

Key Findings

WHAT
MAJORITY MEN
REALLY THINK
ABOUT D&I

And How to Engage Them in It

BELONGING SERIES | PART 2

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INTRODUCTION

Fueled by the recent reckoning on race, many companies and leaders are recognizing, and seeking to dismantle, the inequities that persist in the professional workplace. They want to build workplaces where all employees feel a true sense of belonging. But belonging for all, which we defined and gave guidance on in *The Power of Belonging*,¹ requires dedication and prioritization from the top to the bottom of companies. And that means ongoing engagement from men who are in the majority at work (majority race, gender, and sexual orientation). After all, they still hold most positional power within organizations, and their involvement in diversity and inclusion (D&I) is crucial to driving progress.²

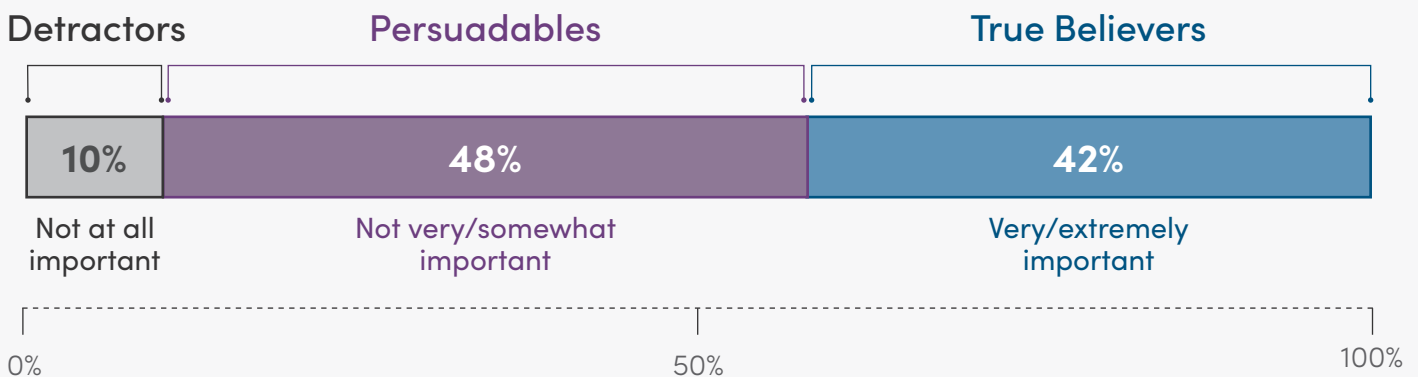
Engaging majority men in D&I will be no easy feat. It will require that they build new habits. They can no longer rely on common schools or neighborhoods to build community with others. They have to practice partnership, feel empowered to speak out against biased behavior, and see the upside in building diverse, inclusive workplaces—for their organizations and for their own careers. It will require a shift, but not an impossible one: we find that most majority men already think D&I is important.

UNDERSTANDING MAJORITY MEN

As we define them, majority men³ include White men who are straight and are cisgender (or “cis”), meaning their gender identity aligns with their assigned sex at birth. This group makes up 95% of majority men. We also include cis straight men who are *not* White, but who work mostly with people of their race/ethnicity.

To engage majority men, it’s important to understand their attitudes toward D&I, and how those attitudes correlate to different backgrounds and behaviors. We grouped majority men into three archetypes. Detractors think D&I has no importance at work. True Believers think D&I is very important—and, unsurprisingly, are the most likely of the three to get involved in D&I efforts. Persuadables sit somewhere in between.

Majority men’s responses to: How important is D&I to you at work?

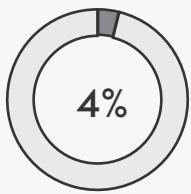


DETRACTORS

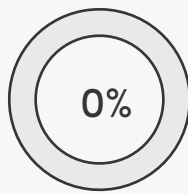
Talent specialists worry most about Detractors, who don't think D&I is important—at all. Zero percent of Detractors who manage others believe that building a diverse team boosts their leadership skills, and very few see a connection between diversity and innovation. Luckily, they make up only 10% of the majority male population. Indeed, they may feel disenfranchised themselves: nearly two in five (39%) Detractors do not have similar political views as most of their colleagues. The top reason they cite for not getting involved in D&I: it doesn't "benefit me."

Understanding the value of D&I

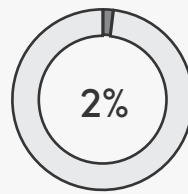
Detractors who agree that a diverse team would:*



Lead to more innovation



Make them better leaders



Improve their reputations at their companies

"Many times in the name of diversity, it feels that a form of reverse discrimination is created."

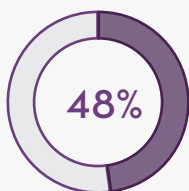
White male Gen Xer

PERSUADABLES

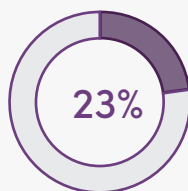
Persuadables, who think D&I has a bit of importance, make up nearly half of the majority male workforce. A majority of Persuadables are introverts. As a group, they seem reticent to engage with D&I, and hold a wide range of contradictory views. They're more likely than Detractors to see the business case for building a diverse team and believe that senior leadership should reflect the diversity of the country's population. But they're more likely than True Believers to believe that focusing on difference is divisive.

Understanding the value of D&I

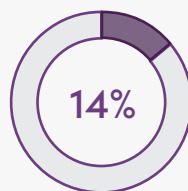
Persuadables who agree that a diverse team would:*



Lead to more innovation



Make them better leaders



Improve their reputations at their companies

"I don't feel there's much I can do to promote diversity and inclusion. The ability to get just regular work done is so hard that there's rarely interest or time to work on the 'higher-order' tasks that promote a healthy culture."

White male senior individual contributor

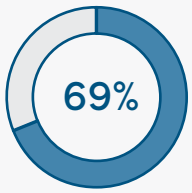
*This question was only asked of respondents who have direct reports

TRUE BELIEVERS

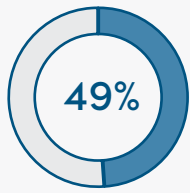
Nearly two-thirds of majority male senior leaders are True Believers, who think D&I is very important at work. True Believers are more likely than other majority men to have educated themselves on racism and on sexism, and to be willing to talk about issues related to race, gender, the LGBTQ movement, and D&I at work. They're more likely than other majority men to believe that men and women, as well as individuals of different races, do not have equal access to career opportunities. But many aren't acting on their beliefs. The top reason they cite for not getting involved in D&I? They're too busy.

Understanding the value of D&I

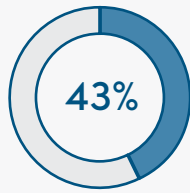
True Believers* who agree that a diverse team would:



Lead to more innovation



Make them better leaders



Improve their reputations at their companies

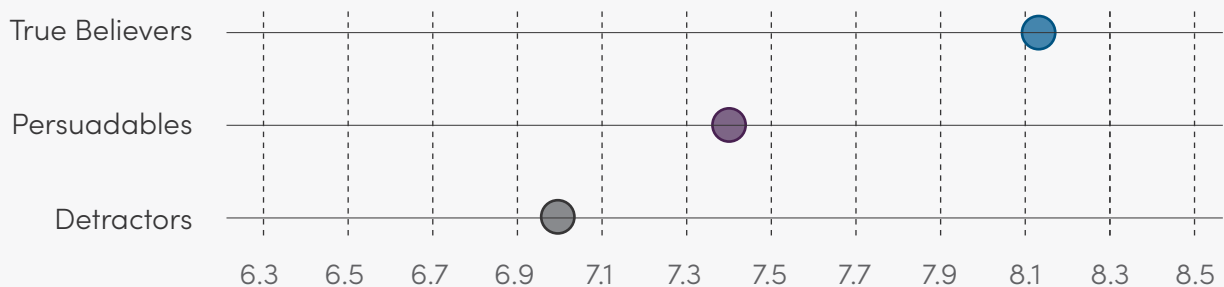
"I know I had a lot going for me, so for someone with less privilege to get onto the same playing field as me, they probably had to overcome a lot more—that has to be factored into hiring and promotion decisions as well."

White male Millennial

*This question was only asked of respondents who have direct reports

True Believers have the highest median belonging score of all archetypes. Our proprietary ten-point belonging scale is rooted in four elements: feeling seen for your unique contributions, connected to your coworkers, supported in your daily work and career development, and proud of your organization's values and purpose. As we know from *The Power of Belonging*, higher belonging scores are connected to a host of positive business and individual outcomes, from higher rates of engagement and loyalty to payoffs for employer brand.⁴ True Believers aren't threatened or frightened—or angry—about the push for diverse representation; they're working to educate themselves and build bridges across difference, and it's paying off in their own careers.

Median belonging scores for majority men



MEET PARTNERS

Detractors

Persuadables

True Believers

Partners



As their name suggests, True Believers *believe* in the good of D&I, but don't always convert goodwill into action. For instance, fewer than half of True Believers have ever confronted behavior demeaning to women, people of color, or LGBTQ individuals. This failure to speak up can be deeply alienating for many, and work against building a culture of belonging for all.⁵

That's why we're calling for a fourth archetype: Partners. They would engage in the activities True Believers don't. For example, Partners would speak up when they noticed a microaggression or biased behavior. They would take on leadership roles within employee resource and affinity groups.

Most True Believers have voluntarily:

- ✓ Mentored a White woman*
- ✓ Mentored a woman of color*
- ✓ Mentored a man of color*
- ✓ Sponsored a White woman*
- ✓ Sponsored a woman of color*
- ✓ Sponsored a man of color*
- ✓ Attended a training on how to behave inclusively**
- ✓ Sought others' opinions and feedback in their day-to-day work*
- ✓ Hired someone of a different background than their own*

Most True Believers have not:

- ✗ Confronted behavior that demeans women
- ✗ Confronted behavior that demeans people of color
- ✗ Confronted behavior that demeans LGBTQ individuals
- ✗ Asked a colleague open questions about an identity that is different from their own identity
- ✗ Voluntarily attended an ERG (or affinity group) meeting for employees with a different background than their own**
- ✗ Voluntarily helped lead an ERG or affinity group**
- ✗ Voluntarily sponsored an ERG or affinity group**

*Only includes responses from respondents who are in a position to do this

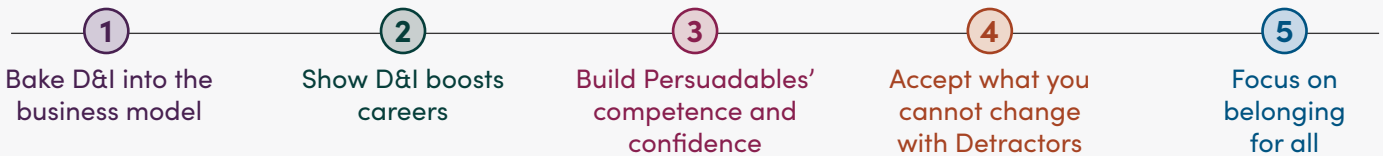
**Only includes responses from respondents whose companies have these programs

"Coming from the position of the White, male, native-born citizen, I feel it's incumbent on me to stand up against racism and sexism when I see it."

White male individual contributor

THE ROADMAP TO PARTNERSHIP

We now have a clearer picture of majority men. How do we convert Persuadables into True Believers, and True Believers into Partners—and what do we do about Detractors? These five steps address the primary concerns of these groups, engage those who've felt overlooked, and make it crystal clear why belonging lies at the heart of this work.



1 Bake D&I into the business model

Both Persuadables and True Believers who haven't gotten involved in their companies' D&I efforts cited "I'm too busy" as their biggest hurdle. Organizations need to signal to all of their employees, especially executives and team leaders, that D&I isn't a second job; it's a thread that runs through all of the work they do.

NEXT STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Examine your organization** to find majority men who believe in equity and partnership. Work with them to find opportunities, and time in their week, to get involved.
- **Prioritize D&I competencies**, such as exhibiting inclusive leadership behaviors, in performance reviews.
- **Reach out directly** to majority men; you're more likely to make time for something you are called, and encouraged, to participate in.

2 Show D&I boosts careers

The belonging scores in this report show that there is a career upside to getting good at this work: those who believe in D&I have much higher belonging scores than their skeptical peers. And those with higher belonging scores are less likely to be stalled and more likely to be engaged.

NEXT STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Give role models the microphone** whenever and wherever you can. Build time and space to share the stories of inclusive leaders who are proud to talk about how prioritizing D&I has helped grow their careers.
- **Bring purpose to the paycheck** by tying compensation conversations, including bonuses, to diverse hiring, retention, and promotion, as well as 360 team reviews that capture inclusive leadership competencies.
- **Harness competition.** Building a culture of belonging and engaging in D&I work does not have to be antithetical to employees' competitive edge. Lift up leaders who prioritize the values of diversity, inclusion, and belonging, and make it crystal clear that to reach their level, you'll need to embody these values, too.

3 Build Persuadables' competence and confidence

For Persuadables, engagement and education are crucial. Through a workplace culture that encourages open dialogue, majority men can be encouraged to reflect on their own advantages and better understand issues impacting colleagues from underrepresented groups.

NEXT STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Provide education and resources** on structural racism and sexism, with books such as Iris Bohnet's *What Works: Gender Equality by Design* and podcasts like Scene on Radio's "Seeing White." (For a more comprehensive list, check out our report *Being Black in Corporate America*).⁶
- **Offer training** for all majority men on speaking up against bias in the moment.
- **Help fight the fear of being "called out,"** for majority men and others, by emphasizing trust and partnership, encouraging leaders to tell stories of working through an uncomfortable moment, and sharing scripts.
- **Take out the guesswork;** signal clearly to majority men, in ERG messaging, for example, when and where they are welcome and wanted to engage in conversation and allyship.

4 Accept what you cannot change with Detractors

Focus on those who are wholeheartedly with you, and those who are beginning to understand the vision. When it comes to those who oppose your mission—let it be. If an individual vocally opposes your company values, demonstrate to them—and to others—that everyone is accountable to the same set of values, regardless of seniority or performance.

NEXT STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Emphasize the company's core values,** from onboarding to annual reviews to company intranet. Employees don't have to like them, but do need to live by them.
- **Hold employees accountable** for adhering to company values.
- **Target True Believers and Persuadables** in your messaging around belonging and D&I; it's crucial to speak to majority men, but engaging with those who are staunchly opposed can be frustrating and (at times) counterproductive.

5 Focus on belonging for all

This link between D&I involvement and belonging is hugely powerful for you as a D&I leader. Make the belonging business case to your leaders: those who belong will be engaged and loyal, and those who care about D&I imperatives are more likely to belong.

NEXT STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Centralize "belonging"** in company messaging—but be deliberate, not vague, about what you envision for company-wide belonging.
- **Acknowledge the differences** that may hinder belonging for majority men and establish or promote ERGs that can offer them a "safe space": introverts, parents, veterans, etc.

METHODOLOGY

The research consists of a survey; in-person focus groups and *Insights In-Depth*[®] sessions (a proprietary web-based tool used to conduct voice-facilitated virtual focus groups) with over five hundred participants; and one-on-one interviews with more than 40 people. The national survey was conducted online and over the phone in February 2020 among 3,711 respondents (2,096 men, 1,593 women, 18 who identify as something else, and 4 who did not identify their gender). Respondents were between the ages of 21 and 65 and employed full time in white-collar professions, with at least a bachelor's degree. Data was weighted to be representative of the US population on key demographics (age, sex, education, race/ethnicity, and census division). The base used for statistical testing was the effective base. This survey was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago under the auspices of the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI), a nonprofit research organization. NORC was responsible for the data collection, while CTI conducted the analysis. In the charts, percentages may not always add up to 100 because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple responses from survey participants.

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ENDNOTES

1. *The Power of Belonging: What It Is and Why It Matters in Today's Workplace* (New York: Center for Talent Innovation, 2020).
2. "Table 322.20. Bachelor's Degrees Conferred by Postsecondary Institutions, by Race/Ethnicity and Sex of Student: Selected Years, 1976-77 through 2016-17," National Center for Education Statistics, accessed June 24, 2020, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18_322.20.asp; Stacy Jones, "White Men Account for 72% of Corporate Leadership at 16 of the Fortune 500 Companies," *Fortune*, June 9, 2017, <https://fortune.com/2017/06/09/white-men-senior-executives-fortune-500-companies-diversity-data/>.
3. Our sample includes 1,326 majority men.
4. *The Power of Belonging: What It Is and Why It Matters in Today's Workplace* (New York: Center for Talent Innovation, 2020).
5. "Costly Conversations: Why the Way Employees Communicate Will Make or Break Your Bottom Line," VitalSmarts, December 6, 2016, <https://www.vital-smarts.com/press/2016/12/costly-conversations-why-the-way-employees-communicate-will-make-or-break-your-bottom-line/>.
6. *Being Black in Corporate America: An Intersectional Exploration* (New York: Center for Talent Innovation, 2019).