

**D**uring the last decade there have been numerous studies by McKinsey, Deloitte, Catalyst and others validating what many believed intuitively: Companies that embrace inclusion and diversity (I&D) in all aspects of their business statistically outperform their peers.

Equipped with valuable data and insights, many large companies have launched I&D initiatives. Unsurprisingly, meaningful progress in the manufacturing industry, where Weir's ESCO division does business, has lagged. In the U.S., 80% of the manufacturing workforce is white and just 29% is female.

But corporate efforts to bolster I&D in manufacturing are intensifying and it is easy to understand why. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the composition of the labor force will shift significantly during the next 25 years. These expected changes are driving a business imperative to make workplaces agreeable to and represented by diverse socioeconomic groups.

At Weir ESCO, we are making a strong and public commitment to building

an inclusive culture where our people feel they belong and can do their best work. This is critical to our future success as a business and an Oregon employer. We are still early in our I&D journey, but have already learned some important lessons:

**1. Accept that there is no finish line.**

A commitment to I&D is not a sprint or a marathon. It is forever. As daunting as that may sound, it is fundamental to developing a sustainable culture. As workforce demographics shift, and public perceptions and demands about I&D evolve, an organization must keep its commitment to continuous organizational and cultural change.

**2. Keep it authentic.** During this journey, you will learn from others, but do not try to leapfrog ahead by copying them. Weir ESCO's initiative came from employee feedback. Employees told us they wanted a more inclusive workplace at all levels of the organization. Our senior leadership is on board, which is essential and enabling us to build an inclusive culture. Employee focus groups, trainings, skill-building and community outreach are all having a positive impact, as is creating employee connections around the world.

**3. Define your purpose before measuring.** Metrics are almost meaningless without a well-defined objective. Data may shed light on the diverse composition of your workforce, but it will not move the needle if it cannot drive purposeful action. We are currently in the process of aligning what we measure with our company's strategic roadmap.

**4. Embrace transparency.**

Transparency builds trust, which you will need, because a lack of trust is kryptonite to I&D. Tell employees what you are doing and why. Be open and compassionate. Listen more than talk. Accept that you will make mistakes along the way and acknowledge them when you do.

**5. Be creative and bold.** Building a truly inclusive workplace will push your organization out of its collective comfort zone. We now have a dedicated I&D leader who is responsible for developing and driving our I&D roadmap and associated employee programs and trainings, scholarships and community outreach efforts.

We live in an ever-changing world made more complicated by a global pandemic. Now more than ever, we believe it is essential to ensure our people know how deeply we care about them by creating a work environment where they feel they belong and can be their authentic selves.

# Five Lessons Learned on the Journey to Inclusion and Diversity



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