

How Organizations Can Use Leadership Development to Support DEI&B Initiatives



A GUIDE BY

ve.b

Leadership Development for the Modern Workplace

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DEI&B IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

Learning and DEI&B: Putting People First

Research shows that organizations leading the way in diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging (DEI&B) make learning a top priority.

They learn about the policies, processes, and programs that increase diversity and create equity. Then they take action to establish hiring goals, de-bias performance review processes, track metrics, and report on progress.

Policies, processes, and programs like these are critically important, but it's people who bring them to life. That's why organizations committed to DEI&B also encourage learning among their employees. They support people in developing the knowledge, understanding, and behaviors needed to put these things into action on a daily basis.

As a leadership development platform, Verb understands the importance of this kind of learning, and we are committed to offering content that builds the knowledge, understanding, and behaviors that people need to drive effective DEI&B efforts. In this guide, we share what we've learned about the role of leadership development in DEI&B and how Verb can contribute to this work.

**DEI&B is not
a program to
complete.
It's an ongoing
practice.**

How Leadership Development Fits into DEI&B

After working with DEI&B executives and consultants, we've learned what may and may not be effective in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through leadership development.

LESS EFFECTIVE

- One-off programs or workshops
- Programs that are disconnected from business strategy and existing initiatives
- Limited support from senior leadership
- Untrained and inexperienced facilitators
- Outdated content

MORE EFFECTIVE

- Structured, in-depth, and ongoing
- Goes beyond "checking a box"
- Informed and guided by experts, with both solo and group learning
- Engaged and invested senior leadership
- Updated content that is relevant and sensitive to current issues
- Addresses race explicitly



Voluntary, not mandatory:

In addition, we've learned that engaging in DEI&B learning and work should be voluntary for employees. This provides autonomy for people in underrepresented groups and reduces possible backlash or further harm.

Voluntary participation supports trust and psychological safety, which are foundational to DEI&B efforts in organizations. People must feel safe in order to identify problems, communicate with one another, and change organizational norms. *(Research by Ely/Thomas)*

What Ongoing DEI&B Work Looks Like



Leadership development is only one part of an organization's overall DEI&B work.

- DEI&B efforts should be ongoing and integrated throughout an organization.
- It is not something that can be checked off or completed. There is not a one-stop, one-off solution.
- The work is ongoing as long as there are racial inequities and/or people who feel they don't belong.

That means every team must integrate DEI&B into their goals and daily work. Leaders need to demonstrate their commitment and hold the organization accountable for results, and employees should be included and involved every step of the way.

Verb's Content: Inclusion and Belonging

Verb is the leadership development platform that prepares your people to adapt to the challenges of today's rapidly changing workplace.

Verb's microlearning activities prompt learners to practice human-centered leadership skills like listening, empathy, and courage in a safe space. From there, they take action in the real world and reflect on their growth—leading to real skill development and behavior change.

Working with experts and consultants, Verb has explored how we can best support organizations with DEI&B. As a leadership development platform, we help leaders develop a variety of capabilities and skills. Our new content focuses specifically on the knowledge, understanding, and behaviors proven to advance inclusion and belonging.

Verb has developed a suite of DEI&B-related content (10+ hours) focused on several topics:

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP PATHWAY	UNDERSTANDING BIAS PATHWAY	KEEP LEARNING ABOUT ANTI-RACISM PATHWAY
<i>Collections</i>	<i>Collections</i>	<i>Collections</i>
→ Where Inclusion Begins	→ Breaking Down Bias	→ Introduction to Anti-Racism
→ Build Trust	→ Bring Global Perspective	→ Examining Cultural Racism
→ Psychological Safety	→ Questioning Assumptions	→ Racism and Language
→ Belonging		→ Understanding Racial Equity
→ Become a More Inclusive Leader		→ Reflecting on the Anti-Racism Pathway

As an always-available resource, Verb is a way to keep these topics top of mind so employees can apply what they learn in their jobs.

It also supports trust and psychological safety by allowing them to learn at their own pace and access content at any time, no matter what level of awareness, understanding, or action they are starting from.

Essential Skills for Inclusive Leadership

Verb's topics are based on research that shows diverse organizations are more successful when employees understand concepts like inclusion and belonging and put them into practice.

Throughout 10+ hours of content, learners have opportunities to:

- Learn about and/or process sensitive topics independently
- Experiment with practices that develop psychological safety and trust with others
- Understand foundational terms and ideas related to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-racism, and why these are vital leadership skills
- Practice listening to and learning from perspectives different than their own
- Gain self-awareness about the perspectives they bring to work and how these fit with other perspectives
- Cultivate a more inclusive leadership style based on curiosity about others
- Engage with their own sense of belonging so they can support others in this area

Many Voices

People learn in different ways from many voices. Verb believes that human-centered leadership requires many ways of thinking. That's reflected in our DEI&B collections, which feature insights from:

- DEI&B executives and consultants, business leaders, organizational researchers, neuroscientists, and psychologists.
- Historians, professional tennis players, community organizers, and journalists.
- Artists, including poets and documentary filmmakers

And you'll consider the very important perspectives of another source: first-person stories from people working in roles similar to those in your organization.

Leveraging Verb in Your Efforts



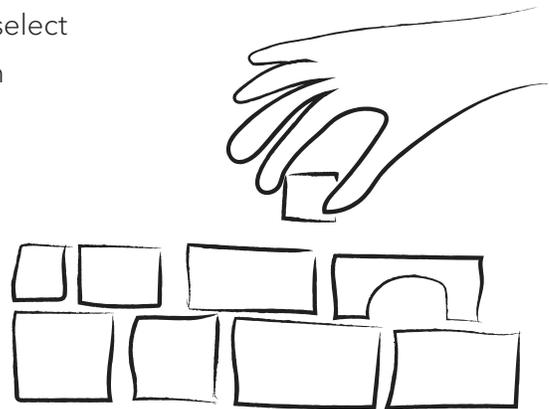
Verb supports all organizations—from those just starting out to those with established DEI&B ecosystems (consultants, workshops, ERGs, etc.).

You can use this always-available resource to offer all employees voluntary learning opportunities with Verb's DEI&B collections and pathways.

Use Verb to reinforce learning or experiences from other DEI&B initiatives (e.g., workshops). Or, you can choose to select collections and/or pathways that support and align with an organization's existing DEI&B efforts.

Who Is Verb for?

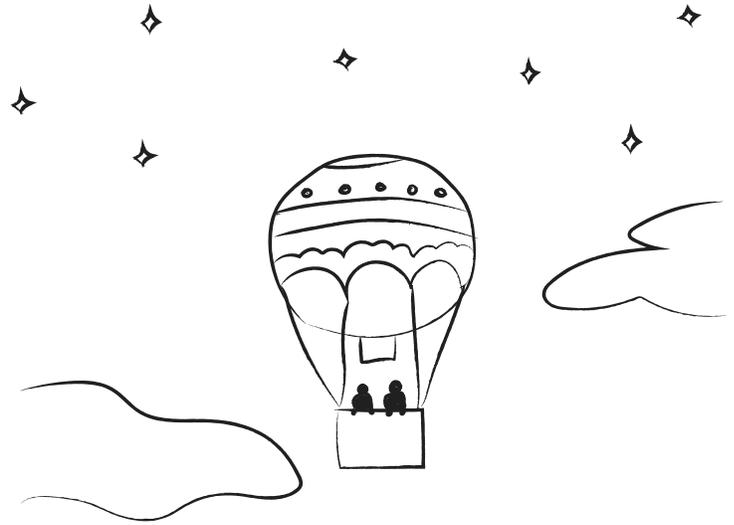
- **Solo learners** who are interested but want to learn alone. They may feel they "should" know more than they do and need a concise, solid, yet introductory-level understanding of these topics.
- **Managers** or people leaders who want to develop their own skills and build more inclusive teams.
- **Pairs or groups**, like employee resource and ally groups (ERGs) who choose to learn together. Groups can review content and advise on leveraging Verb in an organization.
- **Teams** with high levels of psychological safety and existing trusted relationships.



Beyond Verb

With Verb's new content on inclusion and belonging, we are including more voices and reflecting more of the learners who use our platform and our activities.

But to close out our guide on leadership development, DEI&B, and how Verb can support these initiatives, we feel it's just as important to give an overview of what Verb is not.



#1 Verb is not a tool for facilitating discussions in groups without high psychological safety.

Productive conversations about DEI&B require high psychological safety. Without it, discussions can be difficult and sometimes even cause harm (e.g., damaged relationships, burdening people to educate others, disengagement, etc.).

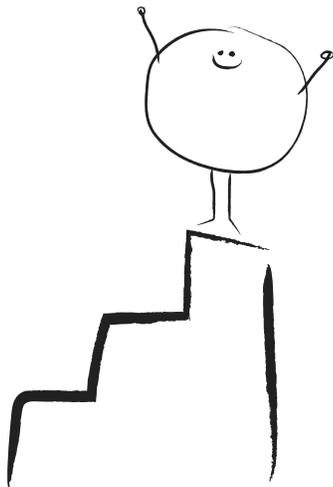
Verb's discussion questions are designed to enhance learning and build trust. These questions are focused on the content at an appropriate level, avoid probing personal questions, and remind people to share when they are comfortable while taking others' experiences into account.

Based on Verb's research and our own experience as an organization, **we believe trained facilitators are important for more substantive and productive discussions about DEI&B topics.**

Beyond Verb

#2: Verb does not contain specific training on inclusive hiring and performance reviews.

These things are absolutely important, and there are many checklists and tools available (see Resources section for a few suggestions). In Verb's research and work with experts, we've come to understand that following these checklists are vital, but these actions alone don't create inclusive workplaces.



Example: An HR team implements new processes to reduce bias in hiring. However, these processes can't always reduce or change the personal biases of people involved with interviewing and hiring.

Verb supports managers in developing the skills to become more aware of their own biases and what it takes to catch them and respond productively. With these kinds of skills, managers improve the effectiveness of HR's processes.

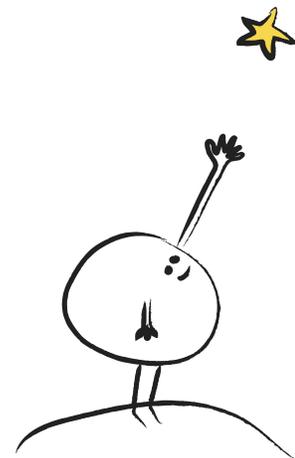
Verb's content is less about checklists, and more about helping people build the skills they need to implement the checklists well.

#3: Verb is not a replacement for ongoing DEI&B work within your organization.

Verb features many human-centered leadership skills that support DEI&B. These skills can help everyone foster inclusion throughout your organization.

You can use Verb to support the DEI&B initiatives you already have in place or plan to develop. And, as an always-on resource, Verb supports self-directed learning for anyone at your organization.

And while leadership development is essential, it's only part of what's needed to build inclusive, equitable, and diverse organizations.





Partner and Learn

We believe this work takes many people and organizations.

At Verb, we seek to partner and learn from each other.

We'd love to hear about what your organization is doing and be a supportive partner in your efforts.

We also appreciate feedback and collaboration to include more perspectives to improve content for learners and customers. As we learn from each other, we can support more organizations and people advancing DEI&B.

To discuss how Verb can be a part of your DEI&B efforts, contact us at sales@goverb.com

Resources

- [What Works: Evidenced-based Ideas to Increase Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace](#)
- [Getting Serious About Diversity: Enough Already with the Business Case](#)
- [Google's re:Work, Hiring](#)
- [Culture Amp Resources](#)