

# The Blueprint You Need For Diversity & Inclusion



# Introduction

What comes to mind when you hear the word diversity? Take a moment to close your eyes and then write down the first few things that come to mind.

There is a huge disconnect between the way most diversity training has been and still is being presented. A study from Harvard and Tevivi, that was based on a series of research from Kalev and Harvard's Frank Dobbin, studied 830 U.S. diversity trainings. The findings show that companies who implement mandatory diversity training actually saw declines in the numbers of some demographics and zero improvement among women and minorities. The authors also show how the efforts to reduce prejudice can not only backfire, but lead to an increase in bias and hostility.

To put it directly: diversity training hasn't been and still isn't working.

This guide delves into 8 steps to rethinking and creating learning that cultivates a healthy diversity mindset in your company culture.



# step one

Clearly define what diversity is and why it is important to your business.

Let's start right now.

## **Why is diversity and inclusion important to foster in your business?**

To capture employee attention you have to communicate how diversity and inclusion plays into your company's goals and overall vision. It's difficult to convince an employee to take a diversity training if they don't understand why the learning is important and relevant to the business in the first place.

Take a look at what you wrote above, and expand on this within your diversity learning content.

As Millennials take over leadership roles and Gen Z enters the workforce, a huge mindshift is taking place when it comes to the topic of diversity. Diversity is not something that needs to be learned with these groups, but rather is already a norm, and accepted. That's why it doesn't work to simply have diversity learning for the sake of it.

A few examples of goals to tie diversity learning to include:

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY

INCREASING CREATIVITY

AIM FOR LOWER TURNOVER

Diversity learning tied to tangible business and culture goals leads to higher buy-in from employees.

# step two

Clearly define what inclusion is and explain how inclusion puts the concept of diversity into action by creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection.

Pretty much everyone wants to be included. Whether it's in a social setting or a work setting, people need to feel that inclusion is possible.

To be included means to be a part of, to have a place in, or a piece of something, which in this case is a company work culture.

Within the workplace, inclusion is where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives are harnessed to create business value.

For a company, this is especially important. You want to expand your business to be as successful as possible and you do that when you make sure that people, with their diverse talents and perspectives, feel included on the mission. When you create a culture that promotes inclusion, you will find that people are more comfortable displaying their full range of talent.

Now, this is subject to change.

That sounds odd, but when it comes to the generations, everything is changing.

For Millennials, everything is focused on having a diverse culture and the efforts needed to gain it. For Generation Z, they don't expect diversity: they are blind to it because it's such a normal part of their everyday culture. They'll notice when a company doesn't have diversity, but they won't notice when it does.

# step three

Make diversity learning voluntary instead of mandatory, and tie it to a reward.

The biggest challenge diversity training faces is getting people to learn something from it. This has led research to come to one conclusion: don't make it mandatory. Mandatory diversity training has been shown through studies by Harvard and Tel Aviv to a) be ineffective and b) actually heighten resistance to diversity all together. On the cover of the latest issue of the Harvard Business Review, Harvard and Tel Aviv sociologists explore the counterintuitive idea that mandatory training is just ineffective.

With this in mind, the only thing you can do is make the training voluntary.

But when you decide to make diversity training voluntary, you run the risk of people not showing up. One of the researchers from the Harvard and Tel Aviv study said that when you make people sit through mandatory training, they will resist what you're teaching them and be grumpy in the process.

Keeping this in mind, gamification will be the key to making sure people take advantage of the training you're offering. If you offer rewards to people who come to the training (a day's paid vacation, a catered lunch, etc.) that will resonate with them as a positive experience and they are more likely to retain the information you are trying to impart.

Give your employees the choice and they'll get more from diversity training.

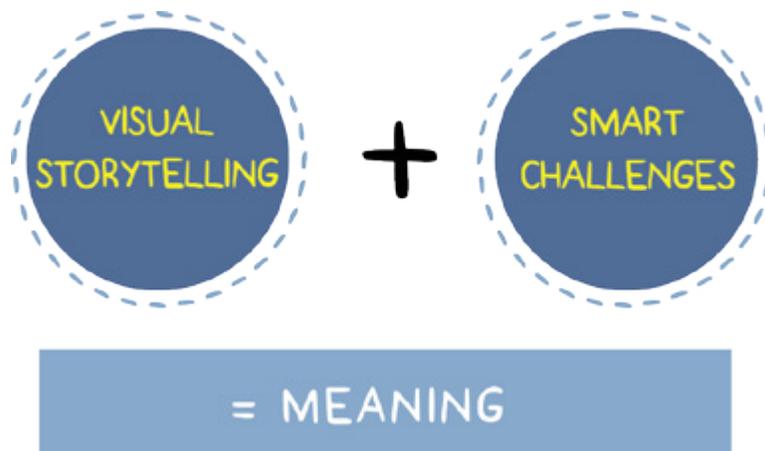


# step four

Make the learning interactive and scenario-based with detailed feedback.

At ELM, we've found consistent success in helping our clients on one of the most challenging parts of learning: keeping the learner engaged enough to retain the information.

We do this through our methodology called neurolearning, which boils down to the following formula:



## Why do visuals enhance learning?

Here's just a few stats from <http://visualteachingalliance.com/> on the topic.

The brain can see images that last for just 13 milliseconds.

Our eyes can register 36,000 visual messages per hour.

We can get the sense of a visual scene in less than 1/10 of a second.

90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual.

Visuals are processed 60,000X faster in the brain than text.

40 percent of nerve fibers are linked to the retina

But to really engage and retain information, learners also need to be challenged, get feedback, and consistently engage in the learning experience. We call these smart challenges, such as quizzes, drag and drop, simulations, and more.

This is why diversity training delivered via animated videos with interactive challenges and feedback is much more effective than traditional, stale, static diversity learning.

# step five

## Create awareness around unconscious bias in learning content.

We are all a little biased, it's a part of human nature. Some of our biases are obvious and harmless, but some are more serious. These are called unconscious bias which is the bias we have toward people that we aren't aware we have. These biases are dangerous because it could stop us from hiring a perfect candidate for a position based solely on something we're unconsciously biased of that won't affect them doing their work. There are two types of unconscious bias to be aware of:

**Micro-advantages-** This name is deceiving because at first you think that this is a good thing but it's actually a disadvantage. Micro-advantages are when we only collaborate with people who have the same mindset, ideas, cultural background, positions, etc. as us, and we avoid people who are different. This is a problem because when we do this, we lock ourselves out of a whole world of people with a lot to offer.

**Micro-inequities-** This unconscious bias is just rude. Micro-inequities happen when we text during a presentation, when we mispronounce someone's name repeatedly, or when we ignore someone's contribution to a conversation. The good thing about this unfortunate bias is that it is fairly easy to overcome. Just be aware of the people around you and display respect for your co-workers. That text can wait, their name isn't that hard, and they made a good point.

There is a way to ensure that unconscious bias doesn't affect our decision-making abilities and it's a pretty basic solution: become aware. Once we open ourselves up to the possibility that we have unconscious biases, we can start to correct ourselves. The thing is, we are all human and we all have biases but that doesn't mean that we have to let them control our decisions. We just have to become aware.

## Here's a real example from a large tech company we've all heard of: Facebook

Facebook, the world's largest social network, launched an internal unconscious bias training, and brought the training live for the world in an effort to bring a voice around improving diversity in the workplace. You can see the videos here: [Managing Unconscious Bias](#). Facebook developed the course to educate both employers and jobseekers on the reality of bias in the hiring process. But like many other tech companies, it still faces diversity issues, with a reported 68% of its employees being men (84% making up tech-related roles), and over half of its employees being white.

**So how could Facebook improve the results of its diversity efforts? Here's our suggestions:**



**First we want to give props where it's due.** Facebook made a great move with breaking down the content into shorter videos (also called Microlearning). This makes the content easier to consume, and allows learners to easily and quickly go back through content they may need a little more time with.



**The content would be more effective paired with "smart challenges."** Learner's need to be tested for comprehension of learning material while in the learning experience. They allow them to not only assess where they are at, but also repeat the information again to ensure understanding. Smart challenges can be quizzes, drag and drop tests, an in-person conversation about the content with a team member, and other things of that nature.



**The content needs to be more personalized to the learner.** While the content Facebook covered was good, we can imagine it must have been pretty hard for a learner to understand how bias can affect their personal role in the company. The information was more broad, and would have been more powerfully delivered by giving very specific examples of how to catch our bias, and how to begin becoming more aware of managing our bias through the day.



**The videos are short, but lack engagement.** Facebook could amplify the engagement factor of their video content by adding custom animation. The videos used from their internal training could have been better utilized as supporting material, with interactive videos being at the heart of driving each learning component.



**Instructional design can tie it all together and create a more powerful learning experience.** Putting this course together with an instructional design strategy would have greatly benefited the learners by understanding what their specific learning needs are, and focusing on those needs within the training content.

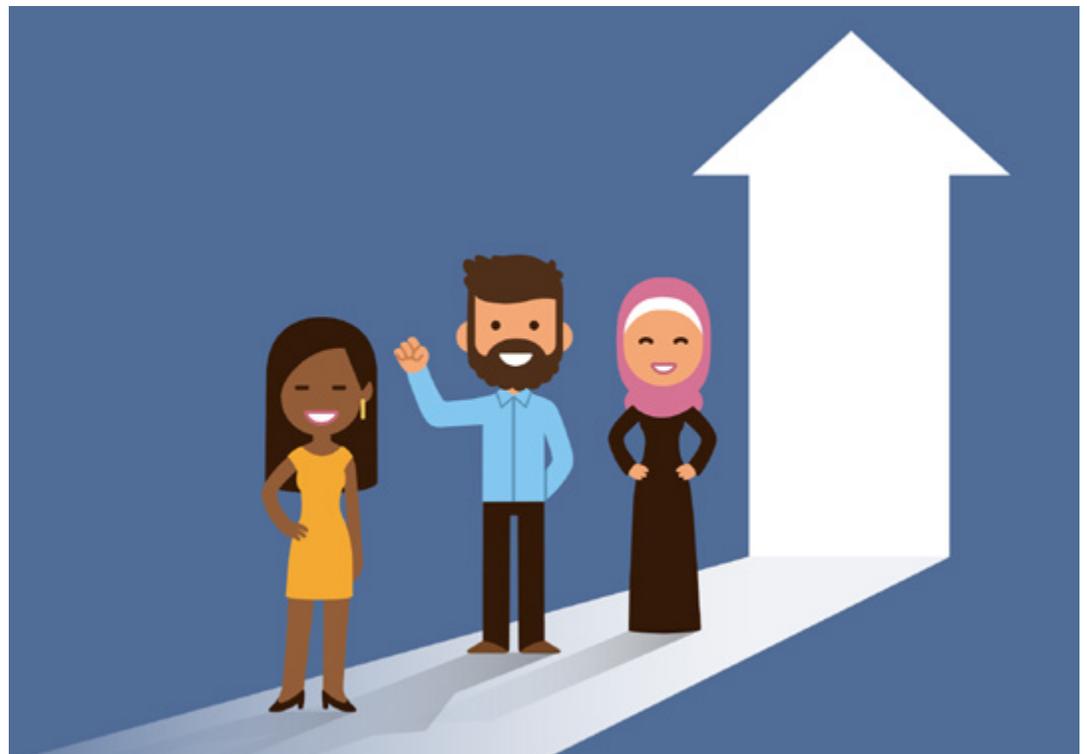
# step six

Make common challenges of diversity in the workplace known.

Even though there (hopefully) will come a time when diversity training is no longer necessary, today is not that day. There will always be challenges that you have to face when it comes to diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias. Here are some of the common challenges people face when they start to tackle workplace diversity:

- People can become easily offended when diversity is brought up, especially if it seems accusatory.
- When diversity training is mandatory, people will be less receptive to hearing what you're trying to impart on them.
- There will usually be people who resist the change you're trying to make because it isn't the way things have always been done.

Once you are aware of the problems that will arise, you can be more prepared to implement the changes that are necessary for your company.



# step seven

Deliver content in short, engaging videos (aka microlearning).

You've probably seen BuzzFeed's Tasty videos cropping up on your Facebook newsfeed: short, appealing cooking videos that show you how to make mouthwatering foods in about 30 seconds or less.

But what about those Tasty videos are so appealing to so many different users? It's their quick, highly engaging nature that reels us in by playing on our visual senses.

According to Forrester Research, the average Internet user consumes around 206 videos per month (roughly seven videos per day). The brain processes video and graphics 60,000 times faster than it does text, so for your neurons, it's a numbers game: It's faster and takes up less energy to watch something than to read something, so your brain prefers pictures and videos to reading an article or recipe, even if it contains the same content.

This is why microlearning as a delivery strategy for your diversity training makes the most sense.

It's not just about convenience: Our brains love videos because they're quick and easy to process. Utilize those factors in your next diversity learning program, and you'll probably see some "tasty" results as well. (Yes, we went there)



# step eight

Tie it all back to the big vision.

Diversity doesn't have to be a scary concept, or a daunting task, it just has to be something that you are conscious of in your workplace. With patience and understanding of why and what diversity is, you can begin to see the benefits of becoming conscious. When you accept people's diversity, when you allow it to be a benefit, you will open up yourself and your company to a world of possibilities.

Your company can flourish. You just have to take the first steps to get there.



# Checklist

Can't remember all of the steps we went through?  
No worries! We created a checklist for that very reason.

Clearly define what diversity is and why it is important to your business.

Clearly define what inclusion is and explain how inclusion puts the concept of diversity into action by creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection.

Make diversity learning voluntary instead of mandatory, and tie it to a reward.

Make the learning interactive and scenario-based with detailed feedback.

Create awareness around unconscious bias in learning content.

Make common challenges of diversity in the workplace known.

Deliver content in short, engaging videos (aka Microlearning).

Tie it all back to the big vision.

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The logo for 'elm' is displayed in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are bold and modern, with a slight shadow effect. The 'e' is a simple circle with a horizontal bar, the 'l' is a vertical bar with a small top serif, and the 'm' is a simple block letter.