

ASSIGNMENT 1: MANAGING  
DIVERSE WORKPLACES

**Assignment 2 – Managing Diverse Workplaces – XXXXXX Pty Ltd**

Karl Baxter

Kennedy University of Leadership

KU-MGT625-0326 Organisational Assessment and Development Plan Course Project

**Table of Contents**

[Company Introduction & Overview](#) ..... 3

[Diversity in the Workplace Basics](#) ..... 4

[Leading Workplace Diversity](#) ..... 7

[Leading Workplace Equity](#) ..... 10

[Leading Workplace Inclusion](#) ..... 12

[Creating a Culture of Belonging](#) ..... 14

[Inclusive Management Practices](#) ..... 16

[Creating an Inclusive Workplace Culture](#) ..... 18

[Workplace Development Tools & Strategies](#) ..... 20

[Conclusion](#) ..... 25

[References](#) ..... 26

[Appendix](#) ..... 28

### **Company Introduction & Overview**

The organisation I have chosen to analyse with respect to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is XXXXXX Pty Ltd. XXXXXX is an Australian company that operates primarily in the industries of energy and energy distribution, alongside agriculture and other verticals being explored. Within these industries they offer IoT products which enable customers, being both large businesses and end users, the ability to monitor their liquid assets, and optimise their operations through hardware, software, and cloud-based service offerings.

XXXXXX is a relatively small team in the scale-up phase of their organisational journey. This is important to note when assessing the company, irrespective of the focus of any analysis. It is noted by Adizes (2004) that formal structures such as established policies, systems and procedures can be lacking when an organisation is in and coming out of infancy.

Being in year 7 of the company's evolution, it is a good time to look at how DEI principles are functioning within XXXXXX, particularly as it looks to expand operations internationally, with a global strategy. Given the documented positive outcomes when operating globally for diverse workplaces, as noted by McKinsey & Company (2022), there may be scope for XXXXXX to gain a competitive advantage by improving this aspect of their business.

Moreover, it makes sense to solidify and strengthen the diversity, equity and inclusion efforts that occur at XXXXXX in an informal fashion, by ingraining them in the culture through formal policy and framework.

### **Diversity in the Workplace Basics**

Diversity has a different meaning to different people, and as such has a different meaning, or definition in different organisations.

I have established basic diversity markers that show the current status at XXXXXX. These noted differences are of a narrow definition and are not an attempt to create an understanding of diversity, but, as a starting point merely show the level of representational diversity within XXXXXX.

Number of Team Members (including board members) – 19

Males – 14, Females – 5

Nationalities represented – 11

The industries in which XXXXXX operates are traditionally male dominated, which is reflected in the numbers of males and females within the company. Women “account for one in five energy positions” (International Energy Agency, n.d.) with women in leadership positions in the sector being at a slightly lower level again. The IEA is an organisation which has a gender equity taskforce amongst other initiatives, so there is a conscious effort to modernise, reflecting an understanding across the industry that greater balance is needed. Statistically, XXXXXX could be said to be doing better in this area, however it is only by a few percentage points.

Additional points of note which could relate to diversity at XXXXXX are relevant in creating a big picture view within the context of this course. The 3 board members consist of two males and one female, with the Chairperson being male. The 4 founders of the company are all male and are represented by 4 nationalities, American, New Zealand, Chinese, and Ukrainian.

A narrow definition of diversity could be prudent for analysis at XXXXXX. As stated, energy and agriculture are traditionally male dominated industries, so actions to create a more even workforce seem a logical step in promoting diversity within the company. XXXXXX is an equal opportunity employer, which “ensures equal consideration, not preferential hiring” (Hays-Thomas, 2022, p. 5).

The Fair Work Act prohibits workplace discrimination based on protected attributes such as race, sex, age, disability, religion, pregnancy, and other listed grounds (Fair Work Ombudsman, n.d.). It is fair to say that XXXXXX is merely acting lawfully in its overall diversity actions.

There exist no formal structures, policies, systems, or processes at XXXXXX to address or measure diversity, or the as important factors of equity and inclusion. This represents a significant gap within the company. Engaging with an Inclusivity framework, such as the Korn Ferry DEI model, which explores multiple dimensions of DEI integration (Tapia et al., 2021), can allow XXXXXX to formally ascertain where it is placed, which would be in the “basic” level.

In a small organisation like XXXXXX, measuring diversity on its own is undoubtedly less valuable than when it is measured alongside equity, inclusion and belonging. This should be the focus when working toward a development plan and recommendations based on the assessment undertaken. Quantitative data is more valuable when paired with qualitative data and will allow for greater understanding of the subject as a whole.

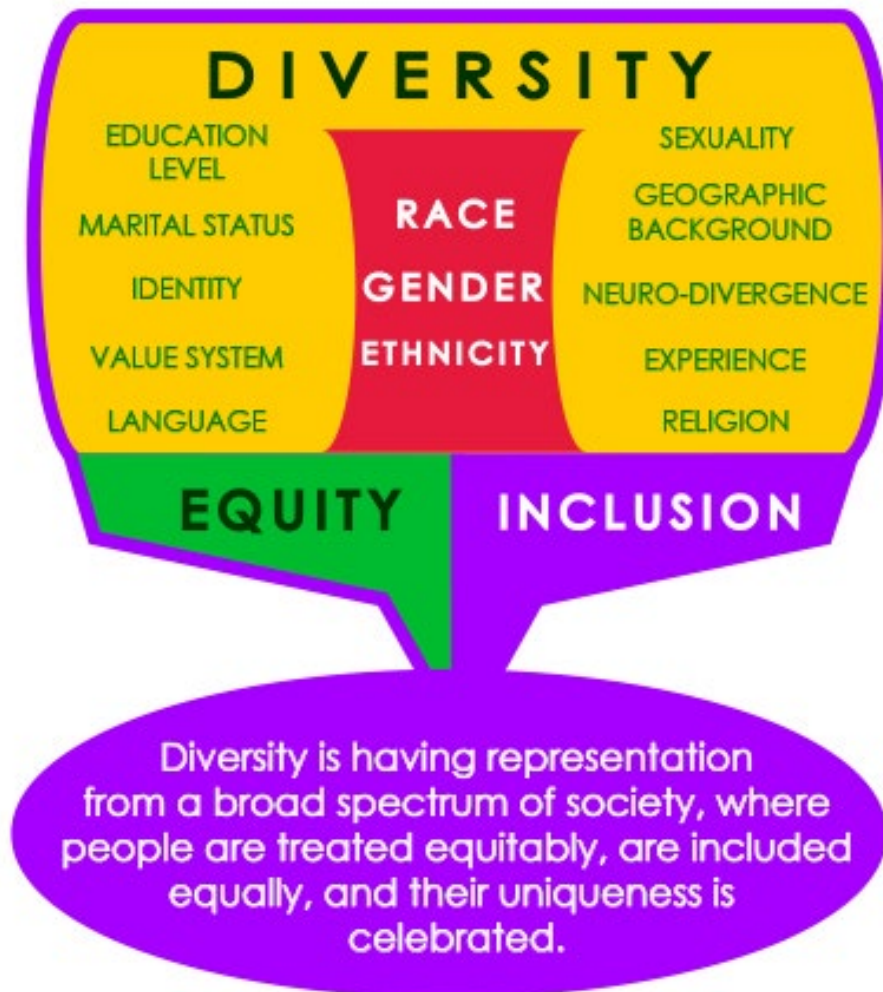
Research by Gartner led to 7 key dimensions of inclusion, “fair treatment, integrating differences, decision-making, psychological safety, trust, belonging, and diversity” (Romansky et al., 2021). Diversity is tied to inclusion, and therefore should be assessed and measured together, rather than separately. Integration of structures and processes to understand employee sentiment in these areas will be crucial.

### Leading Workplace Diversity

Leading true workplace diversity means that a broader definition of diversity needs to be considered. Beyond just visible differences, one needs to understand there are more invisible differences that are prevalent within society, and potentially, or more likely probably, within your workplace. Don't assume everyone is like you.

**Figure 1.**

Definition of Diversity



Invisible diversity has a deeper list than seen in figure 1, however, for leading diversity at XXXXXX, the above shows a mix of narrowly defined meanings of diversity, which can serve to highlight traditional inequities of representation within energy and agriculture industries, as well as invisible differences such as education level, identity, and experience. A funnel of equity and inclusion leads to the definition of diversity, which is where leadership becomes pronounced, as it creates belonging, signified by a purple border surrounding all.

Leaders can benefit from a clear understanding of what DEI means within the organisation, and where it sits with respect to its maturity as a diverse organisation, as effectively leading diverse workplaces requires a combination of deliberate behavioral considerations, as well as structures, processes, and organizational policies, to guide the leadership.

Does a leader, more specifically, does the leadership at XXXXXX need to be more proactive when it comes to diversity. Hays-Thomas (2022, Figure 2.1) presents a questionnaire to establish where an organisation might be in terms of diversity. For XXXXXX, the answers show elements of having diversity maturity, but also shows a lack of deliberate consideration of diversity.

Hays-Thomas (2022) asks whether management believes they will achieve greater innovation and ideas if they hire people who are different from those already within the organisation. I think at XXXXXX, the executive team do have a mantra of looking for diverse talent, but without a particular policy stating this. As outlined earlier, the founders, although all male, have different backgrounds, and I see various ethnicities and backgrounds within the current team.

If I were looking for more from leadership with respect to diversity, it would be to have greater female representation. This could be an area where XXXXXX could look to create something formal in terms of policy. The 5 women within the XXXXXX team do have positions that show there is every opportunity to grow and progress – Board member, Director of LPG sales, Head of Operations, Head of XXXXX Sales, and Customer Support. More evenness throughout the company could be something to

address. Within the Korn Ferry DEI Maturity Model, XXXXXX shows a lack of structural implementation in talent integration fairness, but do demonstrate some behavioural attributes.

To ingrain diversity and inclusion, I think XXXXXX would benefit from officialising diversity as an important part of what it stands for. “Formalizing company values in explicit language can help make culture real inside an organization” (Meyer, 2024).

### **Leading Workplace Equity**

Equity in the workplace enables diversity to mean something. There is little value in having a wide variety of people from different backgrounds, ethnicities, experiences and values if only a select few, or type, have access to all available opportunities.

“Equity-minded managers understand that transparency through sharing key information with all team members is just the first step because equity comes from making sure everyone understands that information.” (Miranda-Wolff, 2024, p. 6). This statement has great meaning as it alludes to what true equity looks like. In a practical example, a company may have gym facilities available to all employees, but if only a certain type, or level of employee, is seen to be using the facilities, a barrier may still exist, which can inhibit a sense of belonging.

There are some noteworthy practices that occur that show equity at XXXXXX. These are not rooted in DEI principles but do show management being proactive in the space of equity.

On a monthly basis a facilitator takes a session where there is the opportunity for all employees to submit potential improvement points (PIPs). These can be submitted anonymously or named. They are categorised and given weight, dependent on a vote by all members. Some PiPs are larger than others and may take significant consideration, others are easier to tackle, nonetheless all are recorded and there is a commitment to improve on each of these points. Individuals from all levels in the company take leadership over small groups to work on different PiPs. Completed PiPs are celebrated. This concept could be scaled by using this concept in other areas, similar to the Pixar Braintrust as described by Ranadive (2016) where feedback is provided to a director in film development with candour, respect and empathy – feedback on company inclusion efforts could be integrated, which would rely on leaders equipped to take recommendations and improvement opportunities.

Within the organisation, there could undoubtedly be some simple steps taken to advance equity. As stated earlier, XXXXXX is now in its 7<sup>th</sup> year of development and has grown out of its start-up

phase. There are however some lingering effects. Start-up companies are commonly moving quickly from one state to the next trying to create a profitable organisation from scratch. Along the way, important things are missed. Now is time for XXXXXX to address some of these misses.

Thorough documentation, particularly on-boarding kits, FAQs, company policies must be available for all employees in any organisation. It is unfair to expect a diverse range of people to have the same level of understanding of specific computer systems, naming conventions, file storage locations, product knowledge etc. Without proper and considered training for all employees, it can easily become an inequitable workplace. XXXXXX needs to address this.

Another aspect, where XXXXXX could look to provide more equity, is to consider the male to female ratio in the company, noted in the section on diversity. At XXXXXX, when looking specifically within product development and software development, there are 6 males and zero females.

“Equity recognizes that advantages exist disproportionately, and as a result we don’t all start from the same place.” (Ike, 2023, p. 39) Looking more closely at hiring processes could be seen as managing diversity, I believe that as a group sees more balance, without a particular bias, equity is more likely to be achieved, alongside belonging.

### **Leading Workplace Inclusion**

Creating an inclusive workplace is where concepts of diversity and equity come together and start to have more meaning. Diversity and equity can have their base structures formed within an organisation with policy and systems, whereas inclusion relies upon the characteristics and traits of the people within the organisation, particularly those in leadership positions. DEI efforts are reinforced through frameworks created, however, without leaders who believe in an inclusive workplace environment, any structure can be seen as fabricated and non-genuine.

As has been observed at XXXXXX, there is no specific set of systems or processes that actively address inclusion. When observing the executive team, being the founders of the organisation, they could broadly be described as promoting inclusion through different actions and behaviours, some of which could be framed as DEI type policy but are in fact, more related to business success. This nuance could attribute to “driving employee motivation and satisfaction” (McKinsey & Company, 2022), as they mirror the promotion of inclusion.

Miranda-Wolff (2024) elucidates a list of 7 practices of highly inclusive managers. Within the list there are points where leadership at XXXXXX actively lead inclusion. Sharing information and creating clarity is a strong focus. “Every employee you manage should know how the organization makes money” (Miranda-Wolff, 2024, p. 16). This extends to knowing how an organisation is tracking on various fronts. XXXXXX holds a weekly “All-hands” meeting involving every member of the organisation. Within the meeting information pertaining to successes, issues being faced, and general goings-on are discussed. Importantly, there are various dashboards used that clearly explain different aspects of the business, critically, the financial health of the business, being one. This information is shared openly and honestly with real-time metrics displayed, from new client on-boarding, ARR tracking, spend, customer churn, balance sheet, and more being discussed. This information is also available to all employees at any time on XXXXXX’s server. When this type of company information is known, and understood by all, everyone

has the opportunity to be a part of the company's journey, which potentially leads to a sense of belonging.

Other real examples of inclusion shown at XXXXXX, actively encouraged by the leadership team, are flexible working schedules for workers where office attendance is difficult, the ability for employees to participate in religious practice at various points in the day, as well as mental health leave days being widely accepted. These small but meaningful efforts at inclusion from management show a level of care for employees, another inclusive practice, as noted by Miranda-Wolff (2024).

At XXXXXX there appears to be, in many visible ways, a genuine attention paid to inclusion from the leaders in the organisation, albeit in a casual fashion.

Would the company be better served leaving the status quo, or would it be beneficial to bake in these inclusive practices to ensure they remain an important part of the culture? In order to commit to DEI within an organisation, there needs to be a firm and public commitment by leadership to ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion are as much a part of the fabric, as the desks and computers at which work is undertaken, a sentiment echoed through qualitative surveys referenced by Ferdman et al. (2020).

### **Creating a Culture of Belonging**

People often speak about great company culture. This can be attributed to success, pay and benefits, excellent annual and sick leave, and other work-related items. When it comes to concepts of DEI and a great culture, for those that are from minorities or who are traditionally marginalized, or even those who function a bit differently in society (unseen disabilities), it comes when there is a real sense of belonging, which is an intrinsic need according to social psychologists Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary, as noted by Kennedy University of Leadership (2026).

There are significant challenges in making this happen. There are potential biases that exist that need to be understood and overcome, consistent learning and growth needs to occur, understanding differences through accommodation, acceptance and actions must take place.

Navigating differences between cultural norms is not easy, expectations of workplace relationships can vary whereby efforts of inclusion can be perceived as being non-existent, or in other cases too overt. To create a culture of belonging, leaders need to be across evolving trends of DEI, and more importantly, across the evolving landscape within their own organisation.

At XXXXXX, there exists elements of inclusion that promote a culture of belonging within the company. Formal and informal events, planned and spontaneous occur on a regular basis through each year. There is a company off-site event each year where company vision, mission and strategy are discussed openly. XXXXXX has a history of shifting focus, quite rapidly at times, it does not have a clearly defined vision – it would be beneficial to crystallise this. All employees are encouraged to contribute to conversations in this space, with activities occurring in smaller groups with members from varying departments. Facilitators are used in these settings as per afore-mentioned monthly PIP sessions, experienced in creating a positive and inclusive atmosphere. At this event there is also a “fireside chats” evening where a guest speaker shares their story, generally around business success, but also personal

growth. The speaker has always been, to this point, a white male – there could be a focused effort to diversify here.

There are often informal team lunches to celebrate successes, new hires, visiting international members, and other small milestones. For a small company, there is a consistent effort from leaders to bring all members together as part of the journey. When developing a workforce plan, there is scope to promote greater trust within the team via the introduction of cultural island exercises, that build on the relative diversity, turning “cultural diversity into cultural synergy” (Ferdman et al., 2020, p. 79).

The company leadership do display, I am sure intentionally, characteristics of inclusive leaders. It is worth noting that two of the four founders studied and obtained an EMBA together, so undoubtedly have exposure to the types of materials within this course. Another founder has intimated they do significant study into emotional intelligence as an effort to better themselves.

Transparency is promoted throughout the organisation, with consistent communication being championed. Employees at all levels are given ownership of their role, with real opportunities to make decisions within a collaborative environment. Two-way communication is actively encouraged, with leadership acknowledging the significant attributes of team members. Autonomy within roles exists completely.

“We hired truly great people and gave them the room to do great work... They hire people to tell them what to do. We hired people to tell us what to do.” (Jobs, 2011)

In a tech environment, inspiration is drawn from other successful leaders. From a DEI perspective, there could be inspiration to be gleaned from other areas.

It is worth noting however that some of the “misses” that befall a start-up company, with respect to on-boarding kits and training for staff on company practices, seen at XXXXX, could potentially undermine the efforts in creating group cohesion and synergy. Any development plan must address this issue. AI, which is strongly focused on at XXXXXX, should be used to speed creation of these materials.

### **Inclusive Management Practices**

Leaders are responsible for creating and maintaining a culture of inclusion within an organisation. This should be through personal traits and actions, either inherent or learned, as well as through formal practices, techniques, and ultimately metrics, in order to have DEIB efforts flow through and result in inclusion and belonging to be felt at all levels in said organisation.

Having been provided a definition of inclusive leadership, the leadership at XXXXXX show aspects of said definition, but there are gaps revealed which require attention.

The leadership team definitely make effort to empower the individuals within the team. Employees are given autonomy when working on assigned projects, collaboration is actively encouraged with suggestions on who to work with to achieve particular goals, and a relatively high degree of decision-making ownership is given to different departments.

XXXXXX leadership, and the overall team, has had a number of workshops, where facilitators have championed the idea of “democraship”, explained by Belorusskiy (n.d.), meaning democracy in decision-making and dictatorship in implementation. XXXXXX, from observation, follows this concept in principle, and in many ways, it has a good foundation for inclusive leadership to be applied within, however my observations are that it overlooks key requirements for true inclusivity.

As noted, leaders at XXXXXX do make efforts to provide an environment where everyone can contribute and have a guiding philosophy on which this is based. What is not present in the current framework, is an understanding from leadership that their strong personalities are potentially not allowing employees the psychological safety to express themselves openly. Greater trust needs to be achieved throughout. It is not enough to simply say, “let’s all contribute to our decision making.”

The leadership team must undergo training in self-awareness to understand their own biases, develop the ability to show vulnerability, and develop greater abilities in active listening. A greater level of empathy can begin to build employee confidence and allow for higher levels of satisfaction and

belonging. An inclusive leader is not necessarily the person who has the title, but one who inspires people to enter the circle. (Ferdman et al., 2020, p. 89). The afore-mentioned “fireside chats” could be an opportunity for leaders to share moments of failure or uncertainty, enabling employees to see some vulnerability, and therefore fostering psychological safety and building trust

I have observed instances of transparency of information at XXXXXX, particularly in relation to company financials and business performance. This is important for all employees to understand. I think greater transparency should be made available to employees, with respect to hiring and positional changes. Furthermore, unbiased job descriptions should be made available internally, as well as externally for all positions, giving fair opportunity to all for advancement. It has been seen at XXXXXX, that hiring decisions often occur without knowledge or understanding from employees. Nishii (2013) states an inclusive environment should remove status-based barriers to access and participation, including potential promotions or opportunities.

It can be seen at XXXXXX, strong leadership and business acumen, however, real inclusive management practices need work to align the culture to achieve positive DEIB outcomes. Coupled with training for leaders in personal development, conflict resolution should be addressed to manage overall company expectations and resistance to change.

Implementation of the above inclusive management practices, so that the real commitment to these principles can be seen as ongoing, requires measurement and KPIs. For a small company like XXXXXX, these should be introduced incrementally, with goals that align with size. An opportunity exists for the company as a whole to create these metrics together.

### **Creating an Inclusive Workplace Culture**

Creating a culture of any kind takes time and effort, it is not something that is achievable overnight. An organisation cannot expect to hire external consultants to come in and perform an analysis, create fair systems and equitable processes, insert them into the operations manual of a company, observe for 6 months and declare that the workplace has an inclusive culture. If anything, this would be the antithesis.

The drive for DEI has to come from within, and a course has to be set by the leaders of an organisation, importantly, a commitment to persist and evolve the course over time must take place. It is not a set-and-forget type operation. As such, “inclusive relational-based leadership practices” (Ferdman et al., 2020, p. 200) must be the underpinning of creating that culture.

Identifying suitable DEI metrics for XXXXXX could be difficult, noting the small size of the company. This in itself, should not be an inhibitor, but part of the challenge. Gaps have been identified, particularly with respect to women within the company - developing goals and methodologies to achieve greater parity in numbers, and opportunity is paramount. These can be seen in the workforce development plan.

XXXXXX should look to organisations that have been able to create, build and grow inclusive cultures for the inspiration to follow in their footsteps. Tech companies rely on problem-solving, innovation, and complex thought patterns to continue to be successful. Cisco, a global technology leader, is also a leader in creating a culture of inclusion for its people and customers, embedding inclusive principles into “operations, workforce strategy, external ecosystems, and brand” (Cisco, n.d., para. 1). Rather than just being lip service, significant frameworks can be seen in place that point to a true culture of inclusion, from policies for fair pay, non-discrimination, and skills-based recruitment, to workplace training in respectful practices, through to leadership mentoring and career growth

opportunities for all, with a focus on women. There are also a significant number of “inclusive communities” that span many cultures and minority groups.

It is impossible for XXXXXX to implement to the scale of Cisco, who are a company at the leading edge in each dimension of the Korn-Ferry DEI Model (Tapia et al., 2021), and have implemented vast initiatives globally. There are lessons to be learnt however in seeing theory cross over into the workplace successfully with positive outcomes.

Maintaining an inclusive culture, such as that of Cisco, involves keeping track of how initiatives and policies are going, and whether DEI KPIs are being met successfully. Within any modern business, the concept of continuous improvement is at the forefront of a success mindset. Monitoring through scorecards, employee and customer feedback and surveys, allow data-driven decisions to be made on current DEI practices as well as future initiatives.

For XXXXXX, the development plan needs to include formal structure while maintaining the overall positive, informal aspects of inclusion that exist.

### **Workplace Development Tools & Strategies**

The following workplace development plan is for XXXXXX Pty Ltd.

Implementation of the plan would begin from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2026, noting this is the beginning of the Australian financial year. This is a first-year plan. It is important to note, XXXXXX's current strategic plans do not include expansion of employee numbers.

#### **Stage 1 – Preparation. (Awareness). Step 1.**

- Within a company values statement, ensure that DEI principles are part of the company mission.

WHO – 3 x board members.

WHEN – July 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

- Diversity Training – building DComp and Inclusive leadership skills

WHO - (CEO, CFO, CTO) and board members.

FOCUS – Active Listening, promoting psychological safety in the workplace, trust building exercises, Self-awareness, and self-regulation, bias recognition and training.

WHEN – 1<sup>st</sup> week of August, off-site for 4 hours, noted by Hays-Thomas (2022) as an effective time period for training.

#### **Stage 1. Preparation. Step 2.**

- Company Yearly Off-Site as per normal – Introduction to DEI as a company mission.

WHO – whole of company - where possible international team members to attend.

DAY 1. 2-hour session introducing company DEI mission including reasons and rationale, Q & A, feedback. Presented by CEO and female board member.

“Fireside Chats” session, as per normal. Speaker to be a successful female entrepreneur, where possible, with a challenging back story.

DAY 2. 2-hour facilitated session, small mixed groups, sharing challenges in life, career, with a focus on discrimination or isolation. "Cultural Island". Understanding and empathy to be promoted.

DAY 3. Anonymous feedback through text message to Survey Monkey Questionnaire. Facilitating group and executive team to monitor for any dissatisfaction and/or lack of acceptance.

WHEN – Mid September 2026

**Stage 2. Integration. (Operations Integration, Talent Integration) Step 1.**

Development of on boarding and company knowledge kits for all staff, especially new hires.

WHO – CTO, AI agent (see Appendix 1), with support from other employees,

WHY – A significant gap has been exposed whereby employees, new and existing, have not received adequate access to company knowledge, processes, policies, and information to enable them to perform their jobs confidently. For some people, this may be very isolating and potentially not give the right opportunity to develop into their role, and as can be seen in high numbers in some minority groups, lead to disengagement, absenteeism, and lack of retention.

HOW – Each employee, alongside personal on-boarding by their area manager, will be assigned their own AI agent, which has access to the entire company knowledge base. The agent will be able to assist wherever an employee needs access to resources to perform their role effectively.

WHEN – Completion by December 2026

**Stage 2. Integration. Step 2.**

Implementation of skills-based hiring practices, non-discriminatory position descriptions when hiring, balanced interview processes to remove potential biases as an influencing factor in hiring decisions.

WHO – CEO, CTO, AI agent, Director of Product Development, Director of Product Design, Head of Operations

WHY – To remove potential bias from hiring and enable a more diverse group of applicants the opportunity to be selected. Skill based hiring has seen Cisco “unlock career opportunities and economic mobility for skilled talent without four-year degrees” (Cisco, n.d., Fairness and Opportunity section), through their founding role in the One Ten program. XXXXXX needs to diversify their talent pool.

HOW – Management will work with AI to create fair and unbiased hiring and interviewing materials. Interviews will be conducted by mixed groups and monitored by AI, to give unbiased feedback post-interview and provide any DEI recommendations.

WHEN – Completion by December 2026

**Stage 2. Integration. Step 2.**

XXXXXX to develop a reach-out program targeting women in engineering and women in software development, aimed at universities and TAFEs in QLD. The program will offer paid internships, coordinated with course requirements to develop this talent.

WHO – CEO, CFO, Head of Operations

WHY – To create pathways for underrepresented portions of society, in this case, women, to potentially join XXXXXX in the areas of product design, engineering, and software development.

HOW – Plan Development, Consultation with universities and TAFEs, Consultation with governing bodies on employment requirements. Multi-layered project.

WHEN – 1<sup>st</sup> Internship offered from start of financial year 2027 (July onwards).

**Stage 2. Integration. Step 2.**

AI Agent to send periodic (quarterly) scored pulse surveys on inclusion levels, belonging, job satisfaction, areas of improvement required – feedback can be anonymous, or owned, depending on respondent’s preference. (AI Agent will be bound by protocols to ensure this).

WHO – CEO, CTO, AI agent

WHY – To ensure continuous improvement, obtain qualitative feedback on initiatives to be able to establish a system of metrics, and to integrate the gathering of information as a normal XXXXXX process.

HOW – Feedback will be collated and analysed. Areas of improvement will be fed into monthly PIP meetings as required and appropriate. Inclusion and belonging will be part of ongoing processes.

WHEN – Start January 2027

**Stage 3. Continuation. (Risk Management) Step 1.**

Company wide DEI training, reinforcement of values.

WHO – All employees (Setup by Head of Operations, CEO).

WHY – To ensure that the DEI principles established are not prone to slippage.

HOW – All employees via Microsoft Teams, 2-hour morning session, 2-hour afternoon session, led by facilitator. Half year recap. All employees off-site and online ensures facilitator controls voice and presentation flow.

WHEN – January 2027

**Stage 3. Continuation. Step 2.**

AI Agent to also be whistleblower mechanism, reporting either directly to CEO, or company chairperson, or another board member, depending on the nature of the complaint.

WHO – CTO, AI agent

WHY – According to Korn-Ferry DEI Model (Tapia et al., 2021), the importance of strong compliance and whistle-blower mechanisms, regardless of level and status, must be available. A mature organisation continues to monitor “performance” broadly.

HOW – AI agent can process a complaint, having the entire company knowledge base available, and email the most suitable recipient of the information (from the agent’s own email). Information can be represented as per the complainant’s request, anonymously or owned.

WHEN – Introduction January 2027 All employee half-year recap

**Stage 4. Consolidation. (Accountability)**

Within this first year, although a time of establishment, there needs to be metrics applied to the plan with KPIs that are incremental.

WHO – CEO, CFO, Board, AI Agent.

WHY – For accountability reasons, without review, progress can’t be understood.

WHAT – KPIs are A) Qtr by qtr improvement on pulse feedback scores. B) Intern system of women in engineering/software engagement program established. C) Tracking of applicants for any positions offered with respect to gender/ethnicity/background where appropriate, as a foundation for improvement.

WHEN – Quarterly from January 2027.

**Stage 4. Consolidation.**

The Company yearly off-site to focus on a yearly recap of goals, undertaken measures, establishment of metrics over a year (quantitative and qualitative), and importantly, establish more focused KPIs for the company moving forward.

WHO – CFO – presentation of data / All employees participation.

WHY – After one year of embedded practice, time to reflect and improve is paramount.

HOW – Establish the KPIs in the inclusive fashion of small groups into the larger company group.

Use the democraship model and have the outcomes tabled at the next PIPs meeting.

WHEN – September 2027

### **Conclusion**

The relatively small size of an organisation does not mean that diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging are too difficult to ingrain into the fabric of the place. It simply means that DEIB should be tailored to fit the organisation, and conversely, the organisation should be tailored to fit what it means to be a DEI focused organisation.

XXXXXX Pty Ltd has many foundations to enable this to occur. There is strong leadership that is focused on company growth and future prospects, and an enthusiastic and talented group of employees with a broad range of skills.

DEI has the potential to build upon those foundations by enhancing the organisation through exceptional innovation, diverse ideation and problem-solving, increased trust and cooperation, as well as creating a company that truly has the global perspective that it wishes to aspire to.

Personally, I have learnt a lot these two months. I approached the course with an open mind, and have found the materials and teachings to be quite enlightening. I have enjoyed the academic depth of the subject matter alongside the conveyed nuances from authors and within frameworks studied. I believe that in terms of leadership, this course will definitely help me grow.

### References

- Adizes, I. K. (2004). *Managing corporate lifecycles* (2nd ed.). Adizes Institute Publishing.
- What is diversity, equity, and inclusion?* (2022, July 15). McKinsey & Company.  
<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>
- International Energy Agency. (n.d.). *Energy and gender*. IEA. <https://www.iea.org/topics/energy-and-gender>
- Hays-Thomas, R. (2022). *Managing Workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://www.perlego.com/book/3701188>
- Fair Work Ombudsman. (n.d.). *Workplace discrimination fact sheet*.  
<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/fact-sheets/rights-and-obligations/workplace-discrimination>
- Tapia, A., Polonskaia, A., Kirtzman, F., & Gisbert, G. (2021). *The Korn Ferry diversity, equity, and inclusion maturity model: A new understanding*. Korn Ferry.
- Romansky, L., Garrod, M., Brown, K., & Deo, K. (2021, May 27). *How to measure inclusion in the workplace*. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2021/05/how-to-measure-inclusion-in-the-workplace>
- Ranadive, A. (2016, January 11). *Lessons from Pixar 1: The Braintrust*. Medium.  
<https://medium.com/great-business-stories/lessons-from-pixar-1-the-braintrust-e306843a5153>
- Meyer, E. (2024, July 1). *Build a corporate culture that works*. *Harvard Business Review*.  
<https://hbr.org/2024/07/build-a-corporate-culture-that-works>
- Miranda-Wolff, A. (2024). *The First-Time Manager: DEI* ([edition unavailable]). HarperCollins Leadership. <https://www.perlego.com/book/4214097>
- Ike, I. (2023). *The Equity Mindset* (1st ed.). Wiley. <https://www.perlego.com/book/4234047>

Ferdman, B., Prime, J., Riggio, R., Ferdman, B., Prime, J., & Riggio, R. (2020). *Inclusive Leadership* ([edition unavailable]). Routledge. <https://www.perlego.com/book/1705382>

Kennedy University of Leadership. (2026). *Lesson 5.1: The need to belong theory* [Course reader]. EMBA: Managing Diverse Workplaces.

Jobs, S. (2011, October 6). *Steve Jobs: "Computer science is a liberal art"* [Interview by T. Gross]. *Fresh Air*, NPR. Republished by North Country Public Radio.

Belorusskiy, P. (n.d.). *How do we manage?* Adizes Institute Worldwide.  
<https://www.adizes.com/blog-posts/how-do-we-manage>

Nishii, L. H. (2013). The benefits of climate for inclusion for gender-diverse groups. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(6), 1754–1774.

Cisco. (n.d.). *Inclusion*. Cisco Purpose Reporting Hub.  
[https://www.cisco.com/c/m/en\\_us/about/purpose/reporting-hub/people/inclusion.html](https://www.cisco.com/c/m/en_us/about/purpose/reporting-hub/people/inclusion.html)

### **Appendix**

Gasbot is currently nearing completion of an interconnected knowledge base that has been created and verified through various AI platforms, in conjunction with human inputs. This knowledge base will be utilised throughout the company for obtaining information, understanding company history, suggesting potential problems with strategy, assisting staff recognize product issues, and so on.

In an implementation of this development plan, the Gasbot knowledge base (more specifically, the MCP that connects all the fragmented pieces of knowledge) will be fed an additional agent, which will be acting as a DEI source of truth. This agent will ingest Australian Discrimination Law, the newly developed Gasbot DEI initiatives, overall plan, and many other resources. This agent will be interacting with all the other information in the knowledge base and ensuring, wherever possible, that all actions are in line with company policy and larger frameworks.

It should be noted that currently all employees at Gasbot use AI agents to assist in day-to-day activities, with some company “source of truth” knowledge accessible through these agents.

The above DEI aspect feeds directly into company direction with use of Artificial Intelligence, so could be seamlessly integrated into the current AI strategy.