

Best Practices for Implementing DEI Initiatives

ATA's DEI Mission & Vision

ATA is a member-based organization. It represents America's for-hire motor carriers, private motor carriers, private carriers, industry suppliers and allied companies, shippers, and individual professionals. ATA also represents Americans from every background and seeks to ensure their voices are heard and that our industry values different perspectives and experiences. Every individual working in the industry is a part of our success and is valued for their experience and perspective.

ATA's diversity and inclusion efforts are meant to further connect and empower our members, customers, suppliers, and the communities we serve. We seek to make our industry and the communities we serve stronger and more accessible for every American for their benefit and ours.

ATA and our members have a longstanding commitment to equal opportunity in our vibrant industry. We value inclusion, diversity, and the talents of people from all walks of life, in every role and business, to ensure they can achieve their full potential.

"The trucking industry strives to be as diverse and dynamic as the country we serve. Establishing new career pathways into the trucking industry while broadening and diversifying the talent pools which the trucking industry recruits from will help to alleviate a significant pressure point imperiling the supply chain. It's both the right thing to do and a business necessity."
Chris Spear, ATA President and CEO

"I'm calling on trucking and logistics business leaders large and small to begin taking steps to create a culture more accepting of others from different races, ethnicities, genders and sexual orientation. As an industry, we'll struggle to attract the type of talent we need to compete in a global economy if we don't start having these conversations and enacting real change."
Eric Fuller, President and CEO of U.S. Express¹

1. Why our Industry Focuses on Embracing Diversity

The most compelling reason for embracing diversity is to help individuals obtain great careers in our industry. Doing so will also help address persistent labor shortages challenging our industry. ATA recently estimated the industry is short 80,000 drivers.² Demographic shifts in America will accelerate the need to seek diverse talent pools as, by 2050, more than half of the population will be from current racial minority groups. In recent years there have been tremendous efforts put into expanding diversity and inclusion in the industry. These efforts have shown some success, for example, increasing the representation of Black, Hispanic,³ and Asian drivers (currently over 40 percent of drivers). However, attracting and retaining women (currently only 7 percent of drivers) and diversity across the board in our industry's management and ownership ranks continues to be a challenge. Trucking can also better position itself in the competition for top millennial and GenZ talent by being seen as inclusive of all dimensions of diversity.⁴ Encouraging and embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion can be a factor in solving issues the industry confronts today.

Diversity and inclusion help the bottom line. Diverse companies tend to perform better than their industry peers. McKinsey⁵ estimates that companies with gender and ethnic diversity can financially perform up to 25 percent better than the national industry median. According to Jerry Jasinowski, former CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers, maximizing the economic roles of women, people with disabilities, and immigrants in the marketplace is essential to encourage growth and innovation. Diverse companies are more innovative. A 2018 study reported by Harvard Business Review "found that indeed there was a statistically significant relationship between diversity and innovation in all countries examined."⁶ This study was based on a survey of 1,700 companies in several countries. Valuing diversity leads to improved communications and problem-solving in an organization. This results in better teamwork within and between organizations, better time management, minimized downtime, and increased commitment to accomplish objectives, translating into greater customer satisfaction. External forces can also encourage a greater focus on diversity. Investors are increasingly interested in diversity and inclusion for publicly traded companies because they believe it leads to better results. Proactive organizations with diversity initiatives have stock prices that tend to be higher, and business goals are reached faster.

Beyond the business case, all society benefits by making room for everyone to succeed. Improving the environment for all makes it better for truckers. We can make the world in which truckers operate more welcoming and inclusive by embracing diversity in our organizations and making sure all individual employees have input into the business.

2. Defining Diversity

Numerous institutions use the following definition of diversity:

Diversity is broadly defined as the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.⁷

2.1 Defining Workplace Diversity

Workplace diversity is organization-specific and refers to an organization's intentionality to employ a range of individuals who share similarities and differences through a wide range of characteristics, including those listed above.

Definitions of diversity in the workplace are broad and differ from one organization to another as their concept of diversity varies. Here are a few different viewpoints on defining Workplace Diversity:

- [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#):⁸ “Although the term is often used to refer to differences based on ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, national origin, and sexual orientation; diversity encompasses an infinite range of individuals’ unique characteristics and experiences, including communication styles, physical characteristics such as height and weight and speed of learning and comprehension.”
- [Microsoft](#):⁹ “Diversity enriches performance and products, the communities where employees live and work and correspondingly the lives of employees.” As the workforce evolves to reflect growing diversity in communities and the global marketplace, efforts to understand, value, and incorporate differences are becoming increasingly important.
- [Texas Instruments \(TI\)](#)¹⁰ defines diversity as their effectiveness in using talents of people of different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives and believes that it is key to their competitive edge. Valuing diversity in their work force is at the core of the TI value statement. Every TI employee is encouraged to create an environment that promotes diversity and TI business develops diversity strategies and measurements.
- [University of Maryland](#):¹¹ –Diversity is otherness, or those human qualities that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups. It is important to distinguish between the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity. Primary: age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, and sexual orientation. Secondary: those that can be changed and include but are not limited to educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, parental status, religious beliefs, and work experiences.
- *Resources:*
DI Training Module 1 (Under Development)¹²

3. How to Get Started

Not all organizations are beginning their journeys in the same place, and that's okay. Some are just getting started, while others are quite advanced. Over 33 percent of respondents to the 2021 ATA Membership Diversity and Inclusion Survey rated their organizations as “Advanced” or “Vanguard.” Regardless of where your organization is on the journey, here are four common generally accepted imperatives for a successful diversity and inclusion initiative.

- 1) **Leader-Led.** This must be a **leadership and business** imperative, not a “HR project.”
- 2) **Establish Your “Why.”** Document your purpose, vision, and objectives.
- 3) **Organization.** Organize the team, with representation from all key stakeholder groups.
- 4) **Strategy and Action Plan.** Develop a durable strategy with specific actions for impact.

3.1 Leader-Led

DEI initiatives are most successful when driven by the leadership team. At least one company leader or senior team member should champion the initiative.

“Hold leaders accountable for implementing the organization’s D&I vision, setting goals, achieving results, and being role models.”
Global Diversity Equity Inclusion Benchmarks – GDEIB.¹³

Examples/Best Practices

- [US Xpress CEO Eric Fuller’s OpEd and viewpoint piece](#)¹⁴ about the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and a call for an industry-wide change.
- Senior team members should create initiatives to promote organizational change. The following is from *Leading Change* by John P. Kotter:¹⁵

Putting together the Guiding Coalition.

The first step in putting together the kind of team that can direct a change effort is to find the right membership. Four key characteristics seem to be essential to effective guiding coalitions. They are:

- 1) Position Power: Are enough key players on board, especially the main line managers, so that those left out cannot easily block progress?
- 2) Expertise: Are the various points of view - in terms of discipline, work experience, nationality, etc. - relevant to the task at hand adequately represented so that informed, intelligent decisions will be made?
- 3) Credibility: Does the group have enough people with good reputations in the firm so that its pronouncements will be taken seriously by other employees?
- 4) Leadership: Does the group include enough proven leaders to be able to drive the change process?

3.2 Establish Your “Why”

Document your purpose, vision, and objectives.

*“Develop a strong rationale for D&I purpose, vision, objectives and strategy and align it to organizational goals.”*¹⁶

Examples/Best Practices

[Cummins’ Business Case for Diversity](#)¹⁷ sets out the company imperative to value diversity, equity, and inclusion. It sets out how this is tied to achieving their collective vision, and mission and serves as a crucial strategic advantage to meet complex external challenges it faces in operating on a global scale.

3.3 Organization

Organize the team, with representation from all key stakeholder groups.

*“Provide visible, dedicated support and structure with authority and budget to effectively implement D&I.”*¹⁸

Examples/Best Practices

- [XPO Logistics forms Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Steering Committee](#)¹⁹ to advance their DEI agenda. With 29 leaders across XPO’s operations in North America and Europe, uniting around a formal mission and vision have developed action plans across workstreams including: Communications, Diversity Recruiting, Employee Resource Groups, External Partnerships and Community Engagement, External Speaker Series, Organizational & Culture Assessment, Performance Management, and Supplier Diversity Program.

3.4 Strategy and Action Plan

Develop a durable strategy with specific actions for impact, organized around these focus areas:

3.4.1 Leadership Engagement

What it looks like.

“Leaders and board members view the accomplishment of DE&I goals and objectives as an important part of their management and oversight responsibilities. They publicly support internal and external diversity-related activities and are seen as DE&I change agents. Leaders are held accountable for implementing the DE&I strategy. They position DE&I as a key component of their organization’s sustainability agenda and provide DE&I coaching to those they manage, creating both a psychologically and physically safe workplace. Leadership development includes DE&I competency build and this is evaluated when determining succession pools for leadership.”²⁰

Examples/Best Practices

- Walmart’s “President’s Inclusion Council ([Equity & inclusion at Walmart & beyond](#))²¹ is comprised of eleven Walmart executives (including President and CEO Doug McMillon, who chairs the Council) and serve in an advisory capacity to Walmart’s Executive Committee and the entire organization to help Walmart sharpen its culture and dial up inclusiveness across the enterprise. The members represent each of Walmart’s business units and corporate centers of excellence, and serve for a two-year term.”
- [Sodexo](#)²² gender equality strategy SoTogether is a global advisory board consisting of senior executives, alumni, and associates from many nationalities dedicated to advancing women at all levels. The advisory board reports to the executive committee to lead and drive organizational gender equality, enlist influential individuals onto the board, and make high potential visible across the organization.

3.4.2 Talent Acquisition, Including External Partnerships/Employment Pathways

What it looks like.

“A conscious effort is made to attract applicants from diverse groups to achieve and maintain a workforce that is equitably representative across levels and functions. Advertising and recruitment are targeted to diverse communities. Diversity on interviewing panels is standard, and staffing/hiring managers are educated on the impact of conscious and unconscious bias. The recruitment process is regularly reviewed to ensure it is equitable and fair. Hiring of underrepresented groups is roughly proportionate to their representation. There are clear DE&I measures of success throughout the recruitment process.”²³

Examples/Best Practices

- [Amazon’s veterans and military initiatives](#)²⁴ include hiring events, apprenticeship and internship opportunities for those leaving the military. With dedicated resources and targeted efforts that understand and provide the support for those that have served in the military, Amazon is intentional in its effort to help this community into its workforce.
- [Sodexo](#)²⁵ gender, generations and sexual orientation are part of the Sodexo hiring strategy. Sodexo is intentional in its recruiting strategies as they live up to their mission “to make everyone’s business better too,” gender balance is a diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy.
- [EY](#)²⁶ assigned full-time partner-level leadership diversity to recruiting. EY believes only the highest-performing teams maximize the power of different opinions, perspectives, and cultural references to succeed in the marketplace.

3.4.3 Employee Development

What it looks like.

“A conscious effort is made to maintain a workforce that is diverse across levels and functions. High-potential employees from underrepresented groups are provided with coaching, mentoring and sponsorship opportunities to advance within the organization. The onboarding process results in all new employees feeling valued and included. Promotion and advancement of underrepresented groups is proportional to the representation of those groups in the organization. Performance reviews, and involuntary and voluntary turnover of underrepresented groups are measured and analyzed using interviews, employee engagement surveys and so forth.”²⁷

Examples/Best Practices

- [Trimac Academy](#)²⁸ aims to be the best in any industry to provide its people a combination of internal and external training and learning materials—both on the job required training but for continued development and personal growth in their careers.
- [Accenture](#)²⁹ diversity and inclusion is comprised with high focus on the idea that no one should be discriminated against because of physical difference such as age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and sexual orientation. Accenture focuses diversity training on three core areas: diversity awareness, diversity management, and professional development.

3.4.4 Employee Engagement, Including Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and Compensation and Benefits

What it looks like.

The organization provides structure and budget for employee resource groups (ERGs; also known as affinity groups, or business network groups) for employees who join together in the workplace based on shared characteristics or life experiences to provide support, career and personal development, and for harnessing their collective power to effect positive change and foster an inclusive environment within the company. DE&I measurement is integrated into assessment tools such as engagement surveys or cultural audits. Remuneration is based on job requirements and performance. The organization aspires to pay a minimum living wage, in accordance with locally agreed upon standards. Compensation analyses are conducted regularly to ensure that biases based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability and other potential areas of discrimination are significantly reduced. Work-life integration, flexibility and equitable benefits are encouraged, actively promoted, recognized as enhancements of productivity and are not career limiting.³⁰

Examples/Best Practices

- [USA Truck’s focus on Driver Experience](#)³¹ by simplifying driver pay structure to include regular pay increases, creating dedicated jobs that pay \$100k+ per year in select markets, launching pet insurance as a benefit, partnering with WorkHound which allows employees to provide anonymous real time feedback. Continuing to innovate ways to improve driver’s experience with award winning driver loadboard.
- [Coca-Cola](#)³² designs “employee networks that are employee-led, company-recognized networks that serve as a resource to both employees and organization. They are regionally structured, globally connected groups of employees with common interests or backgrounds.” Coca-Cola places the networks as a recognition platform to value voices, cultural sensitivity, and awareness. The company places emphasis on three core areas: affinity, allyship, community and celebration which enhances recruiting, retention, engagement and development, enablement of diverse vocalization communities within and outside of Coca-Cola, and diverse sounding boards for business strategies capturing input and potential strategy.

3.4.5 Community Engagement, Including Diversity in Procurement

What it looks like.

The organization is a recognized leader for supporting and advocating for DE&I interests in communities and society, and in working with the government. The organization is socially responsible and leverages efforts with industry or sector peers. It is generous in partnering with or supporting other organizations in their DE&I initiatives to advance DE&I in the community. Employees are encouraged to participate in and support various community projects, share DE&I learning from such activities and reinforce the organization's commitment to DE&I. The organization develops, nurtures and commits a portion of its purchasing to underrepresented suppliers.³³

Examples/Best Practices

- [USA Truck Environmental Social Governance \(ESG\) Report](#)³⁴ demonstrates commitment to “achieve results in an ethically balanced and well-governed way” ensuring “sustainability of our planet, society and our Company.” Community involvement activities include: “Annual Volunteer Day for all employees to engage with local community;” “monthly giving campaigns to support local organizations;” “disaster relief response programs;” and “donation of salvage freight to local charities.”
- [Walmart's Supplier Inclusion programs](#)³⁵ aim to source goods and services from diverse suppliers and thereby enable those businesses to thrive and grow by working with Walmart. The company launched a Supplier Inclusion Advisory Council comprised of leaders from across the Merchandising organization to foster, promote, grow, develop and retain a robust and inclusive supply chain. It also recognizes that one of the many challenges for many suppliers is gaining access to working capital. Through partnerships, Walmart expanded an early payment program which features consistent access to reliable funding.

3.4.6 Learning and Development, Including Communications

What it looks like.

Leaders and employees throughout the organization receive DE&I training specific to their job and level to achieve the competence and confidence needed to achieve the organization's goals. Internal and external DE&I communications are ongoing, innovative, accessible, transparent and report regularly on progress made towards goals.³⁶

Examples/Best Practices

- [Pepsico launched BOLD \(Breakthrough Organizational Leadership Development\)](#)³⁷ a six-month executive development program that offers support and opportunities to the Black and Hispanic middle managers. It's part of the larger commitment by the company to uplift Black and Hispanic representation at all levels within PepsiCo.

3.4.7 Measure–Key Metrics and Goals are Linked to Purpose, Vision, and Objectives

What it looks like.

“Metrics indicate your current efforts and helps your organization assess diversity, equity and inclusion (and belonging) outcomes, progress, assign goals and develop accountability.” (AIHR)³⁸ DE&I measures are explicitly linked to strategy and have an impact on leaders at all levels, including their performance appraisals, recognition and rewards.³⁹

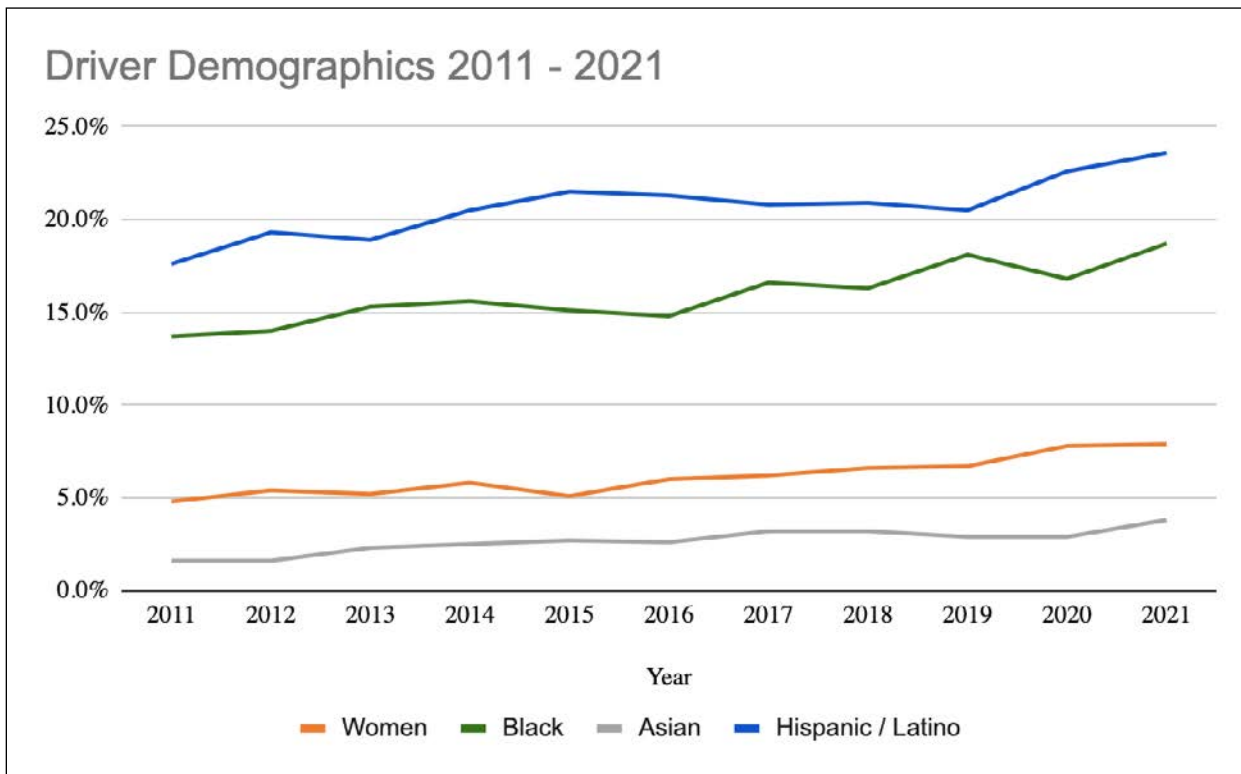
Examples/Best Practices

- [Starbucks commitment to transparency](#)⁴⁰ by publicly sharing the workforce diversity data serves as publicly accountability to its goals and progress.

- [Walgreens](#)⁴¹ annually reports on the organizational view, commitments, metrics, and progress to diversity and inclusion. “By reporting regularly on our D&I goals and achievements, we hold ourselves accountable to fostering and creating a truly inclusive organization that improves performance, drives growth and enhances engagement among ourselves and with our customers and suppliers.”

Truck Driver Demographics Graphic

As America has grown more diverse, so has the trucking industry. See the increase in the number of women drivers and Black, Asian, and Hispanic drivers over time.



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