

2025

DIVERSITY,

EQUITY, AND

INCLUSION (DEI)

TRENDS

It's no secret that 2025 has already been a tumultuous year for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). As we continue to progress forward into 2025, the potential for organizations to [hold steadfast to their priorities](#) when it comes to inclusion and drive impactful change has never been greater. What can your company anticipate for its diversity initiatives in the coming year, and what are some key trends to be aware of?

From remaining resilient among changing times to promoting transparency in metrics, we dive into the top four trends set to impact the space in 2025 below.

1 REMAINING RESILIENT AMONG CHANGING TIMES

2 A SHIFT IN LANGUAGE TO BELONGING AND CULTURE

3 RELIANCE ON EMPLOYEE-LED ACTIVISM THROUGH ERGS

4 DATA TRANSPARENCY AND AI TO SUPPORT DEI EFFORTS

Despite a constantly changing climate marked by a new administration, organizations should consider how to remain resilient and [uphold their commitment to inclusive practices](#) and creating a culture of belonging, despite shifting business priorities and external challenges.

In 2025 we're already seeing budget cuts to diversity-focused programming – [Target, Meta, Walmart, and McDonalds among others have begun to scale back DEI commitments](#) in the last few months. However, it's crucial for organizations to demonstrate leadership and remain committed to inclusivity in 2025, especially in the midst of changing political rhetoric and amid societal pressures.

Despite these challenges, job seekers still expect companies to uphold their commitments. According to Glassdoor, [76% of employees and job seekers consider a diverse workforce an important factor when evaluating job offers](#). Even with limited financial resources, companies can continue to prioritize inclusion by focusing on a few “quick wins.”

Where should organizations put their focus?

- **Internal Goals:** Companies should establish both short- and long-term DEI goals that require minimal financial investment. These goals should be realistic, ensuring that they remain achievable even amid uncertainty. For example, maintaining inclusive hiring practices does not incur additional costs, but it ensures that as the team grows, it remains diverse.
- **Foster Employee-Led Initiatives:** Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and employee groups offer employees an opportunity to connect with colleagues from similar backgrounds, fostering a sense of inclusion and community. These networks, supported by the company, help employees feel valued and empowered, enhancing overall workplace engagement and inclusivity.

We know maintaining a strong commitment to inclusion is essential for employees, regardless of the external landscape. By implementing practical, low-cost strategies such as setting clear diversity goals, fostering diversity networks, and offering internal training, companies can continue to support an inclusive culture in 2025 and beyond. Demonstrating resilience in these areas not only strengthens an organization's reputation but also ensures that it remains a desirable and equitable place to work, even in uncertain times.



2 A SHIFT IN LANGUAGE TO BELONGING AND CULTURE

We're seeing some organizations shift their language, using terms like "belonging" and "culture" to ease any anxiety around continuing to use the words diversity, equity, and inclusion. These language shifts should not signal a departure from DEI principles, but rather a continuation of the work—just under a different naming convention.

What does a language and organization shift mean for your people?

Budget cuts and shifts in DEI language may result in organizational restructuring of DEI teams and de-prioritization of dedicated initiatives. It's imperative that the language shifts reinforce, not replace, equity practices. Job descriptions for shifted roles should tie back to equity goals and continue to hold leaders accountable to equity outcomes. As new rhetoric takes place, it's important to continue to tie initiatives under the "Belonging" and "Culture" umbrellas to inclusive metrics (such as belonging survey scores, promotion rates, and inclusive hiring).

Leaders of these teams must maintain momentum in fostering an inclusive environment that is not just lip service. Before rolling out language updates or organizational priority shifts, consider the following:

- ***How will this help all employees feel seen, heard, and supported?***
- ***Are we reinforcing equitable access to resources, opportunities, and networks?***
- ***What data will we collect to ensure this change doesn't inadvertently create new barriers?***

By consciously ensuring equity isn't lost in your organization's language shifts, you ensure your new structure amplifies, rather than deprioritize, your organization's inclusivity.



3 RELIANCE ON EMPLOYEE-LED ACTIVISM THROUGH ERGS

Another group that we will see more and more as the central “DEI Strategy” is Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). With significant budget cuts to DEI programs, ERGs will be used to fill the gap.

How can you build and sustain ERGs as budgets change?

We know that ERGs are critical to employees’ sense of belonging. As of 2024, an [estimated 65% of employees who participate in ERGs report strong, positive effects on their careers](#)—showcasing the real impact these groups have on supporting employee experiences. And with more being asked of them than ever before, it’s crucial that ERG leaders get the support they need.

One way to do that is by [giving them a seat at the table](#). As paid DEI roles are cut from organizations, it’s even more important that your ERG leadership [feels empowered](#) to raise and escalate the challenges they’re hearing across the business. You should be positioning ERGs to be strategic partners, with regular access to decision-makers; their proximity to employees’ needs should be viewed as an asset.

To help ERGs thrive as sustainable, impactful groups—especially amid budget constraints—it’s worth leaning on existing resources. [Inviting internal experts to serve as guest speakers](#), from learning sessions, panels, or career development workshops, can eliminate the need to outsource. ERGs should also be part of conversations around onboarding and employee surveys to ensure an intersectional lens is being applied. Encouraging cross-ERG collaboration, such as co-hosting events, can be a great way to pool resources and maximize impact for members.



4 DATA TRANSPARENCY AND AI TO SUPPORT DEI EFFORTS

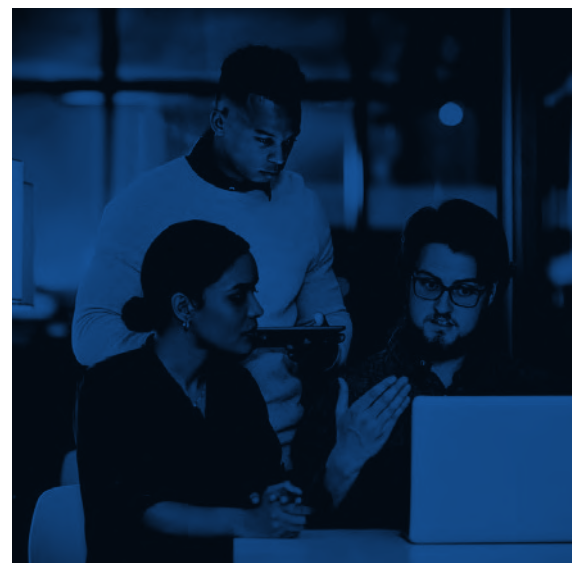
We've talked about the [importance of measuring data](#); however, organizations leading in equitable outcomes are doing more than just measuring. The value of data comes from intentional analysis, framed by thoughtful metric selection and purposeful data sourcing. The emergence of [artificial intelligence \(AI\) and large language models \(LLMs\)](#) has changed the field of [data analytics, including diversity analytics](#). Data analysts and diversity leaders will continue to explore the role of AI and LLMs in the assessment of workplace data in 2025.

What opportunities can AI and LLMs bring to these efforts?

Using these tools for data analysis and interpretation has a lot of benefits. It empowers analysts to engage with larger, unstructured data sets than they would have the bandwidth to explore by hand, creating a more comprehensive picture of the state of diversity at an organization. These models can also detect nuance and hard-to-spot patterns in diversity data, helping businesses identify systemic issues and actionable solutions in real time. Tools like this also support analysts and business leaders in using their diversity data to tell a story, making it easier to align inclusivity goals with organizational strategy. [AI can provide an outside perspective](#) when determining key takeaways from data like performance reviews, pay equity analyses, or résumé reviews. Additionally, AI can expedite market research as business leaders seek to understand how their diversity data can be leveraged to improve business strategy.

What are some of the watchouts to be aware of?

While there are a ton of benefits of leveraging AI to support diversity analytics, we also know that [using this tool without exercising caution can work against diversity and inclusivity goals](#). It's important to remember that AI is trained on real-world data, and



real-world data contains biases. AI outputs cannot be trusted blindly. They must be considered within the context of the data the system was trained on. To protect the integrity of AI-supported diversity analyses, companies should consider how and by whom their system was trained and adjust expectations of objectivity accordingly. AI cannot also fully replace human judgement. Leaders in diversity and inclusivity should contextualize AI findings within their organization's culture and goals to avoid misinterpretation.

Where should you begin?

Once confidence in the data has been established, organizations must be strategic in how they share their findings internally and externally. Sharing this data among internal teams is most effective when the level of detail can be catered to your audience. [Dashboards](#) or detailed, multi-view reports are great tools for internal sharing. Conversely, external publications of diversity data findings can be high-level, with a focus on sharing how the data trends support broader business goals such as recruiting, retention, and knowledge building.

While some may see this as a sensitive topic or hesitate to publicly address progress in the diversity space, sharing data doesn't create the problem or feed into it; sharing data fosters transparency and creates trust with employees, customers or clients, and shareholders. Companies that thoughtfully source, analyze, and share their diversity data in line with emerging regulations will set themselves apart as leaders in the ongoing effort to support diverse talent and customers.



GOING FORWARD

In 2025, businesses must have the courage to stay committed to the values they believe in, even as the external landscape shifts. Organizations should continue to embed inclusion principles throughout the employee experience, from recruiting and onboarding to engagement and retention. They should prioritize supporting ERGs and increasing transparency around key metrics, remembering that with the proper context, sharing data doesn't create the problem—it builds trust.

If you're looking to learn more about how your organization can advance your diversity programs in the complex landscape of 2025, [connect with our experts today](#).

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