



Case Study: Prominent Life Sciences Company struggling with lack of gender diversity, non-inclusive senior leadership, and low employee engagement.

Client Challenge

Many studies have shown that the ratio of women to men decreases as individuals move higher through the ranks to the top of an organization. The client had a significant drop off in gender ratios in upper management compared to entry level positions, with only 7% of executive positions filled by women and only 34% of the total workforce being female. Members of the senior leadership team were primarily male and non-inclusive. These factors contributed significantly to lower advancement of women into leadership and low employee engagement scores among women. Lead Inclusively was engaged with the full support of the CEO to make substantive changes and move the organization toward a more diverse and inclusive future.

Our Process

The first step of the client journey was for Lead Inclusively to evaluate the current Diversity and Inclusion strategy, policies, processes and practices. A comprehensive, proprietary assessment allowed the client to understand how their D&I practices, or lack thereof, were impacting their talent and business performance.

The Lead Inclusively Assessment, over 100 questions completed by Human Resources, addresses D&I maturity around the 8 areas of Leadership and Accountability; Strategy & Implementation; Recruitment and Staffing; Retention; Advancement and Performance Management; Benefits; Services and Work Options; Marketing and Corporate Communications; and External Stakeholder Groups. The client also chose to conduct a leadership assessment 360 to evaluate leaders' behaviors at the intersection of inclusion and innovation.

Based on the data gathered, Lead Inclusively developed a comprehensive D&I roadmap of interventions and optimizations that addressed all aspects of the employee lifecycle from recruitment to advancement to retention, then customized it as per client's requirements.

Our Solution

The interventions put in place addressed the "Lead Inclusively Trifecta of Diversity and Inclusion Transformation" for the client:

1. **Organization:** Lead Inclusively held Inclusion Labs in association with Human Resources to engineer the bias out of H.R processes, addressing the specific policies and practices that impact recruitment, advancement, and retention of the target demographic, in this case – women. Recommendations included requiring a diverse slate of candidates for open positions, gender diversity among interviewing panels, and blind resume review software.
2. **Leadership:** Inclusive Behaviors workshops provided training and education around the 3 Rs of inclusive leadership being Receptive, Reflective, and Revitalizing, to create buy in and provide understanding around effects of unconscious bias at different points of the talent life cycle. This training also addressed how to practically implement more inclusive behaviors to create a more inclusive culture across all levels. Individual action plans were established to assist leaders in making practical changes.
3. **Target demographic:** Lead Inclusively facilitated an Inclusive Innovation Lab to guide a diverse group of employees through the steps of design thinking innovation in order to develop and launch an Employee Resource Group for the further education and support of women in the organization. External leadership coaching for high potential women in the organization was established to assist developing leaders and provide them with additional tools for success. A comprehensive change management approach was developed to test, modify and scale the interventions for organization-wide impact.

Results

1. Increased hiring of women: by requiring a gender-diverse slate of candidates, making significant efforts toward advertising open positions among senior technical women, and moving toward gender blind resume review, the client was able to hire women at an increase of 10% at mid- and senior-management levels.
2. Increase in gender diversity ratios: due to increased recruitment, advancement, and retention of women, the clients overall improved gender diversity representation was 8% across all levels within the organization.
3. Increased employee engagement: by creating a more inclusive environment from the top down and empowering employees to create the client increased employee engagement by approximately 7% measured by pulse survey.