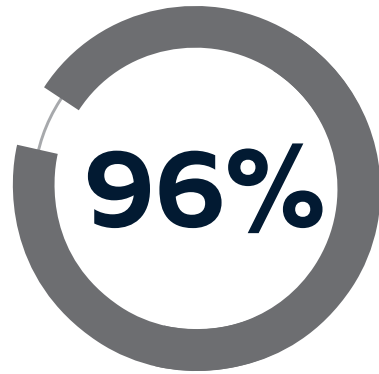**TEK**systems®

Own change

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in IT:

Breakthroughs and Barriers

96%

of IT employees say leadership at their company makes it clear that DEI initiatives are critical aspects of company strategy

Executive Summary

Fostering a workplace culture rooted in diversity, equity and inclusion helps employees thrive and leads organizations to succeed. In recent years, many organizations have committed to building a diverse workforce and creating an equitable workplace. Fortune recently reported that every company in the Fortune 100 has made a public commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

In the IT workforce, DEI efforts have shown signs of positive progression; however, signals still indicate more room for sustained improvements. Although there are breakthroughs from DEI programs, massive diversity gaps among IT talent remain. In the U.S. today, women make up just 25% of the IT workforce. People of color account for 41% of the IT population, but only 8% are Black or African American.

Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in IT report examines perceptions about the scope and impact of DEI programs. We dive into the challenges and expose the bitter realities that continue to permeate the workplace.

There is a clear disconnect between DEI perceptions and the actual impact of these programs. In our research, 96% of IT employees say leadership at their company makes it clear that DEI initiatives are critical aspects of company strategy. But less than half of women working in IT say DEI programs have positively affected their careers. It is not enough for organizations to declare they value DEI. They must make systemic changes that demonstrate their commitment to DEI and hold themselves accountable at all levels of the organization.

Our research reveals a great number of genuine breakthroughs within DEI programs. Organizations are talking about DEI, and it appears to be having a positive effect. But are these positive perceptions just an illusion? We examine the barriers that hinder sustained progress toward more inclusive and equitable IT workplaces.

One thing is clear: Much work remains to be done to create an inclusive culture conducive to attracting, retaining and developing a diverse IT workforce. Organizations can lead the way, but real change comes down to our humanity and the behaviors we cultivate and encourage among our teams. People must choose to act with kindness and respect. We must offer grace and empathy toward one another if we hope to build a more inclusive workplace.

IN THE U.S. TODAY:

Women make up just **25%** of the IT workforce.

People of color account for **41%** of the IT population,

but only **8%** are **Black or African American.**

Understanding diversity, equity and inclusion

While the terms are often used interchangeably, it's important to point out the distinctions:

- **Diversity** can describe a wide variety of differences among people, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender and sexual identity, disability, neurodiversity, religion or faith—even life experiences and others.

- **Equity** is providing equal opportunities through a personalized approach, utilizing unequal distribution of resources to "level the playing field." Applying equity includes factoring in a variety of disparities within society that affects individuals to varying levels.

- **Inclusion** details the desired outcome, ensuring everyone genuinely feels safe, welcome and included. Inclusion is a step past integration, where diverse individuals blend completely into the environment without a second thought.

Key Findings

86%

of IT decision-makers believe DEI programs have made their culture more inclusive.

But only one in five says the majority of leadership roles are made up of women or minorities.

58% of enterprise decision-makers say DEI has improved company performance.

89%

of IT workers agree DEI has made their workplaces more diverse.

Eight in 10 IT employees say DEI makes their workplace a better place to work.

Less than half (46%) of enterprise decision-makers report their **DEI policies are advanced or mature.**

- IT decision-makers spend an average of 12 hours per week on DEI and use 3.2 methods to measure DEI success.

△ **TOP DEI SUCCESSES** include a more diverse workforce and improved employee retention.

▽ **TOP CHALLENGES** include an inability to track benchmarks and employee satisfaction, and a lack of understanding of DEI benefits.

While **96%** of IT workers say leadership makes it clear that diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are a critical aspect of company strategy, these programs are **failing to create equitable workplaces for women in IT**:

- Just 45% say DEI programs have positively affected their career.
- Only about half feel they have growth opportunities at work (vs. 89% of men).
- Two out of five don't believe they receive fair compensation for their work.
- 58% report they have a sense of belonging at work (vs. 85% of men).

DEI

The Current Landscape

Current State of DEI

Less than half of organizations have mature or advanced DEI programs in place

It's one thing to say diversity, equity and inclusion is important, but it's another aspect to activate a strategy and implement change. Organizations must show their commitment to DEI by investing in it.

Advanced—DEI is ingrained into the DNA of my workplace: **17%**

Mature—funding, initiatives, staff are well established: **29%**

46%

Growing—staff, funding and initiatives are in place with plans to expand in the future: **36%**

Limited—some initiatives, investment, staff in place: **11%**

Starting out—building and investing in initiatives, staff and tentatively planning to expand in the future: **8%**

Companies are Clear that DEI is Critical to Strategy

Organizations are talking the talk when it comes to DEI

Organizations are talking the talk when it comes to DEI. Communicating their commitment is a key first step, but they must follow through to foster real change.

% AGREE LEADERSHIP IS COMMITTED TO DEI

	Total	IT DMs	HR DMs	IT Employees	Top-2 Box: Agree
	96%	96%	95%	97%	
Neither Agree Nor Disagree					
Somewhat Agree	30%	31% b	22%	35% b	
Strongly Agree	66%	65%	73%	62%	

Legend:
- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q: Thinking about your workplace, how much do you agree with the following statement?

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"Leadership at my company makes it clear that diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are a critical aspect of company strategy."

Organizations Leverage a Wide Variety of Programs

On average companies have at least 5 different DEI policies in place
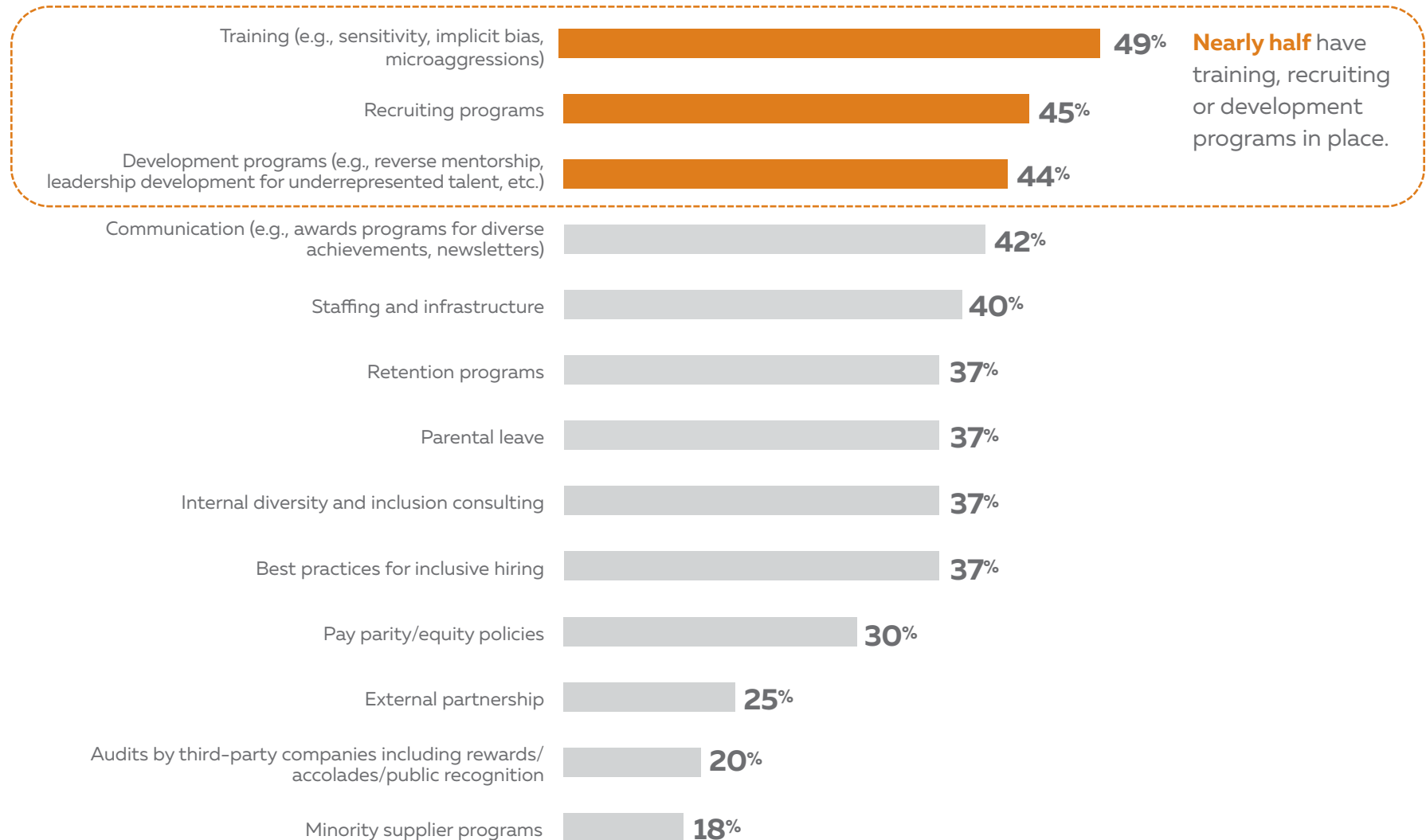
Program	%
Training (e.g., sensitivity, implicit bias, microaggressions)	49%
Recruiting programs	45%
Development programs (e.g., reverse mentorship, leadership development for underrepresented talent, etc.)	44%
Communication (e.g., awards programs for diverse achievements, newsletters)	42%
Staffing and infrastructure	40%
Retention programs	37%
Parental leave	37%
Internal diversity and inclusion consulting	37%
Best practices for inclusive hiring	37%
Pay parity/equity policies	30%
External partnership	25%
Audits by third-party companies including rewards/accolades/public recognition	20%
Minority supplier programs	18%

Nearly half have training, recruiting or development programs in place.

Q: Which types of DEI-related initiatives, programs or services are currently available/in place at your workplace?

Most Effective DEI Policies for Creating a Diverse Workforce

HR leaders report mixed results regarding the effectiveness of DEI programs. No one program is overwhelmingly effective. The lack of effectiveness may stem from the relative lack of maturity in DEI programs.

Policy	Percentage
Recruiting programs	33%
Staffing and infrastructure	25%
Retention programs	25%
Best practices for inclusive hiring	25%
Training	25%
Communication	24%
Internal diversity and inclusion consulting	22%
Development programs	22%
Pay parity/equity policies	15%
Parental leave	13%
External partnership	11%
Audits by third-party companies	7%
Minority supplier programs	6%

Q: Which of the DEI-related initiatives, programs or services which are currently available/in place at your workplace do you consider to be most effective in creating a diverse workforce?

DEI

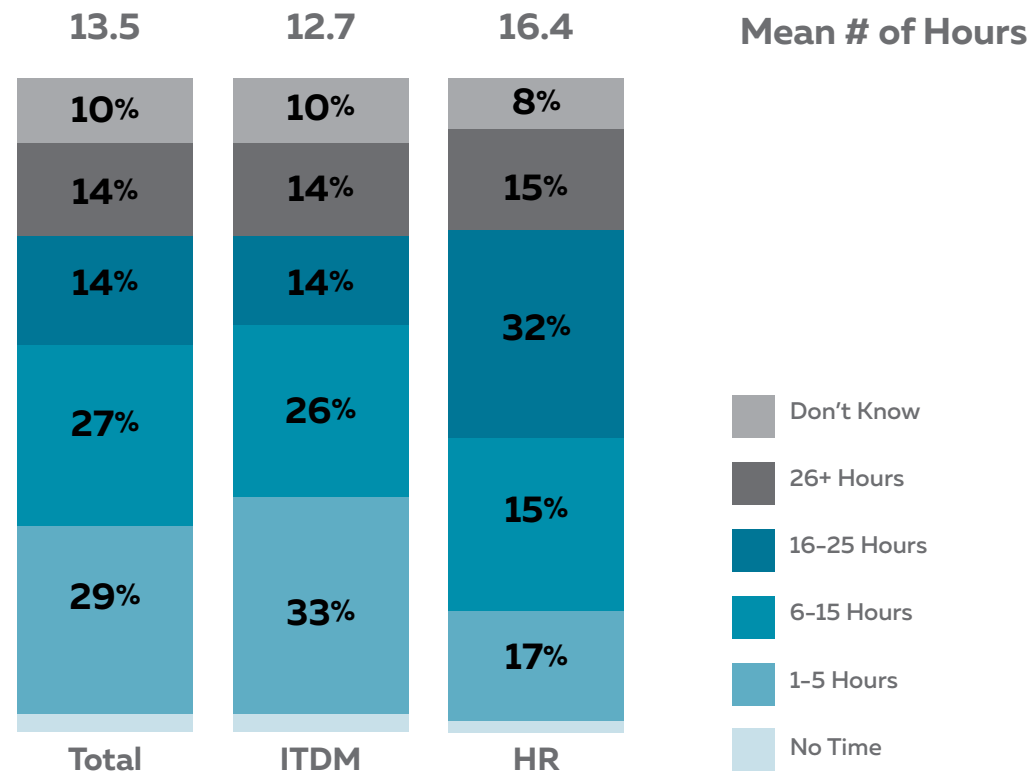## Perspective From IT Decision Makers and HR

IT and HR Decision Makers Spend, on Average, 1/3 of Their Week on DEI

Everyone can agree that DEI is important, but team leaders often push back, saying they don't have enough time for DEI.

According to the data, IT leaders are already spending time on DEI.

Time spent could include anything from policy planning to training to general conversations with their teams related to DEI.

TIME SPENT ON DEI DURING A TYPICAL WEEK

	13.5	**12.7**	**16.4**	**Mean # of Hours**

Total	ITDM	HR
10%	10%	8%
14%	14%	15%
14%	14%	32%
27%	26%	15%
29%	33%	17%

Legend:
- Don't Know
- 26+ Hours
- 16–25 Hours
- 6–15 Hours
- 1–5 Hours
- No Time

Q: In a typical week, about how many hours do you personally spend working on or participating in DEI initiatives, programs, services, or policies?

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How Organization Measure DEI Success

On average, organizations use 4 different methods

The diversity of organizational leadership and the diversity of employees are the most common methods for measuring DEI success.
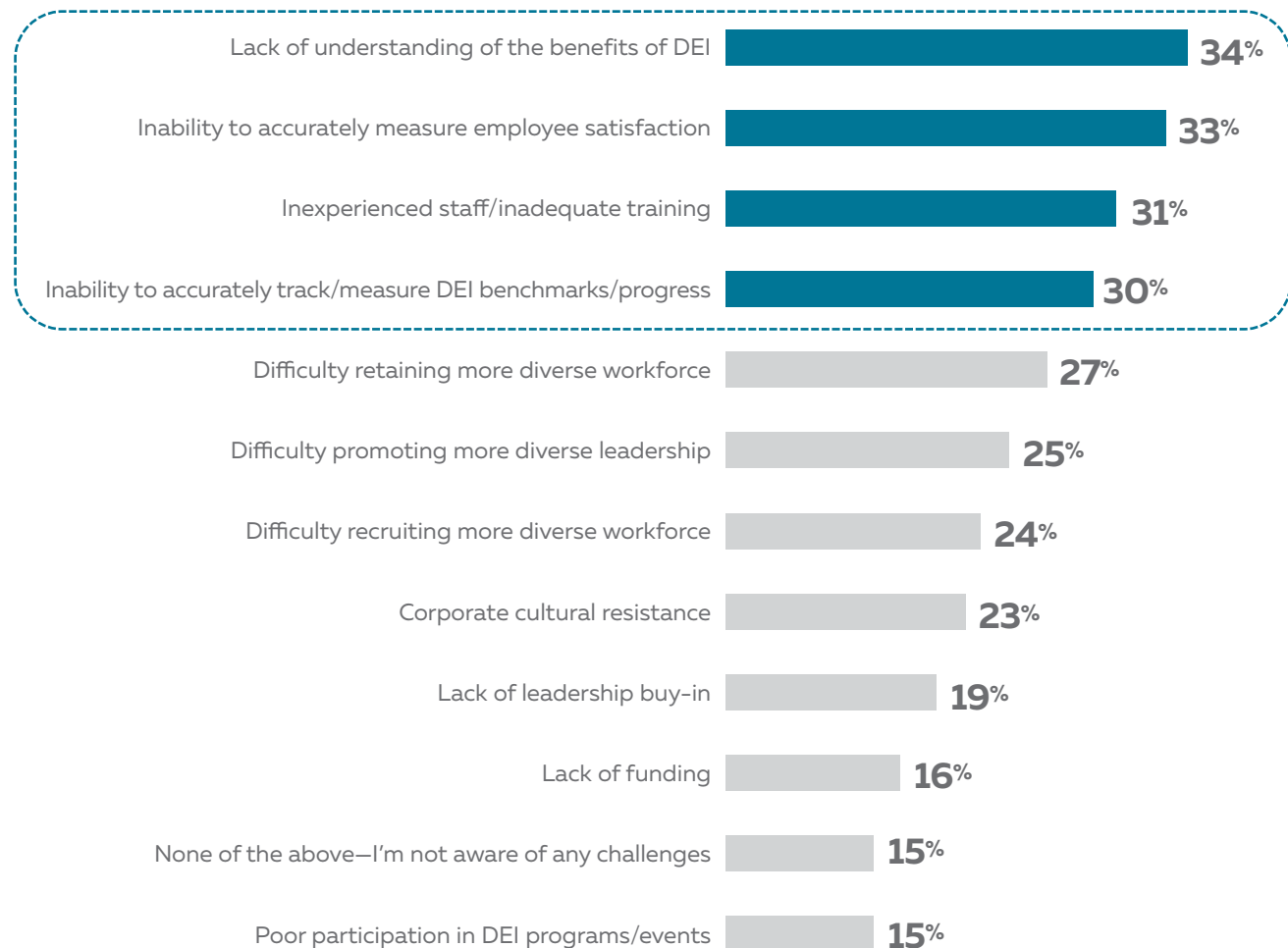
MEASUREMENTS OF DEI SUCCESS

Diversity of organizational leadership
75%

Diversity of employees across the organization
73%

Employee retention
65%

Internal employee surveys or interviews
58%

Number of incident reports (e.g., employee complaints of harassment or discrimination)
48%

Third-party audits (e.g., diversity indexes, inclusivity study results)
42%

Amount of dollars allocated to DEI
35%

Not applicable—my organization does not measure DEI success
1%

Organizations Face a Litany of Challenges Related to DEI

Nearly one-third of organizations have difficulty tracking DEI benchmarks and progress. This makes it difficult to hold the organization accountable for improving the diversity of their workforce.
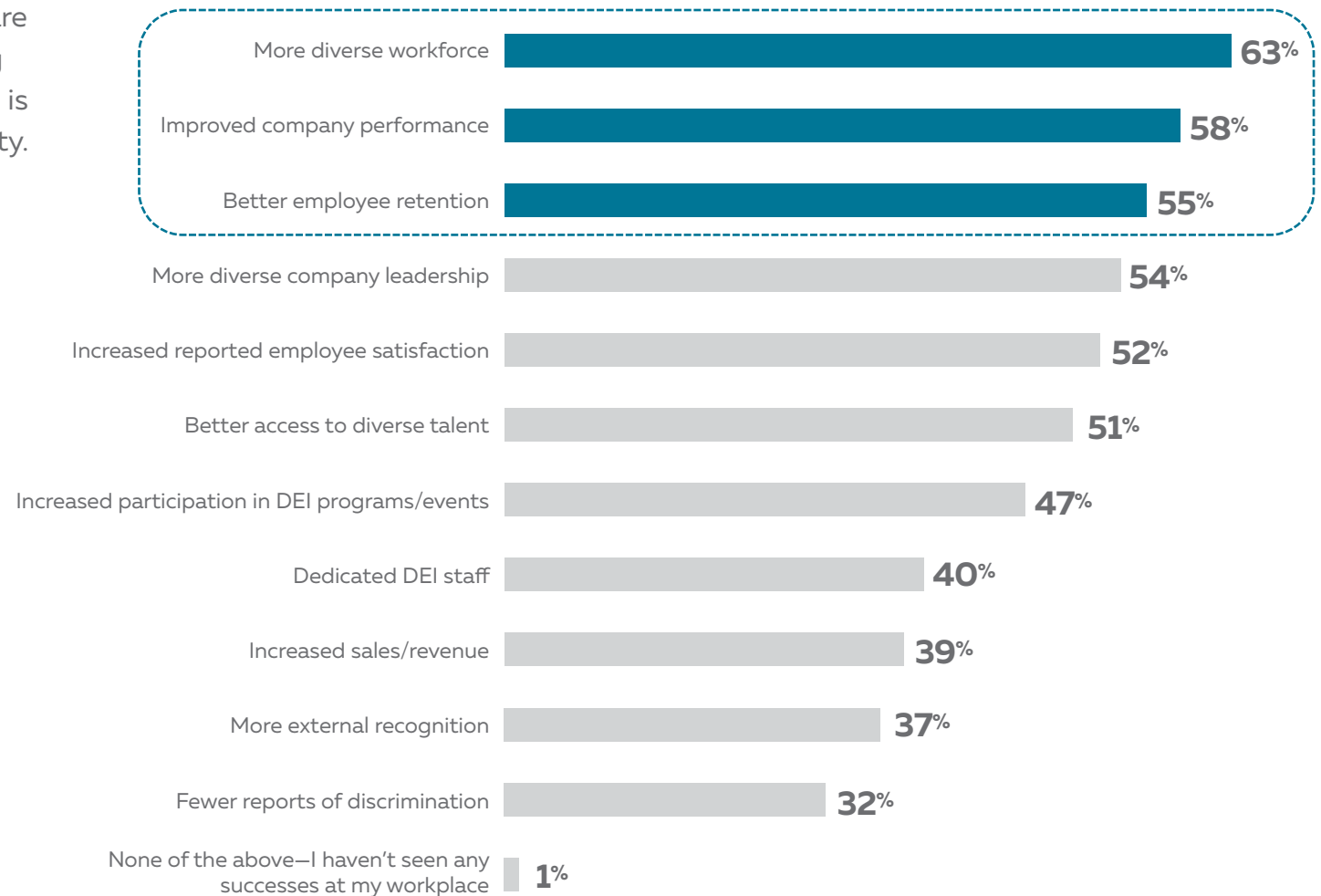
PRIMARY CHALLENGES OF DEI

Challenge	Percentage
Lack of understanding of the benefits of DEI	34%
Inability to accurately measure employee satisfaction	33%
Inexperienced staff/inadequate training	31%
Inability to accurately track/measure DEI benchmarks/progress	30%
Difficulty retaining more diverse workforce	27%
Difficulty promoting more diverse leadership	25%
Difficulty recruiting more diverse workforce	24%
Corporate cultural resistance	23%
Lack of leadership buy-in	19%
Lack of funding	16%
None of the above—I'm not aware of any challenges	15%
Poor participation in DEI programs/events	15%

Q: What do you see as the primary challenges of the DEI-related initiatives, programs, and services at your workplace?

DEI Efforts are Delivering Tangible Outcomes

Organizations appear to be making progress with their DEI programs. But if so many are challenged with measuring progress, we wonder if this is more perception than reality.
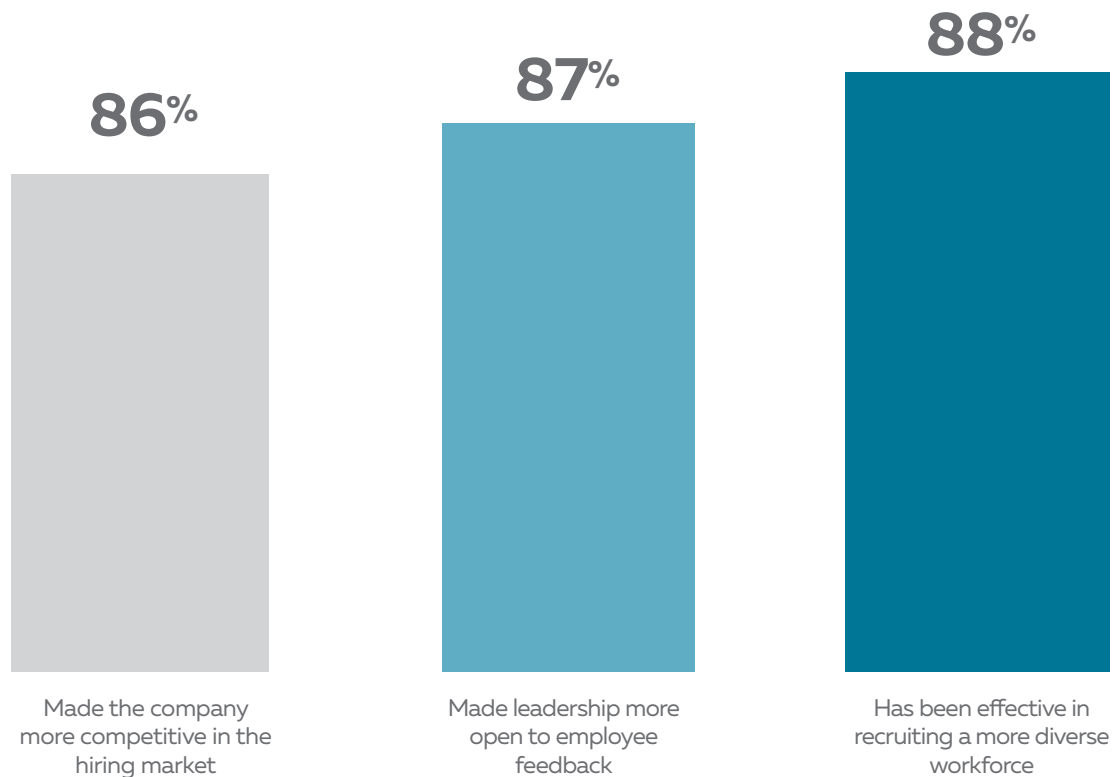
PRIMARY SUCCESSES OF DEI

Category	Percentage
More diverse workforce	63%
Improved company performance	58%
Better employee retention	55%
More diverse company leadership	54%
Increased reported employee satisfaction	52%
Better access to diverse talent	51%
Increased participation in DEI programs/events	47%
Dedicated DEI staff	40%
Increased sales/revenue	39%
More external recognition	37%
Fewer reports of discrimination	32%
None of the above—I haven't seen any successes at my workplace	1%

Q: What do you see as the primary successes of the DEI-related initiatives, programs, and services at your workplace?

HR Reports Positive Effects on Hiring

DEI has proven to be successful in recruiting a more diverse workforce

IMPACT OF DEI PROGRAMS

86% Made the company more competitive in the hiring market

87% Made leadership more open to employee feedback

88% Has been effective in recruiting a more diverse workforce

IT Leaders Report Positive Impact of DEI Programs

IT leaders feel DEI programs have made their culture more inclusive than it was two years ago. But is it really more inclusive if two in five women in technology don't feel a sense of belonging at work?

IT leaders report that DEI programs have positively affected business results and have increased productivity on their teams.

CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

Made our corporate culture more inclusive than it was two years ago

86%

Made our workforce more diverse than it was two years ago

84%

TEAM PERFORMANCE

Has been effective retaining a more diverse workforce

84%

Has positively impacted business results

76%

Has increased productivity

73%

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with following statements?

DEI

The employee perspective

IT Employees are Highly Satisfied with Their Current Employer

However, men are significantly more satisfied than women, presenting another opportunity for organizations to improve the workplace experience.

OVERALL WORKPLACE SATISFACTION

39%
Somewhat
Satisfied

50%
Very Satisfied

6%
Neither Satisfied
Nor Dissatisfied

89%
Top Box
Satisfied

5%
Somewhat
Dissatisfied

1%
Very Dissatisfied

Top-2 Box Satisfied:

■ Very Satisfied   ■ Somewhat Satisfied

94%

40%

54%

Male

70%

35%

35%

Female
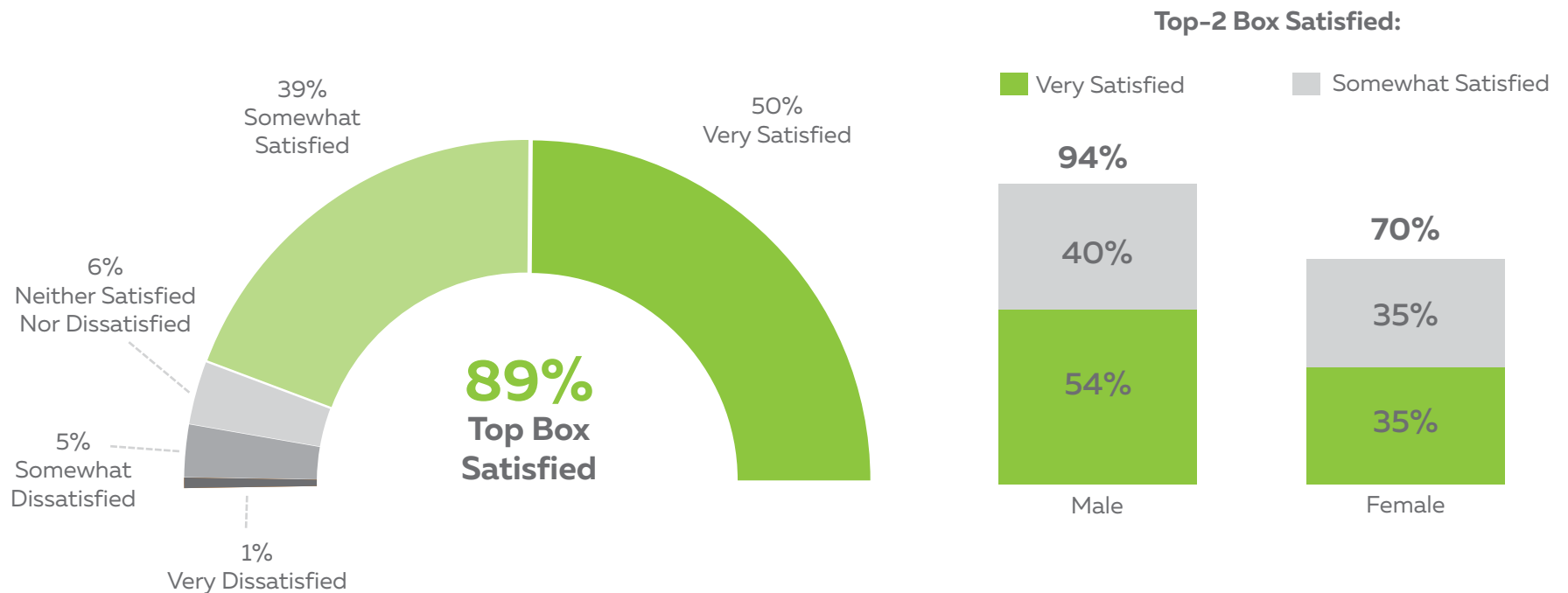
Women in IT are Much Less Satisfied Than Their Male Counterparts

While IT workers overall report high levels of satisfaction, when we compare women to men, there are some glaring gaps in the data. Much work remains to be done for employers to create better workplace experiences for women in IT.

Workplace Satisfaction (% very/somewhat satisfied)	Male	Female	Difference
Specific goals/targets my company has set (specific dates and milestones to achieve gender balance)	80%	42%	–38%
Pay equity policy	83%	45%	–38%
The number of women in senior or executive leadership roles	81%	48%	–33%
Availability of mentorship programs	77%	45%	–32%
Accolades/rewards/public recognition	84%	52%	–32%
Paid parental/adoption leave policy	78%	48%	–30%
My ability to make an impact/work on engaging projects	88%	61%	–27%
Quality of diversity/sensitivity training	78%	52%	–26%
Skills/career training and development	87%	65%	–22%
My relationship with my immediate manager/supervisor	91%	74%	–17%
My relationship with coworkers	93%	84%	–9%

Q: How satisfied are you with the following areas at your current workplace?

Organizations Fall Short in Creating Positive Workplace Experiences for Female IT Employees

Fewer women are considering IT as a career, and the women who do begin careers in IT often leave the profession entirely because of ineffective development and/or career opportunities. When organizations fail to deal with these issues, it makes it much more difficult to inspire women to pursue a career in IT.

Workplace Perceptions (% strongly/somewhat agree)	Male	Female	Difference
I feel I have solid growth opportunities at work	85%	55%	–30%
I receive fair financial compensation for my work	89%	61%	–28%
I feel a sense of belonging at work	85%	58%	–27%
I feel safe reporting workplace issues to HR	84%	65%	–19%
I can be my true self at work	89%	71%	–18%
My immediate manager/supervisor creates a positive/respectful work environment	91%	74%	–17%
My immediate manager/supervisor treats me & my coworkers fairly	90%	74%	–16%
My immediate manager/supervisor would support me if I faced a problem at work	92%	77%	–15%
DEI-related initiatives made workplace better reflect marketplace demographics	82%	68%	–14%
I am empowered to do my job	91%	81%	–10%
My team cares about me personally	85%	77%	–8%
My team/coworkers would support me if I faced a problem at work	92%	87%	–5%
I feel like my skills/talents are valued at work	89%	84%	–5%

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your workplace?

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Impact of DEI Programs on Employees

Organizations should be encouraged by areas where DEI programs are positively affecting the workplace. But if companies hope to retain and develop their female IT talent, they must be intentional about creating better opportunities for women.

All Employees

Helped create a diverse workface
89%

Made my workplace a better place to work
81%

Made the company more competitive in its industry
74%

Increased my trust in company leadership
74%

Led to more productivity on my team
69%

Positively impacted my career development
- **70%** Male
- **45%** Female

Increased opportunities for job Growth
- **78%** Male
- **61%** Female

Female
Male
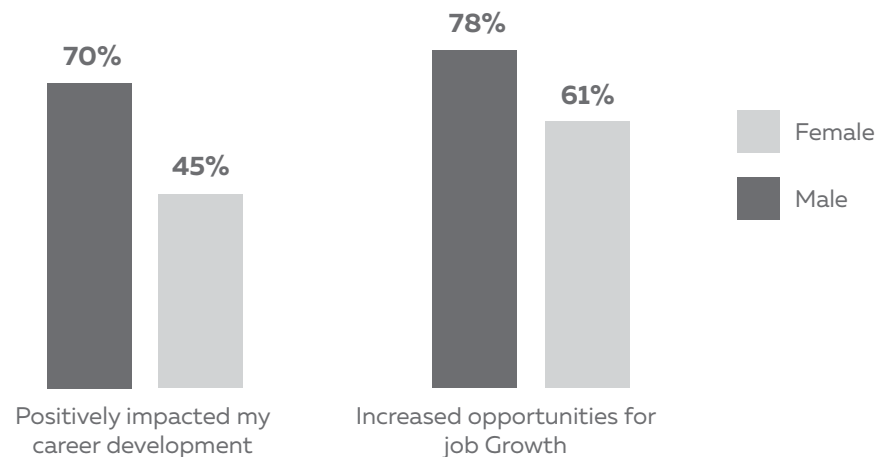
Recommendations & Research Methodology

Recommendations

Work from where you are. When you first start out, the task can be overwhelming. Where do you begin? You can start by focusing on diversity. Recruit and retain people of diverse backgrounds and experiences and, most importantly, set goals for increased representation across various demographics. Expand the pools from which you historically recruit to include nontraditional sources. Remove degree requirements for certain roles. And continually leverage insights from your human resources team to shine light on where you're underperforming.

Get the right mindset. Focus on enrolling a cross section of stakeholders to create your approach. But this isn't simply a group of leaders making decisions. All employees should be invited to open and transparent dialogue about what's important to them. It's important to find the opportunity for equity in your feedback loops and processes. Investigate and remove barriers that muffle feedback from certain communities to build the co-creation mindset, enrolling as many people as possible on the journey.

Break down processes. As you review your DEI strategies, look for the unintentional processes and business norms that can inadvertently affect equitable access to opportunity. Focused, high-performing leaders can sometimes be a bit myopic when considering opportunities for their best talent. Not surprisingly, often it is those leaders who want to keep that talent on their team. Instead, we should incentivize leaders to seek the best opportunities for their people, even if those opportunities are in another function or department. Try including talent mobility and leadership legacy goals in your leaders' performance reviews, and seek ways to create positive reinforcement of the leadership behaviors that open greater access to opportunity.

Secure senior leader support. Nothing is sustainable in any culture without leadership commitment. Diversity, equity and inclusion must be top priorities and treated by senior leaders as other clearly defined strategic business imperatives. They can't be things you simply pay lip service to; if so, despite the best of motivations and intentions, you'll risk getting distracted or derailed on the journey when other business opportunities, challenges or threats invariably come to pass. You must have consistent leadership follow through on purposeful DEI strategy and initiatives, but you must also consider that your leaders are people too—people on their own journey. They need education, support and guidance. They need to feel safe to ask questions, express concerns and challenge assumptions without fear of reprisal, as they would when engaging in any other strategic initiative.
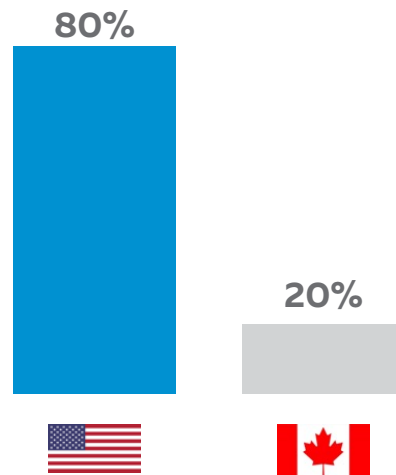
Look outside your organization. Your team members want to be part of an organization that has a great culture, and more and more that means being one that also invests outwardly into the communities where we all work and live. Invest in organizations committed to underrepresented groups, such as the Equal Justice Initiative, Thurgood Marshall College Fund and the conscious kid, along with military and veterans groups such as the Pat Tillman Foundation and 50Strong. Look to establish training partnerships with organizations like Per Scholas and Creating IT Futures to help create more opportunities and greater representation in the tech industry. Choose organizations with a shared vision, find ways to partner with them and involve your team members in the process.
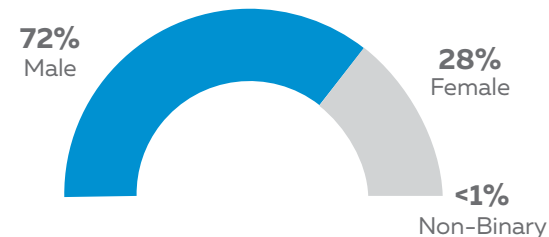
Research Methodology

This U.S. and Canada-based study, conducted by TEKsystems and YouGov, analyzes survey data related to diversity, equity and inclusion in IT. The survey, fielded in August and September 2022, includes perspective from 863 IT and HR professionals. Respondents include IT and HR decision-makers, IT employees and IT job seekers. The report explores the social-related DEI challenges and perspectives and their impact on the workplace.
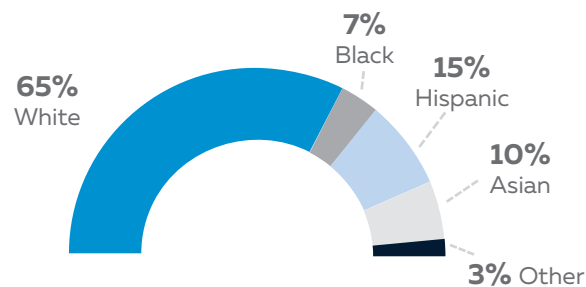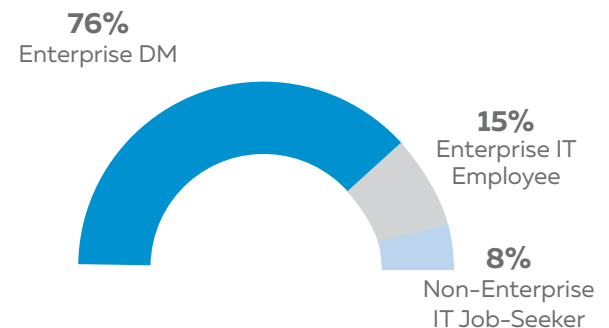
RESPONDENT DETAIL

Country

80% (U.S.)

20% (Canada)

Gender

72% Male

28% Female

<1% Non-Binary

Race/Ethnicity

65% White

7% Black

15% Hispanic

10% Asian

3% Other

Respondent Type

76% Enterprise DM

15% Enterprise IT Employee

8% Non-Enterprise IT Job-Seeker

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We're TEKsystems. We accelerate business transformation for our customers. We bring real-world expertise to solve complex technology, business and talent challenges—across the globe. We're a team of 80,000 strong, working with over 6,000 customers, including 80% of the Fortune 500 across North America, Europe and Asia, who partner with us for our scale, full-stack capabilities and speed. We're strategic thinkers, hands on collaborators, helping customers capitalize on change. We're building tomorrow by delivering business outcomes and driving positive impacts in our global communities. TEKsystems is an Allegis Group company.

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