

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

to work for companies with strong values that reflect a DEI-focused approach to hiring and culture. Diverse workforces are also statistically proven to generate more

...

**Amy Vetter** • Apr. 02, 2021



Everyone wants their CPA firm to be a modern workplace equipped for the challenges of tomorrow. Turning this dream into a reality is a wide-ranging and multifaceted effort, touching on everything from technology and [remote work](#) policies to branding and service offerings. Perhaps the biggest and most imperative way to modernize a firm, however, involves the people you hire and the way you treat those

people. Without taking the time for a thorough understanding of diversity, equity,

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

when it comes to these issues, but far too many simply pay lip service to the idea without doing what it takes to really understand the challenges and implement policies that make a difference.

## Defining diversity, equity, and inclusion

Before you begin to enact DEI initiatives in the workplace, you should take the time to grasp what each of the three terms mean. Diversity, the broadest of three terms, simply means having many different types of people in your workplace. While that's pretty straightforward, people still make mistakes when talking about diversity. Promoting diversity at your firm is more than discussion on the topic, but filling positions with people from different backgrounds that have equal opportunity for success at your firm.

Beyond diversity is equity, which involves ensuring that all of your diverse employees are treated fairly. As [Forbes](#) notes, "Equity requires an organization to acknowledge that everyone has different needs, experiences, and opportunities and respond accordingly." In other words, we can define equity as acknowledging different experiences in order to provide an equitable experience for all.

Inclusion is the act of making all types of people feel comfortable and accepted in the workplace. Creating an inclusive firm will require you to tackle both big-picture ideas and granular details. Little details, down to the [words](#) we use to communicate to one another, can have a massive impact on how included people feel in the workplace. Oftentimes, we aren't even aware of little ticks of language, behavior, or policy that can make people feel excluded. Addressing these concerns will help make everything you do make all of your team feel welcome.

## Putting DEI into action

Once you understand the pillars of DEI, you can begin to craft [policies](#) and initiatives

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

Companies become less diverse as you work your way up the corporate ladder. Equity should be present at every level of the company.

You should look outside your own doors when it comes to assessing DEI practices. Everything from the vendors you work with to the charities you support paints a picture of where you stand on DEI. In an always-online and data-obsessed world, people can do the legwork and see if a firm walks the walk in addition to supports the principles it espouses.

Additionally, setting up a system of checks and balances, where you are rigorously asking for feedback and reviewing how everyone is doing around these values and policies in place is key. Putting them in place but not being tested on their effectiveness can make the effort futile and leave employees disappointed. Having an independent review process periodically to stay on track and make changes as necessary can help with your success.

Most of all, though, a focus on DEI has to come from the hearts and minds of the leaders at your firm. It has to be an animating aspect of who you are as a firm and the example is from the top. The adaptation process may not happen overnight, but it's something you can strive for.

Benefits • Firm Management • Staffing • Technology

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

© 2024 Firmworks, LLC. All rights reserved

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us