SEPTEMBER 2018

Tech for All

Breaking Barriers in Toronto's Innovation Community

MaRS

Located in the heart of Canada's largest and the world's most diverse city, MaRS is uniquely placed to lead a new type of innovation—innovation that harnesses the diversity of all its workers.

MaRS helps innovators change the world. Based in downtown Toronto, MaRS is North America's largest urban innovation hub and supports more than 1,200 fast-growing Canadian ventures. These companies work in four high-impact sectors—cleantech, enterprise software, fintech and health—creating technologies that can meaningfully improve lives.

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Foreword

Canada's tech sector has seen tremendous growth over the last few years, particularly in Toronto. The depth of our talent pool is one of the main reasons global companies and venture capital firms are coming here in ever growing numbers.

Our workforce is not only highly skilled, it's also highly diverse, given that more than half of Toronto's population was born overseas. I firmly believe that this diversity is our superpower. Our commitment to multiculturalism means that Canadians are wired differently, which gives us an edge in a world that is being rewired at a rapid pace.

However, just hiring diverse talent is not enough. For our tech sector to thrive, we have to ensure that our companies help talented workers from all backgrounds reach their full potential. We need to build a culture of truly inclusive innovation.

For this report, MaRS surveyed some 400 members of Toronto's tech community. One of the key findings: While tech companies have diversity policies and programs in place that are making a difference, especially when it comes to hiring staff, they need to do more to ensure that their employees' diverse perspectives are recognized and valued in the workplace, that they have impactful work to do and that they feel they are making a valuable contribution. This report lays out a path to do exactly that. I am confident that the solutions proposed will ensure that our increasingly diverse workforce is fully engaged and helping Toronto's tech sector grow even stronger.

We see this report as the beginning of a process, not the end. In the coming months, MaRS will bring together the tech community to better understand the ongoing issues and build tangible solutions. In doing so, we will build a more vibrant and more competitive tech sector, with opportunities for all.

Yung Wu
CEO, MaRS Discovery District

Executive Summary

Toronto's tech sector is primed to shine in today's innovation economy. But in order for it to tap into the talent it will need to succeed and drive global performance, employers must look at how its diversity, inclusion and belonging initiatives are feeding into their overall strategy.

This report presents MaRS research results on the state of diversity, inclusion and belonging (DIBs) in Toronto's tech sector. The report aims to shed light on the challenges companies face in attracting, hiring and retaining diverse talent, and to provide data on how workers feel about the state of DIBs in their workplaces.

MaRS undertook a comprehensive research study that included conducting focus groups with 110 Toronto tech-sector employers and 28 tech-sector employees, interviews with 16 DIBs experts and a survey with 456 Toronto tech-sector employees.

The survey found that tech-sector employees vary widely in their feelings about the organizations where they work. Unfortunately, many women, Black people, young people and non-leaders in our organizations reported lower levels of DIBs in their workplaces. In addition to these groups, many people from the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities and Indigenous workers who participated in our focus groups and interviews reported facing troubling barriers that prevent them from feeling fully included and that they belong in their workplaces. Overall, employees are struggling to understand some DIBs topics and are looking to their employers to help them prioritize DIBs in their workplace.

The good news is that employers want to change this reality: they want to engage in DIBs initiatives and many are already engaged in this work. However, many others reported that they didn't know how or where to start. A lack of knowledge, fear of doing the "wrong" thing, the speed of growth in the tech sector and employee backlash all prove to be barriers for employers. This is a problem. Organizations in the tech sector need to come together to support each other; we need to work together to take on the innovation challenges that will propel our region forward.

The organizations who have started this journey with MaRS have signed on to the Tech for All Agreement, indicating their desire to form a Toronto region tech-sector Inclusion Council. We encourage and welcome other members of the tech community to sign on to this Agreement and join us to truly make Tech for All.

Toronto's Success Depends on Creating Tech for All

Diversity, inclusion and belonging are essential elements for all companies in Toronto's tech sector. As the sector continues to grow and attract the attention of the world, DIBs activities are critical to its success and more important than ever.

The tech sector is vital to Toronto's future

Toronto is leading the technology and innovation movement around the world. New technologies are driving employment and economic growth, making the tech sector vital to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In 2017, the Toronto region added 28,900 tech jobs—14% more than in 2016—and the city surpassed the San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle and Washington combined in job creation in the tech industry.[1]

The GTA as a region has a reputation that embraces the diversity of its people. But despite this, the 2018 *Talent Fuels Tech* report found that attracting and retaining the best talent remains a key chokepoint to success and scalability for Toronto's tech firms.[2] In order to fuel these organizations with the people needed to build a tech sector that is at the forefront of innovation and the envy of the world, employers must think tactically about how they are using diversity, inclusion and belonging to build the workforce needed to meet the challenges to come.

"Toronto doesn't have to be Silicon Valley—in a good way. We have a unique opportunity, while Toronto is building up its tech ecosystem, to use a different model. We can create an alternative, more inclusive model for how we organize and do business. Let's just be the Canadian model."

—Sarah Kaplan, director of the Institute for Gender and the Economy and professor at the Rotman School of Management

1. CBRE. (2018, July). *Scoring Tech Talent in North America 2018*. Retrieved from CBRE: https://www.cbre.com/research-and-reports/Scoring-Tech-Talent-in-North-America-2018
2. Olawoye, L., Pogue, M., Sück, D., & Uppal, G. (2018, January). *Talent Fuels Tech.* Retrieved from MaRS Discovery District: https://talentdevelopment.marsdd.com/resource/talent-fuels-tech/

There are clear reasons to implement diversity, inclusion and belonging in organizations

The business case for investing in DIBs initiatives within organizations has been proven time and again.

The productivity argument. Diverse teams perform better. The multiple perspectives housed in a diverse team promotes more creative, innovative and productive team members who contribute to improved decision-making and financial success.[3]

The market argument. Companies and their employees must reflect the customer base they serve. Organizations that prioritize DIBs are more likely to reflect the diversity of their customers in their employees and leadership team, enabling them to better understand the needs of a diverse client base. Further, having a diverse organization will help with global expansion opportunities.[4]

The talent argument. Customers and clients want to be represented in the organizations that serve them. Further, talent who see themselves represented in their workplace are more likely to remain at that company and feel loyal to their team.[5] Tapping into a diverse talent pool increases the number of qualified candidates for a role, which may also lead to more efficient hiring processes. The MaRS survey of tech employees indicated that those who did not feel that their organization was diverse, promoted inclusion or fostered belonging were more likely to disagree when asked if they would still be working at their organization in two years' time.[6]

These are only some of the benefits of engaging in DIBs. MaRS strongly believes that companies can no longer talk only about diversity work—they must take meaningful action on all three DIBs pillars: diversity, inclusion and belonging.

Toronto can build a tech sector where everyone belongs. One where we welcome differences and help all people to feel welcome, encouraged and included, and where companies commit to action on DIBs work so they can be the most productive and innovative organizations in the world.

3. Hunt, V., Layton, D., & Prince, S. (2015, January). *Why diversity matters.* Retrieved from: https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters; Hewlett, S.A., Marshall, M., & Sherbin, *L. (2013, December). How Diversity Can Drive Innovation.* Retrieved from: https://hbr.org/2013/12/how-diversity-can-drive-innovation; Bourke, J. (2016). *Which Two Heads Are Better Than One?: How diverse teams create breakthrough ideas and make smarter decisions.* Australian Institute of Company Directors. **4.** Levychin, R. (2013, December 4). *3 Diversity Strategies To Help Companies Thrive.* Retrieved from Forbes: https://www.forbes.com/sites/entrepreneursorganization/2013/12/04/3-diversity-strategies-to-help-companies-thrive/#3a668fe762ce. **5.** CEB. (2012). *Creating Competitive Advantage through Workforce Diversity: Seven Imperatives and Inventive Ideas for Companies That Want to Get It Right.* Retrieved from CEB: https://www.cebglobal.com/human-resources/diversity-inclusion/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-white-paper.html **6.** Disagreement to diversity, inclusion and belonging was defined as the share of those whose overall diversity scores were below 3 (or neutral). Those who disagreed that their organization was diverse, inclusive and fostered belonging overall were 4.4, 3.7 and 7.5 times more likely to disagree they would work at the organization in two years' time, respectively.

The Key Terms and Concepts for Understanding Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

Though leaders have been talking about the importance of diversity and inclusion (often referred to as D&I) in their organizations for decades, less has been said about belonging in the workplace. The term "DIBs" was first coined by Pat Wadors in 2016. Then the senior vice-president of global talent organization at LinkedIn, she noticed that conversations focusing on diversity and inclusion were largely unconnected to the emotional aspects of belonging which didn't allow her or others to consider how they could be their authentic selves in the workplace.[7] Her research showed that belonging was the key to truly harnessing the power of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.[8]

DIBs is a powerful way to understand an employee's experience in the workplace, but there are additional concepts that help in understanding the findings of this report and in implementing DIBs within organizations. These key terms and definitions can also help to inform and structure the DIBs work that organizations must do.

Diversity, inclusion and belonging allow individuals to bring their full selves to work

Diversity, inclusion and belonging are three important concepts that lead from one to another and are also interconnected. Diversity is how you begin, inclusion is how you integrate diversity further into the organization, and belonging is how you crystallize your diversity and inclusion efforts.

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7. Wadors, P. (2016, August). Diversity Efforts Fall Short Unless Employees Feel That They Belong. *Harvard Business Review.* Retrieved from: https://hbr.org/2016/08/diversity-efforts-fall-short-unless-employees-feel-that-they-belong **8.** Ibid.

Diversity: An organization's mix of people

Definition: Diversity is the many different forms, types, ideas and experiences contained within groups.

Diversity includes diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, language, marital status, disability, immigration status, country of origin and more and is concerned with how all of these intersect with one another.

Though many primarily consider diversity in terms of a person's physical appearance, it also includes invisible aspects of diversity like diversity of thought: an individual's "mix of unique experiences, identities, ideas, and opinions," which can include a person's educational attainment, religion, current and past socio-economic status, geography and more.[9]

To improve the diversity of an organization, many employers may simply start by hiring or advancing a more diverse workforce. This is certainly positive but tackling diversity alone without thinking through the systems which cause under-representation will not help in achieving the benefits created through diverse teams and can in fact hinder them.[10]

Inclusion: How an organization includes its diverse mix of people in its policies, processes, tasks, teams, conversations and changes

Definition: Inclusion is the act of creating an environment where individuals and groups can be and feel welcomed, supported, respected, heard and valued to fully participate.[11]

Inclusion ensures that people with different viewpoints, cultures, genders, races and more can take part in the life of the organization fully.

It's important to remember that though a group may be diverse, it is not a given that all members will feel included. It's because of this reason that some of the most successful companies began their DIBs efforts by starting with inclusion.[12] Once a culture exists where diverse ideas are welcomed, shared and celebrated, it fosters more diverse groups to apply to work at the organization.[13]

Belonging: The outcome of diversity and inclusion efforts

Definition: Belonging is the feeling created when you are able to be yourself and feel accepted and valued for who you are.

Individuals within a company will feel that they belong if they believe that their diverse thoughts, perspectives and feelings are recognized and valued in the workplace.[14]

Belonging exists when employees feel that they can be their authentic selves within the workplace without having to cover or hide parts of themselves.

Feelings of belonging have been related to a variety of positive work behaviours, including employee loyalty, motivation and resilience.[15] It is because of this that belonging is a fundamental component that employers must consider in their talent and business strategies.

Diversity is the mix of people in your organization, inclusion is the environment created to help mix those people, and belonging is the outcome that allows employees to be integrated members of the group and to reach their full potential. All three elements are needed to truly make an impact on an organization's culture and performance and any initiative that is proposed to improve diversity, inclusion and belonging in an organization should touch on all three.

"When we feel like we belong in our teams, we feel the freedom to voice our thoughts, we want our team to thrive and grow, and we experience respect and fellowship in a safe and progressive community."

— Colleen Ward, vice president of cards and merchant solutions at TD Bank

DIBs requires an understanding of power, intersectionality, positionality and allyship

There are some ancillary concepts that impact how we understand DIBs and implement it within organizations. Understanding the concepts of diversity, inclusion and belonging requires also understanding the concepts of power, intersectionality, positionality and allyship.

Power: "To be able"

Definition: Power is the ability to do something or act in a particular way.

Understanding power dynamics is essential to having a conversation about DIBs because the climate for inclusion and belonging is often set by those with power onto those without power. The traditional workplace operates in a hierarchical format with leaders at the top of

9. Smith. C., & Turner, S. (2015). *The Radical Transformation of Diversity and Inclusion: The Millennial Influence.* Retrieved from Deloitte University: https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-inclus-millennial-influence-120215.pdf **10.** Sherbin, L., & Rashid, R. (2017, February 1). *Diversity Doesn't Stick Without Inclusion.* Retrieved from: https://hbr.org/2017/02/diversity-doesnt-stick-without-inclusion **11.** Kapila, M., Hines, E., & Searby, M. (2016, October 6). *Why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Matter.* Retrieved from: https://independentsector.org/resource/why-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-matter/ **12.** Lever. (2017). *The Diversity and Inclusion Handbook.* Retrieved from Lever: https://www.lever.co/blog/the-diversity-and-inclusion-handbook **13.** Ibid. **14.** Saska, S., Kinnersley, M., Factor, R., & Lochhead, I. (2018, April). *Why DIBs? Why Belonging is Vital to Your Organization's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.* Retrieved from: http://feminuity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Why_DIBs.pdf **15.** Ibid.

the organization setting the agenda and making decisions. A workplace attuned to diversity, inclusion and belonging requires a collaborative and participatory structure. However, organizations cannot achieve true collaboration without understanding who holds the power and what impact that has.

Intersectionality: The multitude of factors and characteristics that make up a person

Intersectionality is a framework that identifies how interlocking systems of power impact individuals or groups.[16] It considers how gender, class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability and other factors interact with one another.

People typically see themselves in multiple categories of diversity, all of which change how they view circumstances, ideas, projects, workplaces and more. For example, a person's identity and ideas may be impacted by the fact that they are an Asian male over the age of 45 who is gay and has no visible disabilities. By understanding intersectionality, organizations can avoid putting people into boxes that suggest those from the same groups will have similar perspectives, experience the same challenges and/or require the same supports.

Positionality: How your position relates to others

Positionality is how your intersecting identities affect the way you position or see yourself in the world, as well as the lens through which you view other people.

Positionality is an aspect of intersectionality and it impacts how individuals view inclusion efforts. Helping employees to understand their own intersectionality and positionality can foster inclusion because it builds empathy for those whose positions may negatively impact how they act at work. For example, someone in a position of privilege—such as someone who is a member of a dominant group, like men, or who is in a leadership position— might influence whether or not a team member feels comfortable speaking up at work.

All elements of diversity give individuals a particular and unique perspective of the world. Identity is found at the intersection of these elements, and your experience as a person can shift depending on your current positionality (worker, parent, child, leader, youth, senior etc.). Often, visible diversity plays a primary role in a person's intersecting identity until others are introduced to that person's more invisible parts of identity. The act of understanding and accepting those other intersecting identities is the act of fostering belonging within a company.

Allyship: An organizational goal to strive for and which is bestowed upon by others

Allyship is the process of building relationships with people based on trust, accountability and consistency.

Being an ally is not something that a person can own as an identity. Rather, allyship is recognized and bestowed upon a person by the people or groups with whom they seek to be allies. An organization as a whole can create a culture where individuals feel comfortable to act as allies to individuals from under-represented or marginalized groups in the organization and beyond. Organizations can do this by promoting inclusive language, creating safety in the workplace environment and defining its core values and communicating them to employees. Being an ally requires self-reflection, knowledge and action.

16. Cooper, B. (2015). Intersectionality. In L. Disch & M. Hawkesworth (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook Of Feminist Theory*. Retrieved from: http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199328581.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199328581-e-20

How Diverse is Toronto's Tech Sector?

MaRS partnered with the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship to explore diversity in Toronto's tech sector. In a forthcoming report,

Brookfield created a list of the jobs that most require tech-intensive skills. This list was used in the 2016 Canadian Census to discover who is part of the

tech sector in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), which is the statistical region for the Greater Toronto Area.

Exhibit 1: Women and Indigenous Peoples are under-represented in Toronto's tech sector

Share of employed workers, by selected demographic Toronto CMA, 2016

Gender

	Tech occupations	All employed
	78.0% / 22.0%	51.1% / 48.9%

- Men
- Women

Visible minority

	Tech occupations	All employed
	56.1% / 43.9%	51.9% / 48.1%

- Visible minority
- Not visible minority

Indigenous Peoples

	Tech occupations	All employed
	99.6% / 0.4%	99.2% / 0.8%

- Not an Indigenous identity
- Indigenous identity

According to Brookfield, there are approximately 234,000 tech workers in the Toronto CMA, which represents 7.5% of Toronto's workforce in 2016. Unfortunately, women and Indigenous peoples are both under-represented in Toronto's tech sector (Exhibit 1). The data was not available at the Toronto CMA level to separate out the racial and cultural groups within the visible minority data.

The situation becomes bleaker when income is factored into the equation. Women, visible minorities and Indigenous identities are all paid less on average than their peers within tech roles, something that is consistent across tech and non-tech occupations (Exhibit 2). However, the average income gap in dollars between visible minorities and non-visible minorities, and the gap between Indigenous
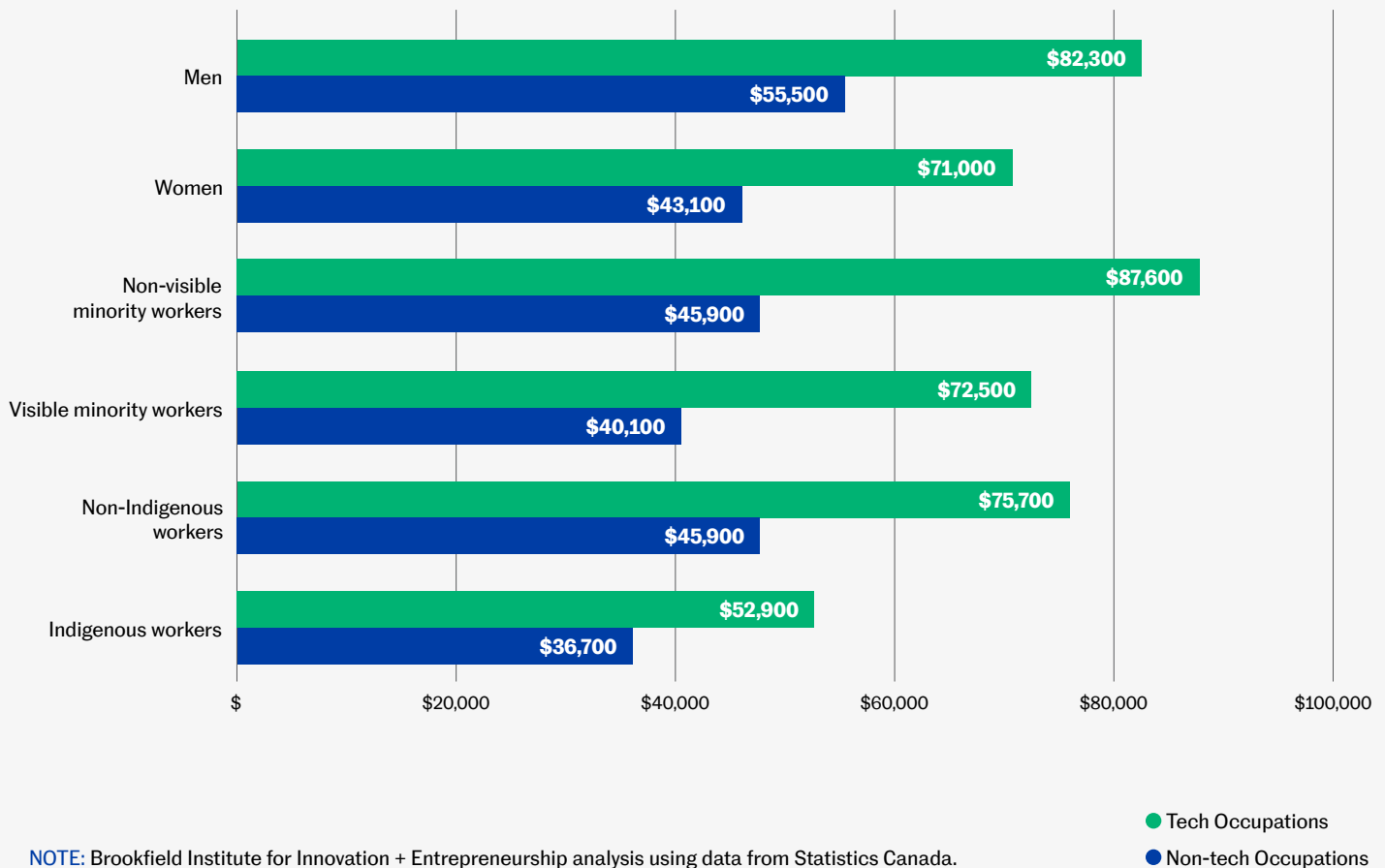
and non-Indigenous people, are both 2.5 times as large in tech occupations than they are in non-tech occupations. This indicates that tech occupations perpetuate the income bias for these groups more than other occupations. The income gap between men and women is modestly smaller for tech occupations compared to non-tech occupations.

Exhibit 2: Women, visible minorities and Indigenous people are all paid less in tech occupations

Average income of employed workers in tech and non-tech occupations

Toronto CMA, 2016

Group	Tech Occupations	Non-tech Occupations
Men	$82,300	$55,500
Women	$71,000	$43,100
Non-visible minority workers	$87,600	$45,900
Visible minority workers	$72,500	$40,100
Non-Indigenous workers	$75,700	$45,900
Indigenous workers	$52,900	$36,700

● Tech Occupations
● Non-tech Occupations

NOTE: Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship analysis using data from Statistics Canada.

As of right now, it is uncertain why tech occupations would amplify the income inequality for these groups. Further research is necessary to understand how other factors, like role selection, negotiation, and the effect of extremely high incomes play into this finding. Many factors contribute to income disparities, including many of the biases we explore in later sections of this report.

This report highlights the state of diversity, inclusion and belonging within Toronto's tech sector. Although income disparity is an important factor within discussions of DIBs and equity, it is not the focus of this report. Future MaRS research may explore the effects of compensation and DIBs, but this is beyond the scope of this research project.

The rest of this report will explore many of the nuances contained within these stats and tell the human story behind them. Tech has the opportunity to become the most diverse and inclusive sector, but it will take belonging to get us there.

"As we turn our attention to the tech sector as an engine of growth, it is essential to ensure equitable access and opportunities for women, visible minorities and other under-represented groups. By doing so, tech companies can not only avoid exacerbating existing divides, but can also enhance their competitiveness by tapping into Canada's most valuable resource: our vibrant, diverse talent pool."

—Creig Lamb, senior policy analyst, Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship

How Employees See the Toronto Tech Sector

To better understand how tech-sector employees feel about the sector's current state of diversity, inclusion and belonging, MaRS conducted four focus groups with employees from tech organizations across the GTA (see Appendix A: Research Methodology for more information). Most employees agree that the tech sector is visually diverse, particularly when compared to other industries in which they have previously worked. Despite this, our focus groups highlighted that discrimination and bias were prevalent.

To explore this further, MaRS partnered with Fortay and Feminuity to use their DIBs Canadian Tech Survey with the purpose of better understanding the current state of DIBs experienced by employees within the Toronto tech sector. The survey was delivered anonymously to members of Toronto's tech community and received 456 responses.

The survey asked respondents about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on DIBs metrics. Responses were collected along a sliding scale of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree (Exhibit 3).

MaRS created an index of the four questions which best represented the three concepts of diversity, inclusion, and belonging (Exhibit 4, see next page).

Exhibit 3: Participants were asked their agreement to survey statements using a sliding scale

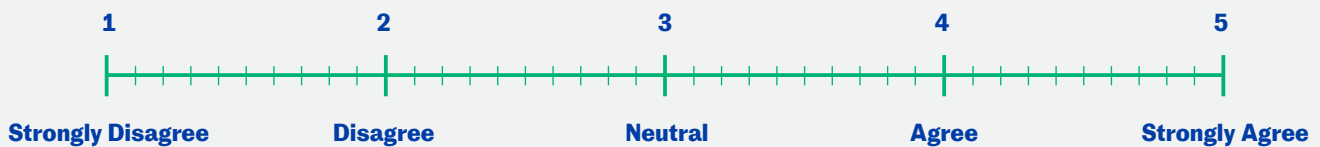| 1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Exhibit 4: MaRS used survey statements to create overall DIBs scores

Overall diversity score questions	Average score (strongly disagree = 1; neutral = 3; strongly agree = 5)
My company values the difference of individuals	4.04
My company invests time and energy in making our company diverse	3.63
My company represents a diverse group of talent	3.85
People who look, feel and think differently have equal opportunities to thrive at my company	3.88
Average overall diversity score	**3.85**

Overall inclusion score questions	Average score (strongly disagree = 1; neutral = 3; strongly agree = 5)
I am part of the decision-making process at work	3.63
When tasks that no one person is responsible for need to get done, the tasks are divided fairly	3.42
I believe that my total salary and benefits are fair when compared to the employees in similar roles at my company	3.44
My company enables me to balance my personal and professional life	3.82
Average overall inclusion score	**3.58**

Overall belonging score questions	Average score (strongly disagree = 1; neutral = 3; strongly agree = 5)
I feel comfortable to be my authentic self at work	3.85
I feel comfortable to voice my opinion, even when it differs from the group opinion	3.80
I am encouraged to be innovative even though some of the things I try may fail	3.92
Even when something negative happens, I still feel like I belong at my company	3.83
Average overall belonging score	**3.85**

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 452

Positionality influences how employees experience diversity, inclusion and belonging in the workplace

MaRS understands the importance of not only focusing on one aspect of diversity, but also the idea that not all those within specific groups experience DIBs within an organization in the same way. However, it is instructive to explore how groups generally experience the workplace in order to highlight issues faced by members of specific groups so that their voices may be amplified. This does not replace the need to communicate with employees to understand specific needs related to each employee's experience and background.

To this end, the following section provides an analysis of survey data and other research to look at the experiences of tech-sector employees using the following lenses:

- gender identity;
- racial and cultural groups;
- Indigenous Peoples;
- age;
- leadership role;
- sexual orientation;
- immigration status; and
- organization size.

An intersectional lens was taken only when the survey size allowed for it. MaRS looks forward to the opportunity to repeat the survey again in the future with an increased sample size so that additional lenses with a more intersectional approach can be applied.

Gender identity: Women report lower levels of organizational diversity, inclusion and belonging

On average, those who identify as women report significantly lower levels of overall DIBs (Exhibit 5) compared to those who identify as men. Additionally, women were twice as likely to disagree that their organization is diverse or fosters belonging, and 1.6 times as likely to disagree that their organization is inclusive (Exhibit 6).

Women gave scores that were significantly lower on the following statements.

- People who look, feel and think differently have equal opportunities to thrive at my company.
- When tasks that no one person is responsible for need to get done the tasks are divided fairly.
- I feel comfortable to voice my opinion, even when it differs from the group opinion.

Exhibit 5: Women report lower levels of overall DIBs at their organization

Toronto tech sector DIBs scores by respondent gender identity

	Men	Women
Overall diversity score	3.98	3.74***
Overall inclusion score	3.72	3.47***
Overall belonging score	3.96	3.75**

Scale: Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5

**Share of responses who disagreed that their organization fostered
overall diversity, inclusion and belonging by gender identity**

NOTE: All differences within component scores are statistically different at the 5% level. Disagreement is defined as overall scores below 3. There were too few responses to analyze agender, bigender, two-spirit, gender fluid, genderqueer, non-binary, questioning, stealth and trans workers in survey.
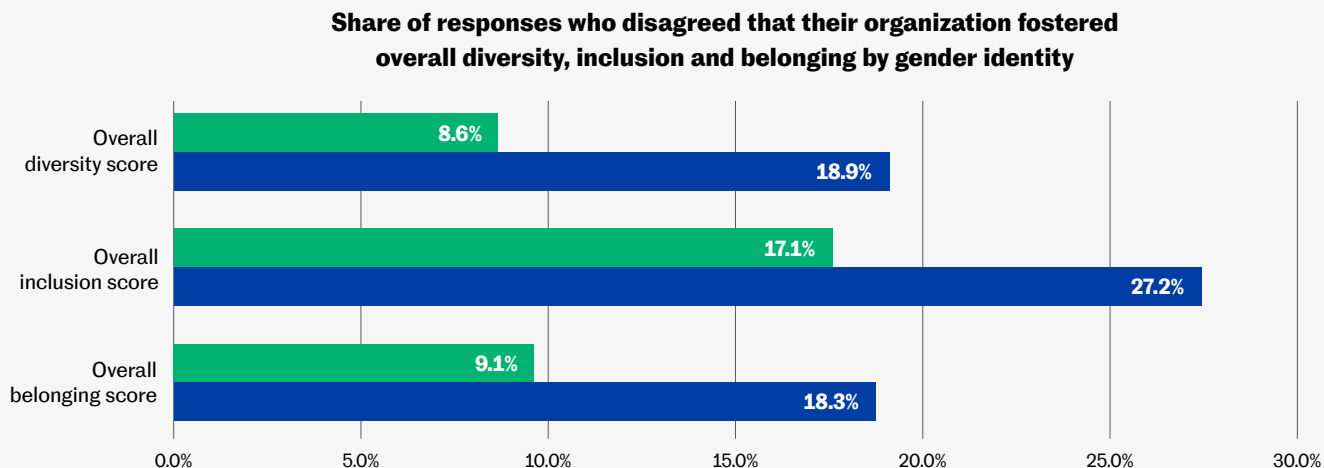
SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 424

Being comfortable enough to voice an opinion implies that a certain level of trust and belonging exists in an environment. That women reported having lower levels of comfort aligns with the results of the focus groups, where we heard many instances from women experiencing sexism and bias in their workplace. For example, we heard many examples of women having inappropriate comments made about their physical appearance and their roles within their team. Further, our survey found that 62% of women have been subjected to bias on one or more aspects of their identity, compared to only 34% of men. This discrepancy was consistent across business and technology roles.

"At my previous employer, I was the only female on the team and was treated differently by many of its members, including being excluded from social lunches."

—**Survey respondent**

"I heard some decision-maker in my company say, 'Well, of course the chief of HR is going to be a woman, because they're good at that.'"

—**Employee focus group participant**

"I am a woman working as a software developer. At two of my previous positions, many people assumed I was in the marketing department."

—**Survey respondent**

Women reported less agreement with the survey statement relating to opportunities to thrive. This finding is consistent with the concept of the "boys' club," which many women shared as a barrier in their work environments. They also provided examples of glass ceilings and of being excluded from social events and expressed concerns about facing repercussions if they behaved differently than perceived female stereotypes. One focus group participant reported that acting "bullish" as a woman meant that she was less likely to be promoted.

> "And in the line of business where I'm at, there is a very obvious glass ceiling where you see women gravitate up to something. But there's a level where it becomes really obvious that it's a boys' club and you see the whole department suffer when there's a woman heading it just because she doesn't play golf or she doesn't like whisky."

— **Employee focus group participant**

It is not surprising that women feel that tasks are not divided fairly in the workplace. Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant write that women often bear the brunt of office housework: "Someone has to take notes, serve on committees and plan meetings—and just as happens with housework at home, that someone is usually a woman."[17]

Research has also shown that men spend more time on tasks that help their likeliness of earning promotions, while women dedicate more time to tasks that hinder their ability to earn promotions, such as event planning, committee work and other non-revenue-generating activities.[18]

Unfortunately, our survey's sample size of agender, bigender, two-spirit, gender fluid, genderqueer, non-binary, questioning and stealth employees was too small to draw statistical significance from those who are cisgender (those whose gender identity corresponds to their biological sex).[19]

Trans employees continue to face discrimination, fear and bias in the workplace, contributing to high unemployment for this group, which prevents entrance into the workforce and creates feelings of

isolation once there.[20] While some trans people are able to choose when and to whom they reveal their gender identity, others are visibly identifiable and do not have this choice. Our survey responses indicate that some of those who have the ability to choose do not feel that they are able to share their gender identity at work.

> "I do not feel comfortable being open and honest about my gender identity at work, so my gender expression at work typically falls within that of my assigned gender."

— **Survey respondent**

Those who transition in the workplace also face significant barriers to belonging and inclusion. A Trans PULSE study from 2011 found that only 20% of trans Ontarians who transitioned in the workplace reported that their co-workers were always accepting of them, only 38% said they were mostly accepting of them and 15% said their co-workers were never accepting of them.[21] Being accepted is a fundamental component of inclusion and belonging; moreover, a complete lack of acceptance presents a safety issue for trans individuals in the workplace that needs to be addressed immediately.

Future work is needed with this community to understand the specific challenges relating to gender identity within Toronto's tech sector—especially among trans workers.

Racial and cultural groups: Black employees report lower levels of DIBs

When looking at racial and cultural groups, it is important to remember that not all people of the same racial or cultural group respond to or experience the same things in their workplaces. With this in mind, the MaRS survey had a limited sample size and could only distinguish between the differences, on average, among white, Black and Asian employees.[22] An "other" group was created to capture the sentiments of employees who did not list white, Black or Asian among their racial or cultural groups.

17. Grant, A., & Sandberg, S. (2015, February 6). Madam C.E.O., Get Me a Coffee. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/08/opinion/sunday/sheryl-sandberg-and-adam-grant-on-women-doing-office-housework.html **18.** Babcock, L., Recalde, M.P., Vesterlund, L., & Weingart, L. (2017). Gender Differences in Accepting and Receiving Requests for Tasks with Low Promotability. *American Economic Review,* 107(3), 714-747. Institute for Gender and the Economy. (No date). *Women more often volunteer for tasks that hinder their promotability.* Retrieved from: https://www.gendereconomy.org/women-more-often-volunteer-for-tasks-that-hinder-their-promotability/ **19.** For more information on the listed gender identities, please see Human Rights Campaign. (No date). *Glossary of Terms.* Retrieved from: http://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms; see also Hixson-Vulpe, J. (No date). *Creating Authentic Spaces: A Gender Identity and Gender Expression Toolkit to Support the Implementation of Institutional and Social Change.* Retrieved from The 519: http://www.the519.org/education-training/training-resources/trans-inclusion-matters/creating-authentic-spaces. **20.** Grenier, A., & Hixson-Vulpe, J. (2017). *Beyond Diversity: An LGBT Best Practice Guide for Employers.* Retrieved from Pride at Work Canada: http://prideatwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Beyond-Diversity-LGBT-Guide.pdf **21.** Trans PULSE. (2011, May 30). We've Got Work to Do: Workplace Discrimination and Employment Challenges for Trans People in Ontario. *Trans PULSE E-Bulletin,* 2(1). Retrieved from: http://transpulseproject.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/E3English.pdf **22.** Note: Asian employees include responses from those who included Japanese, Korean, Chinese, South Asian or Southeast Asian in their answer to "What racial or cultural groups do you belong to?"

In line with previous research, the data from Toronto's tech employees shows that not all visible minority communities feel similarly about DIBs.[23] Compared to white and Asian employees, Black employees report overall lower levels of DIBs (Exhibit 7). Asian employees and employees from other racial and cultural groups, on average, do not feel significantly different from their white peers. Further, Black employees reported significantly lower levels of agreement on the following statements.

- My company represents a diverse group of talent.
- People who look, feel and think differently have equal opportunities to thrive at my company.
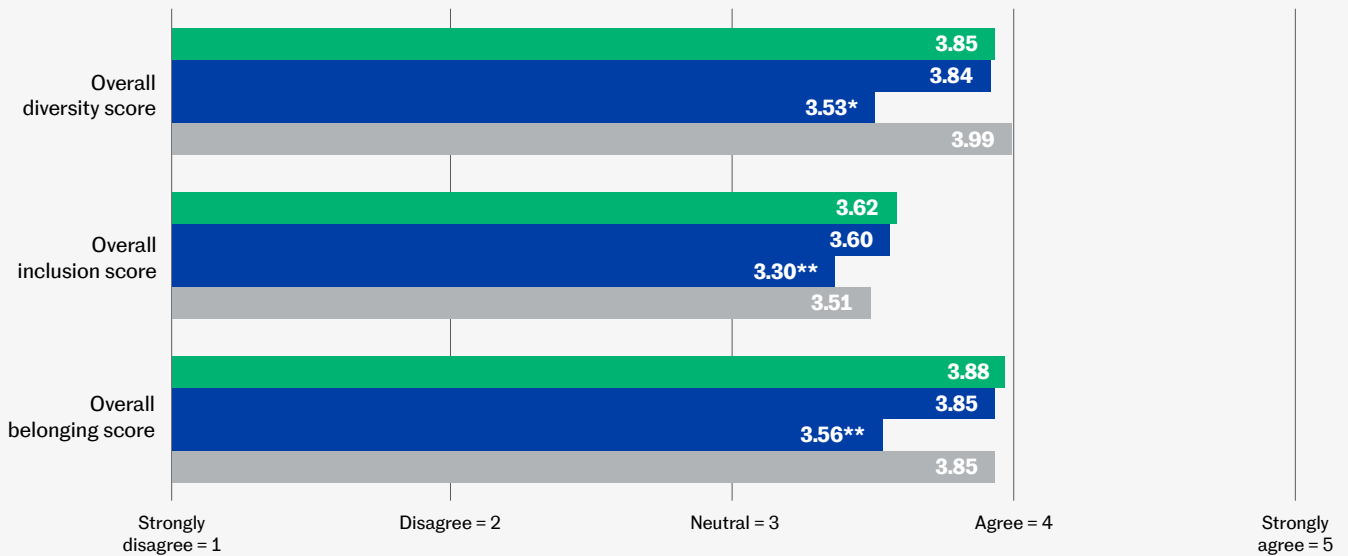- I am part of the decision-making process at work.
- I believe that my total salary and benefits are fair when compared to the employees in similar roles at my company.
- Even when something negative happens, I still feel like I belong at my company.

"As the only woman on my team and only Black person in my department, I feel that I always have to prove myself."

—Survey respondent

Exhibit 7: Compared to white and Asian employees, Black employees report lower overall levels of DIBs in the workplace

Toronto tech sector DIBs scores by respondent racial and cultural group

Overall diversity score	White	3.85
	Asian	3.84
	Black	3.53*
	Other	3.99
Overall inclusion score	White	3.62
	Asian	3.60
	Black	3.30**
	Other	3.51
Overall belonging score	White	3.88
	Asian	3.85
	Black	3.56**
	Other	3.85

Strongly disagree = 1   Disagree = 2   Neutral = 3   Agree = 4   Strongly agree = 5

- ● White
- ● Asian
- ● Black
- ● Other

NOTE: *** denotes statistically different from white score at the 1% level; ** at the 5% level; * at the 10% level.

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 445

23. Booth, A., Leigh, A., & Varganova, E. (2010, May). *Does racial and ethnic discrimination vary across minority groups? Evidence from a field experiment.* (Discussion Paper No. 4947). Retrieved from: https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/36878/1/626591651.pdf

The perception that there is a lack of fairness in salary and benefits, and fewer opportunities to thrive, could be explained by the increase in bias felt by Black employees: 66% of Black employees reported that they had been subject to bias on one or more aspects of their identity, compared to 47% of white employees. There was no statistical difference between the bias felt by white and Asian employees and white and other employees.

We heard from employees that many visible minorities feel the need to **code-switch** in their workplace. Code-switching refers to the practice of changing how someone typically behaves or speaks in a certain context as their authentic behaviour or speech would be judged unfavourably.[24] This points to a fundamental limitation preventing visible minorities from feeling like they can belong.

Additionally, in our focus groups, employees who are visible minorities, especially Black employees, described experiencing feelings of tokenism within their organization. Because employees know that organizations understand the importance of appearing diverse, the hiring process left them feeling as though they were hired as a marketing ploy or a checkmark, so that the organization could increase its points in industry rankings. In general, some employees felt a lack of authenticity in the hiring process.

"I feel like it's used almost as an HR or marketing ploy to gain more candidates who are being used with the intention to prove: 'Look at how many people of colour we have at this company. You'll fit right in.' And it's really fake in some sense. I notice that at my company once they meet that quota, that's it. They don't delve deeper and try to push further and try to understand more. It's just on the career section of the website."

—**Employee focus group participant**

"I often wonder if people hire me because I am an Indian female. As in, I check two diversity boxes."

—**Survey respondent**

It's important to highlight that when something negative happened at their companies, Black employees reported feeling less like they belonged. This is consistent with the principle of **belonging uncertainty**, which primes people who are in a minority position to feel rejected by negative experiences. This is true for Black employees and anyone who may be under-presented or marginalized in their workplace. As Carissa Romero writes, "When something good happens, they feel like they probably do belong, but when they have a negative experience, they're more likely to question whether they belong. This means that instead of focusing all of their mental energy on their work, some mental energy is expended on trying to figure out whether or not they belong by interpreting information from the environment around them. As a result, belonging uncertainty can prevent people from performing to their true potential."[25]

It's important, then, that employers make an effort to ensure that, in cases of failure or rejection, they go the extra length to signal that all workers—but especially those from under-represented groups—belonging.

Indigenous Peoples: Too few responses prevent survey analysis, but interviews report workplace racism is a problem

Indigenous people represent the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population.[26] In the Toronto CMA, the number of Indigenous people ages 25 to 64 grew 25.2% from 2011 to 2016 and, as such, represents a significant opportunity for employers in the area.[27] However, Indigenous people still remain largely unrepresented in the tech sector.

Unfortunately, the sample size of Indigenous workers in our tech survey was too small to find any statistically significant differences in their overall feelings toward DIBs. However, subsequent interviews indicated that significant racism directed toward Indigenous people in the workplace exists and contributes negatively toward feelings of inclusion and belonging. Though not directly tied to the Toronto tech sector, this is supported by other research about Indigenous people in the Canadian workplace, including a study that shows Indigenous employees often feel like tokens and that being asked to continuously explain their cultural practices can make them uncomfortable.[28]

Little research exists on the inclusion of Indigenous voices in the tech sector, so we encourage additional research with this group.

24. Deggans, E. (2013, April 10). Learning How To Code-Switch: Humbling, But Necessary. National Public Radio. Retrieved from: https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/04/10/176234171/learning-how-to-code-switch-humbling-but-necessary **25.** Romero, C. (2016, January 26). *Who Belongs in Tech?* Retrieved from: https://medium.com/inclusion-insights/who-belongs-in-tech-9ef3a8fdd3 **26.** Kirkup, K. (2017, October 25). Canada's Indigenous population growing 4 times faster than rest of country. *Global News.* Retrieved from: https://globalnews.ca/news/3823772/canadas-growing-indigenous-population/ **27.** Source: Statistics Canada—2011 National Household Survey. Catalogue Number 99-011-X2011028 and 98-400-X2016155 **28.** Lazarova, M. (No date). *Aboriginal Inclusion: Sharing Lessons Learned and Best Practices.*

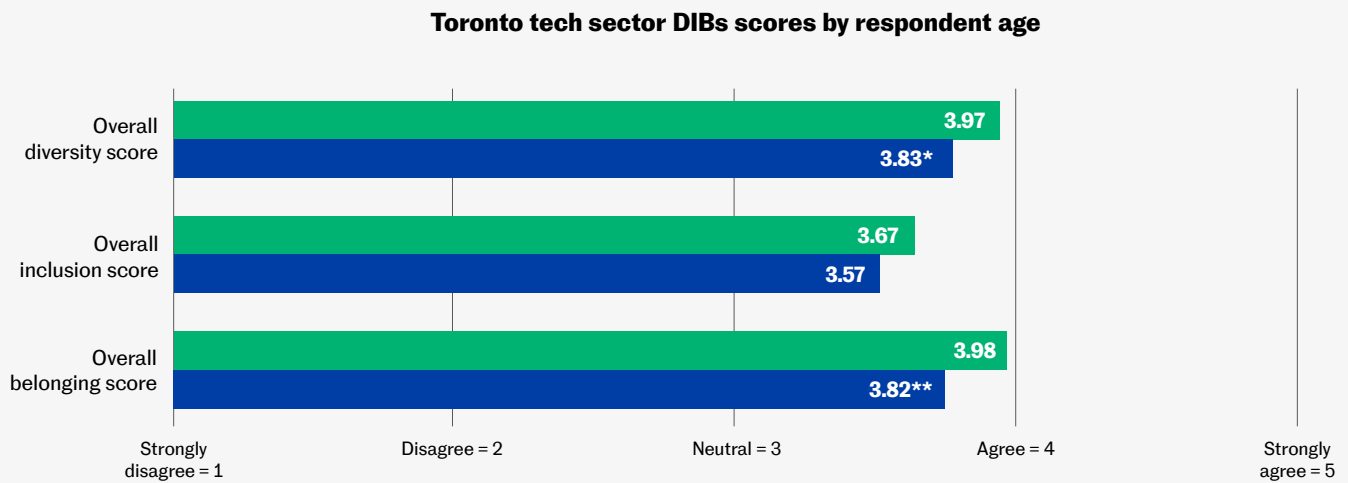## Age: Younger workers report lower levels of belonging

A lot of research exists on measuring the importance of DIBs to the millennial-age crowd (workers who were born roughly between the early 1980s and mid-1990s.) To them, inclusive cultures are even more important for their performance and retention than non-millennials.[29] Our focus groups emphasized age as a factor that strongly influences feelings of belonging in an organization, a finding that was confirmed in the survey (Exhibit 8). Millennials were 1.7 times as likely to report that their organization isn't diverse overall compared to their older peers (Exhibit 9).

Differences were most strongly displayed in the following statements.

- My company represents a diverse group of talent.
- When tasks that no one person is responsible for need to get done the tasks are divided fairly.
- I feel comfortable to voice my opinion, even when it differs from the group opinion.

Exhibit 8: Millennials have lower overall belonging scores, but similar overall inclusion scores

Toronto tech sector DIBs scores by respondent age

NOTE: *** denotes statistically different from 36 years old and over score at the 1% level; ** at the 5% level; * at the 10% level.

● Age 36 and over
● Age 35 and under

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 418

29. Smith, C., & Turner, S. (2015). *The Radical Transformation of Diversity and Inclusion: The Millennial Influence.* Retrieved from Deloitte University: https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-inclus-millennial-influence-120215.pdf

Share of responses who disagreed that their organization fostered overall diversity, by age

Overall diversity score

8.5% (Age 36 and over)

14.9% (Age 35 and under)

0.0% 2.0% 4.0% 6.0% 8.0% 10.0% 12.0% 14.0% 16.0%

NOTE: Difference is statistically different at the 5% level. Disagreement is defined as overall scores below 3. No significant statistical difference was found among disagreement in inclusion and belonging scores.

● Age 36 and over
● Age 35 and under

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 425

That millennials report more disagreement on the diverse makeup of their companies is consistent with research that shows that millennials' views on diversity differ from those of older generations. According to research by Deloitte, millennials are more likely to define diversity in terms of diversity of thought, which includes an individual's "mix of unique experiences, identities, ideas and opinions."[30] Employees over the age of 35 are more likely to describe diversity in terms of demographics, equal opportunity and representation of identifiable demographic characteristics.[31] Deloitte's survey of millennials also found that, while 86% of millennials feel that differences of opinion allow teams to excel, only 59% believe their leaders share this point of view.[32] This is consistent with the findings from our employer focus groups, which points to the idea that tech employers place less emphasis on diversity of thought within an organization's definition of diversity, a point which hampers their productivity.

Issues realating to comfort in expressing opinions and receptivity from older colleagues were brought up by many of the millennials in our focus groups as reasons why they felt less belonging.

They spoke of ageism where older peers would disregard their points or later make the same points only to receive greater receptivity.

"I look younger than my age. Often, I present to senior leadership, generally older men and women who are in their 40s to 60s. When I begin to explain and articulate our product, it feels like they are saying: 'Oh, you're in high school.' It's interesting to see how people will discount you immediately based on the fact that they see you as a young woman coming up who is trying to change the way that their organization works. They question what experience you have and what qualifications you have to be speaking on this topic."

—Employee focus group participant

"I often am not treated as an expert because I look very young. I often prefer phone calls instead of video conferencing because of this reason."

—Survey respondent

Leadership role: Leaders report higher levels of DIBs at their organizations

Whether or not someone described themselves as a leader or an executive is a powerful indicator for their sentiments toward DIBs. Leaders overwhelmingly had higher agreement on statements relating to DIBs than non-leaders (Exhibit 10). In fact, nearly every statement had differences at the highest level of statistical difference. Non-leaders are more than three times as likely to disagree that their organization is diverse and inclusive, and 2.5 as likely to disagree that their organization fosters belonging (Exhibit 11).

30. Ibid. 31. Ibid. 32. Ibid.

Toronto tech sector DIBs scores by respondent role

Category	Age 36 and over	Age 35 and under
Overall diversity score	4.09	3.72***
Overall inclusion score	3.91	3.40***
Overall belonging score	4.13	3.70***

Scale: Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly agree = 5

NOTE: *** denotes statistically different from leader score at the 1% level; ** at the 5% level; * at the 10% level.

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 451

● Age 36 and over
● Age 35 and under

Exhibit 11: Non-leaders are more likely to disagree that their organization fosters DIBs

Share of responses who disagreed that their organization fostered overall diversity, inclusion and belonging by respondent role

Category	Leader	Non-leader
Overall diversity score	5.1%	18.4%
Overall inclusion score	9.2%	29.5%
Overall belonging score	7.3%	18.4%

NOTE: All differences within component scores are statistically different at the 1% level. Disagreement is defined as overall scores below 3.

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 451

● Leader
● Non-leader

This is an important finding as it is often leaders who are responsible for an organization's strategy and culture. This can become important when leaders understand that they have a different perspective on the state of their organizational DIBs and therefore should engage across the organization as they design DIBs initiatives. Leaders need to listen to and engage and collaborate with members at lower levels of the organization to create solutions that work for everyone.

The demographic make up of Toronto's tech sector leaders is unclear. In the employee focus groups, many employees described their leadership as diverse, but just as many said that their executives are predominantly white men (a group that, in general, report much higher levels of DIBs). If it is true that more leaders are male and white, this may contribute to why leaders reports higher levels of DIBs.

"At a base level, a lot of people who run companies and hold power and make decisions, generally in tech, kind of look the same. At my company, it's very many older white males, visibly."

—Employee focus group participant

Sexual orientation: Lesbian, gay and bisexual population report discomfort in sharing their orientations

The quantitative survey data was unable to identify statistical differences between heterosexual employees and those who are asexual, bisexual, fluid, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer or questioning.[33] This is unexpected, as a 2014 study of Canadian workplaces found that almost 30% of LGBT-identified respondents reported discrimination in the workplace, as opposed 2.9% of the general population.[34]

Our survey was able to provide an indication in the qualitative answers that many lesbian and gay employees do not feel comfortable sharing their sexual orientation.

"In general, I could never be open about being gay. It was always best to avoid the topic or lie to reduce the negative impact from co-workers or my opportunities at my work."

—Survey respondent

This is supported by research which shows that 46 per cent of all LGBT Canadian workers are not out to most people at work.[35] In fact, 23 per cent are not out to anyone at work.[36] It follows that those who are not out at work could be less likely to experience rejection based on that part of their identity, which may explain why the survey was unable to identify statistical differences on the DIBs statements among this group. Despite this, homophobia is still prevalent in the Canadian workplace and represents a significant barrier to belonging for LGBT workers regardless of if they are out at work.[37]

It is also likely that the impacts of intersectionality and positionality play an important role in how asexual, bisexual, fluid, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer and questioning individuals experience DIBs in the workplace. Gender identity, racial and cultural identity, age, seniority, appearance or other elements of identity may influence the way colleagues and employers include and interact with these workers more so than their sexual orientation. It is unfortunate that the sample size did not allow for a more intersectional approach to study these aspects of identity within sexual orientation, but further research is necessary to identify the specific needs of this population within the tech sector.

Disability: Employees with a disability are more likely to disagree their organization promotes belonging
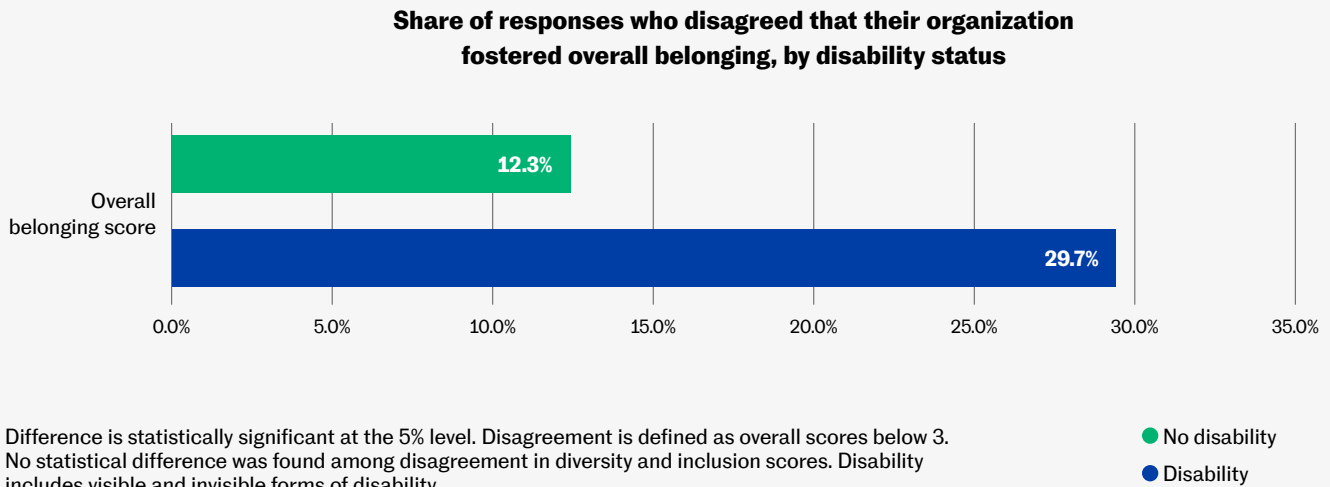
According to Statistics Canada, nearly 16% of Ontarians have a disability.[38] Persons with a disability differ greatly on the severity of their conditions and this variation may impact their employment prospects. It is important to note that employment for this group as a whole is particularly precarious and represents a significant barrier for workplace inclusion. Compared to the employment rate of 70.9% for Ontarians without a disability, the employment rate for those with a disability is 45.5% but falls to 27.5% for those with the most severe disabilities.[39]

Here, the term "disability" includes both temporary and permanent forms of visible disability, as well as invisible disabilities like cognitive or mental disabilities, including addiction and depression. While those with visible and invisible disabilities have very different experiences in the workplace and face different barriers that challenge workplace inclusion and belonging, we weren't able to distinguish between visible and invisible disabilities due to our sample size.

33. For more information on the listed sexual orientations, please see Human Rights Campaign. (No date). *Glossary of Terms.* Retrieved from: http://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms. **34.** Sasso, T., & Ellard-Gray, A. *In & Out: Diverging Perspectives on LGBT inclusion in the Workplace.* Retrieved from: https://ccdi.ca/media/1070/20150528-report-lgbt-inclusion-in-the-workplace-en.pdf **35.** Johnson, I. (2015, December 17). *LGBT Diversity: Show Me the Business Case.* Retrieved from Out Now: https://www.outnowconsulting.com/media/24545/Report-SMTBC-2015-V30sm.pdf **36.** Ibid. **37.** Ibid. **38.** For the year 2012. Arim, R. (2015). *A profile of persons with disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years or older, 2012.* (Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 89-654-X). Retrieved from Statistics Canada: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2015001-eng.htm. **39.** For the year 2012 and aged 15 to 64 years. Statistics Canada. (No date). Table 13-10-0348-01 Labour force status for adults with disabilities by disability type [Table]. Retrieved from: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/ev/tv.action?pid=1310034801; Statistics Canada. (No date). Table 14-10-0018-01 Labour force characteristics by sex and detailed age group, annual [Table]. Retrieved from: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410001801

Share of responses who disagreed that their organization fostered overall belonging, by disability status

NOTE: Difference is statistically significant at the 5% level. Disagreement is defined as overall scores below 3. No statistical difference was found among disagreement in diversity and inclusion scores. Disability includes visible and invisible forms of disability.

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 442

● No disability
● Disability

Those with a disability were 2.4 times more likely to disagree that their organization promotes belonging (Exhibit 12). This is supported by the fact that the following statements had scores that were lower for those with a disability.

- My company invests time and energy in making our company diverse.
- I feel comfortable to be my authentic self at work.

Overall, those with invisible disabilities, such as cognitive and mental health disabilities, reported difficulties in sharing their disabilities with their co-workers. This aligns with the finding above that those with a disability are less comfortable to be their authentic selves at work, preventing them from being able to truly belong in their workplace.

"I live with bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder and depression. It is a constant daily battle, as I have learned it's not something that you

can disclose in the workplace no matter how 'caring and open' your workplace says it is to employees with mental illness. Not true. It has been a constant and awful struggle. I am an actor at my desk 95% of the time. I am not myself. If I want to keep my job, I leave myself at home."

—Survey respondent

"I was diagnosed with a learning disability in elementary school. It relates to how I process information from short-term to long-term memory. I've developed strategies so I don't forget things at work, but it means it takes me longer to get certain tasks done. I've learned how to hide it well from co-workers."

—Survey respondent

Our interviews also highlighted that invisible disability can be a barrier to inclusion and belonging, as employees expend energy to both perform their job with a disability and, typically, to hide the disability.

It is important for those with visible and invisible disabilities to receive the correct accommodations or adjustments at work, as not being accommodated is often a major obstacle to performing their jobs effectively and the right to accommodation is an integral part of the Ontario Human Rights Code.[40]

40. For more information, please see: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/iv-human-rights-issues-all-stages-employment/9-more-about-disability-related-accommodation

"It's important to consider the employee experience in a workplace adjustment process, and not make it too complicated or drawn out. Doing a workplace adjustment is an opportunity to increase employee engagement and productivity.

We do workplace adjustments all the time for workers taking parental leave, but it's so common now that we don't even see it as such. We need to make the adjustments process become part of the culture, like with parental leave. Some people need ergonomic mice, some people need different keyboards and some people need a flexible work schedule. If we just looked at it all as a process to improve productivity, rather than something that we're doing as a 'favour', we would all be farther ahead."

—Lenore MacAdam, inclusion lead at Deloitte Canada

Immigration status: No statistical differences by immigration status

The MaRS survey and focus groups did not identify any significant differences in DIBs based on whether or not an employee was born in Canada. However, as previous MaRS research indicated that those born outside of Canada were more likely to be job seekers within Toronto's tech community compared to those born in Canada. It is possible that this finding is due to a lower employment rate among immigrants, which would lead to a larger pool of job seekers among that group.[41] However, it could also point to lower levels of inclusion or belonging among immigrants in the workforce, as those who feel that they do not belong may be more inclined to look for another job where they could be more included.

Organizational size: Employees from smaller organizations report higher overall DIBs

In addition to demographic questions, respondents were asked for some non-identifying information about the companies at which they worked, including the size of their organization by the number of employees.

For the purposes of this report, small organizations were defined as those having one to 99 employees, medium-size organizations as those having 100 to 499 employees and large organizations as those with greater than 500 employees. On average, smaller organizations (one to 99 employees) have higher overall DIBs scores (Exhibit 13).
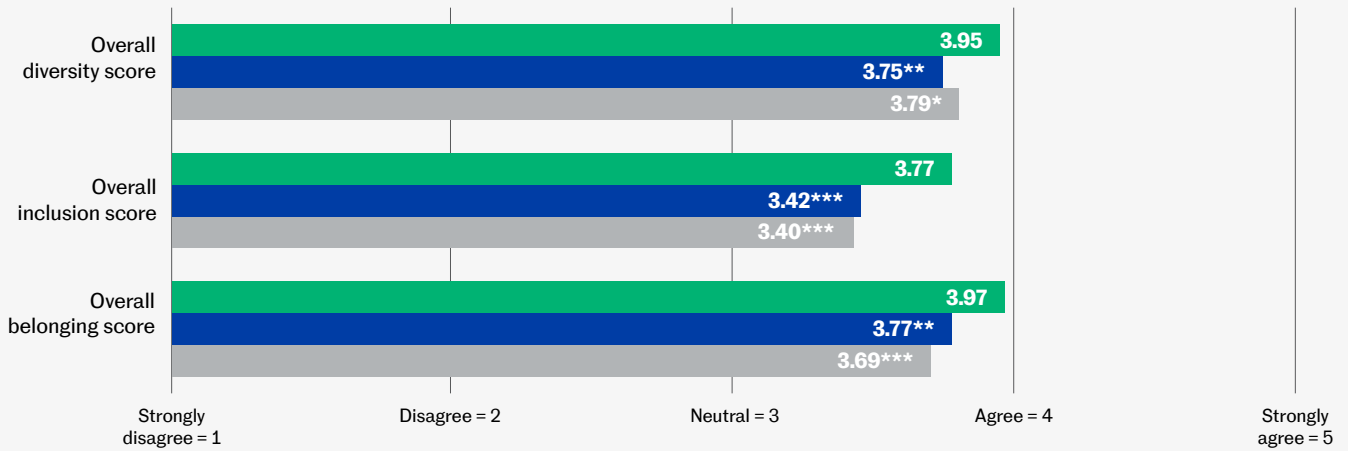
The following statements proved the most different.

- My company values the differences of individuals.
- People who look, feel and think differently have equal opportunities to thrive at my company.
- I am part of the decision-making process at work.
- When tasks that no one person is responsible for need to get done the tasks are divided fairly.
- Even when something negative happens, I still feel like I belong at my company.

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41. For 2016, the employment rate among non-immigrants in Toronto CMA was 65.8% compared to 57.9% for immigrants in Toronto CMA. Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census, Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016286.

Small organizations have higher overall DIBs scores

Toronto tech sector DIBs scores by respondent's organization size

	Score
Overall diversity score	3.95 / 3.75** / 3.79*
Overall inclusion score	3.77 / 3.42*** / 3.40***
Overall belonging score	3.97 / 3.77** / 3.69***

Strongly disagree = 1 Disagree = 2 Neutral = 3 Agree = 4 Strongly agree = 5

NOTE: *** denotes statistically different from 1-99 employees score at the 1% level; ** at the 5% level; * at the 10% level.

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 452

● 1-99 Employees
● 100-499 Employees
● 500+ Employees

Those working at a small organization (one to 99 employees) were less likely to report they had been subjected to bias based on one or more aspects of their identity compared to employees at medium (100 to 499 employees) and large (500+ employees) organizations. Compared to employees at a small organization, employees at medium and large organizations were both 1.7 times more likely to disagree that their organization promoted inclusion overall (Exhibit 14). There was some indication from our focus groups that smaller organizations may have been more attuned to hiring for culture while they were small, but that after a certain stage their growth and size prevented them from focusing on this practice.

Share of responses who disagreed that their organization is inclusive, by organization size

NOTE: *** denotes statistically different from 1-99 employees score at the 1% level; ** at the 5% level; * at the 10% level.

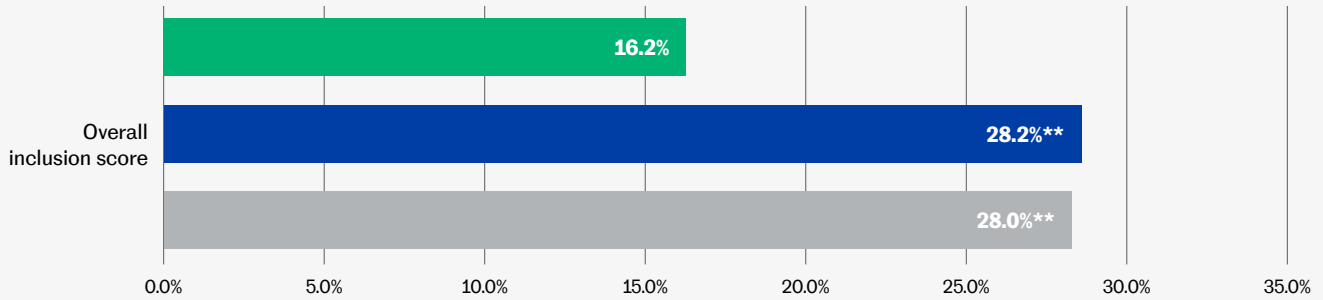SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 452

● 1-99 Employees
● 100-499 Employees
● 500+ Employees

How organizations set their DIBs priorities affects how employees view DIBs

Organizational priorities are communicated to employees in many ways—and employees listen. Whenever employees start a new job they often ask questions about the company's priorities, including how they are determined and by whom. Leaders must communicate clearly what they expect from their employees.

Employees notice that not all aspects of diversity are prioritized

Many employees reported that a hierarchy of diversity exists within their organization. Specifically, gender and race seem to be prioritized in diversity conversations over other aspects of diversity, including age, disability (visible and invisible), sexual orientation and gender identity, and other invisible aspects of diversity.

Because of the emphasis on certain aspects of physical diversity, employees reported that other invisible areas of diversity were often either excluded from the conversation, under valued or not valued at all. This is particularly prevalent in conversations about diversity of thought. For example, some organizations have roots in specific colleges and universities; that is, many founders find each other while obtaining post-secondary education and subsequently start their businesses together. As a result, we heard that there is often a bias toward certain post-secondary institutions and against others, which influences the hiring approach. Hiring employees from specific institutions, however, limits both the hiring pool and the company's diversity of background and thought which can impact their bottom line.

"Nobody in their right mind is going to say, 'I want people who look like myself.' Everyone's going to say we strive for diversity. But since people come with a pre-canned version of diversity, they're just going to say, 'You can be diverse, as long as you agree with what I'm saying.'"

—Employee focus group participant

It is notable that this hierarchy of diversity did not just cause diversity of thought to be undervalued. We heard in our focus groups that divergent perspectives in some cases can be considered harmful. Many employees described the path to leadership as being precarious if you do not share the perspectives of your manager or senior leadership. In fact, sharing diverse perspectives was cited as one way employees might lose their jobs.

"It's really hard to level up if you don't agree with your manager."

—Employee focus group participant

Being able to identify organizational responsibility for DIBs matters for employees
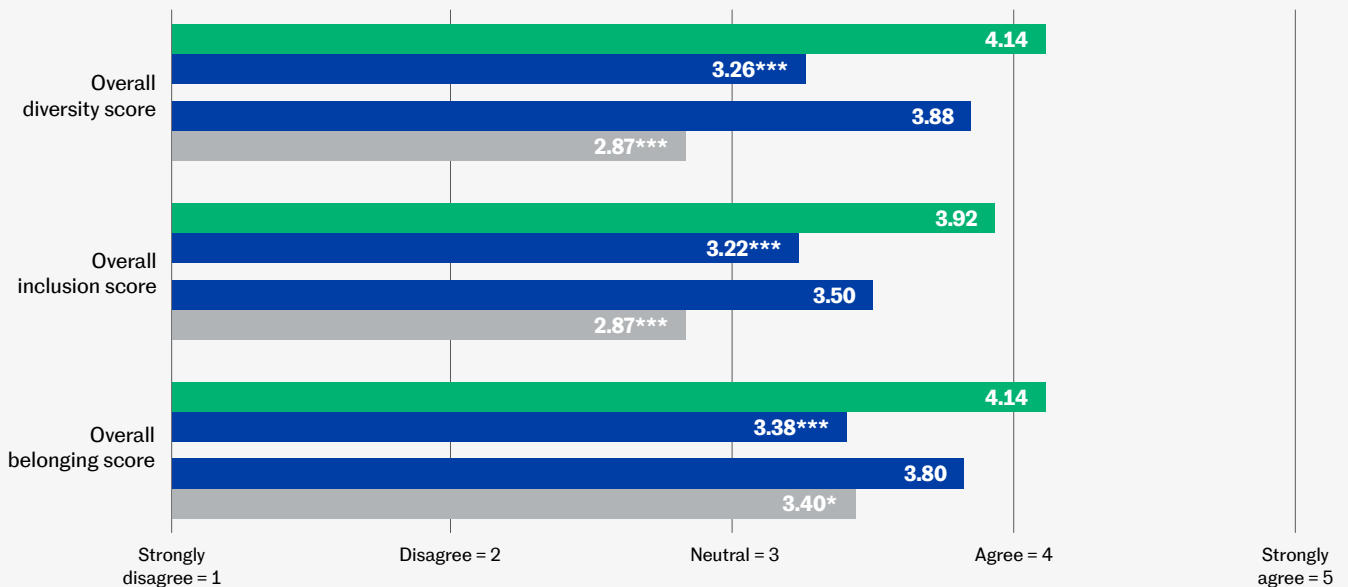
Organizations that have created and communicated organizational responsibility for diversity achieved significantly higher on DIBs than those that have not. To check that this wasn't just due to organizational size, which could be correlated with organizational resources, organizational responsibility and DIBs scores were checked against organizational size.

Ultimately, respondents who were able to identify the person or team responsible for diversity initiatives at their organization had higher overall DIBs scores (Exhibit 15).[42] In fact, those who reported that they weren't able to identify anyone responsible for diversity initiatives were four times more likely to disagree that their organization was diverse overall, 2.8 times more likely to disagree that their organization was inclusive overall and three times more likely to disagree that their

organization fostered belonging overall (Exhibit 16). This doesn't necessarily mean that there is no organizational responsibility at the companies where people were not able to identify them— however, if employees are unable to identify that person or team, they are more likely to report lower levels of organizational DIBs.

Exhibit 15: Identified responsibility for diversity initiatives is important for overall DIBs despite organization size

Toronto tech sector DIBs scores by respondent organizational size and diversity responsibility

NOTE: *** denotes statistically different from the identifiable responsibility score for each organization size at the 1% level; ** at the 5% level; * at the 10% level. Identified responsibility indicates respondent was able to identify someone for whom DIBs was a responsibility at their organization.

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 424

Legend:
- 1-99 employees with identified responsibility
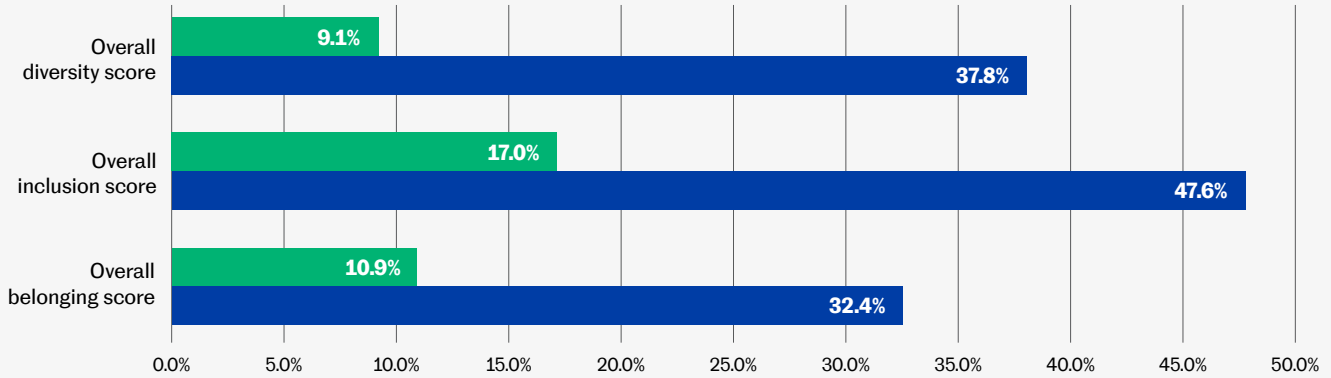- 1-99 employees with no identified responsibility
- 100+ employees with identified responsibility
- 100+ employees with no identified responsibility

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42. "Someone responsible" included responses which listed a person, a department, or that "everyone" was responsible. "No one responsible" included responses which indicated no "one was responsible" or the question was not applicable to their organization.

Exhibit 16: Employees from organizations with no identified responsibility for diversity initiatives are more likely to disagree that their organization is diverse, inclusive and fosters belonging

Share of responses who disagreed that their organization fostered diversity, inclusion and belonging, by identified organizational responsibility for diversity initiatives

Category	Identified responsibility	No identified responsibility
Overall diversity score	9.1%	37.8%
Overall inclusion score	17.0%	47.6%
Overall belonging score	10.9%	32.4%

0.0% 5.0% 10.0% 15.0% 20.0% 25.0% 30.0% 35.0% 40.0% 45.0% 50.0%

● Identified responsibility
● No identified responsibility

NOTE: All differences within component scores are statistically different at the 5% level. Disagreement is defined as overall scores below 3.

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 424

This is supported by research which shows that establishing organizational responsibility for diversity—through initiatives like DIBs committees or action plans—can be more effective in increasing the diversity of management teams than other initiatives like diversity training and mentorship.[43] In fact, organizations who create responsibility among their leadership find that their other organizational DIBs initiatives are more impactful in increasing the diversity of their staff than in organizations who don't create responsibility.[44]

We heard from many employees that a lack of formal processes, policies and responsibility for diversity initiatives prevented them from feeling belonging. The employees we spoke to pointed to the formal processes and policies in place as helping them to feel that they belong. Formal processes and policies could include implementing explicit pay bands by hierarchical level to ensure equal pay, formal maternity leave policies, and policies to support the transition of trans employees in the workplace.

"But the things that they've done that really helped our organization were feedback training and manager training, and they standardized all of our salaries across the board so that if you are at one level, then this is the range you will make. There's no longer a question of: 'Is that white male getting paid more than me because he is a white male manager and I'm a woman?' It helped level the playing field."

—Employee focus group participant

"I think the key is it has nothing to do with diversity. It's more about formal processes and how you want a company to operate as a whole. I think if you're fair you'll be able to acknowledge that there is going to be some bias, but that you'll be able to face it head on. If you try to avoid conflict and bias, it's just going to happen without you being aware of it."

—Employee focus group participant

43. Kalev, A., Dobbin, F., & Kelly, E. (2006). Best Practices or Best Guesses? Assessing the Efficacy of Corporate Affirmative Action and Diversity Policies. *American Sociological Review,* 71(4), 589-617. **44.** Ibid.
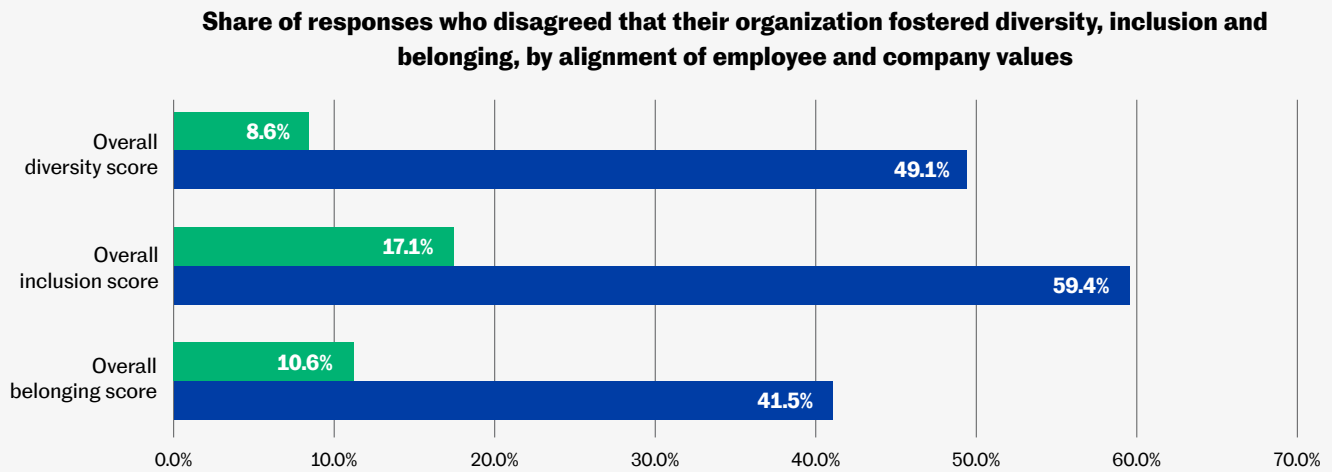
Alignment of employees' personal and organizational values can affect the organization

Many companies have failed in prioritizing the alignment of company and employee values—and they do so to their own detriment. Similar to organizational responsibility, the employee survey identified that alignment of company values was important to employees in how they view DIBs. In fact, employees were more likely to report that their company was not diverse, inclusive or fostered belonging if they felt their own values were not aligned with their company's values (Exhibit 17). Moreover, those whose values were aligned with their organization's were more than twice as likely to say they would still be at their organization in two years' time, further emphasizing value alignment as a contributor to an organization's bottom line (Exhibit 18).

Exhibit 17: Employees whose values are not aligned with their company's values are more likely to disagree that their organization is diverse, inclusive or fosters belonging

Share of responses who disagreed that their organization fostered diversity, inclusion and belonging, by alignment of employee and company values

- Overall diversity score: 8.6% (Values aligned), 49.1% (Values not aligned)
- Overall inclusion score: 17.1% (Values aligned), 59.4% (Values not aligned)
- Overall belonging score: 10.6% (Values aligned), 41.5% (Values not aligned)

● Values aligned
● Values not aligned

NOTE: All differences within component scores are statistically different at the 1% level. Disagreement is defined as overall scores below 3. Values aligned defined as those who answered 3 (Neutral) or greater to the statement "My values are aligned with my company values."
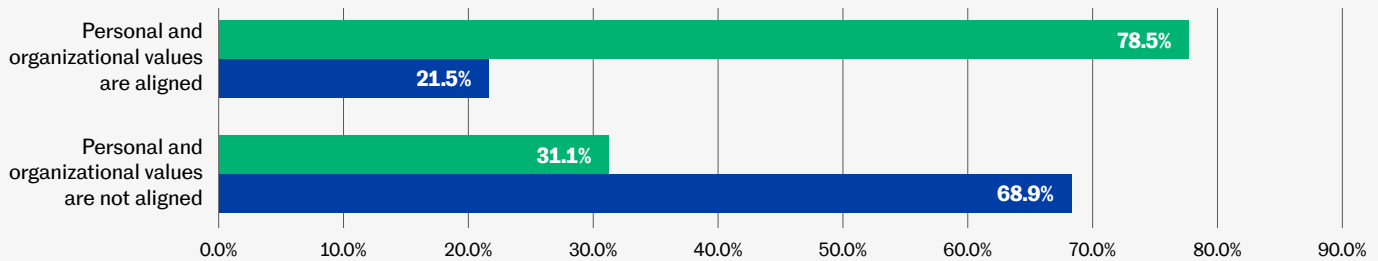
SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 452

Alignment of personal and organizational responses by reported longevity in organization

NOTE: All differences are statistically significant at the 1% level. Values aligned defined as those who answered 3 (Neutral) or greater to the statement, "My values are aligned with my company values." Will stay 2 years defined as those who answered 3 (Neutral) or greater to the statement "I see myself working at my company in two years' time."

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District analysis using survey data set powered by Fortay and Feminuity.

N = 452

● Will stay 2 years
● Will not stay 2 years

Values are more than beliefs; values dictate how organizations behave, act and make decisions, as well as how they hire, terminate, promote, celebrate or penalize. Values are defined by the physical environment, how paid time off is determined, how social gatherings are held and so much more. Values define what is important to an organization and create a framework for action. Ultimately, to reap the benefits of having value alignment, organizations must be sure that their values are created in tandem by both leadership and employees to ensure alignment and create opportunities for regular feedback.

Without organizational leadership, employees' confusion and discomfort with DIBs prevent action

Employees need help and leadership from their organizations to guide them through the DIBs process. Diversity, inclusion, belonging, allyship, power and privilege can be hard concepts

to understand and they require learning and critical reflection, which can only be done when leaders show the way.

Employers must help employees understand allyship is not an identity

Many focus group participants who came from historically dominant groups in the workplace expressed feeling fear and unease when talking about DIBs. They wanted to be allies, but were concerned it wasn't their place to be involved in the conversation or didn't know what to do to help.

"I started a group at my company last year when I joined the company to discuss issues of diversity and inclusion. I just found that to be quite effective. But a few people asked me, 'Do I belong in the group because I'm a white guy?' And I'd answer, 'Do you care about the topic? Yes? Then join.'"

—**Employee focus group participant**

This fear and unease highlight a tension that arose in our focus groups and surveys. Though they wanted to be allies, participants questioned what being allies actually meant. Allyship cannot be claimed; it is a label that must be granted to an ally by an oppressed group. It requires the ally's awareness of their privilege, access to resources and a sensitivity to the power they hold.[45] Joining a diversity group at work is a good way to gain some context, but it also requires empathy to understand how you are experienced by other people and a willingness to use your resources and power to advance others' objectives.

45. Mizock, L., & Page, K. (2016). Evaluating the Ally Role: Contributions, Limitations, and the Activist Position in Counseling and Psychology. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology,* 8(1), 17-33.

Allyship is also a concept that is complicated by intersectionality, an area that was often missing in the focus group conversations. Sometimes a single person can experience power, privilege and oppression. This is why context is paramount to the advancement of a diverse, inclusive workplace that fosters belonging. We must try to limit the desire to place people in grouped hierarchies as we attempt to reduce bias and oppression. We must acknowledge and change oppressive practices rather than acknowledge and reinforce them by assuming the ally is a hero and the oppressed person is a victim.

In addition to doing their own work to learn about allyship, leaders at organizations must help employees navigate these tricky waters by demonstrating how to be an ally and speaking openly about the ways they are using their power to amplify the voices of minority groups in the workplace and beyond.

"I often see the misperception that sharing information and learning about gender identity is the same as including those identities in your workplace and being an ally to them. In fact, sharing knowledge about gender identity can often give cisgender and straight people a false sense of allyship. It is important for people to be active as much as it is to be knowledgeable. A person can know what LGBTQ2+ means, but that doesn't absolve them from having to stand up to homophobic or transphobic language in the workplace. It also doesn't absolve them from intervening when someone is doing something

which promotes bias or fear at work. Just being aware does not make you an ally."

— **Colin Druhan, executive director of Pride at Work Canada**

Some dominant groups experienced discomfort with diversity measures

Survey responses from predominantly male and white groups indicated a fear of prioritizing organizational diversity initiatives because of the perception that such initiatives might create bias against them, which they worried would cause them to lose out on potential advancement opportunities. Other research has shown that these dominant groups are more likely to see pro-diversity messages as threatening.[46] Notably, research shows that fear of diversity measures make dominant groups less likely to take steps to achieve a more inclusive organization because they feel threatened.[47] This concern underscores the importance of including all employees in conversations about the importance of DIBs and about the determination of company values.

Our experiences shape our perceptions. It may be difficult to fully comprehend the pressures or barriers that others face if those pressures or barriers are vastly different from our own. Our employee focus groups generally felt that the tech industry was a diverse sector, and a significant portion of employees credit this diversity to the idea of a "meritocracy" within tech. That is, they feel that a person who demonstrates the right skills and explicit abilities should advance because their competence should speak for itself and win out. A meritocracy would mean that the tech sector presents a great opportunity for talent from under-represented or marginalized groups— both visibly and invisibly—to enjoy greater access to opportunity and professional advancement. However

meritocracies do not acknowledge the problems related to building the talent pipeline, like the relationship between bias, access to networks and social capital, among others.

"One blanket statement that I've heard a lot over the past few years is the concept of meritocracy, where they say they promote people based on their skill set and they don't look at anything else. But people tend to just hang around people that look like themselves. So, when you're going to be looking for a promotion, you're going to think of the people who are surrounding you. Just the fact that somebody looks like you and is going to be close to you, you're going to have a tendency to think about that person first."

—**Employee focus group participant**

If a culture assumes that merit is the key driver of advancement and success, groups who do not have equal access may not be recognized and the unconscious biases that created unequal opportunity in the first place will persist. A side effect of the belief in meritocracy is the assumption that those who do not advance have failed because of a lack of merit. This logic, as research has shown, triggers implicit and explicit biases that are the root barriers to entry and advancement for under-represented or marginalized groups.[48]

46. Dover, T.L., Major, B., & Kaiser, C.R. (2016). Members of high-status groups are threatened by pro-diversity organizational messages. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* 62, 58-67. **47.** Ibid. **48.** Castilla, E.J., & Benard, S. (2010). The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 55(4), 543-676.

Leadership is needed within organizations to counter these false claims and misrepresentations of diversity, and this message needs to cascade down to the rest of the organization.

Belonging is not synonymous with fitting in

Many employees provided examples where they felt that they just didn't fit in. During the hiring process, the dominant culture that was communicated to them provided indicators that they were "different" in some tangible way.

"It was a Friday and my colleagues and I were having some beers after work. Suddenly, everyone begins talking about water levels and their dock conditions, and I have no idea what's going on. It turns out everyone was talking about their cottages, and I'm sitting there thinking, 'Holy crap, I don't have a cottage.' I realized then that everyone on the senior team had their own cottages in the same area, and a lot of my colleagues' parents own cottages, and everyone is talking about cottages. And it comes to me: 'I don't know what I'm doing.'"

—Employee focus group participant

Fit is not the same thing as belonging and this is particularly relevant for hiring and culture in the tech sector. There is a temptation to hire for "fit" and to encourage ourselves or others to "just fit in," but this should not be the goal.

According to Brené Brown, the author of *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone,* "fitting in is the greatest barrier to belonging. Fitting in, I've discovered during the past decade of research, is assessing situations and groups of people, then twisting yourself into a human pretzel in order to get them to let you hang out with them. Belonging is something else entirely— it's showing up and letting yourself be seen and known as you really are."[49]

True belonging is created in the moments where employees who do not share similar backgrounds and life experiences no longer have to question their place at an organization or feel as though they aren't enough for their workplace just as they are. It's not wrong to talk about cottages and water levels, as in the example above, but it is important to recognize the diversity of those in the audience through inclusive practices, like those outlined in the next section, in order to ensure that everyone still feels that they belong.

How leaders approach DIBs makes a big impact on how employees feel in the sector. The tone must be set from the top. Leaders must make efforts to quell confusion and discomfort with DIBs initiatives and create a place where everyone feels that they belong, rather than try to just fit in.

49. Brown, B. (No date). *Brené Brown's Top 4 Life Lessons.* Retrieved from: http://www.oprah.com/spirit/Life-Lessons-We-All-Need-to-Learn-Brene-Brown

The Employer Perspective: Initiatives, Challenges and Hopes

To build on the knowledge gained from the employee survey and employee focus groups, MaRS held focus groups with 110 leaders from 47 tech employers across the GTA. This helped create a holistic view of DIBs in the tech sector.

Overall, there was a great sense of willingness to learn and optimism about DIBs among employers. They were open to discussing aspects of DIBs within their organizations, including current steps being taken, challenges they're facing and plans for the future. MaRS commends the companies who participated in the focus group sessions; openness will help further the conversation for the sector.

Employers understand DIBs, including its benefits

Employers generally understand diversity and inclusion, but struggle to create shared organizational understanding

Employers are aware of diversity and inclusion, and are open about the areas where they know they are falling short. In general, employers referenced diversity efforts and spoke about inclusion and belonging activities, but may not have defined them as such. This suggests that further education about DIBs in the workplace is needed.

Employers—particularly smaller organizations—mentioned that there was no shared understanding of DIBs in their organization. Intellectually, members of these organizations understand the concepts, but some companies had not defined what the concepts mean for them specifically. There seemed to be a disconnect between individual understanding and company-wide understanding.

"We want to ensure people can bring their authentic selves to work and that there is opportunity for all. But we have no shared understanding of what DIBs is."

—Employer focus group participant

"There is no consistent understanding of what it is and how it works, or how to organize the process to improve it."

—Employer focus group participant

Among larger and more established companies, organizational understanding of DIBs was stronger. In some cases, companies had defined concepts or streams of work (i.e. having diversity and inclusion groups).

"As a large organization, we have a whole DIBs team and it's embedded in all our processes. We win awards for our approach. So, we're in a very different place than the smaller startups."

—Employer focus group participant

Typically, many tech employers' organizational understanding of diversity has centred on its observed aspects, including gender, ethnicity, age, ability etc. The caveat to this is that some large organizations reported they have transitioned into understanding diversity of thought and have included mental health initiatives into their DIBs initiatives. However, many smaller firms and startups agreed that they were further behind. Crucially, having a limited understanding of diversity can often lead to missing unseen aspects of diversity, such as learning disabilities, mental health, diversity of thought and intersectionality. This presents a unique opportunity for startup firms to lean on the expertise of larger firms that have more advanced understandings.

It is important to reflect that though large firms may be further ahead in thinking about DIBs, this isn't reflected in higher DIBs scores reported by employees or in the feedback we heard in focus groups. We're unsure why this is, but perhaps a diffusion of organizational responsibility or a lack of cohesive organizational message could contribute.

Employers could articulate benefits of implementing DIBs in their organizations

Almost all employers were able to articulate a mature and holistic understanding of DIBs and its

importance both to their business and to society as a whole. In particular, they understood that investing in DIBs is essential for attracting the highest quality talent, promoting retention, creating products that appeal to diverse markets and improving decision-making.

Employers were also aware that DIBs creates a positive work culture and the potential for employee empowerment. Employers told MaRS that DIBs goes beyond productivity, innovation and profit, and supports individual emotional well-being. All of this communicated that employers have a strong understanding of the benefits of doing DIBs work in their organizations.

Though we heard from our employer focus groups that easier access to the DIBs business case could help leaders make the case that DIBs is a strategic priority at their organization, those same employers were also able to provide a comprehensive view of DIBs benefits to organizations and teams. Given this, we don't believe easier access to the business case to be a material barrier to advancing tech sector DIBs. Instead, there are likely other larger factors preventing organizations from making true progress in advancing DIBs which will be discussed later in the paper.

Many tech employers have started to implement initiatives for diversity and inclusion

One way to approach DIBs is by implementing initiatives that promote diversity, inclusion and belonging within organizations. In the focus groups, MaRS asked employers to explain the current activities they are undertaking to bring DIBs to life. Their examples were numerous and wide ranging, and many were grounded in best practices and research. It's notable that, during the focus groups, many employers

took note of initiatives being practised in other organizations that they could bring back to their own companies. We encourage more tech companies to create more opportunities to share their own experiences with DIBs.

Employers are reimagining the hiring process to remove bias

Research shows that while those who identify as men are more likely to apply to "stretch positions"—that is, positions where they do not meet all of the criteria listed on a job description—those who identify as women are less likely to do so.[50] Instead, women are more likely to apply to jobs where they meet all of the minimum criteria on the job description. Many employers are aware of this and, in an effort to increase the gender parity of their organizations, have started to take a serious look at their job descriptions and to pare down the requirements to reflect the minimum that is absolutely required to do the job well.

Organizations have also been experimenting with diverse hiring panels during interviews to help democratize the decision-making process. Diverse panels help to remove bias in hiring decisions and can portray a diverse view of the company to the prospective employee. However, employers need to be careful that they do not overly burden minority members of their organization with hiring responsibilities that are outside their normal scope of work by using the same employees repeatedly.

50. Mohr, T.S. (2014, August 25). Why Women Don't Apply for Jobs Unless They're 100% Qualified. *Harvard Business Review.* Retrieved from: https://hbr.org/2014/08/why-women-dont-apply-for-jobs-unless-theyre-100-qualified

Employers are harnessing the power of tech solutions

Unsurprisingly, tech employers are using technology solutions to help build diverse and inclusive workplaces. Fortay helps organizations attract and hire diverse talent that will thrive in an organization's workplace culture by mapping based on their core values, cultural contributions, and unifying mindsets to foster diversity of thought and a sense of belonging. Many reported their use of Textio, an app that helps develop job descriptions that are gender neutral or gender friendly, with the goal of attracting a wider range of candidates, as well as AI recruitment tools like Plum that help measure a candidate's potential and remove the bias associated with hiring. Online HR systems and messaging applications are increasingly able to list prounouns, and many changes can be self-directed—a practice which is helpful for workers who may be transitioning or who have transitioned.

Companies have also been implementing blind hiring screenings using products including Knockri and Unbiasify, which both help hide names and other potentially biasing information during the hiring process. Furthermore, tools like GrackleDocs are helping organizations to create accessible documents for use by their employees and beyond. It is important to know that AI apps can come with

their own inherent biases, which companies must investigate before and during use.

To better understand their employee culture, many employers reported using tech products including Fortay and Culture Amp, as well as Slack apps like Polly, to conduct anonymous internal surveys with their employees. They do this to understand who makes up their workforce, including their seen and unseen characteristics, and to ask them what they want and need at work, an essential requirement before tackling other aspects of DIBs. It can also assist in the measurement of progress. Open communication is key when implementing a company-wide survey. Some individuals may be reluctant to engage in a survey if they do not understand its larger purpose or if they think they will be penalized for answering questions honestly. All surveys should be administered responsibly to ensure openness and inclusion.

"Good technological solutions come from repetitive processes which can be automated. The hiring process, for example, is something that is done over and over so parts of that can easily be automated to remove bias. The same can be said about how we educate talent on the importance of diversity

and inclusion. Currently, this process relies heavily on marginalized people educating others or pointing them to online resources, which is inefficient and exhausting. As we've seen in this study, the tech community is feeling the pain of recruiting and retaining good tech talent and they are looking to new, innovative solutions to help them do that."

—Stefan Kollenberg, co-founder and CMO, Crescendo

"We must effectively measure what matters to our talent around diversity, inclusion and belonging. It is imperative for the creation of diverse high-performing cultures, where impactful programs and efforts can be built to drive productivity and growth."

—Marlina Kinnersley, co-founder and CEO of Fortay.co

In general, using surveys is a great way to gain feedback and identify areas for improvement. These can and should be complemented with conversations with employees to gather further information.

Diversity value statements can help create an inclusive workplace when paired with other efforts

Many employers, especially larger firms, have enacted "diversity statements," which set forth the firm's values and can serve as a guiding principle for how they wish to act on diversity. It is common to see phrases such as "equal opportunity employer" or "diversity-friendly employer" on job postings and applications.

However, such statements must reflect the true culture and values of the company and not be there solely for placement online or marketing. These diversity statements alone are not effective at increasing the diversity of the applicant pool or the workforce, and they can actually backfire in some cases.[51] Research has shown that those with power in organizations that have enacted diversity statements may believe that their organization is more diverse and inclusive than it actually is, leading them to take less action on DIBs.[52] Value statements can be an important step in DIBs, so long as they are not the only step taken.

Celebrating and supporting the diversity of employees creates opportunities to be seen

Some large organizations have created the space and resources for employee resource groups. Examples of these groups include visible minorities groups, women's groups, women of colour groups and LGBTQ+ groups.

"Our Indigenous Circle Group is an employee resource group within TD that is very social and is developed and created by employees. It's a community that brings Indigenous employees together who are like you to help you feel like you aren't isolated within your department. And it is in those moments when you feel like you are not necessarily just an employee—you are also an Indigenous person. Creating these opportunities to connect you with your identity show you that you are not just another head— you are a head that matters."

—**Krystal Abotossaway, strategic diversity sourcing partner at TD Bank and president of the Aboriginal Professional Association of Canada**

Employees and employers create these groups to have an opportunity to be seen, heard and valued within the organization. Employee resource groups allow members to support one another and discuss common wins and challenges. These groups are positive in most cases because they decentralize power and create multiple ways for people to feel that they contribute to their organization's culture.

"We have a D&I Committee. It's been in existence for about a year. It's very clear it's important to the organization. The people who work on the D&I Committee, 20% of their time is allocated to that. So, it's not like an after-school program. It is part of their performance."

—**Employee focus group participant**

Similarly, many organizations are engaging in activities that celebrate the culture and visible differences of their employees. Some are acknowledging land rights for Indigenous Peoples, introducing religious calendars and hosting cultural festivals or celebrations. Employers mentioned they introduced lunch-and-learn sessions about diversity topics, including learning about Ramadan and other cultural events or religious observances.

These activities are good starts— however, it's important to not stop there. Launching diversity initiatives gives organizations the opportunity to dig deeper and to begin questioning how these events are positioned and planned.

Important questions to ask include:

- How are these events and the elements of diversity they celebrate being prioritized?
- Who has the power in decision-making?
- Are any groups being unintentionally (or intentionally) left out?

Ultimately, what's most useful is that companies that have started to take steps toward inclusive behaviours can open up to these questions and make their efforts that much more valuable.

Employers are changing what tech-sector culture can be

In the tech sector, it is common to hear the phrase "Work hard, play hard." This culture can often include parties and social events where alcohol is present. Promoting and encouraging these sort of events can hinder inclusion, as they promote a lifestyle or activities not practised by everyone. They can be limiting and pressuring, and may not align with certain religious beliefs.

Employers were aware of these issues and many were taking steps to reduce the presence of alcohol at company events, especially hiring events. It's not necessary that alcohol be removed, but it's important to ensure that drinking is not the only form of socializing that is promoted as acceptable in a given workplace culture. How companies portray themselves on their websites, through social media and during interview processes all influence the types of candidates who apply.

51. Kang, S., Decelles, K., Tilcsik, A., & Jun, S. (2016, March 29). The Unintended Consequences of Diversity Statements. *Harvard Business Review.* Retrieved from: https://hbr.org/2016/03/the-unintended-consequences-of-diversity-statements **52.** Kaiser, C.R., Major, B., Jurcevic, I., Dover, T.L., Brady, L.M., & Shapiro, J.R. (2013). Presumed Fair: Ironic Effects of Organizational Diversity Structures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 104(3), 504.

"Many companies are working to diversify their workforces, but they make the mistake of focusing too narrowly on their recruiting processes— diversifying their pipeline and de-biasing their screening process, as examples—and they forget to focus on what happens when they get the new hire through the door. That new hire is a human, and if companies don't invest their time and energy into building a culture where everyone can feel included, where everyone can bring their full selves to work each day and feel a deep sense of belonging, they'll be no further ahead."

—Sarah Saska, co-founder and CEO of Feminuity

Employers are helping their employees build awareness through education

Companies are introducing training and education to promote DIBs elements in their organizations. One example mentioned in the focus groups was unconscious bias training. Unconscious bias training aims to introduce employees to their own biases and increase their awareness for how their blind spots might impact their engagement with their colleagues. However, this training was the exception, not the norm, among employers. The tech sector should also be looking at other training that would help build capacity to do DIBs work in the sector, including anti-oppression training and training to improve cultural competency, which can help companies begin to understand the theory and framework that underpin DIBs.

"In my company, all those who had responsibilities for hiring were provided interview training for things like unconscious bias and using inclusive language."

—Survey respondent

Other examples of education initiatives that employers cited as priorities for investment included education to improve communication skills, critical feedback delivery and empathy development. All of these improve the emotional intelligence of the workplace, which can aid in a workplace's overall level of inclusion. To increase two-way communication, companies have hosted town halls and offered ask-me-anything sessions with senior leadership on topics related to DIBs. Some hold themed conversations to explore one or more aspects of DIBs.

Employees told MaRS that some employers are taking on the role of providing reminders to staff when they say things that discourage inclusivity. However, this practice may place an unintended burden on one individual and is likely not a sustainable solution.

"Our people manager hones in on inclusiveness. If we say something that isn't inclusive, she gently points it out—it's those little reminders that help you become better."

—Employee focus group participant

Organizations are creating partnerships with under-represented groups

Many companies—large and small— are sponsoring events that promote diversity and inclusion in tech, such as Ladies Learning Code, Pride events, Venture Out and more. These activities increase a company's visibility among diverse groups and serve as a way to improve the hiring pipeline by fostering awareness of tech opportunities among current and future employees. They also connect those who might typically feel left out with various tech companies. It is hoped that these events allow for more diverse candidates to see tech companies as a viable option, and for tech companies to build their understanding of the inclusion challenges faced by these individuals.

"We need to talk to Indigenous youth about what it looks like to work in tech, the types of jobs and careers they could get, and the types of skills they need. If none of your parents work in the technology sector, or if you don't see the types of jobs you can have, what are the chances that you're going to end up working in the technology sector? You likely won't think of it as a career. If we can expose those careers to Indigenous youth, that is a long-term strategy and long-term win."

—Krystal Abotossaway, strategic diversity sourcing partner at TD Bank and president of the Aboriginal Professional Association of Canada

Strategic partnerships can go beyond just events. Procurement can be used to help support under-represented groups. The next time your organization has a catered lunch, think about how you can support Indigenous- or newcomer-owned businesses, for example.

"When you see the growth of the Indigenous economies, some of those in the double digits, savvy companies already understand that they will reap the benefits of investing in initiatives which engage these communities."

—Matthew Garrow, director, strategy planning and economic policy, Ministry of Indigenous Affairs

However, it's important to remember that this isn't just a supply problem. Too often, organizations focus on the lack of a diverse pipeline as the reason they do not have a diverse employee roster. Many of the policies and practices (or lack thereof) that signal an unwelcoming culture in the tech sector mean that many members of under-represented groups do not want to work there.

For example, one study shows that employers' recruiting practices can influence a woman's willingness to consider roles in the same organization in the future.[53] As well, 17% of trans workers in Ontario declined a job they had applied for and were offered, because of the lack of a trans-positive and safe work environment.[54]

"It's wrong to think about tech's talent problem as being just a pipeline or supply issue. It's a demand issue, too. Part of the problem is that women and people of colour don't feel that they belong in the tech space. When people look towards the tech industry, they don't see themselves in it and so they don't choose to pursue careers in it. When organizations are not being inclusive, diverse workers are dropping out before they even enter."

—Sarah Kaplan, director of the Institute for Gender and the Economy and professor at the Rotman School of Management

Critical reflection is needed to move these efforts forward

Toronto's tech companies have taken some meaningful steps toward diversity, but we heard that many of their diversity initiatives focus on the physical aspects of diversity (such as ethnicity, age and gender). Diversity of thought, mental health and learning disabilities, among other aspects of diversity, were under-represented in the activities mentioned by employers. To make real organizational change, activities must capture all aspects of diversity, and must move into inclusion and belonging efforts as well.

Employers report some challenges in implementing DIBs initiatives

Despite the fact that employers seem to have a good understanding of the impacts and benefits of investing in DIBs work, they struggle to make DIBs more visible at the organization level.

The fear of lack of DIBs knowledge prevents action for employers

It was clear in our focus groups that employers wanted to get DIBs right in their organizations. However, employers regretted their lack of knowledge about how best to start or amplify DIBs work. Some said that their lack of knowledge was preventing them from starting any activities because they feared doing something wrong. The desire to do the work the "right way" is admirable and it reinforces the idea that these employers do want to improve the state of DIBs in their organizations. However, **the best way to start is simply to start.** Start having conversations with your staff through open, honest two-way communication and you will begin making progress.

53. Jalbert, C. (No date). *Leaning out: Bad experiences in recruiting add to the gender gap.* Retrieved from Institute for Gender and the Economy: https://www.gendereconomy. org/leaning-out/; Brands, R. A., & Fernandez-Mateo, I. (2017). Leaning Out: How Negative Recruitment Experiences Shape Women's Decisions to Compete for Executive Roles. *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 62(3), 405-442. **54.** Bauer, G., & Scheim, A. (2015, June). *Transgender People in Ontario, Canada: Statistics from the Trans PULSE Project to Inform Human Rights Policy.* University of Western Ontario. Retrieved from: https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/wp-content/ uploads/woocommerce_uploads/2015/09/Trans-PULSE-Statistics-Relevant-for-Human-Rights-Policy-June-2015.pdf

Employers should make engagement plans for how they are going to bring their employees along on this journey and should use the resources that are already available to them to begin this process.

For example:

- Review the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and provide education for management and staff on the history of Indigenous Peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools.[55] Reconciliation Canada has great resources available to start the reconciliation conversation at your organization.[56]

- The Mental Health Commission of Canada commissioned a national standard to improve psychological health and safety in the workplace. This standard helps to identify workplace psychological hazards and provides information on the implementation of practices that support and promote workplace psychological health and safety.[57] Locally, CivicAction's MindsMatter initiative has created assessments and curated resources to help implement these standards.[58]

- Toronto entrepreneurs have created *The Expecting Playbook* and *The Parenting Playbook* to assist startup organizations in supporting new parents in the workplace.[59]

- Canadian Business SenseAbility has resources available to help organizations become more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.[60]

- The 519 has produced *Creating Authentic Spaces*, a toolkit and education program to help employers challenge transphobia and foster environments that are inclusive of gender identity and gender expression.[61]

- Pride at Work authored *Hiring Across All Spectrums*, which provides recommendations for employers and recruiters to promote inclusive LGBTQ2+ hiring and recruiting.[62]

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Instead, these are just some of the many resources available to begin your learning journey as an employer or employee. The sector should learn from each other to cultivate other helpful resources for organizations to explore.

"Maternity leave is a great example. It's not until somebody is having a baby that they remember, 'Oh, people have babies. We need to figure out a system for this.' It would be great if there was something that we could give our CEOs and say, 'Here are the best practices from really great companies who have great policies for how to treat a woman leading up to when she leaves.' Because people need that. And I like to think that folks in tech are open to it. They just don't have the resources or the knowledge."

—Employee focus group participant

In addition to educating themselves, employers must make sure they are helping to educate their employees to build the capacity and knowledge to help build the culture they want to see: one which values the diversity, inclusion and belonging of all employees.
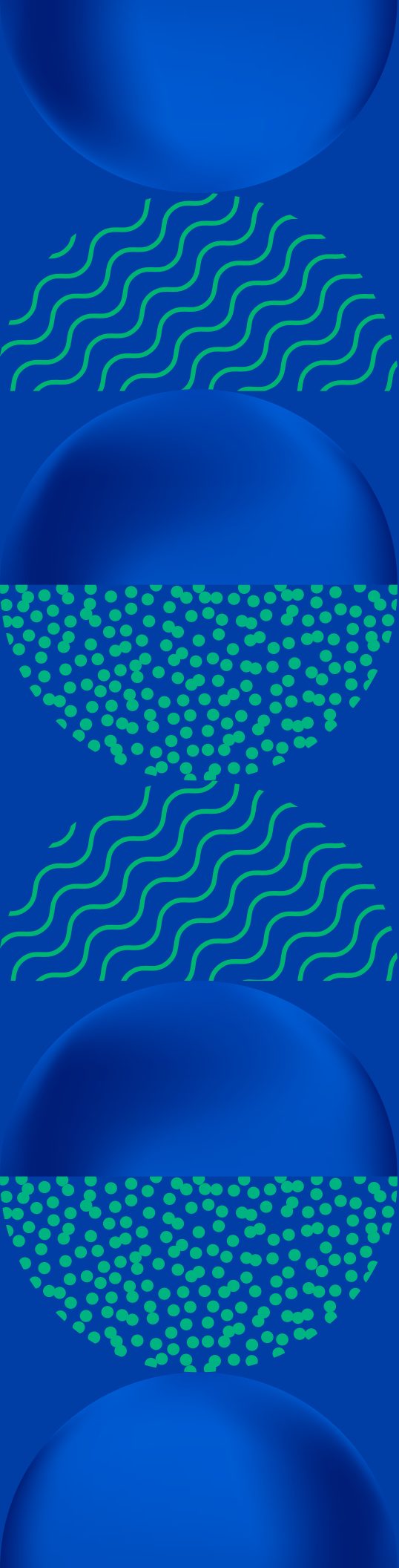
"What are you doing to engage your employees on Indigenous knowledge and why it matters? What are you doing to connect your company with the growing Indigenous economy in Canada and do you track procurement from Indigenous-led companies? Do you keep your employees informed about local powwows to attend when discussing community events? Has leadership at your company reviewed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations and discussed how specific calls to action can be implemented within your company?"

—Meaghan Daly, founder and president of Forward Vision Games

In this process of development, employers should take the opportunity to discuss their current culture openly and honestly. It's possible that history and positionality may prevent some employees from participating widely in this process for fear of retribution or reprisal. Employers must listen to these fears so that employers and employees can learn and move forward together. If organizations are having trouble knowing what to do or where to start, there are professionals in the area of DIBs who can help. Feeling overwhelmed or not knowing what to do or where to start is not an excuse for not doing the work.

55. See Action 92 in Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.* Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. **56.** See http://reconciliationcanada.ca/resources/toolkits/ for more information. **57.** Canadian Standards Association. (2013). Psychological health and safety in the workplace—Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Canadian Standards Association. **58.** See http://www.civicaction.ca/mindsmatter/ for more information. **59.** Mackenzie, A., Gorevalov, E., Pulver, S., & Levine, D. (No date). *The Expecting Playbook.* Retrieved from: http://expectingplaybook.com/; see also Hixon-Vulpe, J. (No date). *Hiring Across All Spectrums: A Report on Broadening Opportunities for LGBTQ2+ Jobseekers.* Retrieved from Pride at Work Canada: http://prideatwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/PrideAtWork_2018_Round_FINAL-s.pdf **60.** See http://senseability.ca/resources/employer-library/ for more information. **61.** Mackenzie, A., Gorevalov, E., Pulver, S., & Levine, D. (No date). *The Expecting Playbook.* Retrieved from: http://expectingplaybook.com/; Mackenzie, A., Jenkins Townson, N., & Munday, A. (No date). *The Parenting Playbook.* Retrieved from: http://www.parentingplaybook.ca/. See http://senseability.ca/resources/employer-library/ for more information. **62.** Hixon-Vulpe, J. (No date). *Creating Authentic Space: A Gender Identity and Gender Expression Toolkit to Support the Implementation of Institutional and Social Change.* Retrieved from The 519: http://www.the519.org/education-training/training-resources/trans-inclusion-matters/creating-authentic-spaces

"Diversity and inclusion conversations will always be difficult and emotional. For those who are marginalized, these conversations aren't just theoretical, they are personal and can even be painful. **Diversity conversations involve many different people, with varying levels of understanding, awareness, and compassion for the issues. This creates additional emotional burdens for marginalized folks who must articulate their struggles, while potentially raising feelings of defensiveness in the privileged.** Add a workplace or industry environment in which power dynamics affect careers and livelihoods, and the difficultly only increases.

And yet, these conversations are necessary. We all need to have them. We cannot move things forward—for our industry and our world— unless we tackle these difficult problems. We must acknowledge inequity exists and is based on systemic oppression of certain groups over hundreds of years. We must ask that people with privilege put the work into learning about this context themselves to reduce the burden on the marginalized and to make the conversations more productive. We must hold ourselves and our leaders accountable to being part of the change."

—Seema Lakhani, head of product and head of Wattpad Labs, Wattpad

Speed of growth in the tech sector may pose a challenge to DIBs

Tech employers face unique challenges due to the quickness of change and fast pace of growth within small organizations. Questions were raised about how to introduce inclusion when everyone is new. Employers were unsure of who should be given the responsibility for DIBs work in a small and rapidly growing firm.

"There is a tension in tech that people want to move fast—which by itself isn't a bad thing—but while we're moving fast we need to teach people to think differently about how they interact in those meetings. Fundamentally, to get to belonging we all need to demonstrate more active listening at work and bring more kindness and empathy to others in the room for who they are and how they are showing up as themselves."

—Jodi Kovitz, founder and CEO of #movethedial

Though an earlier section indicated that an understanding of organizational responsibility is important, in truth, everyone is responsible for DIBs. It's a conversation of the whole, not of small parts. It's also much easier to start addressing diversity when an organization has few employees rather than later in a company's development. If you start by building a diverse team, less backtracking is required later on. Having to deal with a lack of diversity as a later-stage company is known as having **diversity debt**, which can have very real consequences to a company's culture, financial performance and innovation potential.[63]

"It's never too early for startups to invest in HR. Diversity debt, for example, can creep in if you don't actively broaden your network and train your teams to check their hiring biases. There are hiring platforms like Textio, Fortay and Ideal that can assist here. If you've really let things go, employment lawsuits and pay equity liability could rear its ugly head."

—Daneal Charney, director of talent for MaRS Venture Services

Notably, small and fast-growing organizations expressed the potential trade-off between needing to hire rapidly and the time it might take to find a diverse candidate pool while growing quickly as an organization. Though it may be more challenging for these smaller organizations to prioritize DIBs early in their growth, organizations that wait too long will face challenges in attracting diverse staff in the future.

"If everyone on your team looks, feels and thinks similar to you, you're effectively putting all of your eggs in one basket. We build diversified portfolios; why doesn't it follow that we should also create diverse teams? Why hasn't this long-standing investment approach translated into how we build companies?"

—Sarah Saska, co-founder and CEO of Feminuity

63. Saska, S. (2017, July 14). *It's Time to Take 'Diversity Debt' Seriously.* Retrieved from Techvibes: https://techvibes.com/2017/07/14/its-time-to-take-diversity-debt-seriously

Employee backlash and discomfort prevents action on DIBs

Employers reported that when implementing certain aspects of DIBs work, such as celebrating cultural festivals and events, they have experienced a backlash from some employees. This reaction is not rare. DIBs work can disrupt people's sense of self and trigger uncomfortable emotions. Because of the discomfort and reactions that may occur, education and two-way communication are critical.

"At my organization, we created our own women's employee resource group. Our leadership was quite supportive and gave some resources for meetings. There may have been 40 people working at the organization, and 10 women got "pizza paid for," and some of my male colleagues didn't understand. They asked 'Why don't I get pizza paid for? I'll just have to create a men's group.'"

—Employer focus group participant

Implementing DIBs within organizations can be extremely uncomfortable. There is an emotional burden felt among those who are the organizational champions of this work. Employers expressed feeling this toll if they were the only ones responsible for DIBs in their company. It is essential to spread the responsibility wide and to make multiple people accountable for DIBs.

"We are good about diversity, but not inclusion. We are very Canadian, [we] don't want to have the uncomfortable conversations"

—Employer focus group participant

Employers must provide direction on how to address the challenges and opportunities associated with diversity of thought. Ideological differences and unique viewpoints are a benefit of DIBs, yet they can also present challenges in teams. Organizations will need to set up a process to discuss difficult or controversial issues in an inclusive way—not one that isolates or ostracizes those members with differing opinions. Employers expressed that they are looking for effective ways to manage diversity of thought internally.

Employers are ready to move forward

Toronto's tech employers were open about their understanding, initiatives and challenges in implementing DIBs in their organizations. Overall, there was an increased understanding of DIBs at the end of the focus groups, as well as an appreciation for what other companies are working on. Their insights will guide the entire tech ecosystem to make meaningful progress on diversity, inclusion and belonging.

Toronto's Tech Sector Must Work Together to Move the Needle on DIBs

Diversity, inclusion and belonging are everyone's responsibility. Toronto can only succeed when its tech sector recognizes this fact and makes a meaningful commitment to investing in these efforts.

Tech employers are making progress and throughout this process MaRS heard about the start of a number of initiatives. More importantly, MaRS heard employers express their strong desire to start the work and to come together with the tech sector as a whole to make it happen. Both employers and employees expressed hope that the tech sector can make an impact on the state of diversity, inclusion and belonging sooner than later due to its nimbleness and commitment to innovation.

Exhibit 19: Employers and employees together must reflect, learn and act to improve Toronto's tech sector DIBs

REFLECT
LEARN
ACT
Individual and Employer

SOURCE: MaRS Discovery District.

Overall, employees have been making efforts to improve DIBs within their organizations. Importantly, many employees who champion DIBs work do so because they feel the impacts of DIBs the most; this is especially true among those at lower levels within the hierarchies of organizations. Their courage to speak up about diversity, inclusion and belonging in the workplace should be commended and amplified at all levels.

Employers must reflect, learn and take action to improve DIBs

REFLECT on organization's intentions and values

- **Determine your organization's intentions and reasons for previous lack of action.** DIBs work is hard and it can be very uncomfortable. Questioning why action hasn't taken place previously can also be awkward. Having humility and a willingness to hold uncomfortable conversations and approach difficult topics is essential to making DIBs a priority in your organization. It's important to determine why this work is a priority for your organization now and to create the intentionality from leadership needed to propel the work forward.

- **Define your organization's values and examine your workplace practices against them.** By defining your organization's values you are signalling to your employees that this work is important. These values should be the result of a joint conversation with your employees, as they should reflect the values of all members of the organization. But you can't stop there. All organizational activities must be measured against these values. If they aren't, it's important to have a discussion about what can be done to bring your business's activities and practices closer to its values.

This is another great time to engage staff in a two-way conversation about what they would like to see done to match values with actions.

LEARN from your employees and leverage external resources

- **Open up the lines of communication to foster trust.** The most effective way to start is by getting to know your employees. Ask questions either through surveys or in person, or both. Bring your staff together to talk about DIBs issues and—once trust is fostered through patience and active listening—ask them what they think could be done to improve inclusivity and belonging at the company. It is likely this will be uncomfortable. Remember, leaders report higher levels of DIBs than non-leaders, so employers need to view everything as a two-way communication process. Being honest and clear about your intentions for asking these questions will help create a productive environment and build a collective understanding of what DIBs means for you and your organization.

- **Seek support from external resources.** There are many resources available to help organizations begin their DIBs work, including tech solutions, online resources and toolkits, and experts who can be hired. Lack of knowledge or education is not a reasonable excuse anymore. Seek out support from others who have done this work and find a support network of employers to guide you.

ACT on DIBs by starting your work

- **Begin.** Throughout this process, MaRS heard that many companies were afraid to start DIBs work out of fear of doing the wrong thing. Working on DIBs is an ongoing process and journey. The sooner

organizations start, the easier it will be to create strategies and initiatives that will positively impact the diversity, inclusion and belonging felt by employees.

- **Commit to real budgets and strategies.** While talking with your employees about best practices is important, it's not enough. You must also commit to developing a real strategy for tackling DIBs in your organization. This strategy should include measurements and the resources required to do the work. Employees should also be able to identify who in the organization is responsible and accountable for DIBs. Create opportunities for your employees to learn how to be allies and to build cultural competence.

- **Take care not to fall back on quick fixes or tokenism.** Organizations that are motivated to act on inclusivity may skip to implementing activities without understanding the broader systemic changes that are needed. This might manifest as addressing hiring without an attempt to address other systemic issues that contribute to a lack of inclusivity in the corporation. One example of a quick fix would be to promote women to higher levels of the company without considering the organization's broader parental leave policies, sexual harassment policies, or other policies at the same time. Members of ethnic minorities may also be quickly hired, but if it's done with the sole purpose of placing their faces on the company's website, this could represent tokenism instead of real change.

> "People always shy away from targets with respect to measuring an inclusive workforce. That's not to say that there should be hard targets. But active recruitment measures are necessary so you can determine what are the investments and activities you can do to increase the numbers. And once you've achieved a number, don't be satisfied. Keep going."
>
> **—Matthew Garrow, director, strategic planning and economic policy, Ministry of Indigenous Affairs**

Employees must be engaged as partners in reflection, learning and action

REFLECT on how you can contribute to an inclusive work culture

- **Engage in critical reflection.** To continue to be stewards of DIBs culture among their peers, employees should reflect on their position in both society and their workplace. By engaging in ongoing critical reflection, employees will be better able to contribute to an inclusive work culture. As new people join their organization, individuals with high awareness and emotional intelligence can set the tone.

LEARN from your peers to develop cultural competence

- **Join organizational learning events and do your own work.** Take part in the learning opportunities your organization offers and learn from others in your workplace. Still, you shouldn't expect to learn everything from others. Allies should do their own work to try to understand the barriers of other communities and build their own cultural competence. Though organizations should help expose employees to available resources, it's up to everyone to be informed and stay current.

ACT in a way that fosters allyship

- **Seek out the actions that can be taken.** After reflecting on their positionality, employees will be better able to act in a way that amplifies the voices of those from underrepresented or marginalized groups. Allyship involves asking people how they want to be supported. Discuss with all employees what actions help or hinder them in the workplace. Positive actions, like interjecting in a meeting to amplify the thoughts of people who may be in a minority position in the room, can help employees understand the importance of not being a bystander.

> "The one universal thing I've seen is that we all need to be part of the solution. It has to be a collective shared responsibility between employers and employees. Employee engagement is really important. It can't be just one department working toward diversity and inclusion. You need everyone working together to achieve true change."
>
> **—Karen Kuzmowich, director of diversity and inclusion at Manulife**

Reflection, learning and action are not steps; they are activities that happen simultaneously. This work is continuous and must be ongoing.

The Toronto tech sector must build a coalition of partners to achieve momentum on DIBs

MaRS believes that to support our growing tech ecosystem, tech-sector employers must come together to tackle these challenges head on. Toronto will only be able to win at the talent race if it generates the strength that comes with having many people working together toward the same goal. Employers and employees must convene to share both their challenges and their best practices, so they can learn from one another and build the city's sector-wide DIBs capacity. Consequently, MaRS proposes that a sector-wide Inclusion Council be created for tech companies to come together and achieve sector-wide results.

> "Collaboration is key—it's why we all have to work together. If there is a collective commitment to driving toward outcomes that are measurable and to take steps even if they are small, we are fundamentally going to be better off in the long run."
>
> **—Jodi Kovitz, founder and CEO of #movethedial**

DIBs is an ongoing conversation between many individuals—in this case, between Toronto's tech sector and its employees. If this community can take action on diversity, inclusion and belonging, there is no limit to what we can achieve together.

The Tech for All Agreement

MaRS partnered with 47 leading Toronto-area tech companies to undertake a learning journey together with the goal of beginning to understand the state of diversity, inclusion and belonging in the tech sector. It is heartening to see the tremendous work that is happening as it relates to DIBs, and this research and learning journey gave us an opportunity to take a collective step forward as a sector.

Aligning with the recommendations of the Tech for All Report, the following Tech for All Agreement is a commitment by these organizations to create an Inclusion Council that will meet regularly with the goal of bringing diversity, inclusion and belonging practices forward. MaRS began this project with 47 organizations, but the work has just started. We encourage and welcome other tech-sector organizations to join this agreement through the work a sector-wide Inclusion Council.

The Toronto-area tech sector's Tech for All Agreement to promote diversity, inclusion and belonging

We agree to join a sector-wide Inclusion Council to develop our collective understanding of diversity, inclusion and belonging.

The Council will:

- build a collective promising practice toolkit that can support tech employers;
- curate resources and share opportunities for employers to access expertise, best practices and guidance on advancing diversity, inclusion and belonging within our organizations;
- form a regular peer-to-peer learning group for tech employers to regularly connect across organizations and lean on the collective expertise of the sector; and
- determine the best way to measure collective progress as a sector.

As organizations committed to DIBs:

- We agree to start and continue conversations within our organization about diversity, inclusion and belonging.
- We agree to listen to and learn from our employees to help build a better workplace.
- We will take action on improving the diversity, inclusion and belonging within our organization.
- We agree to talk openly and share our successes and challenges with others in the Toronto tech sector.
- We agree to learn from others and to be humble and willing to receive advice and guidance from the community.

Signed,

Ada Support	Financeit	RBC
Autodesk	Interac	Ritual
Betterfrost Technologies	Kira Talent	Rogers
BioConnect	Knockri	Rubikloud
BlueDot Inc.	LinkedIn	Sensibill
CareGuide	KPDI	Shoelace
CleanSlate UV	Manulife	Stack
Coinsquare	MaRS Discovery District	Symbility Intersect
Crescendo	Moneris	TD
ecobee	Nudge	Think Dirty
GreenMantra Technologies	OneEleven	TribalScale
#paid	Peekapak	Wattpad
Hockeystick	Pelmorex Corp.	Wealthsimple
Horizn	Planswell	Zoom.ai
EventMobi	RateHub	

Appendix A: Research Methodology

Employer focus groups

Qualitative data was collected from employers in four separate focus groups held in May and June 2018 where employers were asked for their insights into the challenges they are currently facing in implementing DIBs initiatives. These discussions were held at MaRS with 47 companies presently operating within the MaRS ecosystem and included 110 venture and corporate employers responsible for hiring talent for their respective organizations.

Each employer focus group was facilitated by an expert who explained the concepts related to diversity, inclusion and belonging. Each focus group was split into tables of five to six employers, plus a note taker from the research team, to answer the following questions.

1. What is your organizational understanding of diversity, inclusion and belonging (DIBs)? What do you perceive are the benefits of engaging in DIBs? What are the costs to not engaging in DIBs?

2. What are you currently doing to promote DIBs within your organization? Are these activities working?

3. What have been your challenges in rolling out DIBs activities at your organization?

4. What do you need to overcome these challenges? What do you have at your disposal and what is missing?

Employee focus groups

Qualitative data was collected from 28 employees in four separate focus groups held in July 2018 to gather the perspectives of employees in the tech sector. These employees were identified by the partnering ventures and represented a range of diverse perspectives. Participants did not have direct responsibility over the culture or hiring decisions made at their company. The semi-structured focus groups were moderated by an expert in diversity, inclusion and belonging, and included a short introduction to the major terms outlined in Section 2 of this report (see The Key Terms and Concepts for Understanding Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging).

Survey research

Quantitative survey research was conducted with tech-sector employees who received an anonymized survey link through two methods:

• direct email communication from their employer for participating venture partners; and

• social media links advertising the survey.

The survey was live for four weeks between June and July 2018. A total of 843 partial responses were captured. Of these respondents, 519 finished all parts of the survey. To ensure the sample represented members of the Greater Toronto Area, only those respondents who indicated they were members of the GTA were used in the survey analysis (456 respondents).

The GTA was defined in the sample as including Ajax, Clarington, Brock, Oshawa, Pickering, Scugog, Uxbridge, Whitby, Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton, Oakville, Brampton, Caledon, Mississauga, Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The survey was created by Feminuity and administered by Fortay. For more information on the survey, please see https://fortay.co/dibs.

Sample composition

• Gender identity: 51% women (218); 49% men (205);

  ◦ 2% agender, bigender, two-spirit, gender fluid, genderqueer, non-binary, questioning, stealth or trans (9), of which 2 respondents identify as trans men and 4 identify as trans women

• Racial and cultural group: 51% white (231); 25% Asian (113); 7% Black (30); 17% Other (75)

  ◦ Asian includes those who identify as Japanese, Korean, Chinese, South Asian and Southeast Asian

• Indigenous Peoples: 99% non-Indigenous peoples (444); 1% Indigenous Peoples (5)

• Age: 67% millennials 35 years and under (283); 33% age 36 and over (138)

• Leadership role: 34% leaders (153); 66% non-leaders (302)

  ◦ Leaders defined as those who answered yes to the following question: "Are you currently a leader or executive at your company?"

• Sexual orientation: 83% heterosexual (347); 17% asexual, bisexual, fluid, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer and questioning (71)

• Disability: 89% with no disability (397); 11% with a disability (49)

  ◦ Disability includes temporary and permanent forms of physical disability, as well as cognitive or mental disabilities, including addiction and depression

• Job function: 33% tech occupations (148); 67% business occupations (308)

  ◦ Tech-oriented roles include computer and IT professionals, engineers, design and user experience roles, and research scientists and technologists.

  ◦ Business-oriented roles include administration and office support staff, business analysts and consultants, CEOs and founders, customer success and account management positions, DIBs roles, finance and accounting professionals, legal roles, machine operators and production workers, maintenance staff, management roles, marketing, advertising and PR roles, operations and logistics professionals, people, culture and HR staff, policy and government relations staff, product and project management professionals, and sales and business development roles.

• Immigration status: 64% born Canada (292); 36% not born in Canada (163)

• Organization size: To account for sampling error of organization size in the survey, all analyses included a sampling weight to adjust for differences in organization size using data from Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, with employees, December 2017. Table: 33-10-0037-01. Data retrieved for Ontario.

	1 to 19 employees	20 to 99 employees	100 to 499 employees	500+ employees
Population share	23.3%	25.9%	32.8%	18.0%
Sample share	16.4%	39.2%	24.9%	19.5%
Sample weight	1.422	0.661	1.317	0.920

Appendix B: Interviewees and Experts Consulted

MaRS Discovery District would like to thank the following individuals for contributing their insights to this project.

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Strategic Diversity Sourcing Partner
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Jodi Kovitz
Founder and CEO
#movethedial

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Seema Lakhani
Head of Product and Head
of Wattpad Labs
Wattpad

Lenore MacAdam
Inclusion Lead at Deloitte Canada and
Board Member at Canadian Business
SenseAbility

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CEO
Wellesley Institute

Iradele Plante
Community Engagement Lead
Venture Out

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Feminuity

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