



11.1 Why Businesses Benefit from Diversity and Inclusion



Diversity and inclusion bring value and advantage to any business. As Canada's workforce changes due to older generations leaving, employers will need to rely on diversity groups such as new Canadians, Indigenous people and people with disabilities. They will also need to attract younger generations who care more about workplace diversity, inclusion and healthy workplace cultures. Employers whose workplaces are diverse and inclusive will be the ones most able to attract and retain talent in a jobseeker's market.

By 2025, 75% of the global workforce will be made up Millennials. The 2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey shows that 74% of Millennials believe an organization is more innovative if it has a culture of inclusion.

Why Inclusion Matters for Your Business

- Over 20% of Canadians have some type of disability; and a large percentage of our population care about disability inclusion. 92% of consumers prefer to support companies that hire people with disabilities.
- Businesses that implement effective diversity and inclusion strategies have more engaging, team-based cultures and higher workplace morale.
- Retirement and low birth rate trends mean that approximately 25% of our workforce will disappear over the next 10-15 years. New talent pools must be tapped in order to ensure Canadian business stays strong and competitive. Diversity isn't a choice – it's a necessity.
- Demonstrating inclusion of disability diversity sends a message to all diversity groups that they are likely to be welcome in your workplace.
- Employees with disabilities have "lived experience" and can help your business design an improved and accessible customer experience.

A Word about Disability (It's Diversity)

A commonly misunderstood diversity group is people with disabilities. While disability is often misinterpreted as a lack of ability, this misconception could not be farther from reality. 90% of

employees with disabilities perform as well as, or better than their coworkers. **Disability-inclusive companies also outperform their competitors!**

The inclusion of workers with disabilities generates measurable improvements to a workplace's:

- Culture
- Morale
- Retention
- Safety
- Innovation

Hiring people with disabilities teaches workplaces how to “do inclusion”.

Disability inclusion in the workplace helps build the capacity of employers to improve cultural and diversity competencies across the organization.

Don't assume that 'disability' means having an obvious physical condition. Many employers are surprised to learn that they already have direct experience with workers or customers with disabilities.

Many types of disabilities are 'invisible' – meaning they wouldn't be readily apparent to others, unless disclosed. These include learning disabilities, chronic pain, and most mental health conditions. Many people have some type of disability but don't identify as being disabled.

In a recent study, 62% of workers with disabilities said that unless they disclosed it, most people had no idea they had a disability.

Mental Health Matters

Supporting employee wellbeing and mental health has become an expectation of employers. Mental health support has become a new normal in terms of workplace trends. Mental health issues constitute a high percentage of disability. By age 40, approximately 50% of Canadians will have experienced some type of mental illness.

Creating a stigma-free workplace where employers and employees can talk without fear about mental health has become an important factor in shaping cultures of inclusion where all people perform at their best – and don't compromise the ability of others to do so.

In order for us to be more open to learning new things and to perform better at diversity and inclusion, it is helpful to recognize and challenge our biases.

Here are some important tips for developing a more inclusive mindset.

1. Growth mindset. The belief in your ability, and the ability of your team, to learn new things and to improve skills.
2. You don't always see or understand the barriers that you personally don't face – that doesn't mean those barriers aren't real for others who do experience them.
3. Try to see the perspectives of others; slow down, don't assume and ask questions.
4. Diversity isn't enough – a work environment has to be welcoming and psychologically safe in order for people to share what they have to offer. Inclusion matters.
5. We improve by doing! Select diversity and inclusion strategies that work for your business and put them into practice. Doing something is better than doing nothing.

Sources:

¹ Forbes Magazine. (2020, October 23). *To Tackle Inclusion, We Must Be Honest About Exclusion*. Retrieved from [To Tackle Inclusion, We Must Be Honest About Exclusion \(forbes.com\)](https://www.forbes.com)

² Presidents Group. (2020, March 1) *B2B Untapped Talent Guide to Innovative Hiring and Retention*. Retrieved from [B2B Untapped Talent Guide - Accessible Employers](https://www.presidentsgroup.com)

³ Government of Canada. *Rethinking DisAbility in the Private Sector*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disability/consultations/rethinking-disabilities.html>

⁴ Government of Canada. (2019, March 20). *The labour force in Canada and its regions: Projections to 2036*. Retrieved from [The labour force in Canada and its regions: Projections to 2036 \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/26-669-x/2019001/article/00001-eng.htm)

⁵ World Economic Forum. (2019, April 29). *The business case for diversity in the workplace is now overwhelming*. Retrieved from [The Business Case for Diversity is Now Overwhelming](https://www.weforum.org/articles/2019/04/29/the-business-case-for-diversity-in-the-workplace-is-now-overwhelming/)

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