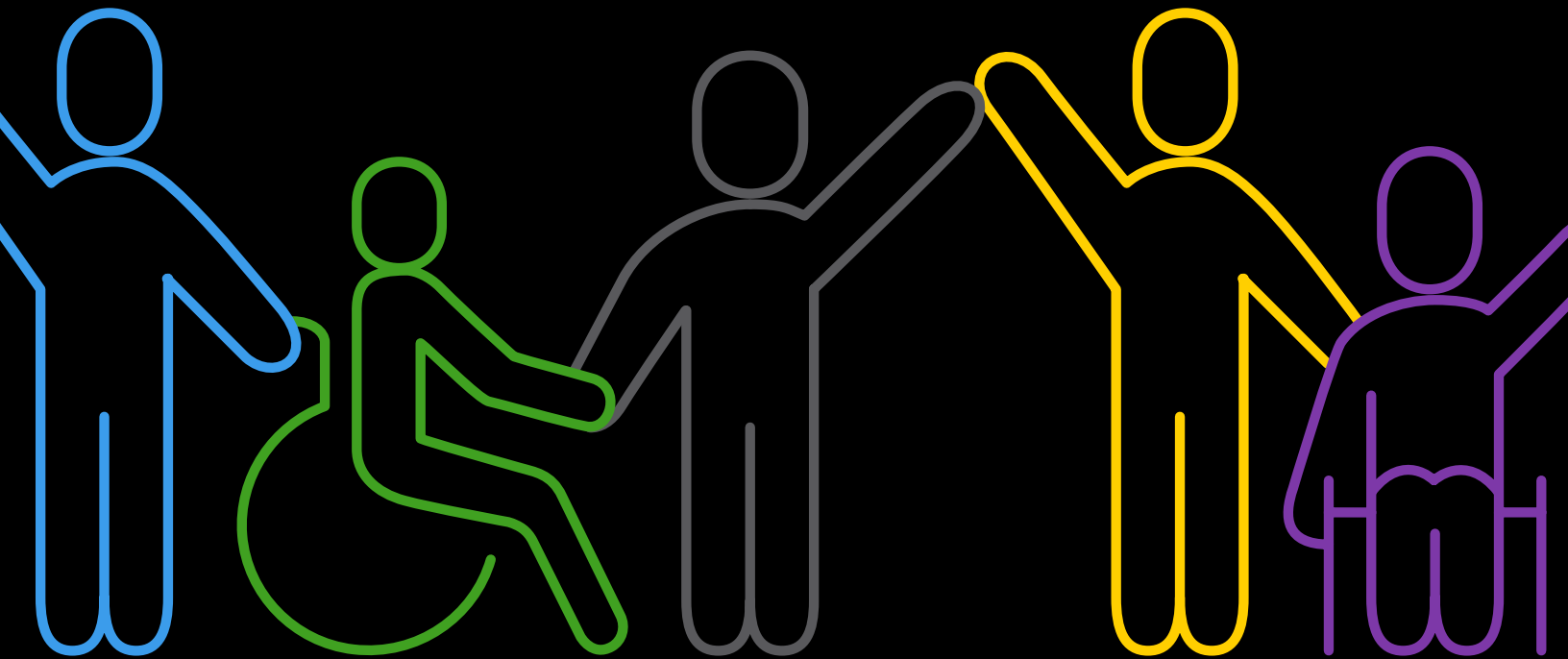


DEI in the Marketing Profession: Progress and Challenges

2023 Research Report



Executive summary

This research is one of many actions the Canadian Marketing Association (CMA) has taken to fulfill its 2020 pledge to combat racism, discrimination, and systemic barriers to inclusion in the marketing profession.

Now in its third year, the research reveals powerful insights about the challenges that employees from BIPOC and other marginalized communities face in the workplace, and identifies steps that organizations and colleagues can take to improve outcomes not only for individuals but also for the organizations where they work.

Key findings include:

Organizations with well-diversified leadership teams are making important strides in creating more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces, while those making no effort to diversify their leadership are experiencing declines in these areas.

While the number of organizations with well-diversified leadership was 25% — only a slight increase from 2022 results (22%), those with diverse leadership teams are achieving significant improvements in several areas. This is in stark contrast to organizations that are making no effort to diversify at the senior level, where we are witnessing significant declines.

The business case for making DEI a priority is undeniable.

In each year of the survey, respondents have agreed almost unanimously (96%) that having a leadership team that is well-diversified supports business growth and that working in an inclusive organization offers many benefits. Notably, employees in organizations with diverse leadership feel valued and included, and are invested in the organization's success.

Valued employees are more likely to feel engaged in organizations with well-diversified leadership teams, and are more likely to remain in these organizations.

Disengagement rates are significantly higher (60%) than in previous years for employees in workplaces whose leadership is not diverse. When these employees feel disengaged, most (65%) start looking for a new job. In contrast, in organizations with well-diversified leadership, only a small minority (14%) of respondents say they feel disengaged sometimes and only a small percentage (17%) respond by looking for another job. Individuals in organizations with well-diversified leadership are much more likely to talk to peers and try to determine how to address the situation (42%) than those in workplaces whose leadership is not diversified.

Fewer marketers than in past years say they've witnessed discriminatory behaviour and disengagement, but there is still work to be done to improve standards of behaviour.

Fewer respondents report witnessing discriminatory behaviour than they did in 2022 (78% versus 85%) and observations of disengagement among traditionally marginalized groups have also improved from 63% in 2021 to 48% in 2023. However, 83% of marketers say they have witnessed discrimination in organizations that don't have diversified leadership. The number of people who report that they have experienced microaggressions is still very high across all categories. In non-diversified workplaces, 68% of marketers say they've experienced microaggressions and nearly one-third (32%) of employees in workplaces with diverse leadership report this.

Ageism is a significant issue in the marketing profession. Many believe it is tolerated more than other forms of discrimination.

On average, marketers consider employees over 48 years of age to be "older workers." Nearly half of respondents (47%) selected a number below 50, while 53% consider employees aged 50 and above to be older. Most Boomers (81%) report they feel disadvantaged because the marketing industry is so image-conscious. In comparison, 49% of Millennials feel the same.

Key tactics can help with implementing an effective DEI strategy and accessing a broader pool of talent.

Having a diverse interview panel is the top tactic (55%) in attracting all available talent at organizations with well-diversified leadership, followed by promoting diversity on the company website's career section (52%). These tactics ranked much higher than offering targeted internships and scholarships to diverse populations (36%).

This year's report includes conversation starters to help organizational leaders articulate a commitment and define the scope of activities they will undertake to create a more inclusive and equitable work environment, and to improve employee engagement and morale. A crucial step in this process is to create a safe place for employees to have open, meaningful conversations. Many of the conversation starters can be adapted for this purpose.

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Introduction and acknowledgements

This report provides insights from the third year of the CMA's survey on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). We launched the survey following our commitment in the spring of 2020 to take steps to combat racism and other types of discrimination in the marketing profession.

The purpose of the study is to raise understanding about the barriers that people from BIPOC and other marginalized communities face. By identifying gaps and challenges, we aim to reduce barriers and identify opportunities to create safe, supportive and inclusive spaces for all.

Thank you to the members of our DEI Committee for their assistance in developing the survey and interpreting the results.

- Patrick Bhang, RBC (Co-Chair)
- Alison Simpson, CMA (Co-Chair)
- Sara Clodman, CMA
- Irene Daley, Canadian Tire
- Tyjondah Kerr, OLG
- Darian Kovacs, Marketing News Canada
- Loretta Lam, Focus Communications
- Chloe Lebouc, Kaiser & Partners
- Maria Maynard, Loblaw Companies
- Christine Sabourin, Scotiabank
- Marème Touré, Dentsu

We are grateful to **strategy** for their valuable input into the survey questions in Year 1 and for deploying the survey to their readers.

strategy

Appreciation to the following organizations for their support in making this research possible:

Major partners



Lead partners



Affiliate partner



Distribution partners



Organizations who shared the survey with their networks through social or a newsletter.

- AccessNow
- Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
- Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce
- Sponsorship Marketing Council Canada

Key metric: Diversity of senior leadership

Many of the findings were evaluated based on the diversity of senior leadership at respondents' organizations, defined as follows:

Well-diversified

My organization's senior leaders are diverse based on age, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, physical conditions, cultural background, country of origin, etc.

Acting towards

My organization has some diverse senior leaders and definite formal plans to address diversity.

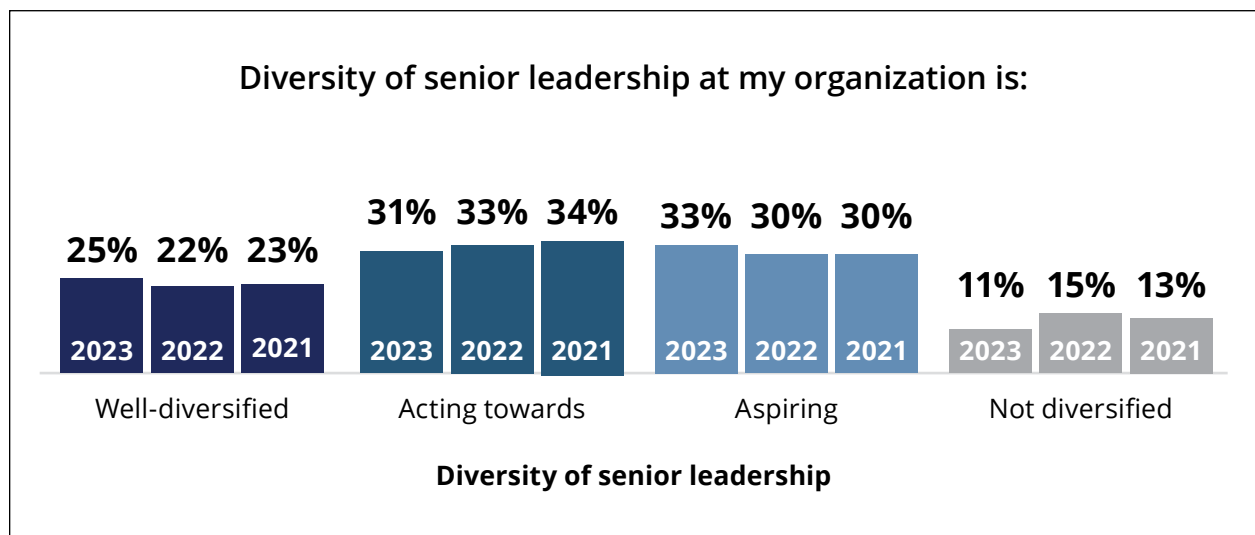
Aspiring

My organization's senior leadership is mostly not diverse and is making attempts to diversify.

Not diversified

My organization's senior leadership is mostly not diverse with no apparent interest in change.

The number of respondents who say they have well-diversified leadership teams is still low at 25%, but 64% say their organization is making attempts (aspiring = 33%) or has definite formal plans to address diversity with some diverse representation (acting towards = 31%). Only 11% of respondents say their senior leadership is mostly not diversified and have no apparent interest in change.



Segmenting the data on this metric reveals significant insights, as indicated throughout this report.

Among those with at least some degree of diversity, 56% indicate that the following groups are represented at the leadership level in their organizations.

Women overall	87%
Racialized/BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour)	70%
Those who speak more than one language/speak with an accent	63%
Women aged 55+	50%
LGBTQ2SI+ community	43%
Member of a religion that experiences discrimination	29%
Mental health challenge/neurodiverse	14%
Have an evident physical or health challenge/disability	9%
Other	2%
None of these	2%

Detailed findings

Organizations with well-diversified leadership teams are making important strides in creating more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces, while those making no effort to diversify their leadership are experiencing declines in these areas.

Almost all marketers (94%) from organizations with diverse leadership say that they feel a sense of belonging and inclusion and believe they are valued. Only 26% of respondents in organizations without diversified leadership feel this way.

While there was a slight dip in numbers since last year, most respondents (96%) whose leadership falls in the well-diversified, acting towards and aspiring categories indicate that their company is taking action to create an environment that is diverse, inclusive and equal. However, only half (50%) of respondents in organizations with non-diversified leadership teams said the same — a drop of nine percentage points since last year.

My organization is taking action to create a diverse, inclusive and equal environment

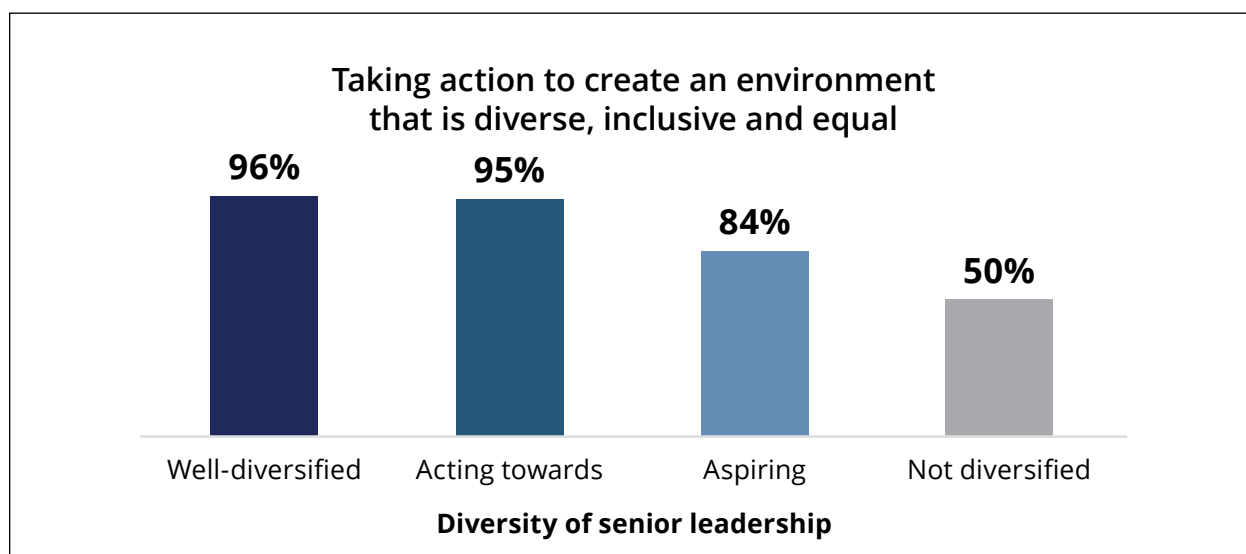
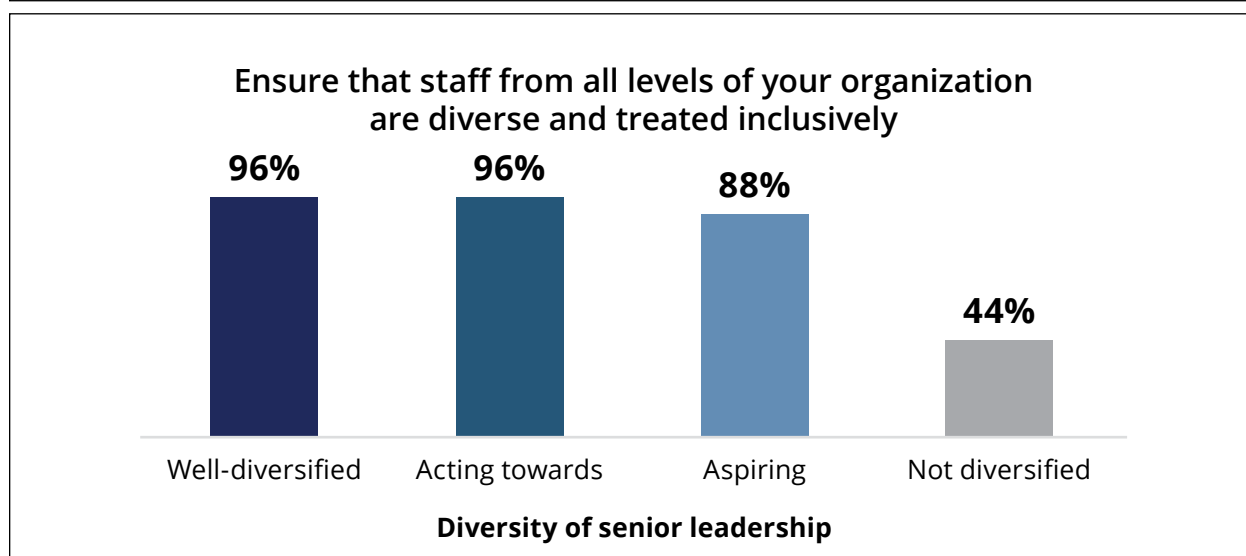
	Views of respondents from organizations whose senior leadership is:				
	Well-diversified	Acting towards	Aspiring	Not diversified	
2023	96%	95%	84%	50%	
2022	100%	98%	85%	59%	

Almost all respondents with leadership that is well-diversified or has definite plans (“acting towards”) to address diversity in leadership report that their organizations are trying to:

- Ensure that leadership is diverse and treated inclusively;
- Ensure staff are diverse and treated inclusively; and
- Create an environment that is diverse, inclusive and equal.

Respondents from organizations that don’t have diverse leadership are far less likely to say this is the case.

Overall, how much effort do you see your company making with the following?



Marketers in organizations with well-diversified leadership teams were much more likely to agree with the following statements:

- Qualified people from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) communities rise to the most senior positions at the same rate as qualified people who are not from BIPOC communities.
- I feel welcome, like I belong.
- There is a senior level role that is dedicated to diversity and inclusion.
- I believe my organization will take appropriate action in response to incidents of discrimination.
- Perspectives like mine are included in decision-making.

By comparison, those in organizations that do not prioritize diversity at the senior level were more likely to agree with the following:

- I have heard racial, ethnic and gender-based jokes at work.
- Women above a certain age have no chance of getting hired or promoted.
- I have seen staff from diverse backgrounds being talked down to and ignored in meetings.
- Canadian experience and education is preferred.

Rate the following regarding your organization

	Percentage of respondents who agree from organizations whose senior leadership is:			
	Well-diversified	Acting towards	Aspiring	Not diversified
Qualified people from BIPOC communities rise to the most senior positions at the same rate as qualified people who are not from BIPOC communities	62%	57%	36%	21%
I have heard racial, ethnic and gender-based jokes at work	23%	23%	40%	41%
I have heard discriminatory comments about older employees at work	22%	20%	31%	26%
Women above a certain age have no chance of getting hired/promoted	25%	19%	31%	35%
Canadian experience/education is preferred	45%	48%	69%	65%
I have seen staff from diverse backgrounds being talked down to and ignored in meetings	7%	15%	25%	36%
I feel welcome, like I belong	94%	93%	89%	68%
There is a senior level role that is dedicated to diversity and inclusion	57%	55%	46%	21%
I believe my organization will take appropriate action in response to incidents of discrimination	96%	90%	84%	53%
Age discrimination is tolerated in the workplace more than other forms of discrimination	39%	37%	55%	41%
Perspectives like mine are included in decision-making	96%	94%	83%	68%

The business case for making DEI a priority is undeniable.

There was near unanimous agreement (96%) — even among organizations whose leadership is not diverse — that a diverse and inclusive workforce is a business growth opportunity.

I see a diverse and inclusive workforce as a business growth opportunity

	Percentage of respondents who agree from organizations whose senior leadership is:			
	Well-diversified	Acting towards	Aspiring	Not diversified
	90%	99%	99%	91%

Almost all respondents (98%) indicate that they believe working in a fully inclusive work environment is beneficial. For 2023, most benefits were cited more often than they were in 2021. Most notably, the benefit of having access to the highest quality employees increased by eight percentage points since 2021.

Key organizational benefits of working in a fully inclusive work environment

	2023	2022	2021	Change since 2021
Any	98%	99%	99%	
Employee morale and loyalty	69%	72%	65%	+4
More innovation/creativity	68%	75%	65%	+3
Being authentic in the workplace	67%	69%		
Understand clients/customers better	66%	71%	62%	+4
Better decision-making	58%	62%	57%	+1
Access to the highest quality employees	58%	56%	50%	+8
Improved collaboration	56%	63%	61%	-5
Doing the right thing	55%	69%	60%	-5
Company reputation/reduced perception of discrimination and inequity	51%	55%	46%	+5
Higher revenue/more clients/business success	29%	36%	34%	-5
None of these	2%	1%	1%	
Other	5%	4%	4%	

Year after year, survey results indicate that having well-diversified leadership is good for business and makes employees feel valued, included, and invested in business success. In diverse and inclusive work environments, there is greater innovation and creativity, a better understanding of customers and clients, and stronger employee morale and engagement. Yet many organizations have not made much progress in increasing the diversity of their senior leadership.

Valued employees are more likely to feel engaged in organizations with well-diversified leadership teams, and are more likely to remain in these organizations.

Attracting and keeping skilled employees is a challenge that keeps many leaders awake at night. Our research demonstrates that having a diverse senior leadership team has a significant impact on this critical issue.

Only 49% of organizations with well-diversified leadership experienced preventable employee loss over the past 12 months compared to 75% of organizations that do not have diverse leadership and are making no apparent efforts to change this. The contrast in responses regarding reasons for leaving are massive. Marketers in organizations where leadership is not diversified are 10 times more likely to leave because of lack of diversity and inclusion and feeling unwelcome and undervalued, and three times more likely to leave for lack of mentorship.



“

The question of diversity in our leadership (7 people) has never come up so while there is no formal plan to change, it's not that there's no interest, but more it's not seen as a concern. ”

Senior level marketer, not diversified agency, non-marginalized background

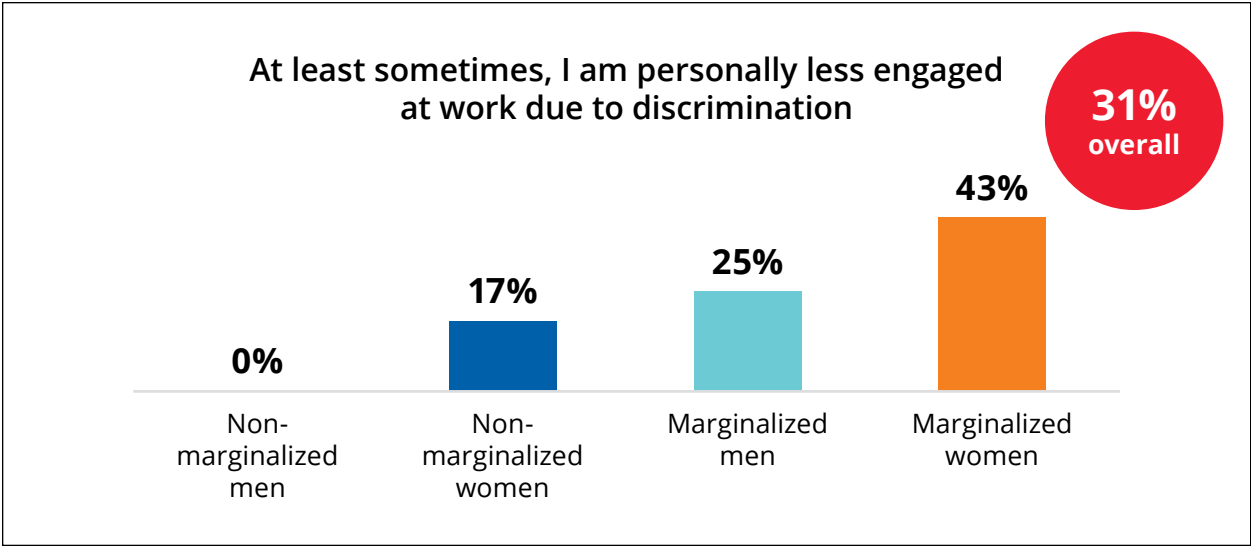
More than four times as many people (60% vs 14%) in workplaces where senior leadership is not diversified are personally less engaged, at least some of the time, due to various types of workplace discrimination, compared to those in organizations with well-diversified leadership.

More than double the number of women feel less engaged due to discrimination at work compared to their male counterparts.

How often are you personally less engaged at work due to discrimination?

		Views of respondents from organizations whose senior leadership is:					
	Total 2023	Well-diversified	Acting towards	Aspiring	Not diversified	Total 2022	Total 2021
At least sometimes	31%	14%	25%	38%	60%	28%	41%
Always	3%	2%	3%	1%	13%	1%	4%
Frequently	6%	1%	4%	8%	18%	5%	11%
Sometimes	22%	11%	19%	29%	30%	22%	26%
Rarely	30%	25%	33%	33%	23%	33%	29%
Never	39%	60%	42%	29%	18%	38%	30%

More than double the number of women feel less engaged due to discrimination at work compared to their male counterparts. Non-marginalized men say they don't feel disengaged at work even sometimes.



Just over half (52%) of employees in workplaces where leadership is not diverse say they care less about the success of the business when they become disengaged, compared to 25% in organizations with diverse leadership.

Almost two-thirds (65%) of employees who encounter discrimination in organizations without diverse leadership spend time looking for another job, compared to only 17% in organizations with diverse leadership.

About one-third (35%) of employees in organizations where leadership is not diverse consider leaving the marketing profession altogether, compared to a mere 8% of employees in organizations with well-diversified leadership.

Disengagement due to workplace discrimination manifests itself in alarming ways.

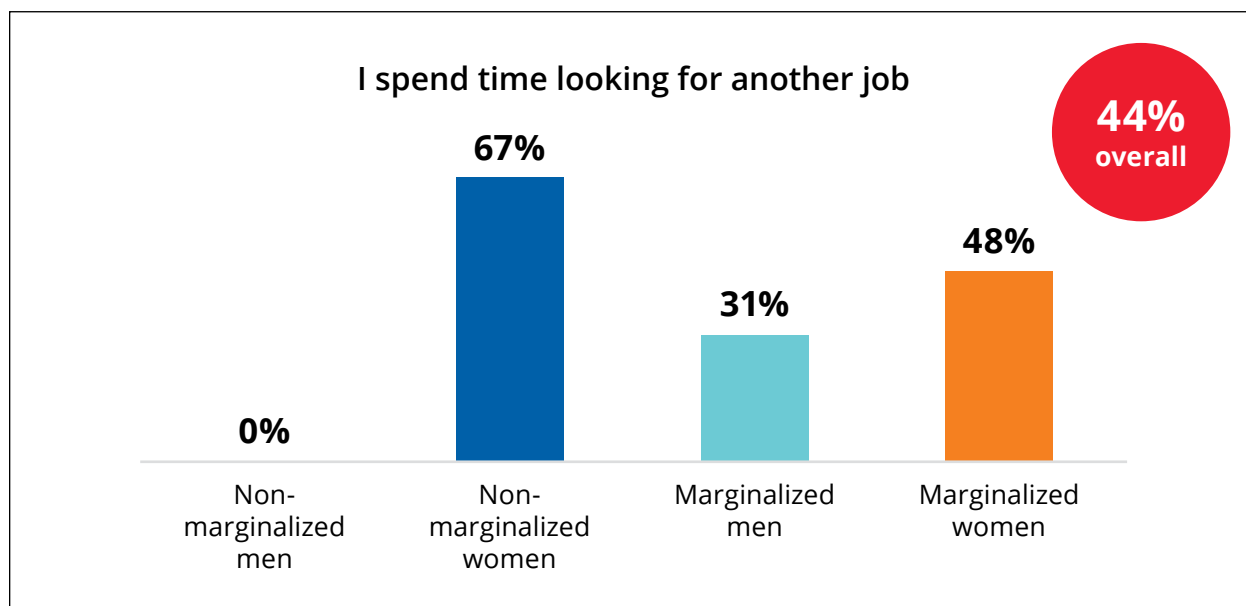
When you are less engaged at work due to discriminatory action/policies, how does this manifest at your job?

		Views of respondents from organizations whose senior leadership is:			
Action	Total	Well-diversified	Acting towards	Aspiring	Not diversified
I am not performing at my best level	59%	50%	73%	52%	61%
I spend time looking for another job	44%	17%	42%	41%	65%
I care less about the success of the business overall	42%	25%	23%	52%	52%
I am actively thinking about how to address the situation instead of doing my job	33%	42%	35%	34%	22%
I talk to co-workers about the situation	26%	42%	27%	23%	26%
I am considering leaving the marketing profession completely	22%	8%	23%	20%	35%

“
I spiral and second-guess my feelings and replay the situation.”

Senior level marketer, aspiring client firm, marginalized background

About two-thirds of non-marginalized women say they look for employment elsewhere when they feel disengaged due to discrimination and 48% of marginalized women say the same. More than 30% of marginalized men start looking for a new job; however, none of the non-marginalized men do so.



Fewer marketers than in years past say they've witnessed discriminatory behaviour and disengagement, but there is still work to be done to improve standards of behaviour.

Over three years, we've seen some improvement in observations of discrimination and disengagement. For example, the number of people who say they've witnessed discriminatory behaviour in their organizations dropped to 78% overall compared to 85% in 2022. Just over half of respondents (58%) in organizations with well-diversified leadership said they witnessed this behaviour. The numbers jump significantly to 83% in non-diversified, 87% in aspiring, and 82% in organizations that are acting towards having a well-diversified leadership team.

While the overall decline is encouraging, the numbers remain too high across the board.

In another encouraging trend, fewer respondents say they have observed disengagement among marginalized groups. The number of respondents who noticed various groups being less engaged due to discrimination has dropped steadily since 2020.

- 48% in 2023
- 58% in 2021-22
- 74% in 2020-21

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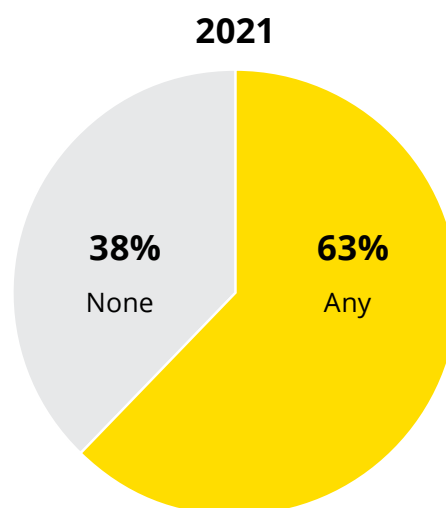
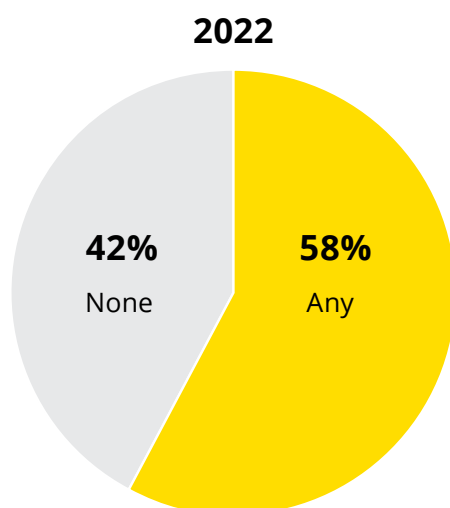
There are pockets where we're very proud of what we've achieved; and for us, inclusion is a core competency. However, making employees feel included will forever be a priority and continuous improvement is our focus. ”

Senior marketer, acting towards agency, non-marginalized background

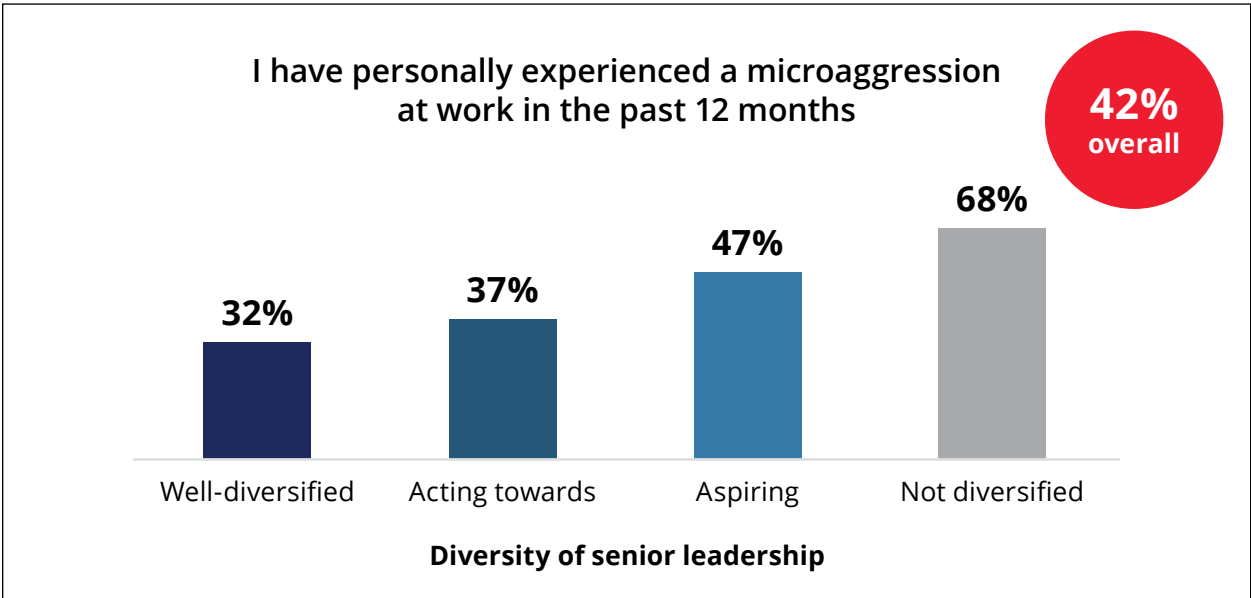
Nearly three-quarters of respondents with well-diversified leadership say they have not witnessed disengagement due to systemic discrimination and they believe everyone is engaged. This is a complete reversal since 2021, when 71% said they had witnessed disengagement. Again, the experiences of employees in organizations with well-diversified leadership vary significantly from those in organizations whose leadership is not diversified.

In your organization, have you noticed people from any of the following communities being less engaged due to discrimination?

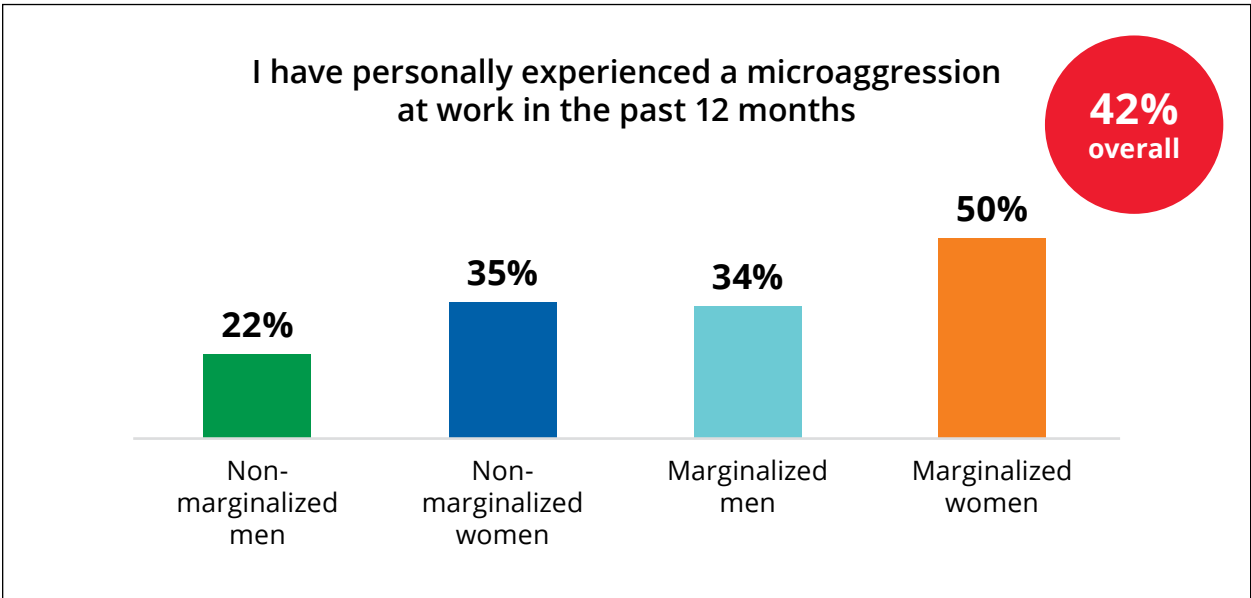
		Views of respondents from organizations whose senior leadership is:			
	Total	Well-diversified	Acting towards	Aspiring	Not diversified
Any	48%	27%	45%	58%	72%
Racialized/BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour)	18%	5%	15%	21%	38%
Mental health challenge/neurodiverse	17%	10%	20%	17%	21%
Women overall	14%	6%	17%	15%	23%
Those who speak more than one language/speak with an accent	11%	3%	9%	17%	21%
Women aged 55+	10%	3%	7%	14%	21%
LGBTQ2SI+ community	6%	1%	4%	10%	13%
Member of a religion that experiences discrimination	4%	0%	3%	5%	10%
Have an evident physical or health challenge/disability	3%	5%	2%	4%	3%
Other	5%	6%	4%	5%	10%
None of these, all are engaged	52%	73%	55%	42%	28%

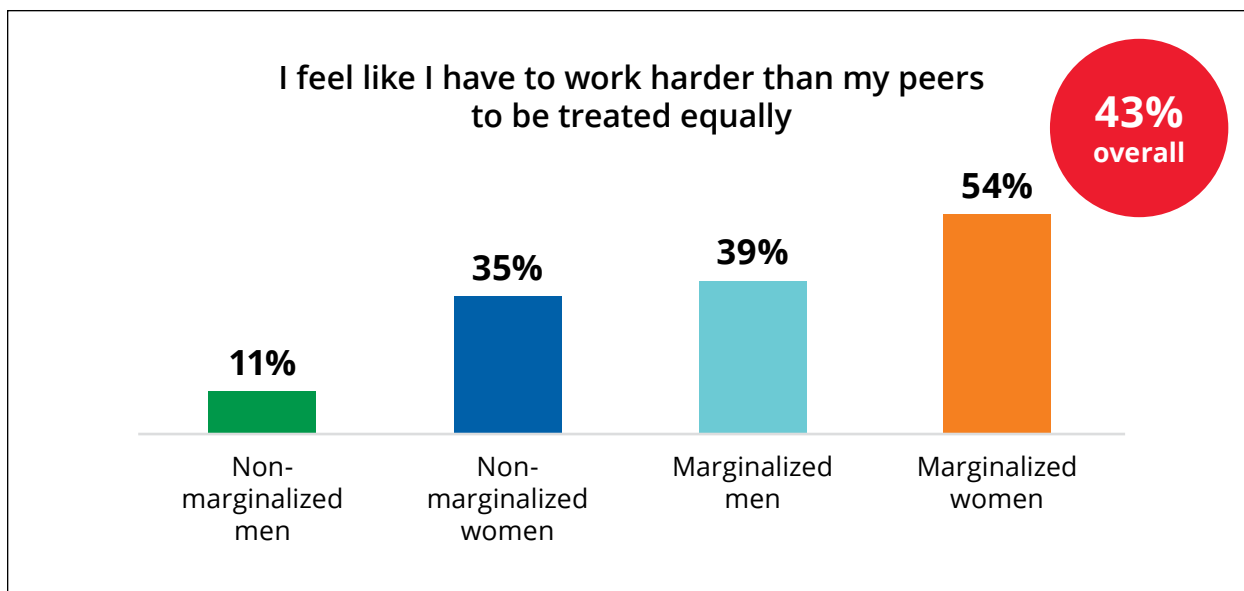


People in organizations whose leadership is not diverse personally experienced microaggressions at twice the rate (69% vs 32%) as those in workplaces where the leadership is diverse.



Half of marginalized women say they personally experience microaggressions at work, compared to 22% of non-marginalized men. And the number of marginalized women who feel they must work harder than their peers to be treated equally is nearly five times higher than the number of non-marginalized men.





Almost all respondents (96%) in organizations with well-diversified leadership believe their organization would take the appropriate action to address incidents of discrimination. Only 53% of employees in organizations with no diversified leadership say the same.

Respondents report that they may not speak up when witnessing discriminatory behaviour because they:

- Feel too awkward (35%)
- Don't want to be seen as disruptive (35%)
- Don't think anything would change (27%)
- Don't feel it is worth risking their job (21%)
- Don't believe it is their issue (17%)

“
Afraid of being fired. Anyone who spoke up in the past was fired.”

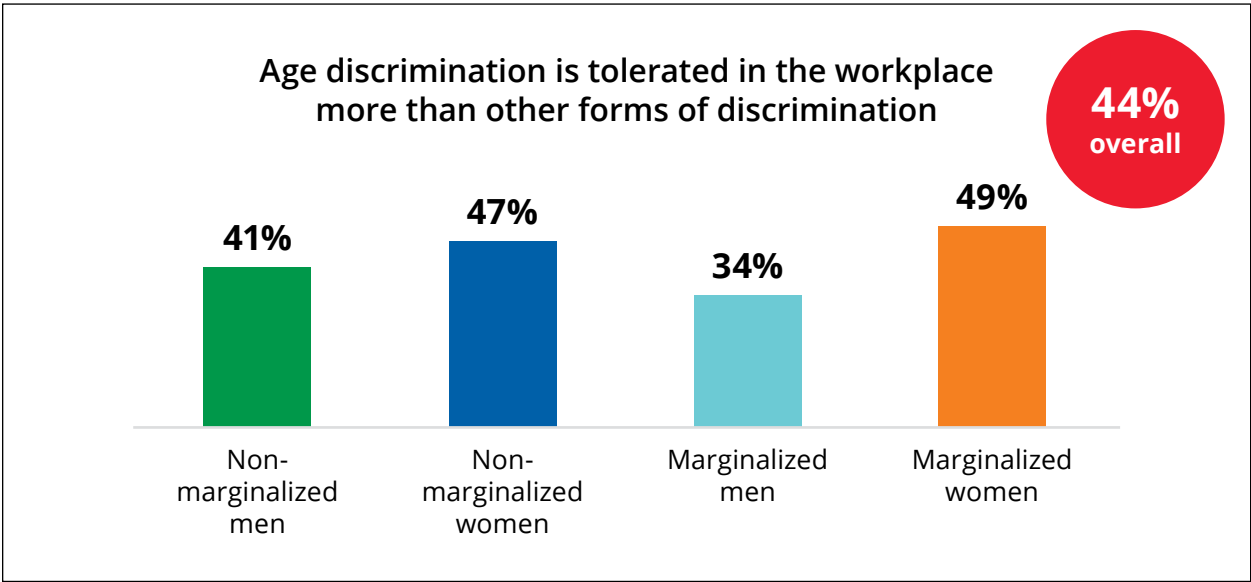
Mid-level marketer, not diversified client firm, marginalized background

Ageism is a significant issue in the marketing profession. Many believe it is tolerated more than other forms of discrimination.

Marketers, on average, consider employees over the age of 48 to be “older workers.” Nearly half of all respondents chose a number below 50 to categorize “older workers.” Not surprisingly, Boomers who fall between the ages of 59 to 77 are feeling the squeeze. They overwhelmingly feel they are at a disadvantage because marketing is an image-conscious profession (81%). Only 49% of Millennials feel the same.

The intersection of age, gender and race means that women of colour face even greater discrimination as they age.

Nearly half of respondents say they believe that age discrimination is tolerated in their workplaces more than other forms of discrimination.



Ageism exists across the marketing community but is even more prevalent in agency settings.

Thirteen percent of marketers in agencies consider employees in their 30s to be “older.” This is double the rate of client companies.

More than a third of agencies (37%) say that an employee aged below mid-forties is “older” compared to only 14% of client companies.

Employees are considered “older” at our company if they are...

		Organization type			Age cohort		
Age	Total	Client	Agency	Other	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
<40	9%	7%	13%	8%	8%	11%	
40-44	15%	7%	24%	18%	18%	14%	26%
45-49	23%	22%	26%	20%	19%	24%	21%
50-54	26%	29%	18%	28%	30%	25%	21%
55-59	14%	18%	10%	14%	15%	14%	11%
60+	13%	17%	9%	11%	11%	12%	21%
Average age	48.3	50.3	45.9	48.0	48.6	47.8	49.5

While only a small proportion of Millennials (5%) believe their company actively avoids putting older workers in front of clients, 24% of Boomers report that this is happening.

		Percentage of respondents who agree		
	Total	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
Older employees don't work as hard because their careers are mostly over	5%	6%	4%	10%
Older employees are at a disadvantage because the marketing industry is so image-conscious	59%	49%	62%	81%
My company actively avoids putting older employees in front of clients	8%	5%	9%	24%
The marketing industry changes so quickly that older employees often lack necessary skills	27%	37%	23%	29%
Younger employees are more in touch with industry trends than older employees	49%	65%	43%	38%
Women over 55 with grey hair should not be working in marketing	7%	2%	8%	14%
Men over 55 with grey hair should not be working in marketing	3%	2%	4%	5%

“

I am the oldest person at work, and it took a while for some younger employees to get the fact that ageism is a form of discrimination. ”

Mid-level marketer, acting towards agency, non-marginalized background

Despite these responses, older workers are valued for their experience and insights. Marketing agencies that may be reluctant to use older professionals in client facing roles are more apt to pair them with younger marketing employees. Nearly half of respondents (49%) in workplaces with well-diversified leadership say they work with a formal or informal mentor, and 83% say they mentor another employee.

More than two-thirds (67%) of marketers attribute at least part of their success to being mentored by an older employee.

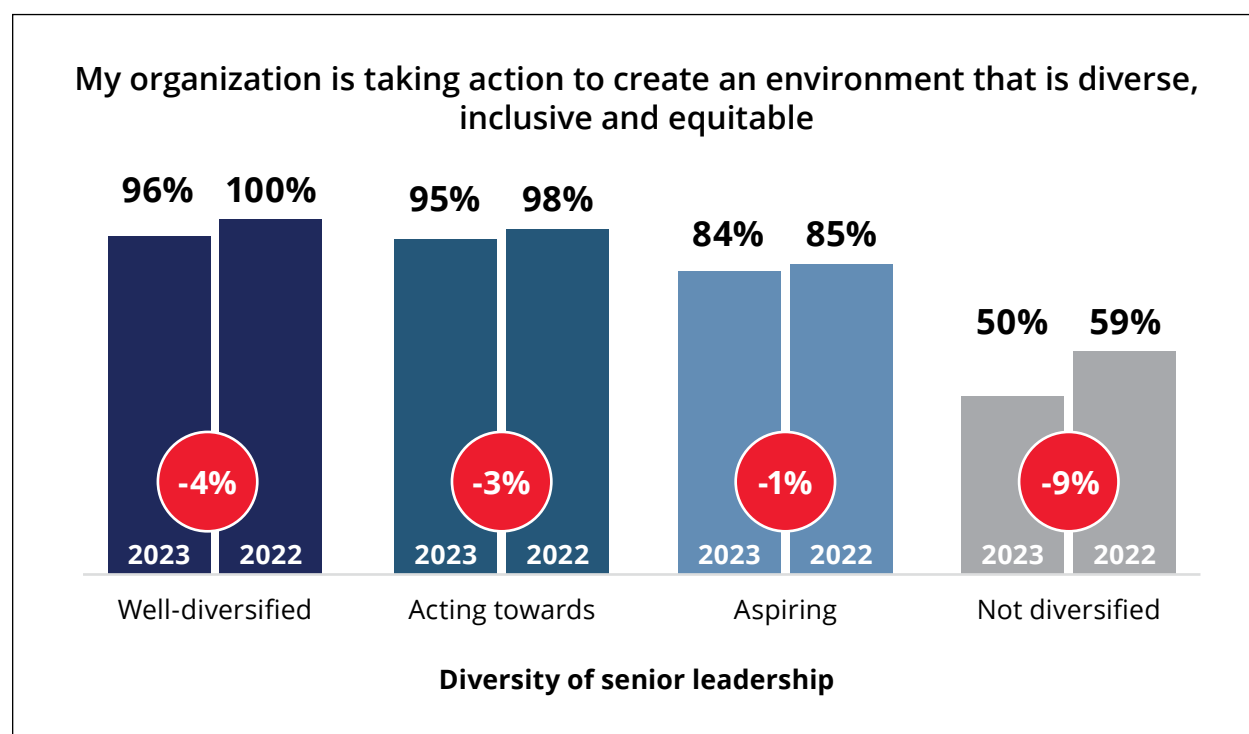
“

Younger people can bring a new perspective, but older people can bring guidance and coaching. Both are key to success together. A strong team is a diverse team.”

Mid-level marketer, aspiring client firm, marginalized background

Key tactics can help with implementing an effective DEI strategy and accessing a broader pool of talent.

It is encouraging to see high numbers of organizations with leadership in the aspiring, acting towards and well-diversified categories taking action to create an environment that is diverse, inclusive and equal.



The research identified several tactics to help implement an effective DEI strategy.

Older workers are valued for their experience and insights.

The top three steps for implementing an effective DEI strategy that emerged from this year’s research are:

- Senior leadership support in backing the initiative (77%)
- Hiring talent from diverse communities (72%)
- Formal diversity and inclusivity/unconscious bias training and management programs for all employees including senior management (64%)

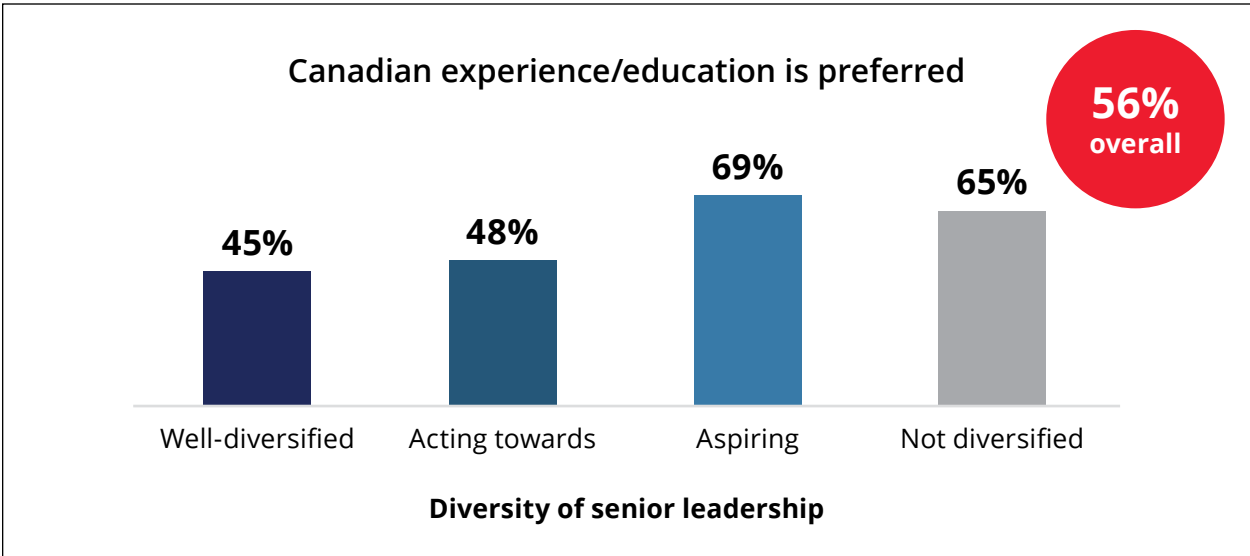
More than 60% of respondents believe that mentorship and allyship opportunities and a diverse team leading the strategy would have a positive impact.

Most organizations are taking action to consider all available talent for open positions, but those that don’t have diverse senior teams lag behind.

Almost all marketers in the well-diversified (87%), acting towards (95%) and aspiring (82%) categories say their organization is employing at least one tactic to ensure they consider all available talent for open positions. Only 49% of respondents from organizations whose leadership is not diverse indicate this is true in their workplace.

While many organizations are making strides to employ immigrants, a number of organizations have not yet adapted to our changing population. For example, 56% of respondents say their workplace prefers Canadian experience and education when looking for new talent — a finding that is unacceptably high given the diversity of the Canadian population.

Less than half (45%) of the respondents at organizations with well-diversified leadership teams reported that Canadian experience and education is preferred, while this number jumps to almost two-thirds (65%) for organizations with a leadership team that is not diversified.



The top tactics for attracting all available talent are:

- Highlight diversity on your career site
- Highlight diversity in your job descriptions
- Advertise your jobs and recruit through diverse channels/diverse job boards
- Hiring/interview panel is diverse

While having a diverse interview panel landed fourth on the list of top ranked measures overall, it was the top tactic for attracting all available talent cited by organizations with well-diversified leadership (55%).

The breakdown of representation on hiring panels was surprising. When asked who was on the panel the last time they hired, only 69% of respondents said there were women on the panel. The number was much lower (51%) for organizations with a non-diversified leadership team. Almost two-thirds of respondents from organizations with diversified leadership teams said individuals from racialized/BIPOC communities were on the panel compared to 18% of respondents from organizations without diverse leadership.

“

Hire the best candidate and be sure to explore all the amazing talent pools available from all walks of life. ”

Senior marketer, agency with well-diversified leadership, non-marginalized background

Thinking about the last time you hired, were any of the following on the interview panel?

		Percentage of respondents who agree from organizations whose senior leadership is:			
	Total	Well-diversified	Acting towards	Aspiring	Not diversified
Any	86%	89%	93%	83%	69%
Women overall	69%	71%	75%	67%	51%
Racialized/BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour)	50%	60%	61%	41%	18%
Those who speak more than one language/speak with an accent	39%	43%	50%	35%	15%
LGBTQ2SI+ community	29%	34%	30%	28%	18%
Women aged 55+	24%	33%	28%	16%	18%
Member of a religion that experiences discrimination	18%	27%	22%	14%	3%
Mental health challenge/neurodiverse	10%	12%	10%	9%	8%
Have an evident physical or health challenge/disability	5%	10%	5%	3%	0%
Other	2%	2%	2%	1%	5%
None of these	14%	11%	7%	17%	31%

Methodology

This research was conducted by Research + Knowledge = Insights (RKI) — an independent research company that adheres to the highest standards of practice.

The survey remained in the field for eight weeks in January and February 2023. Surveys were sent to marketers working in agencies, brands, not-for-profit organizations, service providers and independent consultancies.

A total of 435 usable responses were collected and analyzed by RKI. CMA and its distribution partners did not receive individual responses.

The survey has a margin of error of +/- 5% 19 times out of 20.

Characteristics of organizations whose employees participated in the survey

Organization type

Client	40%
Agency	35%
Marketing services/other	25%

Total number of employees

<201	56%
201 - 5,000	30%
5,001+	14%

Demographics of survey participants

Age cohort

Millennial	28%
Gen X	66%
Boomer	7%

Location

East including Quebec	6%
Ontario	81%
West	14%

Gender

Male	33%
Female	63%
Non-binary	1%
Prefer not to disclose	3%

Marginalized communities

Member of religion that experiences discrimination	14%
LGBTQ2SI+ community/sexual orientation/gender identity	17%
Have an evident physical or health challenge/disability	6%
Mental health challenge/neurodiverse	17%
Raised or educated outside of Canada or United States	15%
Learned English as a second/third+ language (non-mother tongue)	16%
Other	7%
None of these	37%

Race/ethnicity

White/Western European ancestry mostly or all	68%
Métis/Inuit/First Nations	4%
Black	9%
East Asian	6%
Latin American	4%
South Asian	6%
Southeast Asian	4%
West Asian	0%
Arab	2%
Other	6%

Position in organization

Senior	65%
Mid/junior	35%

Conversation starters

The questions in this section can be used as a catalyst for organizational leaders to both articulate a commitment and define the scope of activities they will undertake to create a more inclusive and equitable work environment, and to improve employee engagement and morale. A crucial step in this process is to create a safe place for employees to have open and meaningful conversations. Many of the questions below can be adapted for this purpose.

1. Your workplace today

- Are you working to build an inclusive workplace?
- If not, what barriers are preventing you from doing so?
- What tools and resources would help you overcome these barriers?

2. Your employees' sentiments and expectations

- Have you observed a shift in employees' sentiments and expectations related to inclusion in your workplace?
- Do you feel things are worsening or improving?
- If things are worsening, are you taking steps to improve inclusion and engagement?

3. Interview panels at your organization

- Do you ensure your hiring panels are diverse?
- If not, is it something you are considering for the future?
- What would it take to make this a standard practice?

4. Preventable employee loss

- Are people in your organization promoted based on merit?
- Is attraction and retention a priority for your organization?
- Have you considered the impact that a DEI focus might have on your attraction and retention strategy?

Relevant research findings

There is near universal agreement that having a diverse and inclusive workplace is a business growth opportunity.

Relevant research findings

Employees at less diverse organizations are far less likely to feel included at their workplace and are more likely to be less engaged at least sometimes. By comparison, only few employees in organizations with well-diversified leadership say they feel disengaged (17%) and nearly all (94%) say they feel included.

Relevant research findings

Respondents who have diversity in senior leadership cite using diverse hiring panels as their number one tactic to ensure they consider all available talent.

Relevant research findings

Employees in organizations with well-diversified leadership experience a halo effect of believing that making efforts to prioritize DEI helps them attract and retain talent in the current competitive marketplace. They are less likely to experience preventable employee loss compared to their counterparts in organizations that are lacking diverse leadership (49% vs 75%).

5. Ageism

- Is age discrimination tolerated in your workplace?
- Do you think this has always been the case in the marketing profession?
- Does your company actively avoid putting older marketers in front of clients? What other behaviours or policies have you observed in your organization that impact older workers?
- Do you see an opportunity to promote the experience of older workers in balance with the innovation and skills of younger marketers?

6. Mentorship

- Do you have a mentorship program in your workplace?
- If not, is this something you are considering implementing in the future?
- If yes, have you considered mentorship in both directions to level the playing field for all employees?

7. Employing newcomers to Canada

- Do you place a higher value on Canadian experience and education in your workplace?
- If so, why do you believe this is important, given that you must be able to reach consumers from diverse backgrounds?
- Do you foresee a change in this mindset in the future?

Relevant research findings

Respondents classify employees as older starting at about age 48. Almost half of respondents (44%) say age discrimination is tolerated in the workplace more than other forms of discrimination, and nearly five times as many older marketers feel their company actively avoids putting them in front of clients.

Relevant research findings

Mentorship appears to be a powerful means of breaking down barriers and improving employee growth and organizational success. Two-thirds of respondents indicate that at least part of their success is due to being mentored by an employee who was older than the average worker.

Relevant research findings

Canadian marketers must reach a diverse and pan-ethnic consumer base, yet a surprising number of respondents indicate that Canadian experience and education is preferred when making hiring decisions. Even in organizations with well-diversified leadership, almost half (45%) of respondents agree that their organization prefers candidates with Canadian experience and education.

About the Canadian Marketing Association

The CMA is the voice of marketing in Canada and our purpose is to champion marketing's powerful impact. We are the catalyst to help Canada's marketers thrive today, while building the marketing mindset and environment of tomorrow.

We provide opportunities for our members from coast to coast to develop professionally, to contribute to marketing thought leadership, to build strong networks, and to strengthen the regulatory climate for business success. Our Chartered Marketer (CM) designation signifies that recipients are highly qualified and up to date with best practices, as reflected in the Canadian Marketing Code of Ethics and Standards. We represent virtually all of Canada's major business sectors, and all marketing disciplines, channels and technologies. Our Consumer Centre helps Canadians better understand their rights and obligations.

For more information, visit thecma.ca

About Research + Knowledge = Insights

RKI: Research + Knowledge = Insights is a full-service market research firm located in Toronto. Led by an innovative team of award-winning professionals, RKI focuses on content and media research, recently developing a number of high-profile reports in the areas of workplace diversity, equity and inclusion. Their areas of expertise span the complete gamut, from standard market research's qualitative and quantitative components to projects designed to promote thought leadership and editorial/advertorial content placement.

RKI's practice is tailored to a range of audiences, from elite C-suite executives to small, medium, and large business leaders, and to employees and consumers across a range of industry verticals. The RKI team provides insight and inspiration to realize changes specific to particular industries in an evolving global scene.

For more information, visit rkinsight.com

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