

workhuman*

5 New Ideas to Extend DEI Beyond a One-Time Training



What's next in DEI?

If companies are hoping to thrive in the next era of work, they need to be thinking about diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) today. The last few years have brought on a monumental shift in how we view the workplace. Employees expect their organisations to support them not just financially, but mentally and emotionally as well. Employers can no longer be indifferent to social change or the injustices happening both in and out of the workplace. **In fact, a recent study found 43% of workers want their employers to do more to foster inclusivity.**

With money and reputation at stake, the challenge for many companies – and HR teams, in particular – is finding an effective path forward. According to Gartner, 64% of CHROs are now held accountable for DEI progress. And yet research from Josh Bersin suggests 80% of HR professionals view their companies as “going through the motions” when it comes to DEI – seeing no significant impact from the organisation’s actions.

What is needed moving forward are sustainable, ongoing programmes. One-time trainings may be well-intentioned, but they rarely move the needle on their own. **Academic studies suggest the best DEI approach is delivered over an extended period, integrated with other initiatives and designed to increase both awareness and skills.**

Why does DEI matter?

Getting DEI right is inherently good for the employee experience. The more people feel they are valued and belong in your organisation, the more committed they are to the overall mission and goals. Numerous studies demonstrate the business benefits of diversity, equity and inclusion, but here are a few of note:

Retention:

According to Workhuman® research, 72% of employees say DEI is somewhat to very important to them in terms of staying at their job.

Innovation:

The International Labour Organization found companies that establish inclusive business cultures and policies see a 59.1% increase in creativity, innovation and openness, and 37.9% better assessment of consumer interest and demand.

Absenteeism:

Deloitte research has found a 10% increase in perceptions of inclusion improves absenteeism, adding nearly one day a year in work attendance per employee.

Here are five new ideas for embedding DEI into your organisational culture.

ONE

Make space for ongoing dialogue.

One question that rises to the top in the DEI discussion is, “How can I be a better ally?” According to [Harvard Business Review](#), **allyship is “a strategic mechanism used by individuals to become collaborators, accomplices, and coconspirators who fight injustice and promote equity in the workplace** through supportive personal relationships and public acts of sponsorship and advocacy.”

How can organisations apply the notion of allyship to the workplace? Monica Jackson, VP of inclusion and diversity at Eaton, suggests using advocacy and listening circles. At Eaton, these are intimate discussions with fewer than 10 colleagues, organised by an employee resource group.

“These are micro-nudges or micro-learning opportunities that we can have ongoing for people to understand what it means to be an ally and what role they can play in advancing inclusion at Eaton,” she said. “It allows for psychological safety – that building of trust.”



TWO

Democratise recognition.

If you want everyone to feel more appreciated and included in your organisation, a great place to start is through peer-to-peer recognition.

“Peer-to-peer recognition creates positive, authentic moments that make every person feel seen, celebrated, and appreciated for who they are and what they do,” says Navin “nuvs” Jain, director, product management at Workhuman. “It amplifies the voice of every employee and shines a spotlight on the achievements of historically overlooked groups.”

The proof is in the data. In a study of Workhuman recognition data across 712,000 employees, **Asian, Black and Hispanic employee turnover dropped 20%, and female turnover dropped 17%, after one year in a recognition programme.**

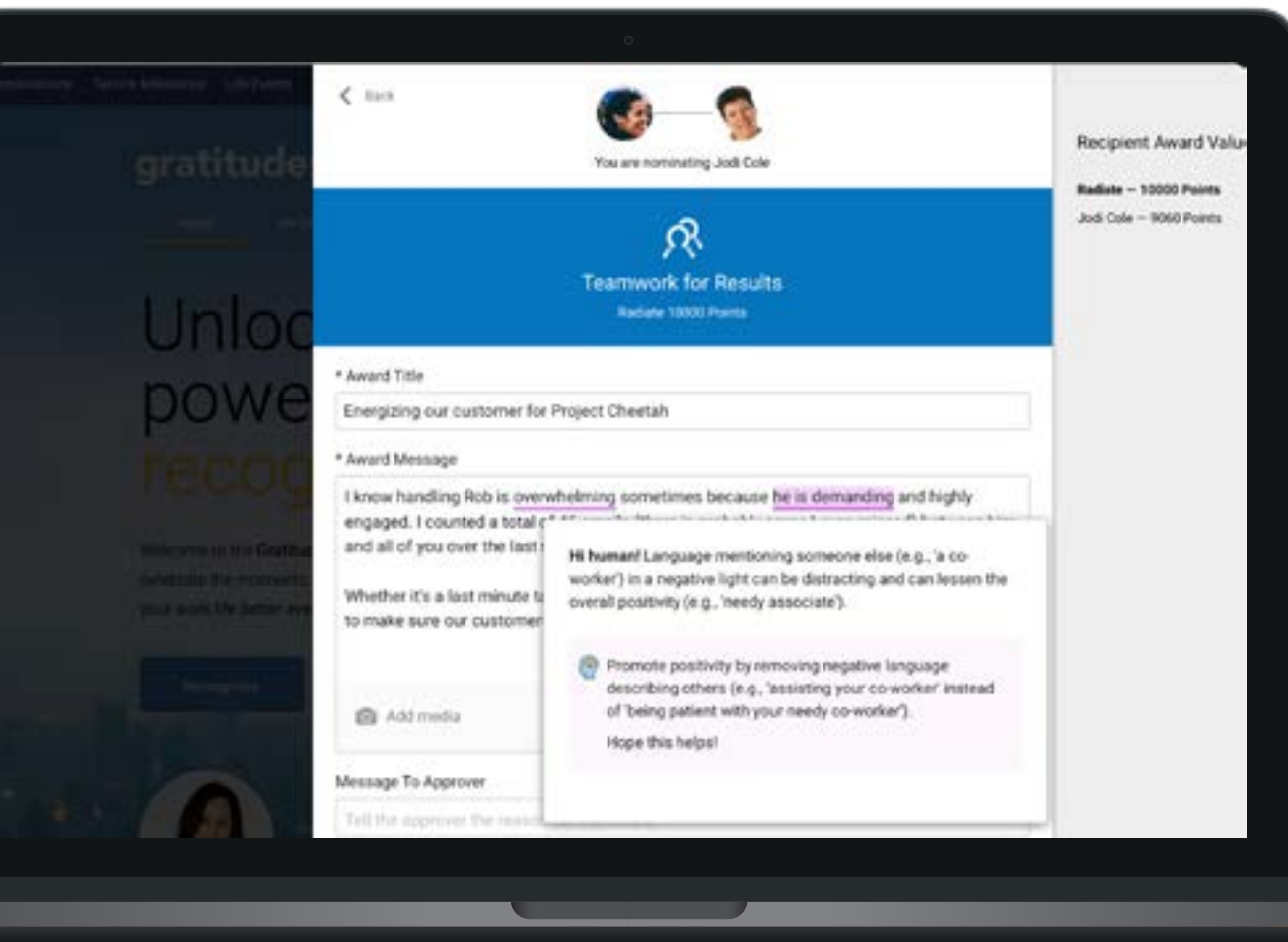
THREE

Use technology to reinforce DEI training.

Most traditional approaches to DEI are one-time training events. “For example, you might have employees watch videos, and then take a survey to indicate what they’ve learned,” says Jain. “But how much do they really retain weeks or months later in the moment when it really matters?”

Unconscious biases, also known as implicit biases, are the underlying attitudes and stereotypes that people unconsciously attribute to another person or group of people that affect how they understand and engage with a person or group. **Our internal analyses indicate unconscious bias in the workplace appears in approximately 20-30% of written communications** – even in a very positive setting. When left unaddressed, this type of bias can have a profound effect on employee retention, engagement and feelings of inclusivity in the workplace.

One tool companies can use to mitigate unconscious bias specifically in recognition messages is Workhuman's Inclusion Advisor. It uses artificial intelligence and natural language processing to classify the underlying sentiment of an award nomination and provide meaningful suggestions for how to improve the message. Words matter – especially at work. **With Inclusion Advisor, 75% of employees will voluntarily change the wording of their message to language that is more inclusive.**





We want to make sure that as we further our diversity, inclusion, and equity mission, it's part of our business and it's embedded in our day-to-day activities. We can continue to coach and guide people to use language that is more inclusive, and to be aware of these unconscious biases, and to challenge themselves to think and act differently.

MICHAELA LEO

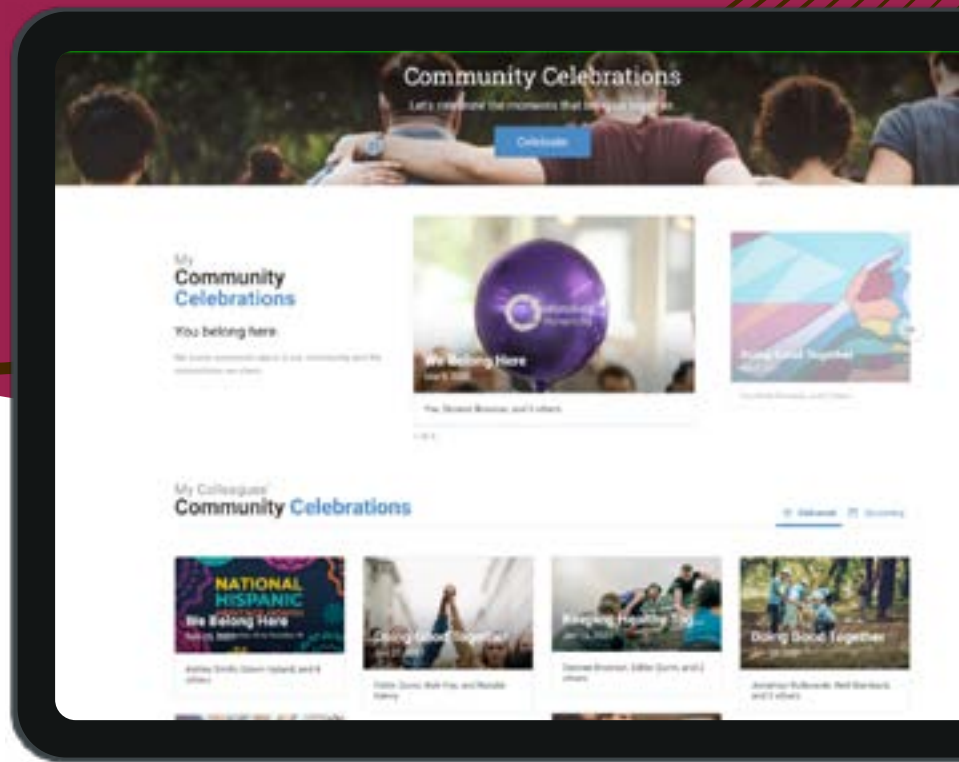
Former Director of Compensation at Merck

FOUR

Truly allow employees to bring their whole selves to work.

In subtle ways, each of us adjusts how we show up depending on the environment we're in. For example, you might dress one way dropping your kids off at school and completely differently for a job interview. And that's OK. But no one wants to put on a big act every day for work. The need to belong has always been a part of the human condition.

Here's where we see opportunity: **Research from Ernst & Young found one-third (34%) of people experience their greatest sense of belonging when at work.** One way to extend DEI and double down on belonging is through employee resource groups (ERGs). Workhuman, for example, has several thriving ERGs that meet regularly, including Parents at Workhuman, DEI at Workhuman, and Live Green at Workhuman.



Another way to enhance belonging is by leveraging a tool like Community Celebrations®, part of Workhuman Cloud®. Especially in the age of hybrid work, this software solution provides a forum for employees to celebrate the things that make us human – both inside and outside of work. Here are some examples of events that could trigger a community celebration:

- **Personal life events**
- **Holidays**
- **Cultural events**
- **Corporate social responsibility initiatives**

The more sense of community that is felt, the better it is for your business. Research from the Center for Talent Innovation finds people who feel like they are included are 3.5x more likely to contribute to their fullest potential.

FIVE

Get your data house in order.

Diversity strategist Torin Ellis once said, “What we count matters. ... We talk often about building inclusive teams. We talk often about the culture inside of our organisations. What we don’t talk about often enough is what exactly are we counting?”

What are you counting when it comes to DEI? Do you have the data you need for continuous improvement and insights? Ernest Marshall, CHRO at Eaton, said **there’s an important distinction between showing the data and exposing the data.**

“When I first started, there was a lot of showing the data,” he said. “But what we were failing to really show is exposing the data for, ‘What story is it telling us?’ For the full story, you need the internal labor market map. You need the whole picture. We were making great progress in hiring women, for example, but then we found we’d lose a third of those women out the back door. If you don’t expose the data and show the leakage on the backend, you’re not really getting the full picture.”

If you have HR technology, ask your vendor what story the data is telling. For example, Workhuman customers have access to dashboards and data to answer questions like:

- **Does one group receive more recognition than another?**
- **Are award values equitable?**
- **Does one group have larger or smaller networks of connections?**
How balanced is the composition of those networks?
- **How do those connections impact outcomes the business cares about (inclusion, culture, productivity, innovation)?**

Taking action

These five tips are meant to get you thinking outside the box when it comes to advancing DEI initiatives – to make real impact on your culture and your business.

What's needed now are tools that are proactive, measurable and sustainable. Only then can you create a human workplace where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.



Ready to learn more? Learn how to operationalise inclusion [here](#).

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