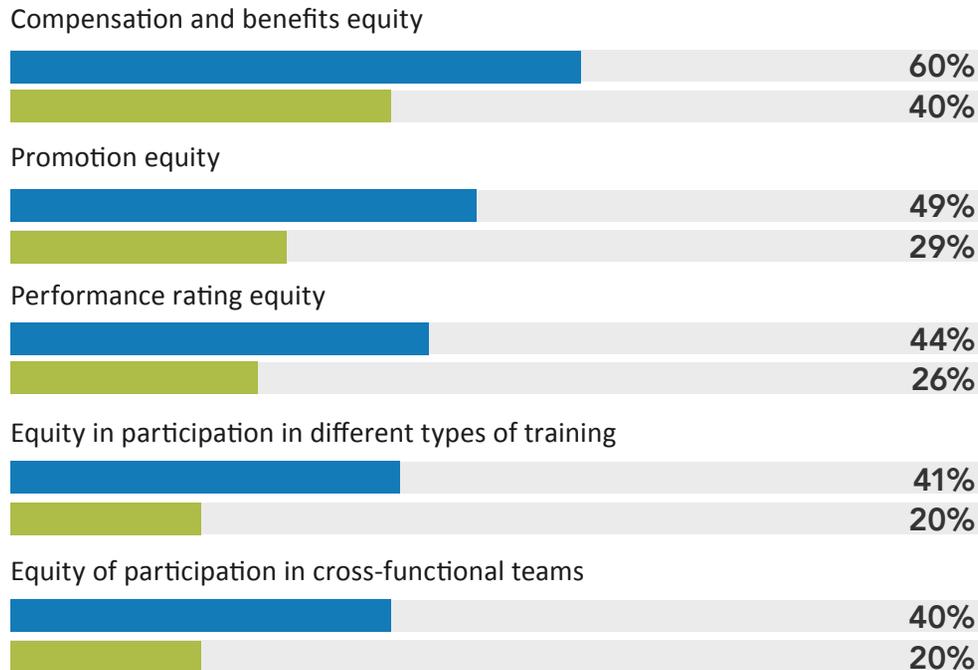
The challenge is that less than half of organizations leverage these types of business metrics to understand the true level of inclusion. You can't understand inclusion unless you measure it.

Almost all organizations collect diversity data — demographics around race, veteran status, education, disability, ethnicity, age, gender, income status, etc. — our prior research shows. But that data then must be analyzed for inclusion.

All organizations, even those demonstrating higher levels of inclusive leadership, must do a better job of measuring inclusion by business metrics. But organizations that demonstrate a high level of inclusive leadership are more likely to leverage business metrics around inclusion than other employers.

Use of Metrics to Evaluate Inclusion

- High Degree* of Inclusive Leadership vs.
- Lower Degree** of Inclusive Leadership



**High degree of inclusive leadership defined by respondent rating it as 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale*
***Lower degree of inclusive leadership defined by respondent rating it at 1, 2 or 3 on a 5-point scale*
 Source: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look, Brandon Hall Group and Orange Grove Consulting

Demographics: How to Develop Inclusive Leaders: An Inside Look

324

Organizations

Valid, verified responses



36%

Under 1,000 employees



27%

1,000- 9,999 employees



37%

10,000+ employees



Corporate
Headquarters
of Respondents

78% North America

16% EMEA

4% APAC

5% South/Central America,
Caribbean



Geographic
Distributions:

19% Organizations with multiple locations across the globe

43% Organizations located in one country with multiple locations

16% Organizations located in one country with some global distribution

22% Organizations located in one country in one location

Responses are from 28 industries. Top 5 Industries are [Education](#), [Banking/Finance](#), [Technology/Software](#), [Healthcare](#) and [Manufacturing](#).

Authors and Contributors



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About Brandon Hall Group

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 27 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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are comprehensive educational programs that center around a multiphase knowledge test.

About Orange Grove Consulting

Orange Grove Consulting (OGC) specializes in research-based leadership development and bias removal consulting to build more innovative, productive, and competitive workplaces. Since 2014, we have delivered high-quality, memorable leadership and inclusion programs to 3,500+ men and women. Orange Grove's pedagogy is steeped in primary and secondary organizational research, published books, and industry thought leadership. Both OGC primary research and peer-reviewed secondary research suggest that if we train on skills without changing mindsets, change will not last. However, if we train on skills without addressing the environment, skills implementation will not make an impact. Therefore, our work with corporate, nonprofit and governmental organizations focuses in three key areas:

Developing an inclusive and open mindset.

Building inclusion skills.

Working with leaders to create more equitable systems and shifting organizational processes.



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