Diversity and Inclusion

SUMMARY: American society and workplaces will continue to grow more diverse and inclusive as values evolve and younger generations increase their share in the demographic mix. This will occur against a backdrop of social, political, and racial polarization—and the workplace will be a primary arena in which contending views collide and issues are worked out. To meet these challenges, inclusion efforts can be treated as a systemic priority, supported by a new generation of tools and processes.

Forecasts

- Given ongoing trends—immigration, rising racial and ethnic diversity, contention around LGBTQ rights, and changing values—diversity and inclusion will be a primary social and human resources issue for decades.
- New diversity and inclusion issues (such as cognitive diversity, genetic discrimination, etc.) will arise continuously. Some will be novel; some may pit the rights of different groups against each other.
- The workplace is one of the few places where people from diverse backgrounds are thrown together by circumstance, rather than choice. Increasingly, businesses and organizations may be the primary location in which issues of diversity and inclusion are worked out.
- Millennial demography and values will push organizations to make diversity and inclusion a strategic priority.

Key Uncertainties

Directions in American politics and their effects on society

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The pace, nature, and demography of immigration

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Evolution and effects of social and political polarization

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The speed at which millennial attitudes shift American culture, and how those attitudes evolve

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The changing nature of identity and its effects on social fragmentation

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Supporting Trends

- **Diverse millennials.** Diversity may be the millennial generation's core characteristic. According to Pew, the millennial generation was 56 percent white, 21 percent Hispanic, 13 percent black, and 7 percent Asian in 2017.
- **Increasing acceptance of LGBTQ rights.** There has been a marked increase in the social acceptance of LGBTQ people in American society in recent decades.
- **Declining racial prejudice in the United States.** American attitudes about race continue to be complicated and situational, but overt racial prejudice has ebbed significantly in the past 30 years.
- **Immigration swelling U.S. population.** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, immigration accounted for 48 percent of U.S. population growth in 2017.
- **Blurring of strict gender roles.** Among those under age 34, strict gender rules and conventional gender stereotypes are fading.
- **Diversity policy in the corner office.** Diversity and inclusion are increasingly being seen as CEO-level strategic priorities.
- **Algorithmic discrimination.** Widespread use of data analytics may lead to data-based discrimination.
- **Data tools for improving diversity and inclusion.** Talent processes and practices are increasingly being measured and monitored for embedded bias using new data-analytics tools.

Related Drivers of Change

- Immigration-Driven Demography
- Empowered Women
- Aging World
- The Splintered Society
- American Inequality

Notable Data Points

ASIAN-AMERICAN POPULATION GROWTH

The overall Asian-American population reached an estimated **18.8 million people in 2017, or 5.8% of the U.S. population.**

Source: United States Census Bureau

A MORE MULTIRACIAL UNITED STATES

In 2015, the rate of interracial marriage in the United States was 17%, up from 3% in 1967, the year of the Loving v. Virginia court decision.

Source: Pew Research Center

D&I AND THE BOTTOM LINE

The 50 companies on Fortune's 2016 Best Workplaces for Diversity list **averaged 24% higher revenue growth** than companies that failed to make the list.

Source: Fortune

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Strategic Insights

- Making inclusion a strategic priority is a necessity for associations—specifically by giving it a systemic, high-profile role, building it into processes, and adding measurement and accountability. Early research suggests this approach can improve teamwork, spark innovation, and boost millennial engagement. Over time, it might even help alleviate divisions in society. Fortunately, powerful trends favor successful workplace D&I, including the push to make D&I a strategic effort and the growing application of HR analytics to measure and enforce it.
- Conversely, associations need to consider that they (like other American workplaces) could become a new ground zero for cultural divisiveness. In a worst-case scenario, associations could splinter along lines of identity and perspective. Taking a proactive internal stance for inclusion could be important in preventing such a future.
- Similarly, organizations that do make D&I a centerpiece of their public identity could find themselves the target of backlash and boycotts and will need to be prepared for this possibility.
- Significant new D&I issues will continue to emerge. In the near term, these could include algorithmic discrimination, genetic discrimination, and "lookism." Internal advocacy groups could be created to explore such issues and develop solutions.
- Associations can help members learn how to use the growing genre of HR analytics tools to identify gender and racial bias in the workplace, in job descriptions, and in other hiring and promotion practices.

Timing

- **Stage:** In a multi-decade growth stage
- **Speed:** Medium, as some drivers are slow-moving, including demography and deeply rooted attitudes

Potential Alternative Futures

- **Heating up the melting pot:** Rising diversity and changing generational attitudes speed up racial, ethnic, and cultural mixing.
- **Sociocultural fragmentation:** Perceived irreconcilable differences cause different social and political groups—which partially follow racial and ethnic lines—to retreat into varying degrees of separatism.
- **Dwindling immigration:** A combination of changes in U.S. policy, economic and demographic change in countries of origin, and shifts in how the United States is perceived around the globe cause immigration to dwindle.

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Take Action

- **Speak to both the heart and self-interest.** Why diversity and inclusion matters will vary by association. Your members may work in direct service with growing immigrant populations. Your industry or field must recruit talented, diverse teams to remain vital. Clients may demand diverse professional teams.
- **Put your commitments in writing.** A formal board policy statement can spell out why diversity and inclusion matters, where you will focus your effort, and how you will work to get results. If you make your intentions public, you will hold yourself accountable and clarify how you measure progress.
- **Get senior leaders on board.** High-level volunteer leaders and staff must demonstrate this is a priority and organize the people and resources to get the job done.
- **Work in multiple dimensions for change.** Diversity and inclusion initiatives should address culture in your field and industry, your association, and your staff. Recruit for diversity, foster welcome and inclusion practices, promote access to opportunities, and insist on equity in policies and decisions. Where you focus first will depend on your priorities and your maturation in this cultural change.
- **Expect to work hard and long at diversity and inclusion.** Getting your organization to change will not be easy: stories about backlash and resistance abound. Stay current with research about what does work to avoid wasting time and goodwill. Seek the counsel and collaboration of others, especially organizations with a sustained and mature commitment. And when your visible actions and words fall short of your stated intentions, remember associations are human enterprises and press ahead with humility and conviction.

Keyword Search

To continue researching this change driver, use combinations of these search terms: ***diversity, diverse, workforce, inclusion, rights, race, racial, multiracial, interracial, LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTI, minority, minorities, discrimination, algorithmic discrimination, genetic discrimination, Islam, Muslims, cognitive diversity, millennial, immigrant, gender, transgender, gender-fluid***

Who Will Be Affected

This driver of change is critical to the future of all organizations and universally affects human well-being and societal stability. Given the many forms that human diversity has taken and may yet take in our future, we all will be challenged to reflect, adapt, and evolve.

About ASAE ForesightWorks

ASAE ForesightWorks is a deliberate, evidence-based research program and emerging line of products to provide association professionals with a continual stream of intelligence about the changes facing the association industry, including:

- regularly updated action briefs;
- tools for applying insights from the research in your association;
- guidance in performing environmental scans; and
- opportunities to engage with peers around the research.

Ultimately, the program's mission is to empower association leaders to create a culture of foresight.

Check **asaecenter.org/ForesightWorks** and follow **@ASAEfdn** on Twitter for updates on new findings and events.

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