

Aligning Your DEI Strategy To Company Purpose and Strategy

October 2025



INTRODUCTION & OUR TIME TODAY

Working Together Today

Reflections

Learning Objectives

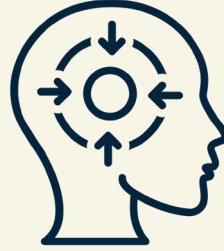
The Power of Purpose

Why Agility Matters

Where DEI and Business Strategies Meet

Action Plan

Guiding Principles



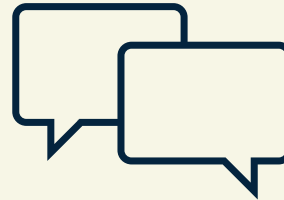
Be Present



Listen to Understand



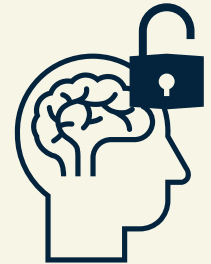
Extend Trust



Speak up



Respect Opinions



Keep an Open Mind

The programme so far...

Reflect

Share one reflection from your own River of Life



Let's go round the room...2 minutes each!



Today, we'll explore how aligning DEI to your company purpose and strategy is a powerful driver of results and engagement



Objectives

- Understand how a clear purpose drives and benefits a company's work and brand
- Identify where DEI currently sits within your organisation using an alignment framework
- Plan how your DEI strategy could flex in response to external factors
- Explore practical ways to align DEI to company strategy
- Use an action plan to identify further actions you would like to take

The Power of Purpose



What is Company Purpose?

- More than a mission statement
- It's the core reason your business exists beyond making a profit
- It answers: '*Why do we do what we do?*'



Simon Sinek famously articulated that the purpose of a company is not to make money, but to **advance a greater cause or belief.**



Purpose Driven Companies Outperform the Competition

- Purpose driven companies are **3 times more likely to retain talent** due to higher levels of employee engagement and job satisfaction (Deloitte)*
- Firms with a well-defined purpose report a **30% increase in innovation rates**, aligning with the growing expectations of today's workforce (Deloitte)*
- **79% of business leaders believe purpose is central to success** (PWC)*
- Companies with a purpose driven culture have employees who are **1.4 times more engaged and productive** (PWC)*

* Source: [4 Reasons Purpose-Driven Companies Outperform The Competition](#)



Purpose (why we exist)

Vision

(where we're going)

Mission

(what we do and for whom)

Values

(how we behave)

Business Strategy

(how we compete and grow)

People Strategy

(how we attract, grow, retain talent)

DEI Strategy

(cuts across Business and People Strategies and ensures alignment with Purpose and Values)

Strategy Without Purpose

Many companies build strategy around what is achievable - revenue targets, market share, product roadmaps. But if it's disconnected from purpose, strategy can become:

Transactional

Siloed

Misaligned with customer or employee values



- Target's release of Pride-themed merchandise in 2023 triggered backlash from conservative groups, including threats and demands to remove products.
- Under pressure, Target responded by removing certain LGBTQ+ merchandise from some stores and cutting back in-store displays.
- Critics argue this was a reactive, transactional move that betrayed its earlier positioning on inclusion. Rather than having built alignment between its brand, customer values, and DEI commitments, it treated Pride merchandising as a standalone marketing campaign rather than integrated into its core identity.



- In January 2025 Meta announced in a memo to staff that it was scrapping its DEI efforts due to the '**shifting legal and policy landscape**'
- The tech giant said it would continue to look for diverse staff, but stop using its current procedure, which seeks to make selections from a pool of diverse candidates.
- Meta said it was also ending its efforts to work with suppliers who are "diverse" but will instead focus on small and medium-sized companies.
- Even though Meta had previously articulated visible DEI commitments, the rollback has sown doubt over how deeply those commitments were embedded in the business.

Strategy With Purpose

When you embed purpose into your strategy you shift from *'what can we do?'* to *'what should we do to serve our purpose?'*

Innovation becomes purpose driven

Growth aligns with values

Talent strategy attracts purpose-oriented people

Risk management includes social and environmental lenses



- The Co-op (UK) has reaffirmed its DEI stance publicly, with its CEO warning against rolling back diversity efforts and undoing decades of progress.
- Their internal leadership has described investment in diversity and inclusion as a “**catalyst for growth**” i.e. not just morally right, but instrumental to business resilience and innovation
- Their website makes clear that inclusion is a core part of their identity, values, and operations.
- The Co-op’s ESG / social impact positioning explicitly ties DEI to their identity as a mutual, community-serving business.



- In 2025, amid political and investor pressure in the U.S. to roll back DEI, Apple faced a shareholder proposal calling for the company to abolish all diversity and inclusion programmes.
- Apple’s board strongly urged shareholders to vote against the proposal, arguing it would “**restrict Apple’s ability to manage its own ordinary business operations, people and teams, and business strategies.**”
- The proposal was overwhelmingly rejected – **97% of shareholders voted against it**
- Apple emphasises that diverse teams are critical for designing products that work for a global customer base and that inclusion ensures products and experiences resonate across cultures

Why Agility Matters

AGILE



Business environments shift → economic cycles, technology disruption, social expectations, regulation.



Rigid strategies lock you in → misalignment with customer needs, wasted investment, reputational risk.



DEI strategies need agility → external events e.g. COVID, social justice movements, political shifts can redefine what inclusion means for your people and customers.



AGILE STRATEGIES ADAPT BY:

- ☐ Embedding feedback loops
- ☐ Regular reviews
- ☐ Using data and insights to remain relevant
- ☐ Building flexibility
- ☐ Scenario planning (best case, worst case, likely case).



GROUP DISCUSSION:

How could you build agility into your strategy?

Please share any examples if you have done this - what worked, what would you do differently?



Airbnb



Before COVID: Airbnb's DEI strategy was heavily focused on increasing diverse representation in leadership and tech roles. They had hiring targets and ERG programs as key levers.



Disruption: When travel ground to a halt, the business faced survival pressures. Hiring slowed dramatically, so talent-focused DEI commitments risked stalling.



Pivot: Airbnb shifted DEI priorities towards trust, safety, and belonging in their community.

- Introduced stronger anti-discrimination protections for hosts and guests.
- Enhanced accessibility filters on the platform (e.g. wheelchair accessible listings).
- Launched initiatives supporting hosts from underrepresented communities with grants and financial assistance.



Impact: Maintained DEI credibility by aligning with core business survival strategy (trust in the platform), while keeping longer-term workforce diversity goals alive.

Where DEI and Business Strategies Meet



The Power of Alignment: When DEI strategy aligns with Business strategy:



**Clarity in
decision making**



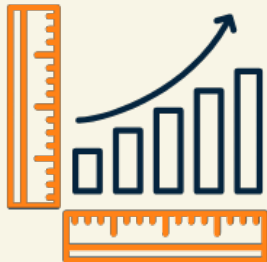
Better prioritisation



**Consistency in
communication and
language**



**Clear direction at all
levels**



Measurement of impact



Enhanced collaboration



Trust



What problem are you solving?

- Low retention of diverse talent
- Customer dissatisfaction
- Regulatory pressure/reputation risk



What's needed in the business to achieve strategic aims?

- Cross-cultural leadership
- Inclusive product design
- Diverse innovation teams



What assumptions are embedded?

- Hiring diverse talent = retention
- Training alone changes behaviour
- External talent supply exists



What will be different if you succeed?

- Stronger innovation and market share
- Higher engagement, retention and performance
- Improved reputation and external stakeholder satisfaction



CONSIDER: What data or insights do you use to inform your thinking across each of these elements?



**Re-join this meeting in
15 mins**



**Be prepared for one
person to share an
overview of your
discussion in the wider
group**

Aligning DEI with Business Strategy

Break out and discuss one of the following questions to identify how you can practically respond:

1. How can you clarify the problem you are you solving?
2. How can you align an organisational strategic aim to DEI?
3. How can you challenge assumptions early to prevent wasted effort?
4. How can you measure and articulate 'what is different'?

Consider what data and insights you can use to answer these questions

YOU WILL NOW GO INTO SMALLER GROUPS

GROUP

A

GROUP

B

GROUP

C



Action Plan

KEY TAKEAWAYS & NEXT FIRST STEPS



Share one action you are going to take based on what you've heard today

Who else can you work with to hold you accountable?

Share your answers in the CHAT



SELF LED: TO COMPLETE

October:

Telling Your Story

Your Brand



YOUR NEXT WEBINAR

22 October:

Leading Through Challenging Times

THANK YOU

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