

Top 10 DEI and Talent Practices for 2024

Innovation in Turbulent Times

In 2023, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Talent leaders faced unprecedented challenges—from expanding responsibilities and tightening budgets to the emergence of new legal and political risks. Despite these hurdles, they continued to innovate, navigate cultural crises, and develop new markets. Now more than ever, leading organizations are adapting cutting-edge tactics to fortify their positions, collaboratively developing an even more bulletproof case for DEI.

The shifting landscape calls for CDOs (Chief Diversity Officers) and CHROs (Chief Human Resource Officers) to reflect on the most impactful strategies for promoting workplace inclusion. Widespread reports of new imperatives to demonstrate value, scale impact, and redefine roles underscore the urgency of these discussions.

Breaking Boundaries

The latest advancements in DEI and talent range widely—from the transformation of age-old tactics to the development of entirely new paradigms. Nevertheless, they share a common objective: a holistic approach shattering the boundaries that have traditionally defined corporate inclusion initiatives.

Holistic Inclusion

1. Personal and Collective
2. Local and Global
3. Competitive and Collaborative

Three Key Focus Areas

1 Attitudes

To achieve their aspirations, today's most effective DEI and talent programs integrate seemingly overlapping—or even opposing—ideas of inclusion at the individual, team, and organizational levels. Best-in-class DEI and talent programs build on and extend these and other productive tensions between global and intersectional understandings of inclusion to maximize belonging.

2 Alliances

In a growing trend, CDOs and CHROs are partnering more closely to harness the power of strategic coalition building. New industry partnerships, functional collaborations, and customer-aligned ERGs continue to reshape research, product development, talent lifecycle, and market opportunities.

3 Advances

Efficient teams and business acumen are becoming increasingly indispensable tools for advancing DEI and talent influence. Competitions can also enhance reputational capital, as award-winning organizations improve recruitment and retention through objective assessments providing actionable roadmaps and visibility into diversity bottlenecks.

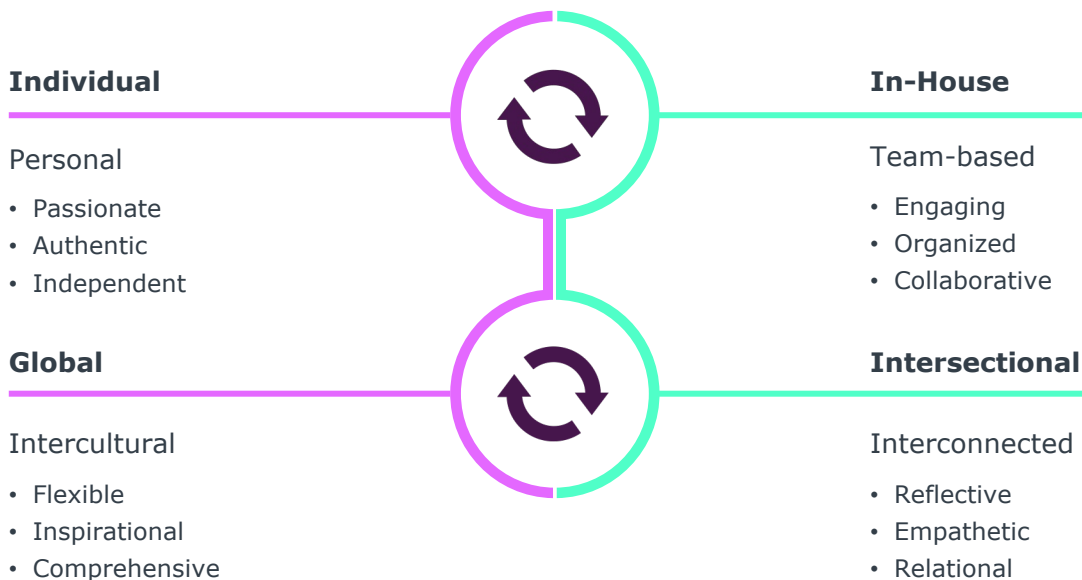
Insightful Outlooks: Four Inclusive Mindsets

Transformative Attitudes

Most CDOs and CHROs are adept at making the case for the business value of DEI and the importance of embedding it across the entire organization. Most corporate diversity statements express a commitment to fostering an environment where employees can bring their authentic selves to work. What then distinguishes the mindsets and practices of the world's most inclusive organizations?

Our research consistently shows that truly moving the needle requires a transformative culture shift integrating four distinct forms of inclusion: individual, in-house (team- and organization-based), global, and intersectional. Seramount surveys consistently demonstrate the value of this comprehensive approach to inclusion.

Inclusion



As DEI and talent programs are developed and advanced, interlocking mindsets are testing the boundaries of workplace inclusion, its scope and practice, and how it will be defined in the future.

“ We don't learn from sameness. We learn from difference.”

Gloria Steinem
Activist and Author

Source: Seramount interviews and analysis; Steinem, G. (2020), *I Know This to Be True: Gloria Steinem On Integrity, Empathy, & Authenticity*, Chronicle Books.

Strategic Alliances: Essential DEI and Talent Coalitions

Impactful Partnerships

In an ever-evolving DEI and talent landscape, maintaining a competitive advantage involves collaboration as much as competition. A new imperative has emerged to expand the work of inclusion beyond traditional organizational boundaries. This bridge-building approach aims to drive meaningful change through an array of inclusive knowledge-sharing practices, ranging from establishing new industry coalitions to empowering ERGs (Employee Resource Groups) to better understand customer needs.

Our surveys indicate that top-tier organizations are strategically deploying these new internal and external partnerships to enhance social proof, drive innovation, and develop new markets.

Strategic Alliances

1 Industry



Collaborations between industry competitors have become a driving force for change. The growing willingness to pool resources and industry-specific expertise to address shared challenges has inspired a diverse array of inclusion initiatives encompassing upskilling programs, research collectives, and philanthropic endeavors.

2 DEI and Talent



The recognition that employee engagement and satisfaction are intimately linked to DEI priorities is steadily increasing. Capitalizing upon this trend, DEI and talent teams are forging new strategic alliances to confront growing talent lifecycle challenges, ranging from skills gaps and “rage applying” to “quiet quitting” and the “disengagement tax.”

3 ERGs



ERGs embed inclusion into the broader company culture, fostering a customer-centric diversity perspective to advance engagement and belonging. Additionally, they drive multicultural marketing, propel revenue generation, facilitate knowledge sharing, and open new markets, building a more representative and welcoming experience for all.

“What can organizations do today in the face of a strained macro environment and limited resources? The imperative for change isn’t going away simply because budgets have shrunk....Complement your DEI team with external partners to meet your evolving needs. Effective DEI teams thrive on agility as they meet ever-changing business needs, priorities, and economics.”

Dr. Erin L. Thomas

Head of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Upwork

Cultivating Influence: Three High-Impact Strategies

Collective Ownership

DEI and talent leaders are catalysts for change in nearly every organization. But they are held back by budget reductions, reporting hierarchies, and insufficient buy-in. To overcome these challenges, top-quartile organizations are embracing collective ownership models empowering CDOs and CHROs to align the roles and responsibilities of every employee with DEI and talent objectives.

Our findings underscore that redefining the work of inclusion as a shared enterprise requires cultivating influence widely—whether recruiting internal DEI ambassadors or sharing insights with the wider world. DEI and talent organizations seeking to lead the way in 2024 can execute three key relationship-building strategies to enhance their impact, reshape existing structures, and become an employer of choice.

Strategic Alliances

1	Managing DEI as a Business	2	Leading with Lean Teams	3	Recognition and Assessment
	<i>Elevate every line of business</i>		<i>Build impactful "teams of one"</i>		<i>Engage in DEI calls to action and awards</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reposition DEI as integral to business leadership 2. Develop inclusion indices and KPIs 3. Build BRGs aligning DEI and business goals 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scale impact with DEI champions network 2. Promote collective ownership 3. Ensure equitable assignments 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce independent evaluations 2. Measure progress against benchmarks 3. Enhance reputation to attract top talent

Awards and Advances

CDOs and CHROs can make an outsized impact by integrating inclusion into every organizational level and role. This evolving cultural mandate encompasses the creation of custom-made plans for individual units. Actively pursuing certifications and awards enriches these endeavors with comprehensive external feedback. Recognition from outside organizations in turn bolsters the company's reputation as an innovative workplace driving DEI outcomes.

“When you're doing this work, everybody has to be involved...Opportunities to make a positive impact are not related to a specific role. DEI work is everywhere and in everything.”

Renita Miller

Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, The Wharton School

Source: Seramount interviews and analysis; Drake, D. (2023, April 19), "The Work of Chief Diversity Officers as They Champion DEI."