



**Diversity, Equity,
Inclusion and
Accessibility**

Association of Legal Administrators



Becoming an Advocate for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility

alanet.org/about/diversity



What Is Diversity and Inclusion?

Diversity and inclusion are about recognizing, respecting and valuing differences based on gender, race, skin color, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, physical ability and sexual orientation. This also encompasses an infinite range of individual characteristics and experiences, such as communication style, career path, political views, educational background, geographic location, income level, military experience, marital status, parental status and other variables that influence personal perspectives.

Successful organizations demonstrate an ability to harness diversity of vision, thought and perspectives, which affords them a wealth of resources to leverage superior business performance.

Homogeneity may adversely affect behavior.

Diversity and Inclusion Bottomline

- Among companies with more than \$10 billion in annual revenues, 56 percent strongly agreed that diversity helps drive innovation.¹
- Diversity is an area in which law firms have traditionally not competed well.²
- When teams had one or more members who represented a target end user, the entire team was as much as 158% more likely to understand that target end user and innovate accordingly.³
- The importance and value of a more diverse and inclusive legal profession goes well beyond dollars and cents. A diverse and inclusive legal profession is fundamental to social justice.⁴
- Diversity is associated with increased sales revenue, more customers, greater market share and greater relative profits⁵

Key Steps for a Successful Diversity Program

1 ASPIRE

Where to we want to go?

Define a clear value proposition.

- » Create a clear value proposition for having a diverse and inclusive culture.
- » Set a few clear targets (not quotas) that balance complexity with cohesiveness.

2 ASSESS

How ready are we to go there?

Establish a fact base.

- » Understand the current situation in terms of statistics and mindsets and learn from external best practices. Understand root causes and underlying mindsets.

3 ARCHITECT

What do we need to do to get there?

Create targeted initiatives.

- » Differentiate initiatives by diversity group — for example, gender initiatives do not always resonate with other minorities. Lead from the top.

4 ACT

How do we manage the journey?

Define the governance model.

- » Define the rollout strategy for all initiatives. Launch 1–2 highly flagship products at the beginning of the effort. Monitor rigorously.

5 ADVANCE

How do we keep moving forward?

Build inclusion.

- » Continuously address potential mindset barriers through systematic change management. Link diversity to other change management efforts.

Beyond Diversity: Inclusion = Success

- Inclusion is more than a program; it should be woven throughout every aspect of an organization's philosophy.
- The best way for firms to support women and diverse attorneys is to have a leadership structure that features attorneys like them. When diverse lawyers look up, they want to see successful women, black, Latino, Asian and LGBTQ+ leaders. They want to know that there's an opportunity for them, too, to reach that level.²
- An inclusive platform for diverse attorneys to succeed — supported and funded by the firm — may identify and propel a new generation of leaders that reflects demographically what law firm management should be.²
- In most law firms, professional development and diversity and inclusion are separate initiatives. Instead of having committees for both, invite a group of lawyers and professionals from both areas to join an advisory group to share perspective and thoughts, and then ask participants to set a living example for others. While subtle, the minor change can be a powerful way to shift the focus to behavioral outcomes.⁶

SOURCE: Scott Keller and Colin Price, *Beyond Performance: How great organizations build ultimate competitive advantage*, Wiley, 2011.



Visit the alanet.org/about/diversity for additional resources.



Advocate Award

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility believes that all members and chapters can and should be advocates for inclusion, equity, diversity and accessibility not only in our association but also in our workplaces. Therefore, in the guidelines for the 2021 Presidents' Award of Excellence, chapters will find new criteria aimed at building and forging more inclusive and diverse chapters. Starting in 2021, those chapters who meet all the required criteria focused on inclusion, equity, diversity will receive special recognition along with their Presidents' Award of Excellence seal for placement on the chapter website, social media channels and newsletters.





Resources

1. "Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce." forbes.com/forbesinsights/innovation_diversity
2. "Embrace Diversity as a Business Imperative," *New York Law Journal*. cadwalader.com/uploads/books/bc2410cdb2e97003b25cdea65a024cb3.pdf
3. "The Evidence Is Growing – There Really Is a Business Case for Diversity." ft.com/content/4f4b3c8e-d521-11e3-9187-00144feabdc0
4. "The Business Case for Diversity: Reality or Wishful Thinking?," The Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession and the Association of Legal Administrators. theiilp.com/Resources/Documents/BusCaseDivReport_11_Final.pdf
5. "Does Diversity Pay?," *American Sociological Review*, American Sociological Association. asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/images/journals/docs/pdf/asr/Apr09ASRFeature.pdf
6. "Motivating Lawyers to Move from Activity to Impact: The Intersection of Professional Development and Diversity," *Law Practice Today*. americanbar.org/content/newsletter/publications/law_practice_today_home/lpt-archives/may13/motivating-lawyers-to-move-from-activity-to-impact.html



The Association of Legal Administrators is the nonprofit trade organization representing professionals in legal management.

ALA is the premier professional association connecting leaders and managers within the legal industry. We provide extensive professional development, collaborative peer communities, strategic operational solutions, and business partner connections empowering our members to lead the business of law.

The Association takes diversity and inclusion seriously. Led by its Committee on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility, ALA is committed to this initiative within the organization, its membership and the legal profession as a whole.

A full library of free resources can be found at alanet.org/about/diversity. Contact the Committee on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility at diversity@alanet.org and join its social media discussions:



Handle: @ALAdiversity



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ALA Diversity, Equity,
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