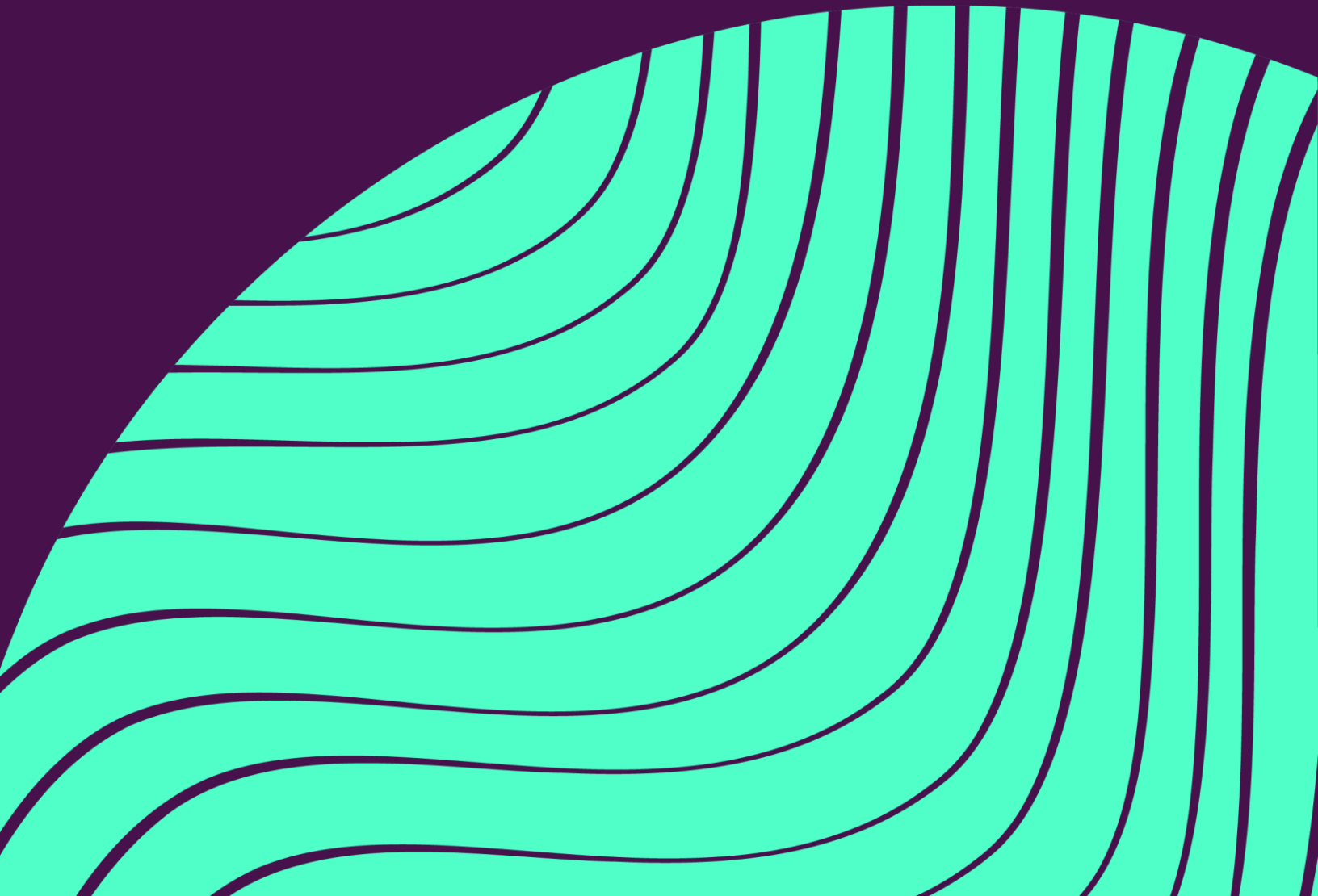




WORKBOOK

Addressing Internal Questions on President Trump's New DEI Policies



Discussing DEI Policy Changes with Leadership

The DEI landscape is undergoing significant transformation. Recent federal policies, executive orders, and agency directives have created new challenges, leaving leaders wondering what they can and should do next.

In this climate of change and uncertainty, DEI and Talent leaders face the critical task of providing steady guidance. Your leadership team will look to you for clear direction on navigating these shifts while maintaining commitment to workplace excellence and inclusion.

While there are no easy answers and the future remains uncertain, this toolkit is designed to equip you with the answers and talking points you need to address concerns and offer a clear, thoughtful path forward for your organization's DEI efforts.

QUESTION

What do the political and legal changes mean for our DEI programs?

Key Talking Points

- It's not yet clear the impact on private sector.
- Compliance with new federal guidelines is crucial.
- Well-designed DEI programs are *not* illegal.

Suggested Answer

The legal landscape around DEI programs is evolving, and the Trump administration's directives around federal DEI programs and staff have created uncertainty. Seramount's [recent analysis](#) reveals these directives primarily target federal agencies, but the fear of heightened scrutiny could lead private-sector organizations to hesitate in advancing DEI initiatives. While these legal challenges and executive orders introduce risk, it's important to remember that well-designed DEI programs are not inherently illegal. However, we must continue to monitor the situation to ensure our DEI strategies comply with new federal guidelines.

Your Response (*Write your answer to this question, focusing on points you think will resonate most with your leadership*)

Discussing DEI Policy Changes with Leadership (cont.)

QUESTION

Why are some companies rolling back their DEI commitments?

Key Talking Points

- The media focus on rollbacks started before Trump's second term.
- Over two-thirds of companies are staying the course and *not* rolling back programs.
- Headlines don't always reflect the full picture.

Suggested Answer

Some companies are rolling back their DEI efforts due to fears about potential legal and political consequences. This trend started before the second term of President Trump, and it's been amplified by current political pressures. However, much of this response stems from a misunderstanding of what DEI actually is, which [recent Seramount insights](#) clarify.

It's crucial to note that according to Seramount research, over two-thirds of companies are maintaining their DEI initiatives. The companies backing away are getting more attention, but they don't represent the majority.

Even in high-profile cases, the reality is often more nuanced. Take Target: They've concluded a specific DEI initiative but continue to emphasize inclusion and belonging. Many companies are shifting their approach rather than abandoning their goals altogether.

Your Response (*Write your answer to this question, focusing on points you think will resonate most with your leadership*)

Discussing DEI Policy Changes with Leadership (cont.)

QUESTION

Should we consider rolling back or changing our approach to DEI?

Key Talking Points

- Stakeholders prefer companies whose values align with theirs.
- We must consider customer and employee reactions before making any changes.
- Resources are available to help navigate legal and strategic shifts in DEI.

Suggested Answer

When deciding whether to adjust our DEI strategy, we need to consider the potential impacts on both our employees and our bottom line. How might our customers or clients perceive any backpedaling? How will our employees react?

Remember, 75 percent of shoppers say a brand's diversity reputation influences their purchasing decisions, and 40% have said they'd leave a company that takes a political stance they disagree with. These are not minor considerations for the business.

At the same time, adjusting our approach doesn't necessarily mean abandoning our commitment. Seramount's ongoing research keeps us informed of the latest legal and policy changes and provides guidance on how to move forward effectively. Rather than rolling back, we should focus on adapting in a way that aligns with both our values and the evolving landscape.

Your Response (*Write your answer to this question, focusing on points you think will resonate most with your leadership*)

Explore Seramount's Latest Member Resources

- ✓ [Tracking Policy Changes During the Trump Administration](#)
- ✓ [Navigating the Intersection of US Law and DEI: Mitigating Legal Risks](#)
- ✓ [Seramount's Guidebook to Supporting Immigrant Employees in US Organizations](#)

Discussing DEI Policy Changes with Leadership (cont.)

QUESTION

Should we stay the course with DEI?

Key Talking Points

- Adjustments may be needed, but the core value of DEI remains essential.
- Scaling back DEI could harm long-term business success.
- Staying committed to DEI helps attract and retain talent, drive innovation, and foster employee engagement.

Suggested Answer

While the future of DEI work is still evolving, it's essential to stay focused on its long-term benefits. DEI helps attract and retain top talent, fosters innovation, and strengthens employee engagement, all of which directly impact business performance.

Maintaining or strategically adjusting our DEI efforts is likely the best path forward. This might include rebranding initiatives, refining strategies to align with new regulations, or emphasizing DEI's role in broader business goals.

However, completely pausing or reversing our efforts could put us at a disadvantage, leading to talent shortages, decreased employee morale, and reputational risks. Staying committed to DEI will ensure we're well-positioned for long-term success.

Your Response (*Write your answer to this question, focusing on points you think will resonate most with your leadership*)

Discussing DEI Policy Changes with Leadership (cont.)

QUESTION

What can I do to support DEI internally?

Key Talking Point

- Leading by example is critical in this moment.

Suggested Answer

Be vocal and visible in your support of DEI, especially when we can't speak out externally. This not only reinforces our commitment but also reassures those who may be feeling uncertain or worried about these changes.

Your Response (*Write your answer to this question, focusing on points you think will resonate most with your leadership*)

QUESTION

How can we support employees amid the changes?

Key Talking Points

- Stakeholders prefer companies whose values align with theirs.
- Consider customer and employee reactions before making any changes.

Suggested Answer

Employees understand there is still a lot of uncertainty, but they need to hear from us. We should be transparent about what's happening and explain how these changes might, or might not, affect our DEI programs. One of the best ways to address their concerns is by holding forums or listening sessions where we can hear directly from them. We should also consider offering mental health days or other support options, such as counseling or additional resources, for those who may be struggling with the uncertainty.

Your Response (*Write your answer to this question, focusing on points you think will resonate most with your leadership*)

Discussing DEI Policy Changes with Leadership (cont.)

QUESTION

Should we reduce or cut our DEI budget?

Key Talking Points

- DEI expertise is critical to respond to today's shifting landscape.
- Cutting DEI budgets can lead to significant financial and reputational risk.
- Cutting DEI budgets risks undermining long-term business growth.

Suggested Answer

Now more than ever, our organization needs DEI experts to guide us through an increasingly complex and shifting landscape. The political and regulatory environment will continue to evolve, and we must be prepared to respond.

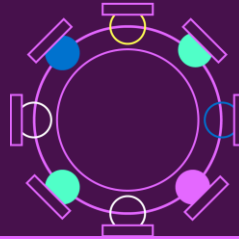
Trying to navigate these challenges without DEI expertise would be like flying through a storm without a weather map. Without the right budget or staff, we won't have the resources to adapt effectively, risking reputational damage.

We've already seen other companies face backlash to their changes, including significant financial consequences. For example, customers are boycotting brands shifting their DEI focus—so much so, according to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, that Ford and Toyota risk losing over \$2 billion in sales from LGBTQ+ consumers alone due to perceived DEI rollbacks. While cutting the budget might save money up front, it could cost us far more in the long run if we alienate customers, employees, or other key stakeholders.

Your Response (*Write your answer to this question, focusing on points you think will resonate most with your leadership*)

Next Steps

Need answers to other questions? Seramount's researchers and expert advisors are here to provide real-time insights and rapid-response resources to help you navigate legal and political shifts. [Contact us](#) to access the latest resources or speak with an expert about your organization's specific challenges.



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**Identify, Engage,
and Hire Top
Early Career
Talent**

Branding and recruiting platform that surfaces engaged, prepared candidates more efficiently, effectively, and at scale

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**Uncover the Real
Levers to Unlock
Enduring Employee
Engagement**

Actionable intelligence into the employee experience powered by innovative technology and over 40 years of workforce data and insights

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Foundations and
Build Adaptable
Roadmaps**

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Connected
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