

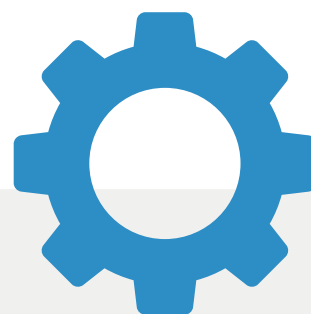
THE RISE OF THE DEDICATED D&I ROLE





Driven by recent changes to social and political landscapes across the EU and US, interest in diversity and inclusion (D&I) appears to be growing quickly.

Online, Google Trends data shows that related search queries have risen markedly over the past 12 months, and further research tells us this rejuvenated focus is now filtering down to HR teams across industries in the UK.



WHERE WE ARE NOW: A PICTURE IN DATA

Optamor data shows a 90% rise in the number of diversity-specific roles over the past year, with around 2,000 dedicated D&I professionals now working in the UK.

The appetite of employers for these types of professionals is strong, too. At the time of writing there are approximately 4,000 D&I-specific adverts live, showing that more companies than ever are chasing the benefits of having balanced teams and fair working environments.

[Additional data from LinkedIn](#) shows that UK organisations employ twice as many D&I professionals per 10,000 employees than any other country (beaten only by the US) and that the number of roles available in 2020 had risen 58% over the previous five years.

WHO ARE THESE D&I PROFESSIONALS?

Job adverts tell us that D&I professionals and the roles created for them go by many names.

The current vacancy list, for example, has titles such as Head of Diversity and Inclusion; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager; and Diversity & Inclusion Consultant. Unsurprisingly, all have similar responsibilities and most have an overarching goal of increasing or maintaining workforce diversity. Many are senior positions, too.

Thankfully, the D&I category bucks at least one of the trends it aims to influence, as 52% of current talent is female – a smaller proportion than in wider HR but much greater than on the average board of a FTSE 250 business.

As could be expected in a category where many roles are senior, almost half of D&I talent (49%) has eight or more years of experience in their area. But chances are also being given to fresh – and [perhaps younger](#) – employees: 32% of professionals have less than three years' experience, compared with 19% who have between four and seven years.



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LARGE BUSINESSES ARE DRIVING THE CHANGE

The average salary for a D&I recruit is £36k, but those with more experience – like the 49% who have eight or more years behind them – earn, on average, £56k. And again, looking at current job boards, we see figures as high as £80-100k, more commonly for 'consultant' and 'specialist' positions.

With these figures in mind, it's no shock that larger businesses are driving the D&I shift. The biggest hirers according to our own data include firms like IBM, Lloyds Banking Group, the BBC and Transport for London (TfL), all of which have the resources to explore less traditional recruitment routes like this.

WHY NOW?

The benefits of diversity are more apparent and appealing than ever; especially as businesses face unprecedented economic uncertainty.

The business case for workplace, and more specifically boardroom, diversity is overwhelming. Researchers repeatedly [highlight its positive influence](#) on productivity, financial performance and innovation; and it's a topic we discuss regularly at Optamor too (read more: [How team diversity will boost your business](#)).

Social movements like Black Lives Matter have pushed diversity and inclusion up the agenda as well, especially for larger, public-facing companies that are more likely to be held to account by customers, employees and the media. It could be that decision-makers in these types of companies have been inspired by such movements or that they're keen to avoid reputational or legal ramifications that come with biased or non-inclusive hiring practices.

22k HR roles
with D&I-specific
responsibilities available
and a talent pool of
9.3k candidates.

D&I recruits with
more experience
can earn on average
£56k

Biggest hirers include:



A WAY IN FOR SMALLER BUSINESSES

Organisations that aren't ready or able to create new specialist roles can still build D&I into their structure by adapting existing HR functions.

Our data shows this to be a popular decision already: at the time of writing there are 22k HR roles with D&I-specific responsibilities available, and a talent pool of 9.3k candidates.

The vacancy list includes more familiar job titles such as HR Manager, HR Advisor and Head of HR, but the descriptions beneath them outline expectations around diversity and inclusion. One, for example, says the ideal applicant would "ensure diversity methods are used in attracting candidates", while another says candidates can expect to "promote equality and diversity" in their role if successful.



A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

By adapting existing HR roles to encompass D&I responsibilities, more apprehensive businesses should start to realise the benefits of representation in their workforces – and the more that happens, the more likely it is that new D&I-focused roles will be created.

That said, it's still likely to be larger, more innovative organisations leading the D&I charge in the coming years. [The LinkedIn data](#) that told us of 58% growth in roles over the past five years also highlights a 33% increase in just one year (June 2019 to June 2020), suggesting the pace of growth is also increasing.

[Another study carried out by PwC in 2020](#) found that two-thirds of companies (from a survey pool of 100, representing one million employees in the UK) are now collecting ethnicity data on their workforces, and half are planning to disclose their ethnicity pay gap reports public in the next three years. While this is only one form of data, and in a specific area of D&I, it does support the idea that the heightened interest in D&I will continue, with businesses more willing than ever to take responsibility. That's only likely to translate into more demand for D&I professionals, and the creation of more roles.

**2 out of 3
companies**
are now collecting
ethnicity data on their
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FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF D&I AND HOW OPTAMOR CAN HELP YOU.



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