

DIFFERENT.

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Leveraging AI as a Tool for Greater Equity and Inclusion.



A Guide to Workplace Inclusion



What is AI?

AI, or Artificial Intelligence, is an exciting blend of technology and human-like thinking. Imagine giving machines the ability to sift through data, recognize patterns, make informed decisions and even engage in meaningful conversations – that's the magic of AI. But as we dive deeper into this tech revolution, it's crucial to navigate it with care and consciousness. At Different, we're not just excited about the potential of AI; we're committed to ensuring that its evolution is inclusive, responsible and resonates with the diversity of individuals who use and interact with it daily.





How will it impact our workplaces?

As we integrate more AI into our daily workflows, the workplace is set to undergo transformative changes. AI promises to streamline processes, optimize efficiency and open doors to innovations previously unimagined. We're looking at smarter decision-making tools, personalized training programs and more fluid communication channels. However, with such advancements come challenges. The human touch, coded biases, the nuances of our interactions and the need for meaningful engagement become even more vital. We believe that for AI to truly benefit our workplaces, it should be molded with an understanding of our diverse needs, aspirations and values. Embracing AI means not just adopting new tools, but creating spaces where technology and humanity harmoniously coexist.



How will it impact the business landscape?

The proliferation of AI doesn't just reshape our workplaces; it's revolutionizing the very fabric of the business landscape. As companies harness AI's capabilities, the marketplace transforms, with businesses leveraging predictive insights, and automating complex tasks; while tailoring client and customer experiences like never before. This new era of business is characterized by more agile startups challenging industry giants, a shift in value propositions and an emphasis on data-driven strategies. But with this technological gold rush comes a pivotal question: How do businesses uphold their company values and maintain inclusive and equitable workplace cultures in an AI-dominated landscape? At Different, we underscore the importance of intertwining technological advancement with ethical and equity-driven considerations that harnesses inclusivity and genuine human connection. In this evolving marketplace, it's not just about getting ahead; it's about moving forward with purpose and integrity.



Consider a Growth Mindset

As leaders contemplate integrating AI into the workplace, it may be helpful to shift our perspective around this rapidly evolving technology. Taking a growth mindset can be a helpful way to embrace uncertainty and prepare your people for change.

✘ AI is not to be used by employees at our organization



✔ We are open to integrating AI, coupled with clear parameters around its usage

✘ AI can reduce our overhead costs by replacing a portion of our workforce



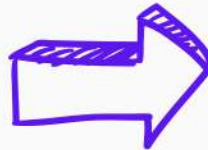
✔ We can streamline the tedious and mundane tasks of our employees through AI augmentation, freeing them up to contribute greater value in other ways

✘ AI risks putting us out of business



✔ We see AI as a way to augment how we do business; and it is now our responsibility to communicate to our clients and customers the added value we still bring as humans

✘ AI adoption is only appropriate for larger organizations; mine is too small to try to keep pace with this technology



✔ AI can help augment workflows across any industry and org size, it's okay for us to start small, learn as we go and get help along the way

Inclusive AI Integration Framework

Integrating AI into your workplace in an equitable and inclusive way



1 Awareness

Begin with learning and understanding AI's potential and its limitations. Subsequently, help your team grasp its capabilities, implications, potential biases and the inequities it can introduce or exacerbate. This is the first step towards meaningful integration.

2 Application

Here's where knowledge meets practice. Collaborate with your team to understand how to integrate AI into your workflows effectively. Ensure equitable access and ease of adoption across different departments and individuals. Up-skill all team members around potential use cases and empower them to envision new ways of working.

3 Action

Act with intent. Continuously refine AI processes, encourage feedback and iterate based on insights. Supply team members with continuous training on effective prompting, refining and evaluating AI outputs.

4 Accountability

Hold the line. Establish mechanisms that track AI's impact on equity and inclusion in your workplace with checks and balances to ensure ethical use. Uphold community guidelines that foster innovation while centering your company values.

Awareness

AI integration should be treated like every other technology roll-out in your workplace. By providing everyone with access to ample learning and development support, you can ensure there is a level playing field from the start.

✔ Roll out structured learning and development

Offer periodic sessions where employees can learn about the basics of AI, its applications relevant to their roles and the ethical implications of using AI. Bringing in external AI experts or partnering with AI firms can provide fresh, up-to-date insights.

✔ Establish AI communities of practice

Foster internal communities where interested employees can collaborate, discuss AI topics and share knowledge. These communities can serve as hubs for innovation and problem-solving using AI.

✔ Showcase real-world applications

Demonstrate the practical implications of AI by sharing case studies, success stories or even failures from within your industry. This not only educates but also inspires employees to think about how AI can be applied in their specific roles.

✔ Promote equitable AI discussions

Foster a culture where the ethical aspects of AI are regularly discussed. Consider setting up debate sessions or panels where the potential biases, fairness and transparency of AI systems can be explored, ensuring that employees understand the broader societal impact of AI.





Application

Defined community guidelines, clear metrics and rules of engagement should outline how employees can and should leverage AI in your organization. This ensures everyone is held to the same standard and that avoidable biases and inequities can be prevented.

✔ Define community guidelines

Define and document formal AI guidelines for your employees. These guidelines should detail how AI should and should not be used, expectations around security, reliance, data-integrity, learning and development and your organization's review protocol.

✔ Establish clear metrics and KPIs

Define what success looks like for your AI initiatives. Whether it's improving efficiency, increasing sales, or enhancing customer satisfaction, have clear metrics in place. This allows for continuous monitoring and adjustment of the AI system to align with organizational goals.

✔ Encourage cross-functional collaboration

Ensure that AI initiatives are not siloed within specific departments. Foster collaboration between IT, data science, and the business units that will be using the AI. This ensures that the AI solutions are tailored to actual business needs and challenges.

✔ Provide potential use cases

Develop potential use cases for each department and role within your organization to give team members a better idea of how to integrate AI into their workflows. Encourage team members to develop new use cases and share ideas with the broader organization through structured engagement sessions.



Sample Community Guidelines

Define and document formal AI guidelines for your employees. These guidelines should detail how AI should and should not be used, expectations around security, reliance, data-integrity, learning and development and your organization's review protocol.

✔ Use AI Ethically

Always employ AI solutions in a manner that upholds our organization's ethical standards, ensuring fairness and avoiding harm.

✔ Respect Data Privacy

Respect the privacy rights of individuals. Use AI only on data for which you have explicit permission and ensure that personal and sensitive data is adequately protected.

✔ Be Transparent

Be open about when and how AI is being used. All team members, clients and customers should be informed if they're interacting with or being evaluated by an AI system.

✔ Mitigate Bias

Continuously check and recalibrate AI systems to avoid and rectify any biases, ensuring equitable outcomes for all user groups.

✔ Commit to Continuous Learning

Engage in regular training and up-skilling to stay updated on the best practices and ethical implications of AI usage.





✓ **Foster Collaboration**

Encourage cross-departmental communication to understand the broader implications and opportunities of AI-supported projects.

✓ **Uphold Accountability**

Own the outcomes. If an AI system, tool or application you're responsible for makes an error or has unintended consequences, take steps to rectify and learn from the situation.

✓ **Respect Human Autonomy**

Avoid over-reliance on AI suggestions or decisions. Human intuition, expertise and judgment should always be a part of critical decision-making processes.

✓ **Create Channels for Feedback**

Establish and use channels for feedback about the AI systems in place. This helps in refining, improving and addressing concerns in real-time.

✓ **Stay Informed**

Adhere to regulations, laws and organizational policies related to AI and remain aware of the evolving AI landscape and its societal implications.



Action

Through continuous education, employees aren't left to learn this ever-evolving technology on their own. It's important to ready even the most non-tech savvy of your employees to stay ahead of the curve.

✔ Educate employees on AI evaluation

Educate employees on how to effectively evaluate AI outputs. Today's models still require a critical eye to ensure accuracy, relevance, clarity and precision. By equipping your employees with these skills, there can be greater confidence around results.

✔ Start small and scale

Instead of diving headfirst into large AI projects, begin with pilot programs or smaller initiatives. This allows teams to test the waters, understand the dynamics and gather insights before scaling up. It also provides an opportunity to measure ROI and refine strategies based on real-world feedback.

✔ Provide support for effective prompting

Effective prompting is key to obtaining better outputs from today's AI models. Without this know-how, employees may grow frustrated with these platforms and opting out from engaging with them. Ensure employees have access to example prompts and are trained on what inputs are necessary to achieve greater outputs.

✔ Strengthen AI outputs

Aside from prompting, it is also important to train your employees on refining the outputs given by AI models. By coaching employees on how to provide feedback to these models, you can strengthen the initial outputs until they align with your team's expectations.





Accountability

Strong governance and accountability will uphold your organization's commitment to equitable AI. Through continual measurement and evaluation, you can be better positioned to leverage this technology in a way that pushes your team and organization forward.

✔ Integrate equity assessments in decision making

Develop an equity assessment to incorporate into AI usage and team decision making. This assessment should determine outcomes across different groups, encourage feedback loops and promote transparency.

✔ Implement regular audits

Periodically review and audit AI systems to check for biases, errors or other unintended consequences. Utilize third-party audits for an unbiased perspective. This process ensures that AI systems don't go unchecked.

✔ Establish feedback mechanisms

Establish clear channels for employees and stakeholders to provide feedback on AI's impact, performance and any potential issues. Additionally, create mechanisms to address grievances or unintended consequences arising from AI usage. This encourages a culture of continuous improvement and responsibility.

✔ Diversify AI development teams

A diverse team brings varied perspectives, reducing the likelihood of unintentional biases creeping into AI systems. By ensuring that AI development and oversight teams represent a mix of backgrounds, experiences and skills, you foster the creation of more equitable AI solutions.

✔ Commit to continuous education

Ensure that there's ongoing training for employees about the ethical implications of AI, the potential for bias and ways to mitigate these challenges. As AI evolves, so should your organization's understanding and strategies to ensure its responsible use.



Mini Equity Assessment

Assessing AI for Equitable Outcomes

Overview

It's paramount that AI systems are not just efficient but also equitable. An effective equity assessment serves as a compass, guiding organizations towards responsible and fair AI deployment. At its core, this assessment evaluates AI-related inputs and outputs to ensure that no demographic disproportionately bears negative consequences. It calls for formal feedback loops, welcoming insights from a diverse array of users. It stresses transparent documentation and collective guidelines for greater accountability. We encourage you to embrace this assessment as a *starting point* for fostering an equitable AI-augmented workplace.

Mini Equity Assessment

Ask yourself the following set of questions to examine how AI may be promoting or hindering equity within your organization.

- ✓ Is everyone in our organization aware of the community guidelines for using AI at our organization?
- ✓ Do all individuals and teams have access to AI technology supported by learning and development that is relevant to their needs?
- ✓ Is there a formal mechanism for employees to submit feedback around the impact AI is having on their work and the workplace?
- ✓ Since the adoption of AI at your organization, has the workload or expectations of employees increased? Is this appropriately being recognized?
- ✓ Does the AI learning and development at your organization take different learning styles and accessibility needs into account?
- ✓ Are your teams sharing best practices on AI usage with others to prioritize team-wide learning, rather than individual benefit?
- ✓ Are employees still recognized for their human-enabled contributions, separate from AI-generated work outputs?
- ✓ Have all team members been made aware of how AI is being used across the organization (e.g. in performance evaluations)?
- ✓ Does your organization routinely assess how AI is either closing the gap or exacerbating inequities with regards to career advancement, performance management and hiring practices?





Ask yourself the following set of questions to examine how AI may be promoting or hindering equity within your organization (continued).

- ✓ Are the ethical aspects of AI regularly discussed in a structured way at your organization?
- ✓ Are the key performance indicators for monitoring the success of AI integration in your workplace clear to all team members?
- ✓ Are the key performance indicators for monitoring the success of AI integration prioritize people's needs alongside your business' bottom line?
- ✓ Are different teams and departments breaking down siloes by leveraging similar AI platforms when collaborating?
- ✓ Does your organization ensure your AI development and oversight teams represent a mix of backgrounds, experiences and skills?
- ✓ Is the privacy of all parties being protected when using AI in your organization?
- ✓ Does your organization continuously check and recalibrate AI systems to avoid and rectify any biases, ensuring equitable outcomes for all user groups?
- ✓ Are there accountability measures in place for any mistakes or missteps made by employees due to an overreliance on AI technology?
- ✓ Does your organization communicate and stress the importance of having human intuition, expertise and judgment play a critical part in decision-making processes?

The success of our future workplaces require a radical departure from today's status quo.

Who we are

Change is a constant, and for organizations to thrive, they must evolve. At Different, we help liberate businesses from the constraints of conventional ways of working, harnessing forward-thinking methodologies to unlock the untapped human potential that will shape tomorrow's success.

You can call us a DEI consulting firm, but our clients see us as *so much more than that*.

Together with our partners, we cultivate inclusive, innovative workplaces that enable greater team-wide resilience and responsiveness to challenges, change, conflict and uncertainty. Applying a diversity, equity and inclusion lens to everything we do makes this possible.





We're a new kind of DEI consulting firm.

Different is a Black, Asian, LGBTQIA+, and women owned DEI consulting firm and we believe in doing DEI differently. We cultivate human connection as a means to propel purpose-driven organizations into a different tomorrow. One where organizations foster diverse, equitable and inclusive human-centered workplaces that welcome all people to bring their authentic selves to work – to do their best work.



Contact us at info@differentdei.co to receive a free strategic support session to support your DEI efforts.

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