

Conscious Inclusion Considerations for Association Operations

The following document is designed to provide key considerations for associations seeking to be more consciously inclusive in their operations. By addressing these questions, tracking these measures of success, and implementing the recommended action plan association leaders can make significant strides in implementing conscious inclusion at their association. The emphasis should be on *inclusion* and engagement with stakeholders who bring a broad range of experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives, and no employees or contractors should be excluded from participation, opportunities, or benefits based on demographic characteristics.

Operations

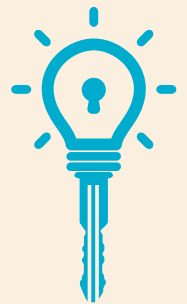
Associations should have a core focus to ensure that the association's day-to-day activities, processes, and systems are inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all stakeholders.

Key Questions for Leaders

- How can we integrate conscious inclusion principles into our operational processes, procedures and general work environment for staff?
- Are our internal systems and technologies accessible to all employees and members?
- Are our operational policies and practices fair across all levels of the organization?
- What metrics can we use to measure the inclusivity of our operations?

Key Considerations for 2025

- How have recent changes impacted your association's operations? Does the association have communication channels for staff to stay abreast of changes and understand how the changes may impact their area?
- With the input of your board and legal counsel, determine your association's position on policy impacting the associations and disseminate the position/strategy to the association staff.





Discussion Guide

- How do our systems and algorithms treat data to encourage conscious inclusion and avoid bias, discrimination, or preferences based on demographic characteristics? (e.g. Not all systems can accept international characters; AI solutions can exhibit and enforce biases; etc.)
- How can we ensure our vendor selection, engagement, and advancement processes, across all areas of the organization, are fair, consciously inclusive, and avoid bias, discrimination, or preferences based on demographic characteristics?

Measures of Success

- Higher satisfaction rates among staff regarding inclusivity in day-to-day operations.
- Reduce bias or discriminatory impacts among operational workforce and leadership (e.g. Pay equity across demographics, objective merit-based performance/promotion reviews, access to growth opportunities, etc.).
- Improved accessibility of internal systems and processes.
- Increased number of range of qualified suppliers and partners.
- Reduction in reported incidents of exclusion or discrimination in operational activities.
- Well-being and HR – Absenteeism, turnover, productivity trends.
- Annual engagement surveys – Broader, deep dive into culture and motivation.
- Pulse surveys – Frequent, short, targeted (e.g. monthly engagement check-ins).
- Internal communications metrics. Slack/Teams usage, email sentiment analysis.

General Notes for Success Measures

- Surveys tell what employees feel; conversations reveal why.
- Casual check-ins with managers foster trust and uncover hidden challenges.
- Institute “Stay interviews” in the HR department. Ask staff why they stay (or what might make them leave).
- Focus groups and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) provide safe spaces for underrepresented voices.



Discussion Guide

Action Plan

- Survey staff to prioritize high impact focus areas and gain buy-in.
- Lead data-driven process to address root causes, not just symptoms (e.g. workload vs. job control).
- Explain how any demographic data collected will and will not be used.
- Involve employees in co-creating solutions (peer-led initiatives).
- Focus on quick wins *and* long-term culture shifts.
- Involve your legal counsel in review of any HR programs relating to selection decisions or that relate to demographic characteristics of staff or consultants.