

Building a Holistic View of Inclusion & Diversity

Mind the Gap Series — Part 2: Insights from Global Employment Leaders

The second installment of the **Mind the Gap Series** offers the employment perspective on inclusion and diversity (I&D), the steps diversity and HR leaders are taking to accelerate I&D progress and the challenges they are encountering.

Research Methodology

Part 2 of the Mind the Gap Series is based on an independent opinion survey of 900 employment leaders in global organizations including a representative sample in EMEA, Asia Pacific and the United States and six sector groups: Industrials, Manufacturing & Transportation (IMT); Consumer Goods & Retail (CG&R); Financial Institutions (FI); Healthcare & Life Sciences (HLS); Energy, Mining & Infrastructure (EMI) and Technology, Media & Telecommunications (TMT).

Key Findings



Stubborn issues undermine optimism on I&D

92% of diversity leaders say I&D programs are effective. However, a majority continue to focus on long held priorities — raising awareness of I&D remains a priority for **55%** of respondents.



Underreporting persists despite investments in training and policies — showing that culture lags intention.

The number of policies and training has grown significantly in the last three years, and **63%** have plans to expand this further. While encouraging a speak up culture remains a priority for **78%** of diversity leaders, **67%** fear that managers contain I&D-related complaints rather than using reporting mechanisms and **34%** believe that I&D issues are underreported.



Organizations struggle to take an evidence-based approach to I&D

75% of diversity leaders believe they could do more to leverage data to direct resources to the most impactful I&D initiatives.

Fewer than **50%** of respondents say their organization uses recruitment diversity data, pay data or employee feedback as a way of measuring the effectiveness of actions taken.



Comprehensive training and policies are the foundations of a good program, but without a clear overarching strategy, with an emphasis on inclusion and cultural change, combined with appropriate funding directed to the areas of greatest need, diverse leadership and robust measurement it is difficult to make real progress.

Monica Kurnatowska
Partner, Employment & Compensation

Three Critical Challenges Threaten Progress on I&D

Our data uncovered three challenges that could be holding back I&D success for organizations:

1

Foresight — Looking Ahead to Anticipate Change

Organizations have implemented a range of training and policies, but the impact can appear piecemeal rather than part of an overarching I&D strategy.

Key Actions:

- Audit key I&D gaps and gather information on employee preferences and future trends upfront — using insights to inform an overarching I&D strategy that tackles problem areas.
- Monitor developments in key markets and where HR or I&D presence is lacking locally, to keep up to date with the changing landscape of legislative changes and best practice.
- Secure senior buy-in and focus finite resources on agreed priorities.
- Review and refresh strategic activity — including policies and education — systematically and at agreed milestones before undertaking new initiatives.

2

Oversight — Lacking Consistency and Controls

Difficulty exercising appropriate controls and oversight in local markets leaves organizations vulnerable to legal action as managers contain rather than escalate complaints.

Key Actions:

- Be wary of implementing volume online training without an overarching strategy and a clear plan to tailor and embed learnings over the long-term. Consider a holistic program of education, high quality, interactive training and in-person sessions and follow up or focus on high quality in-person training in local markets.
- Collaborate with compliance colleagues to ensure I&D activities align with compliance programs and overall corporate governance — demonstrating sensitivity to cultural and regulatory differences.
- Prioritize the cultural as well as procedural aspects of complaints reporting and handling — conflict avoidance is often a big issue. Encourage individuals to speak up and help managers to direct issues appropriately to demonstrate accountability and reinforce a culture of inclusivity.

3

Insight — Understanding What Strengthens I&D

Few organizations take a rigorous approach to data and most do not measure the impact of I&D activities — leaving them in the dark as to which are most effective and where to focus resources.

Key Actions:

- Audit what you currently capture and what gaps exist. Systematic data collection and measurement of progress at key stages of the employee lifecycle will help ensure finite resources are focused on the areas of greatest challenge and on the measures with the best success.
- Strategize ways to build trust in the reasons for and approach to data collection. Carefully consider communications, taking into account cultural issues as well as legal ones, and involve employee networks in the conversation.
- Be aware of local rules on data collection and employee privacy considerations — conducting a risk analysis and piloting measurement in more flexible jurisdictions.
- Consider qualitative as well as quantitative approaches to measurement — demonstrating accountability on I&D promises and building trust.



As I&D activities become increasingly central to overall corporate governance, organizations will have to demonstrate the effectiveness of their efforts with greater rigor. Rather than duplicating efforts, Compliance and Diversity teams should join forces — utilizing the lessons of how to implement effective corporate compliance to improve I&D performance.

Yindi Gesinde

Partner, Compliance & Investigations

To strengthen I&D strategies, accelerate progress and manage risk, having a holistic view is essential. I&D initiatives must be connected by an overarching plan and education strategy, informed by data and driven by culture and employee experience in order to accelerate I&D goals and overcome the barriers to change.

View Our Sector Findings



Industrials, Manufacturing
& Transportation (IMT)



Healthcare & Life Sciences (HLS)



Consumer Goods & Retail (CG&R)



Energy, Mining & Infrastructure
(EMI)



Financial Institutions (FI)



Technology, Media
& Telecommunications (TMT)

About the Mind the Gap Series

Our Mind the Gap series examines how organizations can strengthen corporate I&D.

This is the second report in the series. In the first iteration, we examine the role that compliance leaders, in particular, have to play. This report explores the connection between diversity, inclusion and compliance, based on key findings and insights from a [survey](#) of more than 600 compliance leaders. To read Part 1, [click here](#).



By taking a country-by-country approach — gathering data appropriately where possible and handling privacy considerations in accordance with local law — organizations can begin to build a measurement infrastructure over time that will deliver valuable insights and information to support their I&D programs.

Julia Wilson

Partner, Employment and Global Lead HR Data Protection

Download the full report here.



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