

Driving Diversity: How business leaders can spur workplace change



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The spotlight on inequality is driving increased dialogue and inspiring change on social and cultural levels, and the same is true of the business community.

According to the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, just 18% of businesses in the U.S. are minority-owned, even though minorities make up almost 40% of the population. However, a study conducted by The UPS Store, Inc. shows small businesses and their customers are also doing their part to promote inclusion and diversity.

Among small business owners with employees, 47% are actively trying to increase the diversity of their workforce, according to the survey. This momentum is particularly evident among younger small business owners, ages 18-45 (58%).

Business leaders can continue promoting this effort by introducing practices such as:

Communicating clearly about expectations

Set a policy of zero tolerance for discriminatory behavior and communicate it clearly throughout your business. Conduct a thorough audit of your typical communication channels to ensure your message is clear and consistent so there is no confusion about your expectations. This can include emails, signage and orientation materials. It's important to recognize this won't be a one-and-done exercise. Commit to issuing periodic reminders to reinforce your expectation for an inclusive culture.

Leading by example

Once your expectations have been defined, it's up to you to demonstrate how they should be followed. This means taking stock of your business and any areas where you may not be upholding these standards. Ask for input from trusted advisors. You might even consider an audit by a third party to identify any discrepancies. Chances are, you'll find at least one or two areas for improvement. Take swift and decisive action to make necessary changes, whether it means updating policies, modifying recruitment practices or other adjustments.

Creating programs that support minorities

One way businesses can turn intent into action is to create programs specifically designed to encourage minority participation. When it comes to inclusive ownership, franchising is leading compared to other industries, with nearly one-third (30.8%) of franchises being minority-owned compared to 18.8% of non-franchised businesses, according to an International Franchise Association study. One example is The UPS Store Minority Incentive Program, which provides eligible participants nearly \$15,000 off the franchise fee for their first center.

This program, which applies to Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latino and Native American franchisee candidates, is both an opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs and a solution meant to help consumers support minority-owned businesses. In addition, these new franchise owners will open a new store design with a focus on modern, tech-forward and open concept features. To learn more about the program and apply, visit theupsstorefranchise.com.*

Making training relevant for your business

The concept of diversity training isn't new for many businesses, but it may be time to reassess your approach. Reciting a list of generic best practices to a senior leadership team does not constitute as training. Instead, consider creating a training session (or better yet, a series) that addresses the unique nuances of your business and culture. Work to incorporate principles of inclusion that relate to specific scenarios your staff may encounter and involve everyone at each level of the organization in the training.

Eliminating practices that exclude certain groups

Many traditional business practices completely overlook the good that can be gained from a more inclusive approach. In some cases, such as creating a time-off policy that accommodates holidays across different cultures, the benefits are in the form of employee morale. In other cases, such as flexible schedules for working parents, it may be the difference between successfully hiring the best candidate versus settling on someone who may not be the best fit for the position.

Implementing feedback systems

Learning better and doing better is an ongoing process, not a project to check off as completed. Part of refining your culture and creating a truly inclusive environment is enabling employees to report their concerns without fear of repercussions. Engaging

your workforce, asking for input and genuinely listening may alert you to areas for improvement you never knew existed.

Creating a more inclusive workplace won't happen overnight, but taking necessary steps can benefit your business as well as your workforce.

*This information is not intended as an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy a franchise. It is for informational and design purposes only. The UPS Store, Inc. will not offer you a franchise unless and until it has complied with the applicable pre-sale registration and disclosure requirements in your state, as applicable, and provided you with a Franchise Disclosure Document. Franchise offerings are made by Franchise Disclosure Documents only.

Leverage Consumer Support of Minority Business Owners

As the pandemic recedes, small business owners and entrepreneurs are still looking to receive support from their communities and peers.

A majority of consumers have committed within the past year to buy more products and services from small businesses, according to a survey by The UPS Store, Inc. In particular, consumers indicated plans to buy more from women-owned, Black-owned and veteran-owned businesses.

For entrepreneurial business leaders who aspire to own their own businesses, resources are available to help achieve that goal while providing consumers another avenue for supporting these types of businesses.

One example is The UPS Store Minority Incentive Program, which offers eligible participants approximately 50% off the franchise fee. The program provides individuals the opportunity to turn their dreams of small-business ownership into reality by offering established brand strength, world-class training programs and a strong network of successful, helpful franchisees.

Source: The UPS Store

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DIVERSITY OF WORKFORCE

UPS STORE MINORITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM

ASPIRING MINORITY ENTREPRENEURS

SUPPORT MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES

DIVERSITY

INCLUSION

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