



Are Your Organization's DEI Efforts Going Unnoticed By Employees?

3 Ways to Evaluate and Improve Your DEI Program

Avenue M Group shares some surprising results from DEI research with more than 12,300 respondents, as well as recommended next steps based on the research.

This is the first in a series sharing high-level results from DEI research conducted by Avenue M.



Does your workplace have a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) or equivalent program or initiative? If so, are your employees aware of it?

Many organizations recognize the value of having a DEI program, but if most people in the organization do not know the program exists, that lack of awareness can reduce its value and effectiveness. To better understand this awareness and other perceptions and trends regarding DEI, Avenue M Group (Avenue M) is conducting DEI surveys on behalf of multiple membership associations serving various industries.

The results are surprising. This article uncovers some of those unexpected results from two DEI research projects conducted on behalf of 17 associations and with more than 12,300 respondents overall. Avenue M also presents recommendations for a successful DEI policy, program, and/or initiative.



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What We Found

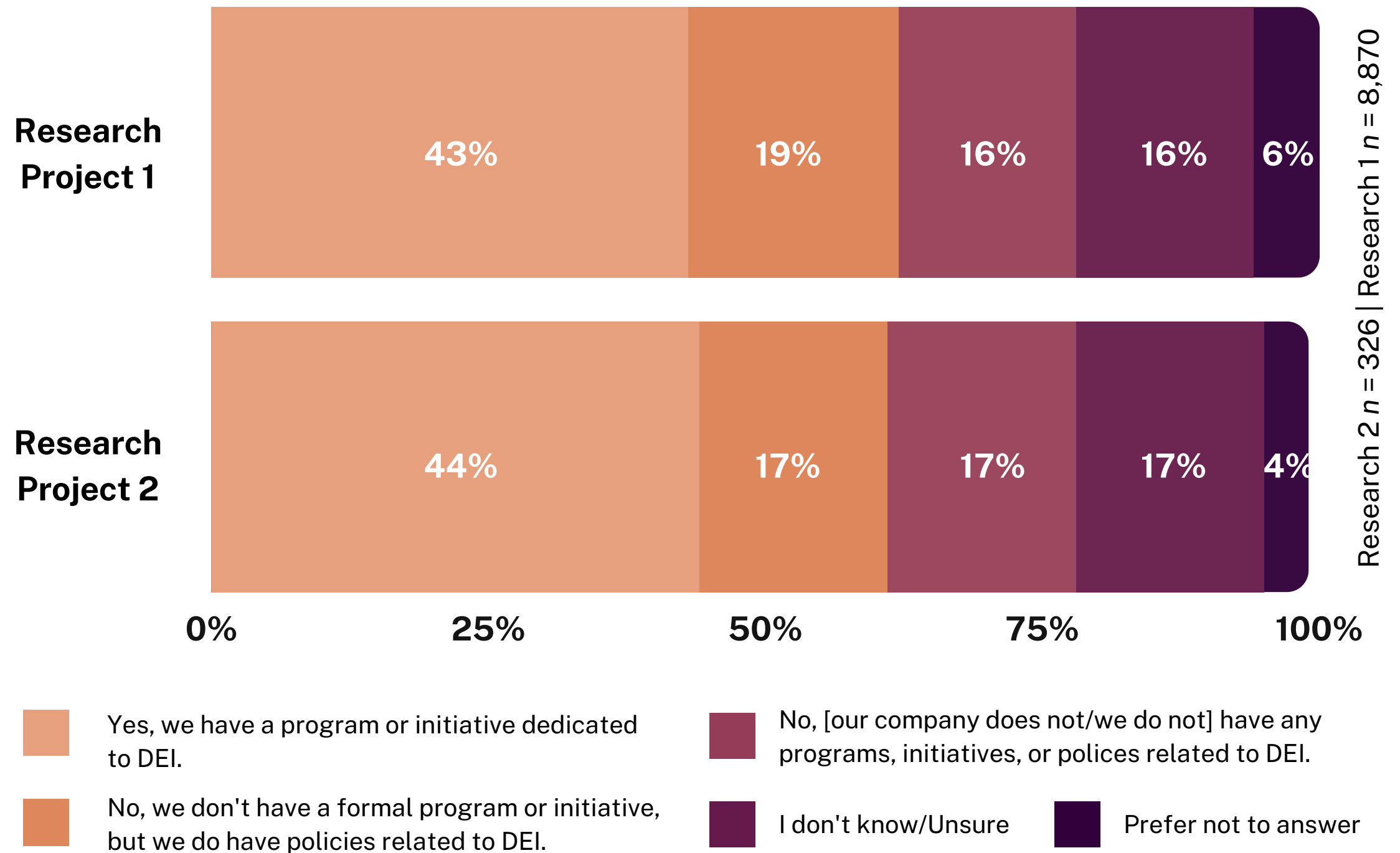
In the two DEI research projects, Avenue M asked respondents the question, “Does your workplace have a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) or equivalent program or initiative?”* Despite the different audiences, the results from the two research endeavors were surprisingly similar.

Both revealed that around two in five respondents indicated their workplaces have a program or initiative dedicated to DEI. Almost one-fifth of respondents indicated that, while their workplace doesn’t have a formal program or initiative, it has policies related to DEI. Fewer than one in five respondents said their workplace has no program, initiative, or policies related to DEI.

What surprised Avenue M the most? Close to one in five respondents (16% in Research Project 1 and 17% in Research Project 2) simply didn’t know if their workplace has a DEI program or initiative. To find out more, Avenue M dug deeper into the data to see what types of respondents indicated they were unsure.



Does [the company where you work/your workplace] have a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) or equivalent program or initiative?



*The question on workplace DEI programs/initiatives was tailored by audience. In Research Project 1, the question was, “Does the company where you work have a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) or equivalent program or initiative?” It was shown to all respondents except unemployed and retired respondents. In Research Project 2, the question was, “Does your workplace have a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) or equivalent program or initiative?” It was shown to all respondents except residents, medical students, unemployed respondents, and retired respondents.

Digging Deeper Into the Data

Employment Situation

Across the two research endeavors, Avenue M found that respondents' level of uncertainty regarding their workplace's DEI program or initiative varied based on employment situation: job position/level in Research Project 1 and employment status in Research Project 2. *(As a note, the following differences in Research Project 1 were statistically significant, but the differences in Research Project 2 were not, possibly because of sample size).*

- **Job Position/Level in Research Project 1:** **Mid-level workers (22%)** and **entry-level workers (35%)** were statistically significantly more likely to be uncertain about whether their workplace has a DEI program or initiative, compared to **Vice Presidents/Senior Vice Presidents (6%)** and **Presidents or C-level Executives (5%)**.
- **Employment Status in Research Project 2:** **More than one in four (26%) respondents who work part-time** were unsure if their workplace has a DEI program or initiative, compared to **less than one in five (17%) respondents who are employed full-time**.

Tenure

In both research projects, respondents' level of uncertainty on whether their workplace has a DEI program/initiative also varied based on tenure.

- **Tenure in Research Project 1:** Respondents who have worked in their field for **10 years or fewer (23%)** were statistically significantly more likely to be unsure compared to those who have worked in their field for **21 years or more (12%)**.
- **Tenure in Research Project 2:** **Almost one in four (24%) respondents who have worked in their field for nine years or fewer** were unsure if their workplace has a DEI program or initiative, compared to **less than one in five (13%) respondents who have worked in their field for 20 years or more**. *(Again, these differences in Research Project 2 are notable but not statistically significant.)*



Why It Matters

It has long been known that organizations that emphasize DEI usually outperform those that don't. Why? Organizations that foster an environment focused on DEI tend to have higher employee engagement, productivity, job satisfaction, and morale.

While your organization may have fantastic DEI policies, programs, and/or initiatives, if only more experienced employees in higher position levels are aware of them, they may not be supporting employees in more precarious employment situations.

What You Can Do

Here are three ways your organization can better position its DEI program:

01

Send a short internal survey to everyone at your organization. Use the survey to gauge both awareness of and knowledge about your organization's DEI policies, programs, and/or initiatives. You may find employees simply don't know about your organization's DEI efforts, or while they may be aware of them, they might not know much about the specifics of the policies, programs, and/or initiatives your organization has set in place.

The survey itself will increase awareness of your organization's DEI endeavors and may reveal interesting insights that indicate what steps need to be taken to further promote your organization's DEI efforts.

02

Ensure there is support for your organization's DEI policies, programs, and/or initiatives from all levels. As indicated in Avenue M's DEI research, employees with more years in their field and in more senior-level positions tend to be more aware of whether their organization has DEI policies, programs, and/or initiatives than employees with less experience and in entry- and mid-level positions.

If awareness of and support for your organization's DEI policies, programs, and/or initiatives remain only at the top, entry- and mid-level workers or part-time workers are less likely to take part in and contribute to your organization's DEI efforts. Senior-level employees must adopt an inclusive leadership approach that clearly communicates the importance of and expectations around DEI policies, programs, and/or initiatives to the entire organization. Additionally, identify and support "champions" of your organization's DEI efforts throughout all levels of the organization so that the efforts are not (and do not appear to be) top-down only.

03

Position DEI policies, programs, and/or initiatives as an essential function vital to the success of the organization. DEI efforts should stretch beyond hiring to ensure that people already at the organization are represented, treated equitably, and heard. Shifting employees' mindsets from viewing DEI efforts as a peripheral task to a core aspect of their work is essential for any DEI policy, program, and/or initiative to be successful.

Successful DEI efforts can bring value to any organization. Make sure employees know your organization is committed to building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace by increasing awareness of your organization's DEI endeavors.

The next article in this series will reveal how respondents define diversity and their perceptions of diversity in the workplace.



About Avenue M Group

Avenue M is a full-service market research and consulting agency with in-depth expertise in examining why individuals believe in brands, organizations, and missions. Established more than a decade ago by CEO Sheri Jacobs, FASAE, CAE, Avenue M Group was formed on the concept of giving clients the individualized attention, expertise, and insights they need and deserve to obtain the results they desire. Since its inception, more than 200 associations have turned to Avenue M to help them solve the challenges they face and remain relevant in the future.

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