DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN IT

Creating Inclusive and Effective Strategies for All

TEKsystems®

Own change

Executive Summary

In today's workplace, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives are not merely buzzwords; they represent a commitment to unlocking innovation and fostering a dynamic workforce. Companies are increasingly recognizing that diverse perspectives fuel creativity and problem-solving. The strides made in DEI programs are commendable, reflecting a positive trajectory toward fostering more inclusive workplaces. While organizations have made significant strides, it's essential to acknowledge that the journey toward true equity is ongoing. It's a destination that may never be fully realized but one that every organization should aspire toward.

This report delves into the DEI initiatives undertaken by organizations to champion diversity, promote equity and foster inclusion. As businesses recognize the inherent value of diverse perspectives and backgrounds, our exploration aims to shed light on the strategies, challenges and successes in the pursuit of a workplace that reflects and celebrates the richness of human diversity.
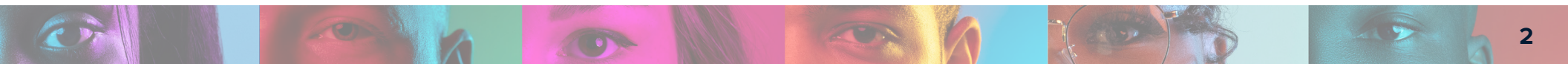
Executive Summary

Overall, experiences with DEI garnered from IT employees highlight the complexities of DEI initiatives in the workplace. It's evident that while many see the value and importance of these programs, implementing them in a way that feels inclusive and effective for everyone—and clearly communicating those benefits to employees—can remain a challenge for many organizations. In the 2024 report, three key themes emerged.
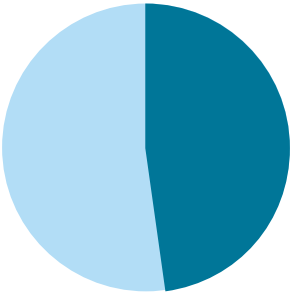
THEME	IT EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE
Variability of experiences: Responses span a broad spectrum, from strong advocates of DEI to staunch critics. This reflects the diversity of experiences and opinions related to DEI initiatives in different workplaces.	"My previous company was very proactive with DEI, and it felt inclusive, but in my current job, it seems like they're still figuring it out."
Need for clear communication: The variance in understanding and perception of DEI underscores the importance of clear communication about the objectives, benefits and implementation strategies of these initiatives.	"I wish our HR team would explain these initiatives better. It's hard to understand the goals sometimes." "The communication workshop was insightful, but I think we need more practical examples relevant to our daily tasks."
Challenges in DEI execution: While the idea of DEI is largely appreciated, challenges arise in its execution, with some feeling excluded or believing that it's more symbolic than practical.	"The company's intentions with DEI are good, but sometimes, the execution seems off, and it doesn't resonate with everyone." "While I appreciate the push for diversity, I think we also need to focus on what unites us as a team."

Key Findings
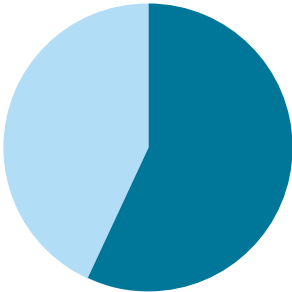
57% of enterprise decision-makers (up from 46% in 2023) report their DEI policies are advanced or mature.

48% of organizations' senior-most DEI leaders are C-level or executive-level management, with more than half of DEI leaders reporting to the C-suite or executive-level management.

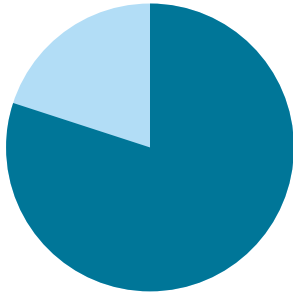Overall, most agree that diversity initiatives benefit companies, with **80% agreeing** "diversity initiatives are crucial for an inclusive IT workplace."

Organizations have **increased** the number of DEI policies, but that could lead to confusion among employees.

One in 4 IT employees do not know the level of their senior-most DEI officer.

Two-thirds of decision-makers feel diversity initiatives need revision.
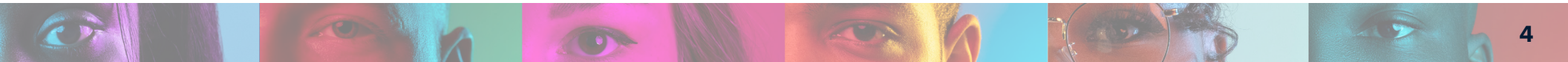
Key Findings
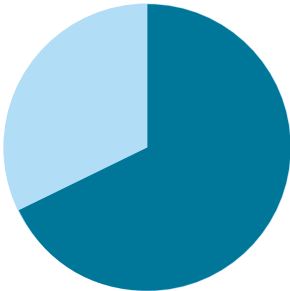
68% of enterprise decision-makers expect to increase their DEI spending and DEI hiring in 2024.

64% of enterprise decision-makers would be more likely to hire vendors committed to DEI for their IT services' needs.
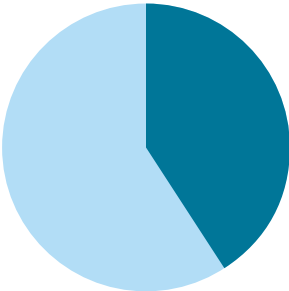
41% of IT employees consider DEI at least very important when considering a new job.

This jumps to **55%** among women and non white IT employees.
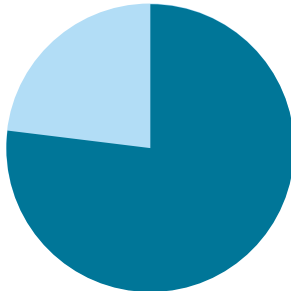
IT leaders (77%) are twice as likely as IT employees (32%) to believe leveraging AI in the recruitment process can enhance workplace diversity and inclusivity.

About **half of organizations** worry that AI might reinforce or worsen existing biases in hiring and career development.
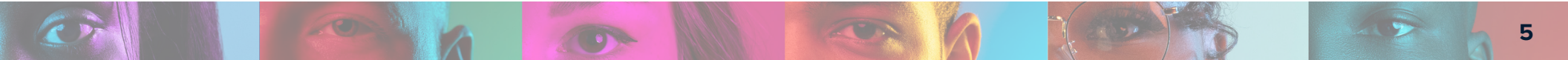
Understanding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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, and 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 affect 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.
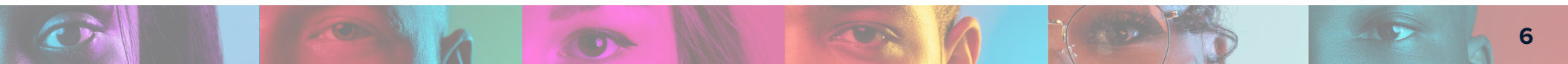
The Current Landscape

Current State of DEI

Nearly 3 in 5 organizations (57%) have mature/advanced DEI programs in place.
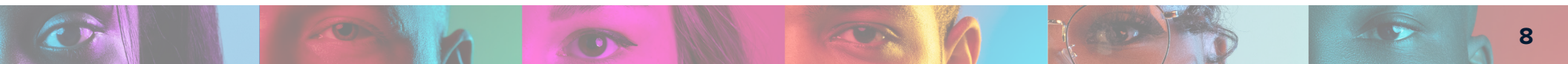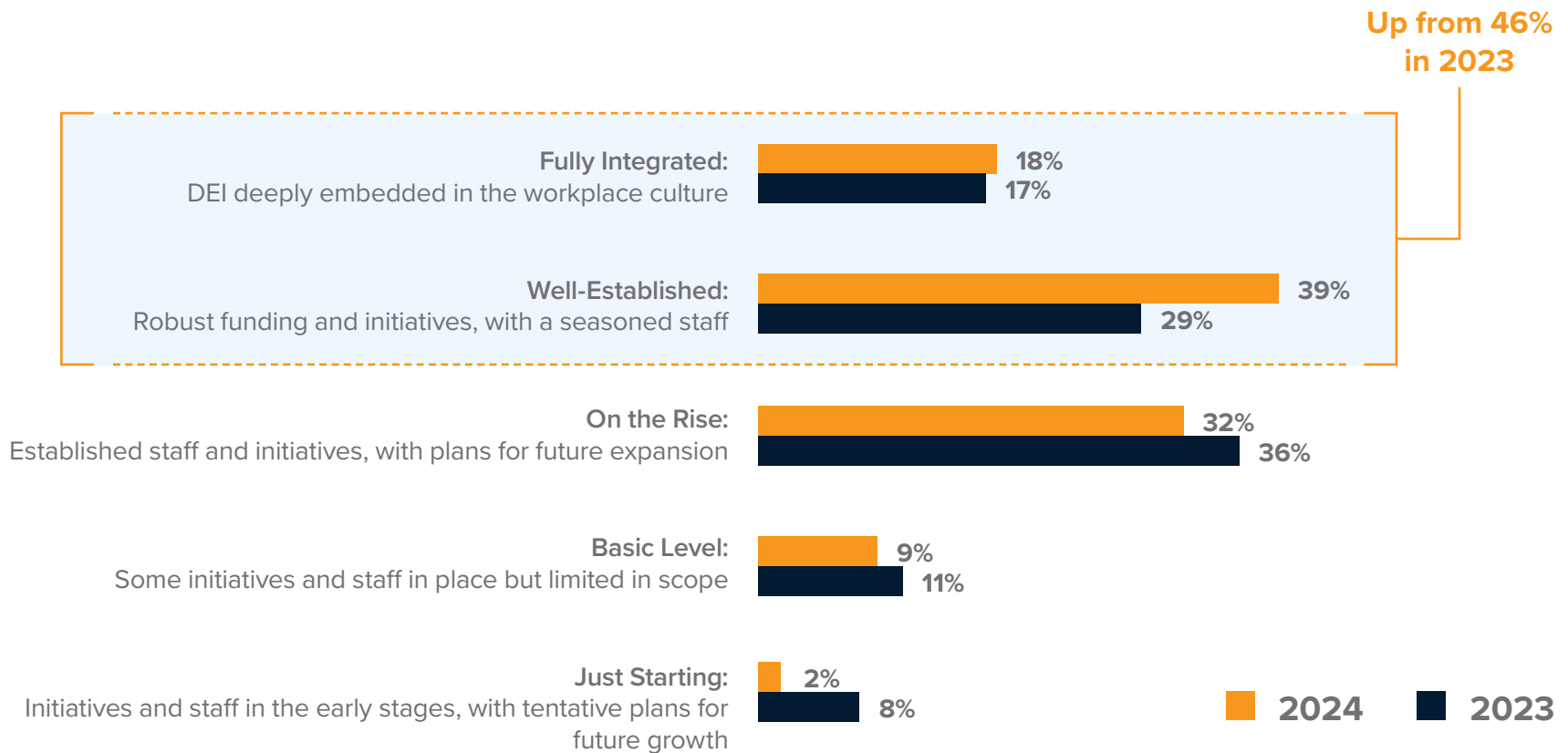
Up from 46% in 2023

Fully Integrated:
DEI deeply embedded in the workplace culture
- 2024: 18%
- 2023: 17%

Well-Established:
Robust funding and initiatives, with a seasoned staff
- 2024: 39%
- 2023: 29%

On the Rise:
Established staff and initiatives, with plans for future expansion
- 2024: 32%
- 2023: 36%

Basic Level:
Some initiatives and staff in place but limited in scope
- 2024: 9%
- 2023: 11%

Just Starting:
Initiatives and staff in the early stages, with tentative plans for future growth
- 2024: 2%
- 2023: 8%

■ **2024**   ■ **2023**

Majorities Agree Their Leadership Is Clear That DEI Is Critical to Company Strategy

While still high, IT employees are less likely to agree.

% AGREE LEADERSHIP IS COMMITTED TO DEI

	Total	IT Leaders	HR Leaders	IT Employees
Top-Two Box: Agree	95%	97%	98%	90%
Somewhat agree	31%	32%	31%	32%
Strongly agree	64%	65%	67%	58%

Additional labels: 3% (Total), 8% (IT Employees)

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree
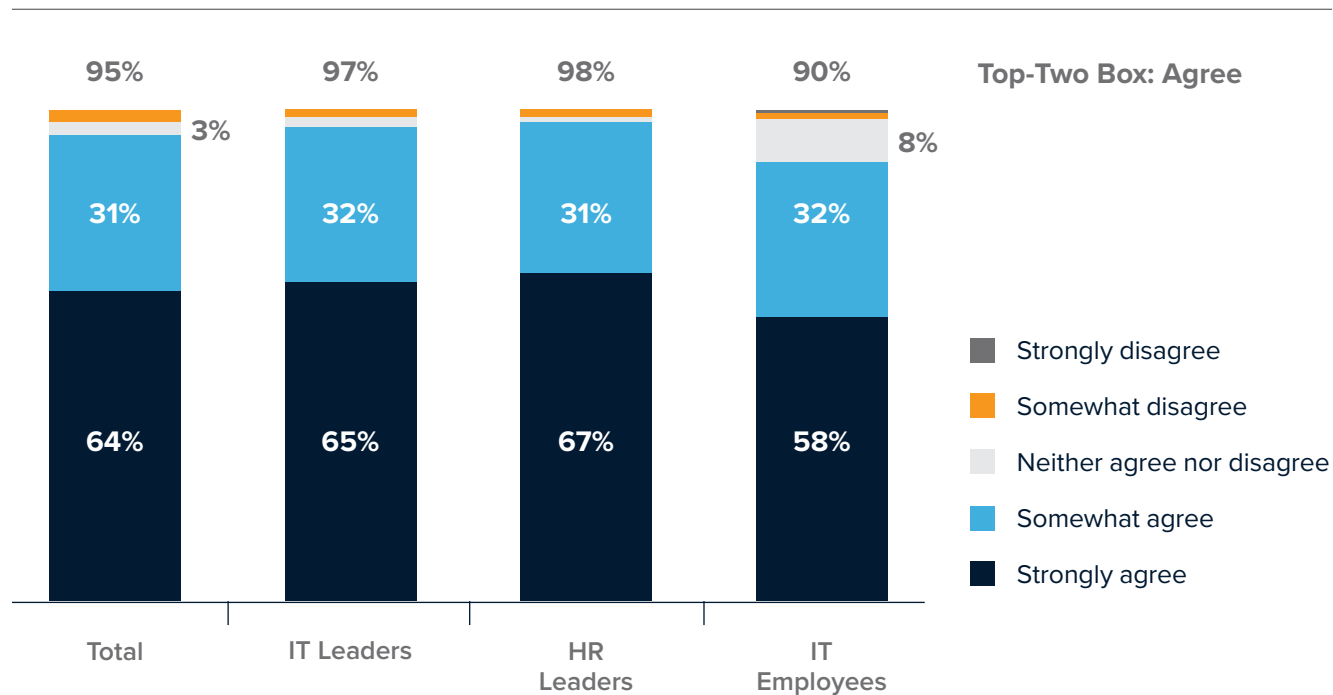
"Leadership at my company makes it clear that diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are a critical aspect of company strategy."
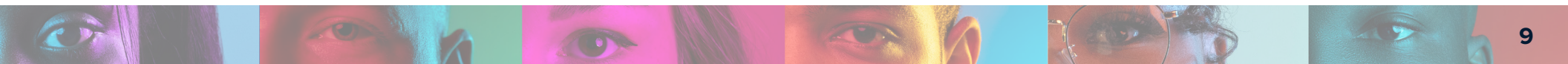
Majorities Agree Their Leadership Is Clear That DEI Is Critical to Company Strategy

While still high, IT employees are less likely to agree.

POSITION OF SENIOR DEI LEADER

	Total (48%)	IT and HR Leaders (50%)	IT Employees (40%)
Don't know	7%		25%
Don't have DEI leadership			5%
Manager of a department/group	17%	19%	11%
Senior management	26%	29%	17%
Executive-level management	20%	21%	16%
C-level officer	28%	29%	24%

C-Level/Executive-Level

- Don't know
- Don't have DEI leadership
- Someone else
- Manager of a department/group
- Senior management
- Executive-level management
- C-level officer

WHO DEI LEADERS REPORT TO

	(55%)
Manager of a department/group	15%
Senior management	25%
Executive-level management	23%
C-level officer	32%

C-Level/Executive-Level

- Don't know
- Other structure
- Manager of a department/group
- Senior management
- Executive-level management
- C-level officer
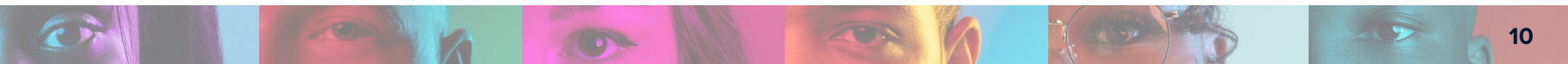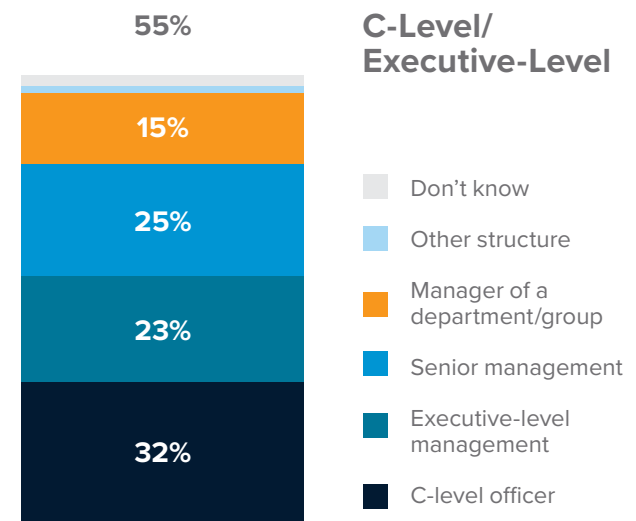
Majority of Organizations Have Implemented a Wide Variety of DEI Policies

TYPES OF DEI POLICIES IN PLACE

Policy	Percentage
Development and Training Programs	86%
Recruitment and Retention	68%
Staffing and Infrastructure	67%
Internal Consulting and Communication	67%
Pay and Leave Policies	64%
External Partnerships and Supplier Programs	38%
Audits by Third-Party Companies	24%
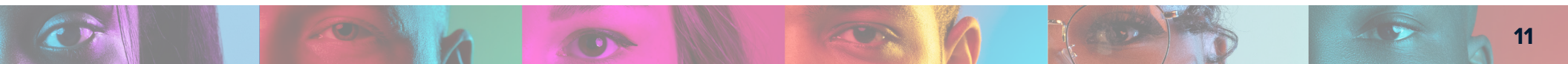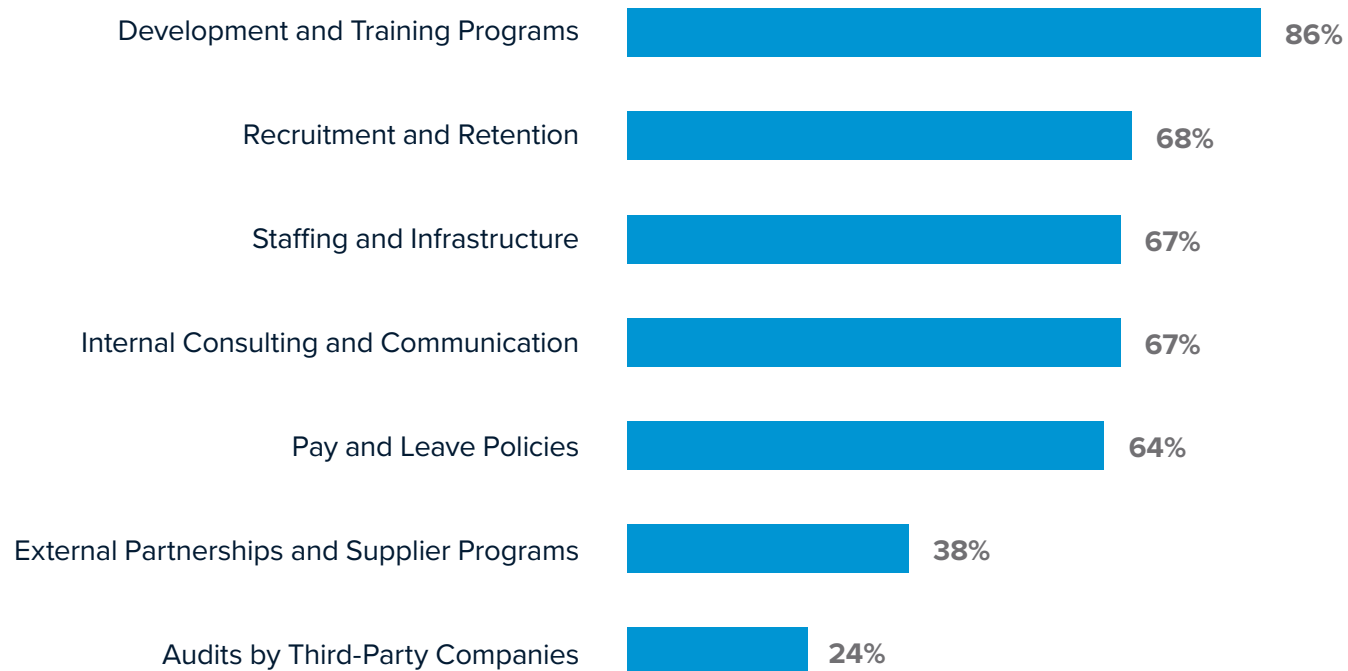
Leaders and Employees Align on Training as the Most Effective and Valued DEI Policy

But there is little agreement across other DEI policies.

DEI POLICIES MOST EFFECTIVE/VALUED IN WORKPLACE (% selected in top three)

Policy	IT and HR Leaders	IT Employees
Training (e.g., sensitivity, implicit bias, microaggressions)	29%	37%
Development programs	29%	14%
Recruiting programs	27%	9%
Skills training and development programs	24%	11%
Best practices for inclusive hiring	24%	11%
Staffing and infrastructure	22%	12%
Retention programs	20%	13%
Communication (e.g., awards programs for diverse achievements, newsletters, etc.)	17%	18%
Internal diversity and inclusion consulting	16%	9%
Pay parity/equity policies	15%	13%
Parental leave	14%	25%
External partnership	11%	5%
Minority supplier programs	8%	2%
Audits by third-party companies, including rewards/accolades/public recognition	8%	3%
None of these programs are effective and/or I do not value any of these programs.	2%	18%

■ IT and HR Leaders
■ IT Employees

Majority of Organizations Have Implemented a Wide Variety of DEI Policies

STATEMENTS ABOUT DIVERSITY INITIATIVES (% agree)

Statement	%
Diversity initiatives are crucial for an inclusive IT workplace.	80%
Diversity initiatives are crucial for an equitable IT workplace.	79%
Diversity initiatives make IT companies more attractive to job seekers.	79%
Diversity initiatives improve IT teams.	78%
Diversity initiatives foster a stronger connection to company culture.	77%
Diversity initiatives positively impact IT project outcomes.	75%
Diversity initiatives narrow pay gaps in IT.	70%
Policies for diversity need revising in IT.	66%

Two-thirds of respondents believe diversity policies need revision.
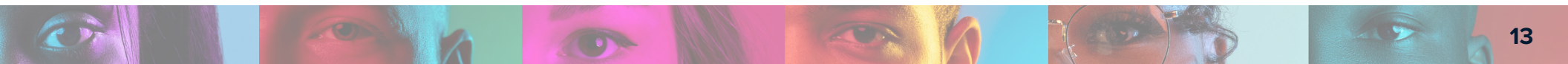
Discussing Diversity Has Increased Innovation and Collaboration

Three-quarters of respondents say leadership is held accountable for DEI results.

STATEMENTS ABOUT DEI

■ Strongly agree　■ Somewhat agree

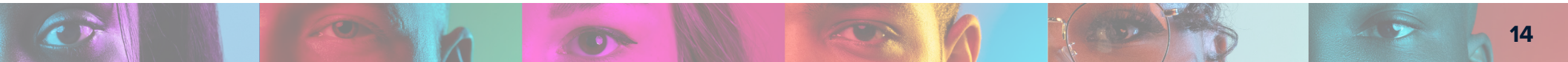| 77%	75%	73%	43%	40%
36%	90%	38%	24%	20%
41%	90%	35%	19%	20%

| Openly discussing diversity, equity and inclusion topics has increased innovation and collaboration in my organization. | At my organization, leadership is effectively held accountable for DEI results. | At my organization, we have clear metrics and KPIs to track DEI progress. | At my organization, the current political climate has made discussing DEI less of a priority. | At my organization, DEI efforts were slowed or put on hold because of the pandemic and as of yet have not been restarted. |

# Company Leadership Confident in Abilities of AI To Enhance Diversity

But IT employees are concerned about the impact of AI.

DEI AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (% AGREE)	IT LEADERS	HR LEADERS	IT EMPLOYEES
I am confident in my organization's ability to check for bias in our hiring and recruitment processes.	84%	85%	58%
Leveraging AI in the recruitment process has the potential to enhance workplace diversity and inclusivity.	77%	66%	32%
I worry that using AI might reinforce or worsen existing biases in hiring and career growth.	46%	54%	45%
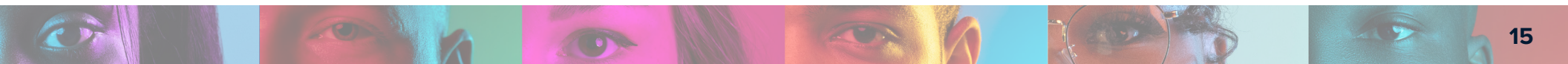
Perspective From IT and HR Leaders

DEI Spending and Hiring Increases for 2024

2024 DEI SPENDING PLANS VS. 2023 DEI SPENDING PLANS

48%
Moderately increase

20%
Significantly increase

5%
Moderately decrease

1%
Significantly decrease

4%
Don't know/ no budget

68% expect to increase spending.
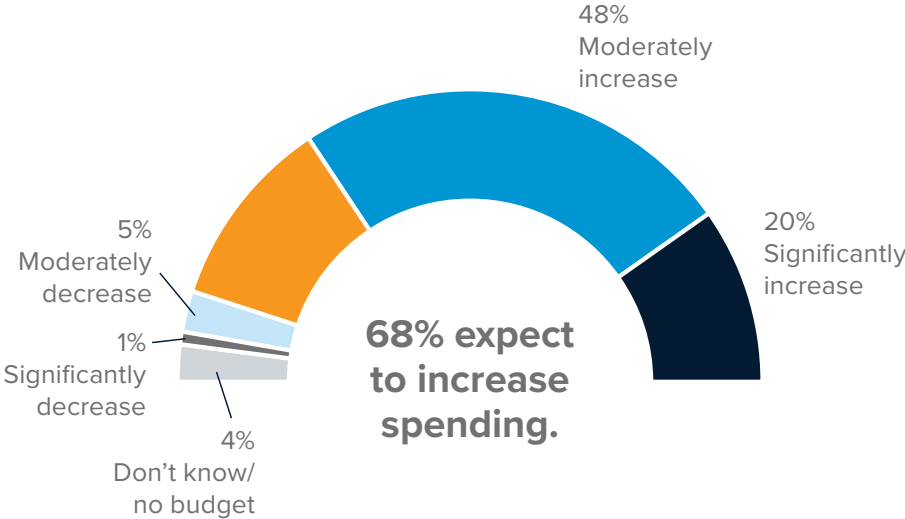
2024 DEI HIRING PLANS VS. 2023 DEI HIRING PLANS

47%
Moderately increase

21%
Significantly increase

23%
No change

5%
Moderately decrease

0%
Significantly decrease

4%
Don't know/ no budget

68% expect to increase hiring.
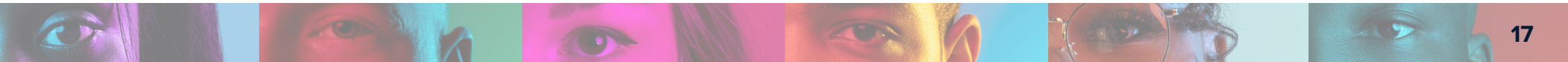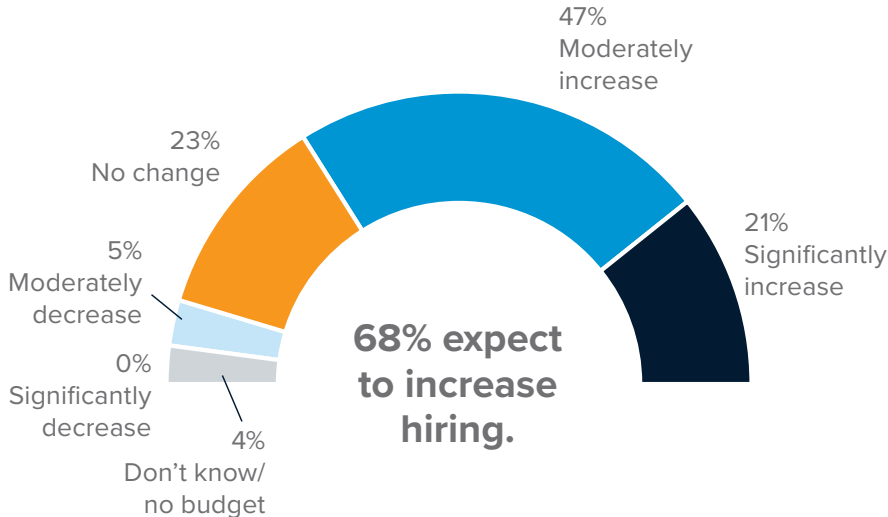
Eight in 10 Leaders Agree That DEI Initiatives Have Improved the Working Environment

STATEMENTS ABOUT DIVERSITY INITIATIVES (% agree)

■ Strongly agree　■ Somewhat agree

83%	83%	82%	77%	77%	75%
37%	43%	41%	38%	40%	40%
46%	40%	41%	39%	37%	35%
Made the company a better place to work	Been effective in recruiting a more diverse workforce	Been effective in retaining a more diverse workforce	Made the company more competitive in the industry	Positively impacted business results	Increased productivity
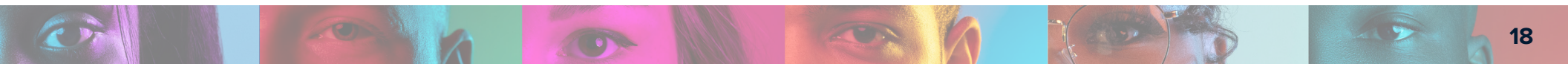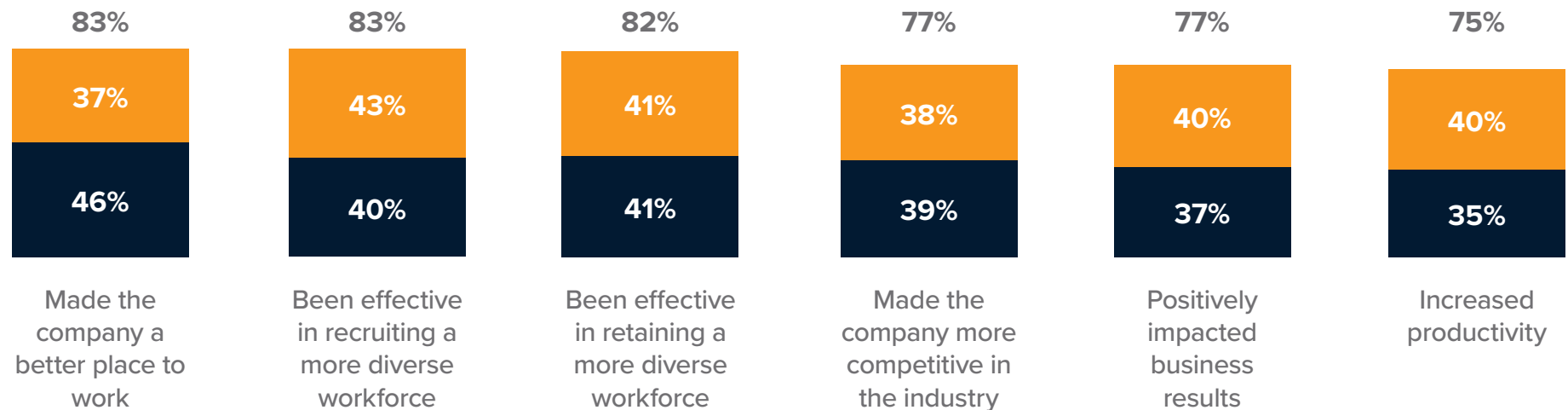
Organizations Report Difficulty in DEI Recruitment and Retention Efforts

DEI CHALLENGES (% selected in top three)

■ 2024   ■ 2023

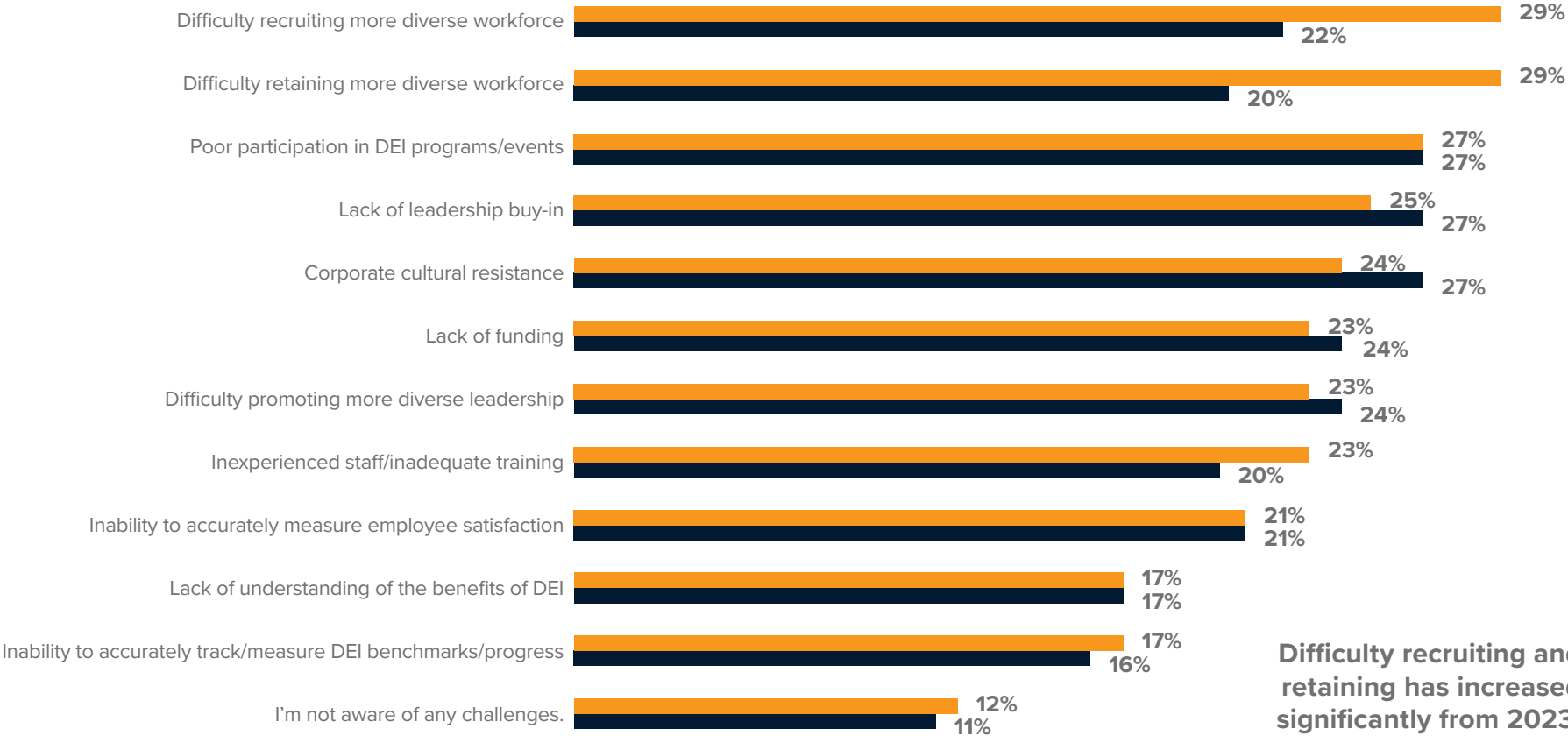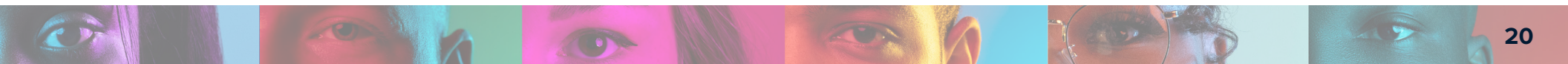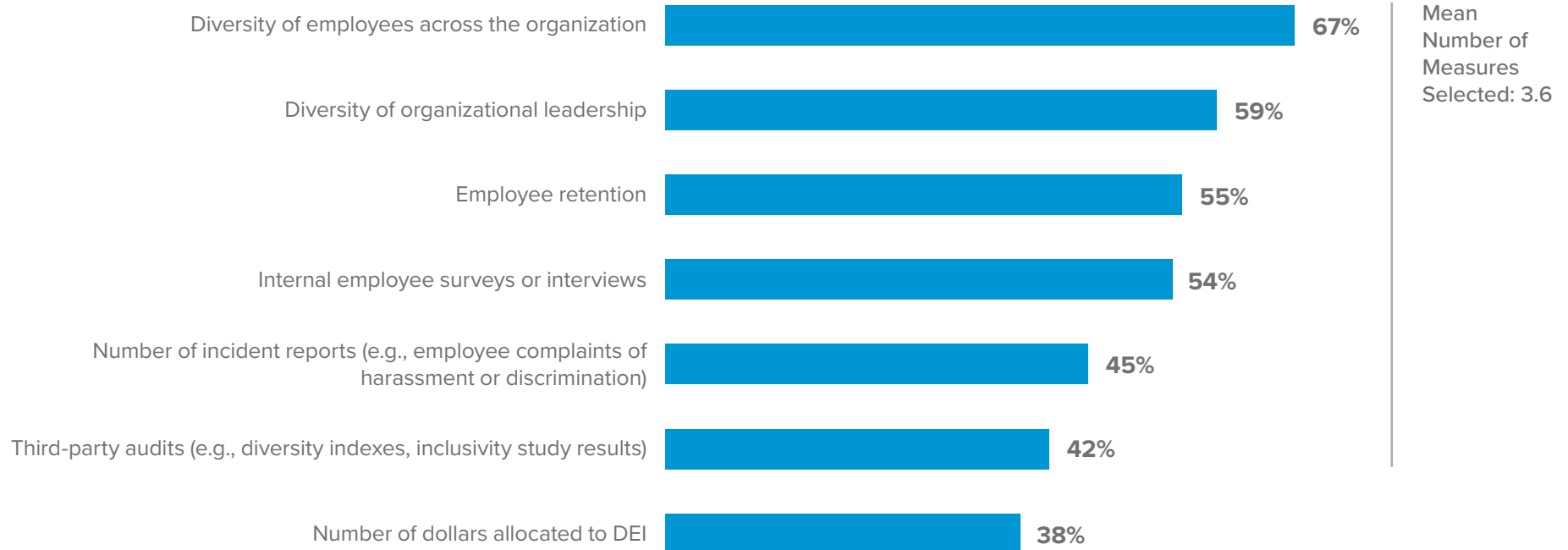| Challenge	2024	2023
Difficulty recruiting more diverse workforce	29%	22%
Difficulty retaining more diverse workforce	29%	20%
Poor participation in DEI programs/events	27%	27%
Lack of leadership buy-in	25%	27%
Corporate cultural resistance	24%	27%
Lack of funding	23%	24%
Difficulty promoting more diverse leadership	23%	24%
Inexperienced staff/inadequate training	23%	20%
Inability to accurately measure employee satisfaction	21%	21%
Lack of understanding of the benefits of DEI	17%	17%
Inability to accurately track/measure DEI benchmarks/progress	17%	16%
I'm not aware of any challenges.	12%	11%

Difficulty recruiting and retaining has increased significantly from 2023.
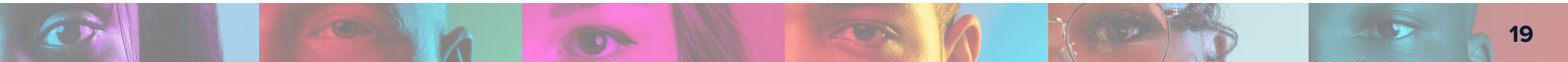
Employee Diversity Is the Top Measure of DEI Success

On average, organizations use 3.6 different KPIs.

MEASUREMENTS OF DEI SUCCESS

Measure	Percentage
Diversity of employees across the organization	67%
Diversity of organizational leadership	59%
Employee retention	55%
Internal employee surveys or interviews	54%
Number of incident reports (e.g., employee complaints of harassment or discrimination)	45%
Third-party audits (e.g., diversity indexes, inclusivity study results)	42%
Number of dollars allocated to DEI	38%

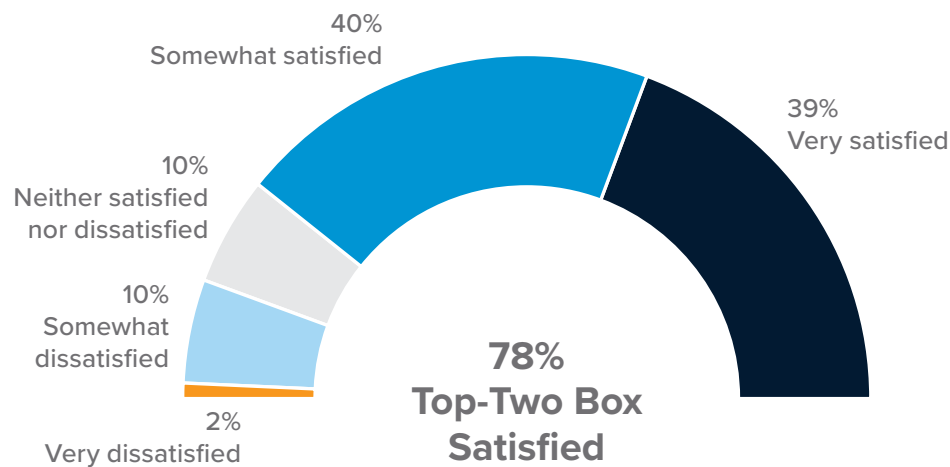Mean Number of Measures Selected: 3.6
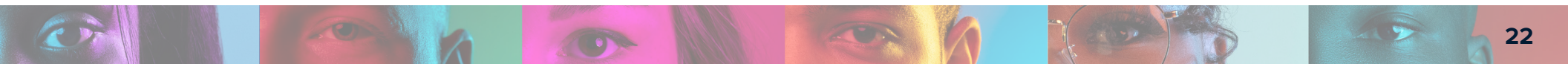
DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The Employee Perspective

IT Employees Are Satisfied With Their Current Employer, But Satisfaction Is Down Significantly From 2023

OVERALL WORKPLACE SATISFACTION

40%
Somewhat satisfied

39%
Very satisfied

10%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

10%
Somewhat dissatisfied

2%
Very dissatisfied

78%
Top-Two Box
Satisfied

SATISFACTION BY GENDER

	Male	Female
Top-Two Box	76%	86%
Very dissatisfied	2%	2%
Somewhat satisfied	10%	10%
Neither	12%	2%
Somewhat satisfied	36%	51%
Very satisfied	40%	35%

Top-Two Box

Legend:
- Very dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither
- Somewhat satisfied
- Very satisfied

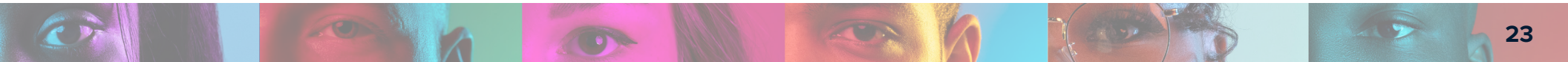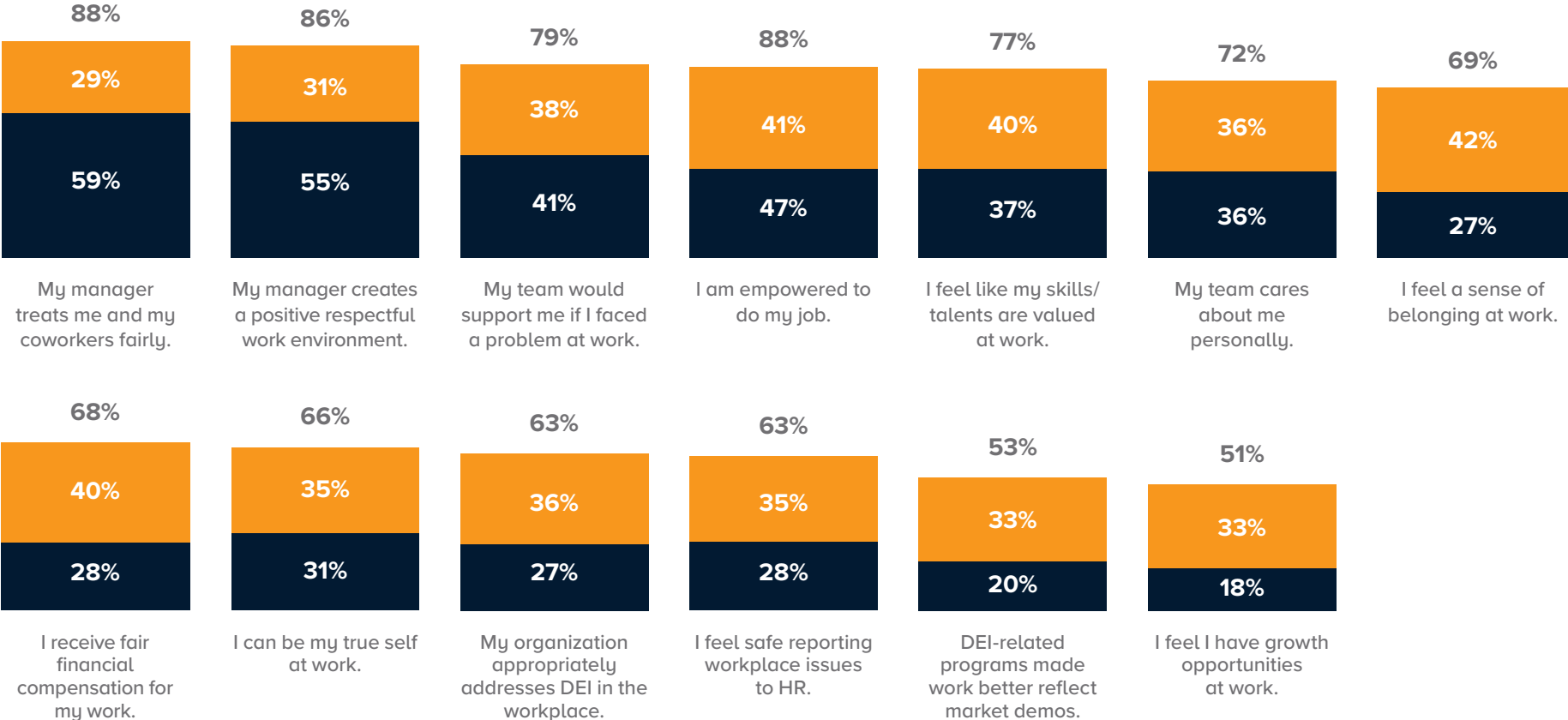# Overall, IT Employees Have Positive Perceptions of Their Workplaces

Nearly 9 in 10 feel fairly treated by their managers; however, only half feel they have growth opportunities.

WORKPLACE PERCEPTIONS (% agree)

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree

	88%	86%	79%	88%	77%	72%	69%
Somewhat agree	29%	31%	38%	41%	40%	36%	42%
Strongly agree	59%	55%	41%	47%	37%	36%	27%
	My manager treats me and my coworkers fairly.	My manager creates a positive respectful work environment.	My team would support me if I faced a problem at work.	I am empowered to do my job.	I feel like my skills/ talents are valued at work.	My team cares about me personally.	I feel a sense of belonging at work.

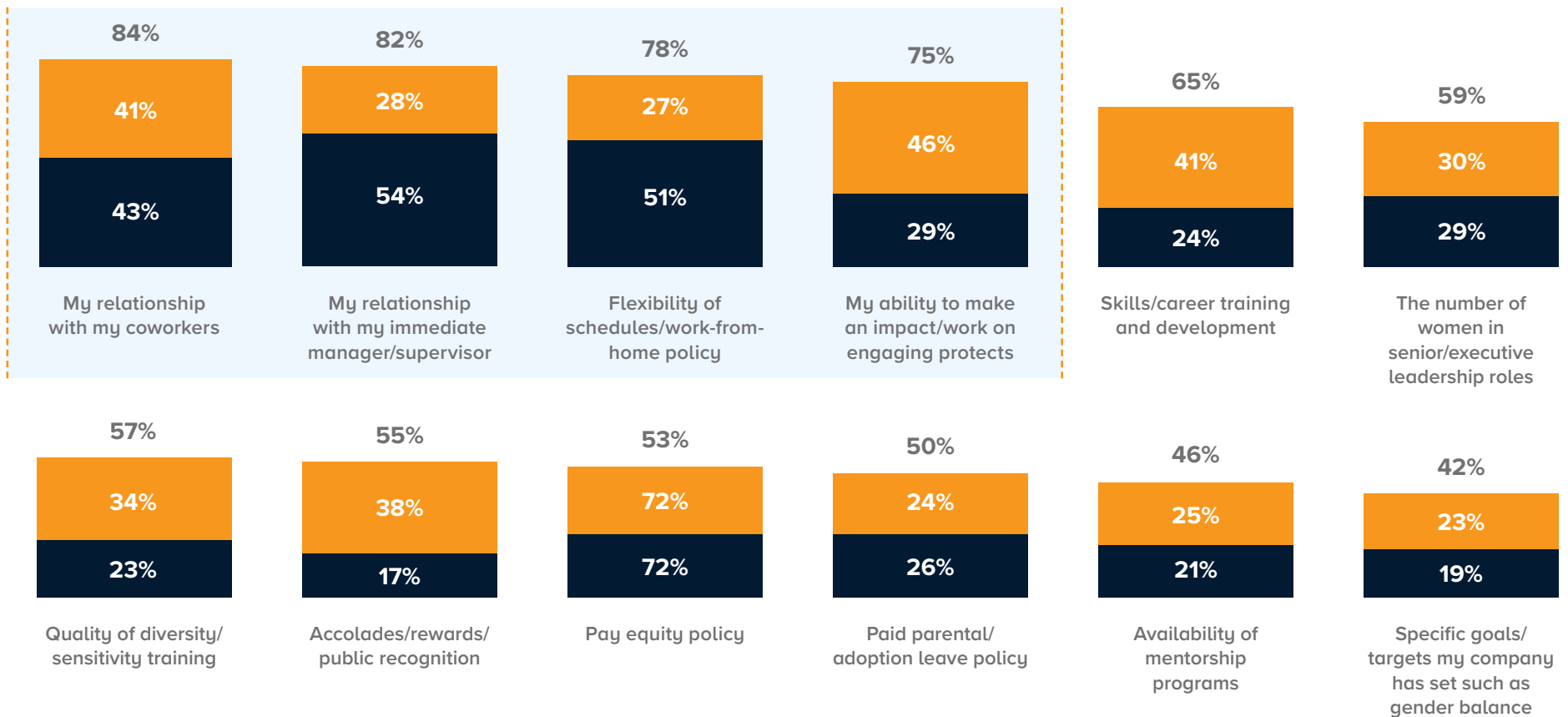|	68%	66%	63%	63%	53%	51%
Somewhat agree	40%	35%	36%	35%	33%	33%
Strongly agree	28%	31%	27%	28%	20%	18%
	I receive fair financial compensation for my work.	I can be my true self at work.	My organization appropriately addresses DEI in the workplace.	I feel safe reporting workplace issues to HR.	DEI-related programs made work better reflect market demos.	I feel I have growth opportunities at work.

Highest IT Employee Satisfaction Stems From Work Relationships, Schedule Flexibility and Work on Engaging Projects

Less than half of IT employees are satisfied with mentorship programs and targets for gender balance.

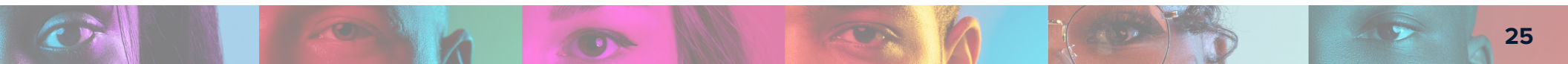**WORKPLACE ATTRIBUTE SATISFACTION** (% satisfied)

■ Very satisfied　　■ Somewhat satisfied

	84%	82%	78%	75%	65%	59%
Somewhat satisfied	41%	28%	27%	46%	41%	30%
Very satisfied	43%	54%	51%	29%	24%	29%
	My relationship with my coworkers	My relationship with my immediate manager/supervisor	Flexibility of schedules/work-from-home policy	My ability to make an impact/work on engaging protects	Skills/career training and development	The number of women in senior/executive leadership roles

	57%	55%	53%	50%	46%	42%
Somewhat satisfied	34%	38%	72%	24%	25%	23%
Very satisfied	23%	17%	72%	26%	21%	19%
	Quality of diversity/ sensitivity training	Accolades/rewards/ public recognition	Pay equity policy	Paid parental/ adoption leave policy	Availability of mentorship programs	Specific goals/ targets my company has set such as gender balance

Majority of IT Employees Agree That DEI Has Helped Create a Diverse Workforce

Women are twice as likely to say DEI positively impacted the career development (compared with men) and nearly twice as likely to say DEI increased opportunities for job growth.
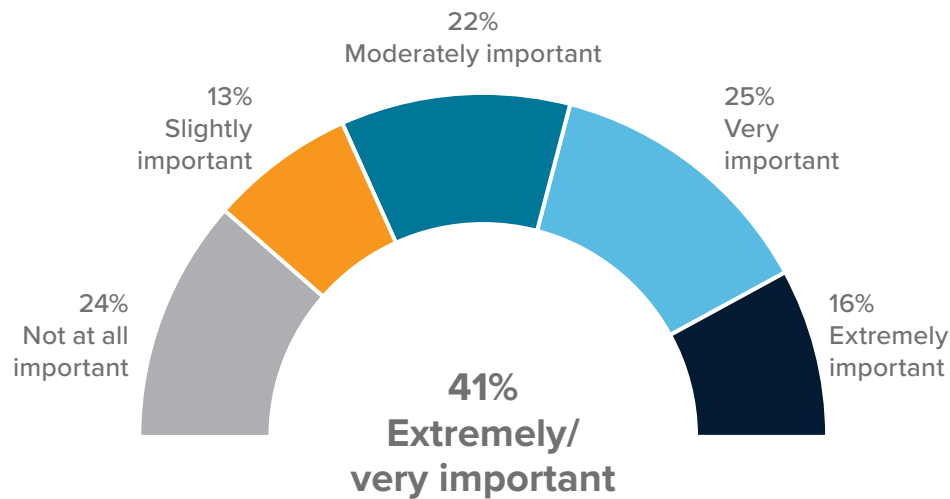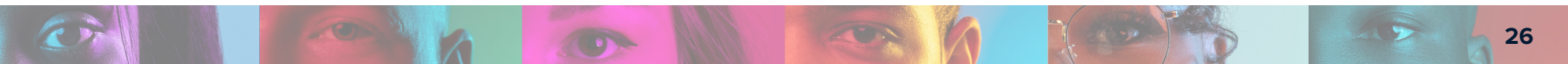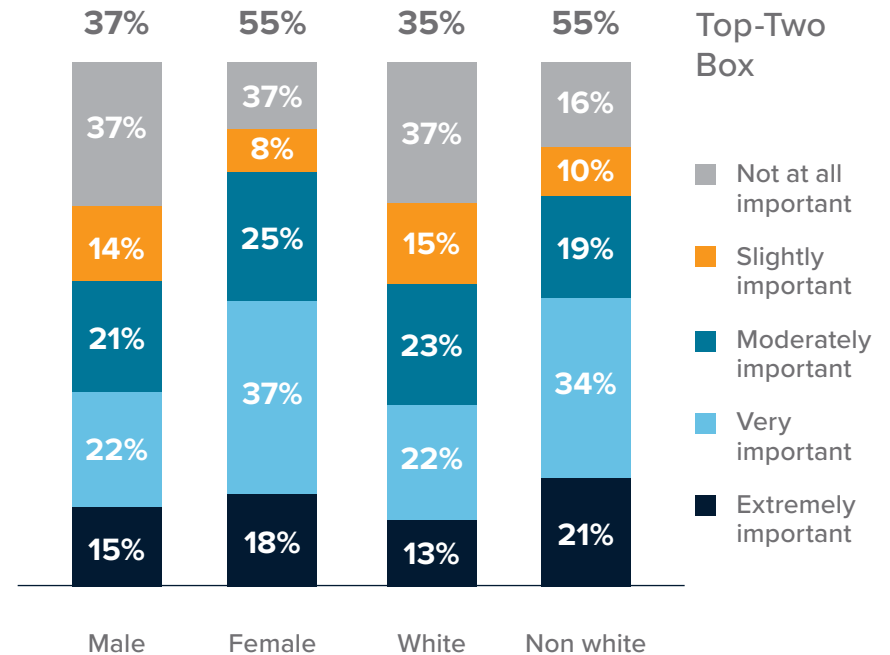
AGREEMENT WITH DEI STATEMENTS (% satisfied)

Statement	%
Helped create a diverse workforce	67%
Made my workplace a better place to work	59%
Encouraged feedback and suggestions to leadership from across the organization	55%
Increased my trust in company leadership	54%
Increased opportunities for job growth	45%
Led to more productivity on my team	42%
Positively impacted my career development	38%

Most IT Employees Consider DEI Important When Considering a New Job

One in 4 IT employees consider DEI not at all important when considering a new job; this jumps to nearly 2 in 5 among male IT employees.

IMPORTANCE OF DEI WHEN CONSIDERING A NEW JOB

22% Moderately important

13% Slightly important

25% Very important

24% Not at all important

16% Extremely important

41% Extremely/ very important

IMPORTANCE BY GENDER AND ETHNICITY

Top-Two Box

	Male	Female	White	Non white
Top-Two Box	37%	55%	35%	55%
Not at all important	37%	37%	37%	16%
Slightly important	14%	8%	15%	10%
Moderately important	21%	25%	23%	19%
Very important	22%	37%	22%	34%
Extremely important	15%	18%	13%	21%

Legend:
- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

Recommendations

WORK FROM WHERE YOU ARE. When you first start out, the task can be overwhelming. You can start by focusing on workplace 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.

CULTIVATE 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 cocreation mindset, enrolling as many people as possible on the journey.

EVALUATE PROCESSES. Examine and dismantle unintentional processes and norms that may hinder equitable access to opportunities within your DEI strategies. Focused, high-performing leaders can sometimes be a bit myopic when considering opportunities for their best talent. Not surprisingly, it is often 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.
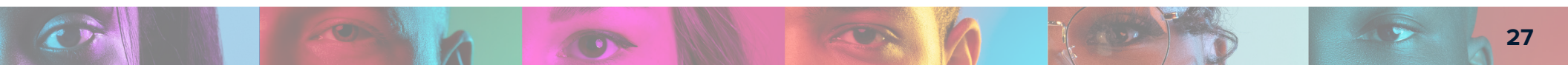
Recommendations

SECURE SENIOR LEADER SUPPORT. Ensure sustained commitment by securing support from senior leaders. Diversity, equity and inclusion should rank as top priorities, treated on par with other 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.

EXTEND BEYOND THE ORGANIZATION. Your team members want to be part of an organization that has a great culture, and more and more, that means it should be 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.
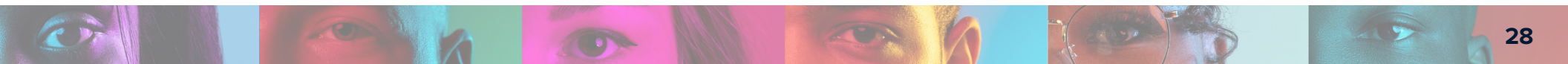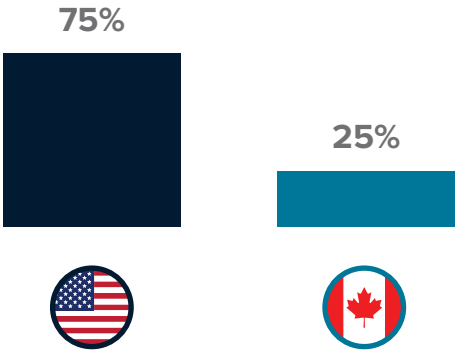
DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION
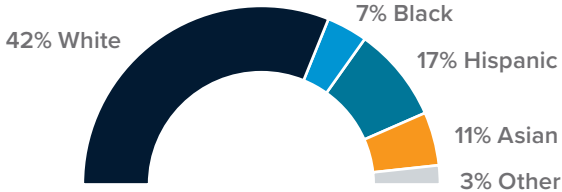
Research Methodology

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 November 2023, includes perspective from 820 IT and HR professionals. Respondents include IT and HR decision-makers and IT employees. The report explores the social-related DEI challenges and perspectives and their impact on the workplace.
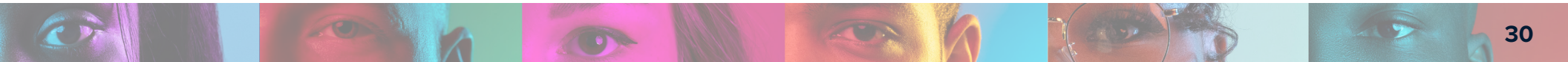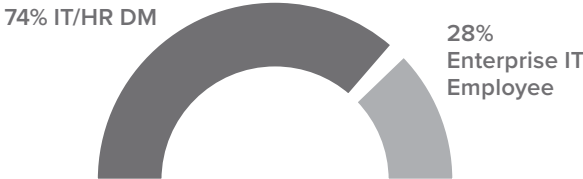
COUNTRY

75%

25%

RACE/ETHNICITY

42% White

7% Black

17% Hispanic

11% Asian

3% Other

GENDER

61% Male

39% Female

RESPONDENT TYPE

74% IT/HR DM

28% Enterprise IT Employee

About TEKsystems and TEKsystems Global Services

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.

TEKsystems

Own change