

**10 QUESTIONS**  
EVERY ORGANIZATION  
SHOULD BE ASKING AROUND  
**DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION**

SAXUM



# Introduction

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**A commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion is not just an item to mark off the company checklist. It requires a shift in organizational thinking and company culture.**

Research illustrates the more diverse companies are the more innovative they are and the better they perform overall. That's a competitive advantage and something every employee and organization values.

A commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion is not just an item to mark off the company checklist. It requires a shift in organizational thinking and company culture. It takes time to make a meaningful impact and ultimately should be embedded in the DNA of your organization. The process, as we've learned at Saxum, is a long-term commitment that is never ending and always evolving.

These conversations are difficult to have and oftentimes make team members feel uncomfortable but are necessary to create a truly inclusive environment for all. We hope the following questions prompt meaningful dialogue – 1,000 small conversations to be exact – in your organization to lead to meaningful and measurable change on your path to creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive world.

# Saxum's Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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We respect and celebrate the unique attributes, characteristics and perspectives that make all of us who we are. We draw our strength from our collective experiences, fostering a culture of belonging and innovation.

## We are committed because:

- + First and foremost, because it's the right thing to do.
- + Demographic and social shifts within the global market demand it, and we need to be informed so we can help better counsel our clients and inform our world.
- + It maximizes our agency's ability to live our values - to BE BOLD (Brave, Original, Lively and Driven).
- + Attracting and retaining the best talent requires us to be diverse, equitable and inclusive.

# Saxum's Key DEI Objectives



- + Become aware of our cultural background and understand the experiences and expectations of other individuals may be different.
- + Gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- + Recognize the implications of implicit biases in the workplace.
- + Learn that undertaking a DEI initiative is a long-term process which includes everyone's active involvement.
- + Understand the concepts of historical distrust, cultural humility and white privilege.
- + Establish common DEI language and understand how DEI relates to our different areas of work at Saxum.
- + Identify organizational DEI action areas and activities.

# 10 Questions You Can Ask

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- 01 Is our environment safe enough for everyone to feel like they belong?

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  - 02 Are we an employer of choice for BBIPOC (Black, Brown, Indigenous, People of Color)?

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  - 03 Who's in the room and who's trying to get in the room but can't?

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  - 04 Is our organization a space where all ideas are heard?

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  - 05 How can we use our organization's overall strength to our advantage in developing our DEI strategy?

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  - 06 Who will lead this effort, help develop benchmarks, hold the team accountable and ensure we are on track?

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  - 07 Who will be the stakeholders, advocates and benefactors of this change?

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  - 08 What are the resources necessary to implement and support a robust strategy?

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  - 09 How do we get everyone in our organization on board?

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  - 10 How long will it take before we see and feel change?
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## **Is our environment safe enough for everyone to feel like they belong?**

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An inclusive workplace is one that values individual differences in the workforce, and makes all employees feel welcome and accepted. Consider surveying employees on how they feel on a quarterly basis to assess your environment for psychological safety.

- + Staff Surveys
- + Employee Committees & Support Groups
- + Open Door Policy

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## Are we an employer of choice for BBIPOC (Black, Brown, Indigenous, People of Color)?

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Consider how your organization is branded both internally and externally through a DEI lens. Assess where you currently are in terms of outreach and retention goals and develop explicit objectives to expand your talent pipeline. In order to meet your goals, you may need to be more intentional about attracting diverse talent into your respective industry.

- + Intentional Recruitment Efforts
- + Formalized Retention Program

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## Who's in the room and who's trying to get in the room but can't?

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Determine whose presence in the room is under constant threat of dismissal. If someone is missing or underrepresented, take time to invite them or seek a representative to ensure different perspectives are present in a meeting. Beware, you might have a blindspot and not even know you are missing someone's perspective, so be brave and ask for help on identifying critical voices.

- + Support For Underrepresented Groups
- + Mentorship Program
- + Open Door Policy With Company Leadership

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## Is our organization a space where all ideas are heard?

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Is your organization a space where all ideas are heard? Work to elevate quieter voices to ensure all perspectives are heard. Give space and opportunity for people to share ideas. You will be surprised where good ideas originate - often where you least expect.

- + Leadership Development - **GiANT**
- + Personality Type Assessments

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## How can we use our organization's overall strength to our advantage in developing our DEI strategy?

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A company's culture is always evolving. It's important to be authentic. Developing a DEI strategy is an opportunity to highlight your company's values and utilize the talent and passion of your staff in a way that can bring people together. You should only invest in creating a strategy if you can truly commit to it long-term.

- + DEI Committee
- + Annual Implementation Plan

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**Who will lead this effort, help develop benchmarks, hold the team accountable and ensure we are on track?**

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You need to establish a lead within your organization who will be responsible for working to keep leaders, clients/customers, stakeholders, advocates and external partners informed, engaged and accountable. For any DEI lead to be successful, they will need direct access to the CEO or a C-suite level executive to help inform decisions that affect your organization. This may even be a member of your executive team, depending on the size of your organization.

- + Empowerment For DEI Lead

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## **Who will be the stakeholders, advocates and benefactors of this change?**

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Determine who you want to engage in this effort and who you will ultimately reach through your initiative. Then develop an appropriate engagement plan and assess how often you want to connect with employees, the level of commitment necessary from members of your leadership team and which external partners you will need to consult with to accomplish your goals.

- + Roundtable Discussions
- + Lunch & Learns

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## What are the resources necessary to implement and support a robust strategy?

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It's important to dedicate talent resources and financial investments to the development and execution of a plan. A results-driven plan requires a robust and integrated strategy that includes both cost-free initiatives and ones that require investment.

In response to the recent tragedy, our DEI Champions produced a Resource Guide for our team that featured black-owned businesses, educational materials and organizations/opportunities for donating in communities where we operate.

- + Dedicated & Transparent Budget
- + Company-wide Resource Guides

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## How do we get everyone in our organization on board?

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A company-wide commitment must have support from all levels, all departments and all locations. Leaders set the tone so begin with your top executive. The role of leadership is essential for setting the stage, defining everyone's role in the process and highlighting the company's values and why it's important. It's also good to ensure you have advocates across the organization leading the effort.

- + Celebrate Milestones
- + All-Team Trainings & Discussions

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## How long will it take before we see and feel change?

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It all depends on your plan. There are short-term goals and long-term goals that require focus, patience and dedication. It's important to be transparent about your goals and achievements/challenges. Establish a criteria checklist, create a scoreboard that is accessible and track your progress along the way.

- + Define Success
- + Measure & Communicate Results

# Community Resources



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## **Oklahoma Center for Community & Justice:**

### **Inclusive Workplace Initiative**

provides educational programs, professional development, training and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) consultation to enhance workplace culture.

## **Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum:**

### **Better Conversations** facilitator

training to lead better conversations, to connect with others on how to give and receive support during difficult times.

## **Creative Reaction Lab: Community Action & Equity**

**workshops** offer participants the opportunity to learn about Equity-Centered Community Design and examine ways their daily design choices can promote inclusive and equitable outcomes.

Questions?  
**We're here to help.**

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