

8 warning signs your diversity and inclusion policy is failing the global majority

You've spent time strategising and brainstorming, you've researched best practices, looked at your data and even run focus groups to understand your colleagues from the global majority's experience. This has culminated in what you think is a comprehensive and robust diversity and inclusion policy. Six months in and it seems to be working but how can you tell for sure? Is it working for some and not others?

The first question that you might be asking is who is the global majority? Well, the global majority refers to people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual heritage, indigenous to the global south, and/or have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities'. Globally, these groups currently represent approximately 80% of the world's population making them the global majority now, and with current growth rates, the global majority is set to remain so for the foreseeable future.

It can be wiser to look out for warning signs than success measures when it comes to diversity and inclusion, as the warning signs will alert you to what

might be hindering progress. Here are 8 warning signs that your diversity and inclusion policy is failing the global majority, and that its time to change your policies, systems, and processes fast:

1. You are losing staff from the global majority

When your data demonstrates that you are not retaining staff from the global majority, and they are leaving at disproportionate rates to their white colleagues, or there is a broken rung on the career ladder at which those from the global majority cannot go beyond. When there are layoffs or redundancies, and you find those from the global majority are disproportionately negatively impacted.

2. Performance is judged lower by staff from the global majority

When you look at performance reviews and matrixes and those for staff from the global majority are always judged to be on the bottom or middle quartile, never top talent. When capability and disciplinary reviews are more likely to be assigned to those from the global majority, while their counterparts are given more chances and support to recover from mistakes.

3. Training is implemented to 'fix' staff from the global majority

When training is rolled out to increase the confidence levels of staff from the global majority, without also developing their line managers and senior leaders, who may inadvertently or purposefully be creating an environment that erodes confidence. A culture of microaggressions can be very harmful.

Microaggressions can look like two colleagues walking into a meeting, and it being automatically assumed that the white colleague is more senior, and the colleague from the global majority must correct them, always having to justify their position.

4. You are met with silence when asking for feedback on policies' usefulness

When staff from the global majority do not feel safe to speak up for fear of adverse consequences, and when they experience resistance from colleagues to the diversity and inclusion policy in covert and overt ways. For example,

being told that you just got the job because of the colour of your skin, is not just undermining but also leads to a lack of safety.

5. You do not have a pipeline of diverse talent

When you find yourself saying that there is no diverse talent out there, either because of your geographic location or the qualifications needed to do the role and you don't want to lower the bar. When you are not working with recruitment agencies or search firms specifically focused on finding diverse talent.

6. Your staff from the global majority are experiencing poor wellbeing

When the workplace well-being of staff from the global majority shows high stress, and burnout, in comparison to other groups. This could potentially be a result of workplace bias, experiencing exclusion, combating daily microaggressions and feeling that they must be strong.

7. You haven't looked into the intersections

We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality, or immigrant status etc., but they intersect, and that intersection can create a compound effect of discrimination or disadvantage in the workplace. When you are looking at your policies it's worth seeing if anyone falls through the cracks due to their intersections, for example, black women who are neurodiverse.

8. When nothing is changing at the top

Representation at the top of organisations tells us a lot about who can be successful in an organisation. If new roles are becoming available and senior leaders and board members continue to recruit in their own image, don't work on enabling diverse succession or at the very least bring diverse perspectives into the room through shadow boards or guests.

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Be alert to these warning signs and act quickly, so that they don't undermine your efforts. It's a matter of continual course correcting and vigilance to realise the ambitions of the policies that you've put in place.

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