

Gartner Research

How to Hold Business Leaders Accountable for D&I Outcomes

Human Resources Research Team

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Initiatives:[Diversity and Inclusion](#) and [1 more](#)

Our research helps D&I leaders learn how to create business accountability for D&I by defining business leaders' D&I responsibilities, providing resources and educational support, and effectively communicating results.

Overview

While most organizations (69%) prioritize diversity and inclusion (D&I) accountability, D&I leaders still struggle to implement accountability measures. This report uses global research and conversations with leading organizations to highlight how D&I leaders encourage accountability in a way that engages leaders and realizes D&I progress.

Key Findings

- Only half of organizations currently hold business leaders accountable for D&I outcomes.
- About 60% of organizations say leader accountability is the biggest obstacle to realizing D&I progress.
- Even though three-fourths of organizations have a specific communication process for D&I, business leaders cite metrics and communications as a hurdle.

Recommendations

To hold leaders accountable for D&I outcomes, D&I leaders should:

- Empower business leaders to take ownership of their D&I responsibilities by clearly defining their role in D&I.
- Help business leaders accomplish their D&I goals by providing them with appropriate resources and education.
- Maximize the impact of D&I accountability by determining the right communication content, channels and frequency, which maximizes the impact of D&I accountability.

Research shows 69% of D&I leaders agree D&I goals and accountability are a key priority in 2018.

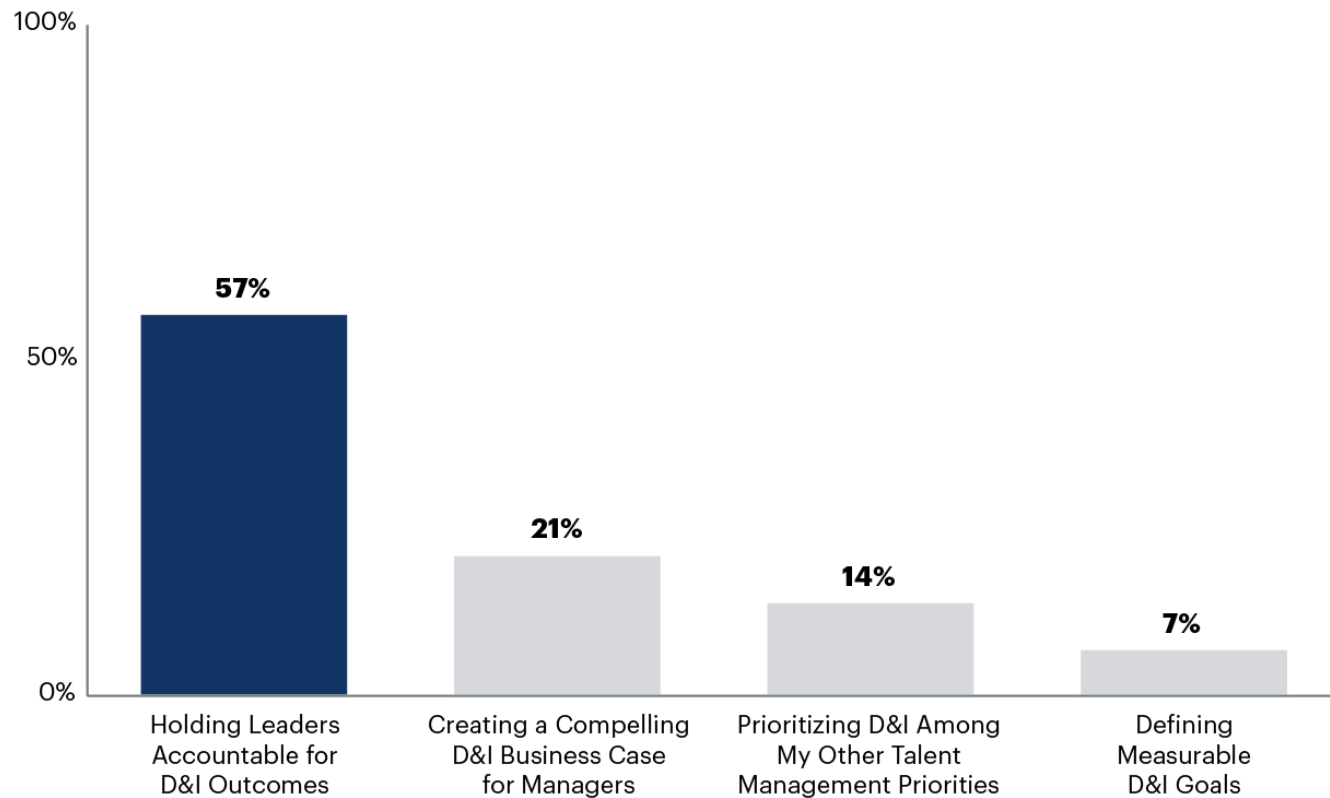
[1] Accountability matters because as line leaders own D&I outcomes, they are more familiar with D&I goals and more likely to make inclusion an integral part of the business; their business units

also benefit from improved collaboration and innovation. However, despite D&I's priority, leaders find it challenging to implement. In fact, 57% of organizations say holding leaders accountable for D&I outcomes is their biggest challenge in implementing their D&I priorities.

Figure 1: Challenges to Implementing D&I Priorities

Challenges to Implementing D&I Priorities

Percentage of Respondents



n = 14 HR leaders

Source: Gartner 2018 Diversity and Inclusion in the Talent Life Cycle Agenda Poll

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D&I leaders should take three actions to ensure business leaders' accountability for D&I is effective. D&I leaders must:

- **Define** business leaders' role in executing D&I outcomes.
- **Support** business leaders as they accomplish D&I goals.
- **Communicate** progress on D&I outcomes to business leaders.

Define Business Leaders' Role

Define the specific role business leaders play in D&I outcomes so they understand their responsibilities in advancing D&I.

Organizations hold a variety of leaders accountable for D&I metrics progress: 64% of organizations hold chief human resource officers accountable, 48% hold CEOs accountable and 48% hold business leader accountable for D&I outcomes.[1] While D&I leaders feel confident that C-suite

executives know their role in advancing D&I, business leaders' roles are harder to define and enforce.

To help business leaders effectively execute D&I priorities, D&I leaders must define what D&I outcomes each stakeholder is accountable for. D&I leaders must establish accountability processes and frameworks at the corporate level and implement them throughout the organization. D&I leaders are responsible for selecting business outcomes, collecting data on goal progress and communicating results to business leaders. Business leaders must act on D&I goals that are specific to their business units to ensure D&I is integrated into business processes. Business leaders help inform D&I goals for their specific business unit by noting progress areas and communicating risks or barriers to progress to D&I leaders.

Organizations see clear benefits from increased definition of D&I roles (see Table 1). D&I leaders ensure they continue to maintain control of metrics and outcomes and influence business leaders' D&I goals and accountability metrics. Business leaders' buy-in often increases as they understand D&I's impact on their business.

Table 1: How to Define Different Roles in D&I Outcomes

Stakeholder	D&I Leaders	Business Leaders
Role	Establish accountability process and frameworks.	Act on D&I goals specific to their business unit.
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Select what the business is accountable for. ■ Collect data on progress toward goals. ■ Communicate results to business leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Help inform D&I goals for specific business units. ■ Create actionable steps for progress toward goals. ■ Communicate risks and barriers to D&I leaders.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to maintain control of D&I metrics and accountability. ■ Influence business leaders' D&I goals and accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase in buy-in of D&I outcomes. ■ Opportunity to voice opinions and concerns.

Source: Gartner (December 2018)

Provide Support for Business Leaders

Identify when to step in and help business leaders advance D&I by providing the resources and education they need to successfully accomplish D&I outcomes.

Because almost 60% of organizations say holding leaders accountable is their biggest challenge to implementing D&I priorities, D&I leaders need to ensure they support business leaders by providing appropriate resources and education.[2] To effectively support business leaders, D&I teams must first identify when to provide support and when leaders are already appropriately taking D&I action.

D&I leaders should step back when business leaders successfully execute their D&I goals independently. D&I leaders should step back if business leaders:

- Act as D&I ambassadors for their business unit.
- Show visible progress on D&I goals.
- Vocalize confidence about their ability to meet metrics.

D&I leaders should consider providing additional support through resources and education if:

- Business unit or organizational goals shift.
- Minimal to no progress has been made on D&I goals.
- Business leaders express concern about D&I goal feasibility.
- Business leaders do not communicate the risks of not meeting D&I goals.

When business leaders need support, D&I leaders improve D&I accountability when they provide support through education and resources. D&I leaders should educate business leaders on the importance of D&I, how to set interim goals and when share peer best practices. Resources such as peer benchmarks and scorecards can be used to demonstrate progress on metrics and outcomes over time.

Figure 2: How To Support Business Leaders' D&I Progress

How To Support Business Leaders' D&I Progress



Education

- **Meet directly** with business leaders to teach them how to **set interim goals** that make long-term objectives easier to achieve.
- Hold meetings between business leaders and the CEO to educate them about the urgency of metrics outcomes.
- Create **monthly review meetings** where business leaders present **objectives and report their progress** to peer leaders.

BAE SYSTEMS

Source: Adapted from BAE Systems and AB Volvo

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Resources

- **Design business-unit-specific scorecards** that indicate the desired team composition and inclusiveness goals for leaders to use and reference when they need additional direction.
- Use company wide scorecards so business leaders can **benchmark their progress against their peers.**



Appropriate resources and education provides business leaders with the support they need to confidently act on D&I outcomes and improve their productivity on D&I progress over time.

Case in Point: Volvo's Composite D&I Index and Scorecard



Volvo created a universally understood measure for progress against D&I goals to transparently engage leaders in D&I. It built a standardized framework for measuring D&I maturity across the organization, which provided a consistent definition of progress. To engage leaders through an actionable and standardized scorecard process, Volvo created a D&I Composite Index with a balanced team indicator and an inclusiveness index and encouraged friendly competition through goal setting.

1. **Balanced Team Indicator:** Business leaders respond to questions concerning the diversity within teams at the top two levels of the organization as well as the perceived management focus on diversity and overall organizational gender balance.
2. **Inclusiveness Index:** Business leaders across the company assess their organization and teams' response to engagement survey questions about inclusiveness.
3. **Goal Setting:** Business leaders track and share their D&I scores over time and compare them to those of other teams.

Communicate Business Leaders' Progress

Identify the right content, channels and frequency for D&I accountability communications to ensure communications effectively inform business leaders' process on D&I outcomes.

While most organizations (75%) have a formal communications process in place within D&I, most D&I leaders are not confident this process effectively communicates D&I accountability to business leaders.[1] Research shows D&I leaders ask three key questions before communicating D&I outcomes and progress to business leaders:

- What is the **right content** to include in our communications?
- **Which channels** are best for delivering our selected content?
- **How frequently** should communications be sent to business leaders?

Content

Most organizations include representation (87%), diversity attrition rates (53%) and diversity recruiting (53%) data in communications about D&I progress to business leaders. However, some organizations include other metrics such as diverse employee engagement, internal talent mobility for diverse employees, employee resource group (ERG) participation levels and D&I training scores.

Since most communications are intended to drive action, D&I leaders should avoid unnecessary or redundant information that obscures the action item for business leaders. Instead, organizations should clearly communicate what accountability metrics they are sharing and why these are important to business leaders. When appropriate, this approach ensures business leaders buy in to the value of their goals and the message resonates with leaders' perspectives and needs.

Channel

Popular channels for communication of D&I progress include infographics, scorecards, newsletters, as well as conversations with D&I leaders, HRBPs or senior leaders' managers. Many organizations also incentivize business leaders to hold them accountable for D&I and the incentives are often connected to the channel of delivery. Incentivized tools organizations use to hold business leaders accountable for D&I metrics include:

- Performance reviews (67%)
- Compensation and benefits (33%)
- Internal awards and recognition (20%)
- Development opportunities (13%)
- Promotions (7%)

Frequency

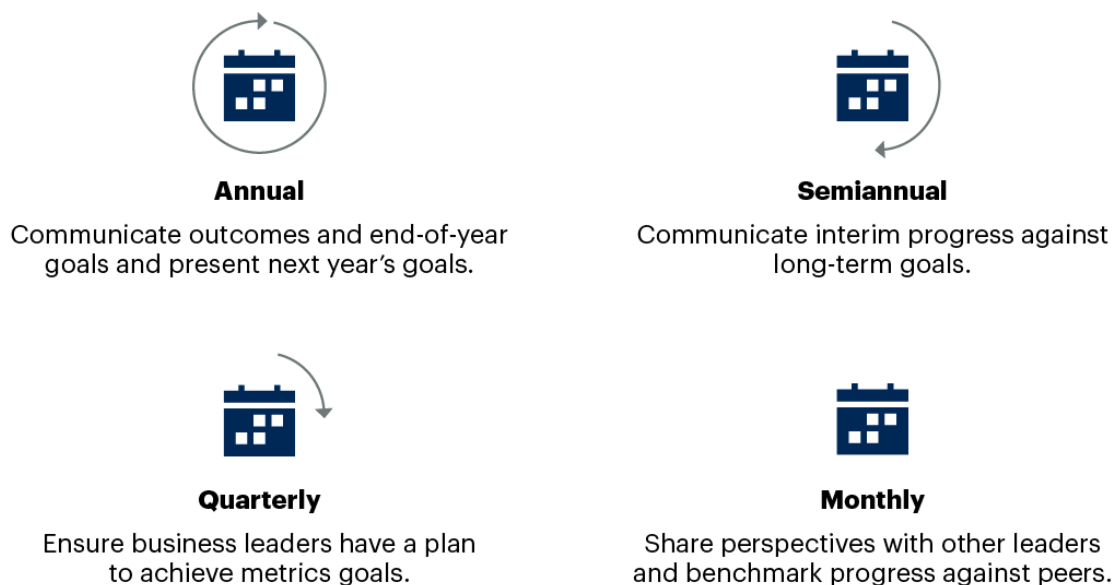
Organizations typically use four different frequencies to communicate D&I progress to business leaders (see Figure 3):

- **Annually** – Annual communications share outcomes or end-of-year progress and present the upcoming year’s goals.
- **Semiannually** – Semiannual communications highlight interim progress toward long-term goals or objectives.
- **Quarterly** – Quarterly communications ensure business leaders are achieving metric goals and serve as a check-in for these leaders.
- **Monthly** – Monthly communications help leaders benchmark their progress against their peers by sharing best practices and perspectives.

Figure 3: Ways to Use Strategic Timing as a Tool for Communications

Ways to Use Strategic Timing as a Tool for Communications

Illustrative



Source: Gartner (November 2018)

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Case in Point: JLL’s Method of Communication for D&I



JLL’s D&I team designed a three-part process to inform business leaders of their progress on D&I metrics and hold them accountable for D&I outcomes. JLL’s three-part communication process included:

Infographics — D&I leaders create easy-to-consume infographics on D&I outcomes and send them to business leaders quarterly. These reports typically focus on one specific content item — in JLL's case, diversity recruiting outcomes.

Scorecards — D&I leaders share D&I representation metrics in D&I-specific scorecards with business leaders semiannually to evaluate their current progress on D&I goals.

HRBP-Powered Conversations — D&I leaders train HRBPs to help deliver D&I outcomes to business leaders, which drives urgency and teaches the importance of D&I outcomes to the business. HRBPs meet with business leaders semiannually and provide resources to help business leaders act.

When D&I leaders identify the right content, channels and frequency for D&I outcomes communication with business leaders, they can ensure communications best enable leader actionability.

Conclusion

When organizations hold leaders accountable for D&I outcomes, they are more familiar with D&I goals, more likely to integrate inclusion into the business and their business benefits from improved collaboration and innovation. Holding business leaders accountable for specific, measurable outcomes tailored to their experience and responsibilities ensures leaders' actions are intentional and impactful. D&I leaders should consider how to define D&I roles, support leaders through education and resources and communicate results effectively.

Recommended by the Authors

- [Discussion Guide to Define Business Leaders' Role in D&I Accountability](#)
This tool helps D&I leaders start a conversation with business leaders on their role in effectively driving D&I metrics outcomes.
- [D&I Metrics Accountability Trends](#)
This quick answer helps D&I leaders learn how their peers use metrics to hold leaders accountable for D&I outcomes at their organizations.

About This Research

This research is based on quantitative and qualitative data from our 2018 D&I Agenda Poll of over 60 heads of D&I, our 2018 Metrics Quick Poll of over 25 heads of D&I and interviews with chief diversity officers, HR leaders and employees. Together, they provide a comprehensive analysis of business leader accountability for D&I metrics.

Endnotes

[1] Gartner 2018 D&I Agenda Poll

[2] Gartner 2018 Diversity and Inclusion in the Talent Life Cycle Agenda Poll

Also Recommended For Gartner Clients

[Creating Organizationwide Ownership for D&I](#)

[Five Things Leaders Can Do Today to be More Inclusive](#)

[Building Sustainable D&I](#)

[Drive D&I Outcomes With a Successful ERG Strategy: An Interview With Moody's D.K. Bartley](#)

[Diversity and Inclusion Primer for 2020](#)

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