



# THE DEI FOR STARTUPS PLAYBOOK:

## Generating Better Business Outcomes Through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

DEI leads to better company performance, better ideas for innovation, and attracting better talent. Building a sustainable company that is built to last and is able to manage growth happens when DEI is built in from the ground up. Here are our best strategies for integrating DEI into the fabric of your company from the start.



## BUILD A CULTURE OF INCLUSION WHERE “THE BEST IDEA WINS”

- Foster an environment where all job candidates and employees feel valued and empowered to contribute only their best work. Be vocal about your commitment to DEI, and remain open-minded to great ideas from all team members.
- Be intentional about the way you lead meetings, making sure all employees have the chance to share their perspectives and insights. This includes sending meeting agendas in advance so that everyone has the time to digest information and prepare their best responses.
- Practice giving [inclusive feedback](#). Give examples of what greatness looks like to you, rather than simply saying what’s wrong. Be direct, and always remain constructive.

## START SMALL WITH DEI EDUCATION

- You don’t have to become an expert on DEI overnight, nor do you need a full organization overhaul to make a positive difference. Just get started and commit to keep going. One great place to begin is by learning [10 Actions You Can Take to Be More Inclusive at Work, Today](#) Encourage (but don’t mandate) your team to take part in bite-sized learning throughout the day, for instance by watching 1-2 videos from [our MicroVideo library](#).
- Offer unconscious bias and other DEI training to your executive team and all employees. Consider helping key leaders and managers gain DEI certifications.

## MAKE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION A PART OF WHO YOU ARE

- Include diversity, equity, and inclusion among your corporate values.
- Set fair and inclusive operating policies, like flexible time-off for cultural holidays and equal compensation for equal work.
- Make sure all company communications and meetings (in-person or virtual) are fully accessible.

## WORK TOWARD A MORE DIVERSE TALENT PIPELINE



Search for candidates in places you haven't searched before, such as diverse job boards, social media, and multicultural professional associations like the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE).



Highlight your commitment to DEI in all job postings. Make sure your end-to-end hiring process is accessible to people with disabilities, and focus your job descriptions on required skills only.



Enlist a diverse group of interviewers to evaluate each candidate consistently and equitably using the same questions.

## PARTNER WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE



Include diverse voices on your professional advisory board and in your business network. Connect with groups in your area that cater to diverse professionals.



Be intentional about choosing diverse suppliers who can help your business in functional areas where you need outside help. (e.g., legal, accounting, marketing, insurance).



Look for the many investors who are now seeking out DEI-focused startups. As you grow, DEI will be an important part of gaining access to funding — for example, it is now an IPO and Nasdaq requirement.

## NAVIGATE YOUR WAY TO BETTER DEI OUTCOMES

Integrating DEI into your culture, processes, and systems from the early stages will prepare your organization for stronger outcomes and sustainable, long-term growth. But how do you move forward with DEI in the midst of a hectic startup environment where budgets are limited, everyone's wearing too many hats, and time is money?

Our **DEI Navigator** offering was built with startups and emerging businesses in mind. We help you take care of building DEI into inclusive, high-performing teams. For an affordable monthly membership fee, you'll gain access to our award-winning team of business strategists and certified diversity experts, plus curated content, how-to guides, specialized training, and the chance to connect with other business leaders about their lessons learned. It's everything you need, all in one place, no matter where you're starting from.

**Get started today by visiting [thediversitymovement.com/dei-navigator](https://thediversitymovement.com/dei-navigator) or reach out to [info@thediversitymovement.com](mailto:info@thediversitymovement.com).**

