



Leadership and Governance Toolkit

Tool 21: Is your Board equipped to Provide Guidance on DEI?

Ensuring DEI Remains a Top Priority for the Organization	Holding Organizational Leadership Accountable for DEI Progress	Providing Guidance around DEI Challenges and Progress
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One of the key functions of a Board when it comes to DEI is to provide the leadership team with guidance.

Strong guidance depends on the presence of (1) DEI expertise among Board members, (2) DEI champions for change, (3) DEI lived experience on the Board, and (4) a commitment to holding itself accountable.

To ensure a Board can provide strong DEI-related guidance, they must consider the following key success factors:

1. Does your Board have a group of Board members with experience designing and implementing DEI strategies?
2. Is your Board willing to attend training to improve their understanding of the organizations' challenges in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion?
3. Does your Board have mechanisms that allow the leadership team to share firsthand DEI experiences of the staff and managers in the organization?
4. Is your Board willing to change its members' makeup to ensure members have lived DEI experience, professional experience with driving DEI change, and are willing to champion DEI at the Board level? Although finding Board members with these skills is a priority, it must be implemented with thought and care. Many Leadership teams drive diversity in their Boards by recruiting younger members from EDGs who may not (1) have the lived and professional experience required to drive organizational change, (2) hold senior leaders accountable, or (3) be experienced enough to guide leaders in directions that are difficult to pursue, but will result in real DEI change. Although not all younger Board members from EDGs have these deficits, they are important considerations when diversifying your Board make up. Finding Board



members with the right DEI expertise as well as DEI-related lived experience takes time, effort and investment. Organizations must be willing to invest in this important priority.

5. Is the Board willing to support a DEI committee that includes key staff and leaders within the organization, members of the community and board members to serve as a governing body around DEI that holds not only the organization accountable but also the Board?