

# Introduction to the Master Brewers Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Committee

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## ABSTRACT

DEI stands for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and is often used to describe programs and resources for addressing diversity in the workplace. Diversity is the presence of differences within a given organization or group of individuals. Equity addresses the impartiality and fairness of processes, norms, and opportunities to ensure equal

possible outcomes for each individual. Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that individuals feel a sense of belonging in their workplace. Recently, the DEI acronym has changed to JEDI, to include the concept of justice. Justice, in this context, addresses the dismantling of structural barriers to resources and opportunities by organizations.

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The brewing industry—from large multinationals to craft brewers and the industry’s allied businesses—remains less diverse in gender and race than the population at large. However, many in our industry have begun to consider how we can embrace healthy (equitable and just) diversity and reap the benefits it brings to a workplace or community, such as greater innovation, employee retention, and job satisfaction. The Master Brewers recognizes its role as a leader in brewing industry education and training and, thereby, its role in assessing and improving its own DEI culture and providing members with tools and best practices to foster greater DEI norms and practices industry-wide. The DEI tools and best practices that can impact a workplace or organization include

- Business vision and strategy, inclusive of DEI
- Leadership DEI skill-building and accountability
- Employee recruitment, retention, development, and advancement
- Work–life integration
- Job design, classification, and compensation
- Learning and education
- Assessment and measurement
- Connecting DEI with sustainability

## Development of the Master Brewers Committee

In August 2021, the Master Brewers Executive Committee moved to convert the Master Brewers Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI) Task Force to a standing committee and to approve the group’s proposed Action Plan to address DEI within both the brewing industry and the Master Brewers. The committee itself is diverse, with over 80% of current members self-

identifying as a minority gender, ethnicity, or other underrepresented group in the brewing industry. In the months leading up to and since that approval, the DEI Committee has worked to prioritize and implement key projects in support of our four DEI initiatives:

- Promote DEI and a culture of accountability within the Master Brewers organization.
- Provide DEI tools for members for their professional development.
- Grow Master Brewers membership through DEI-focused outreach initiatives.
- Participate actively in fostering DEI across the brewing industry.

Recently, we expanded our committee to include over 25 members—the volunteers represent a balanced variety of Master Brewers Districts, brewing positions, breweries, and allied industries.

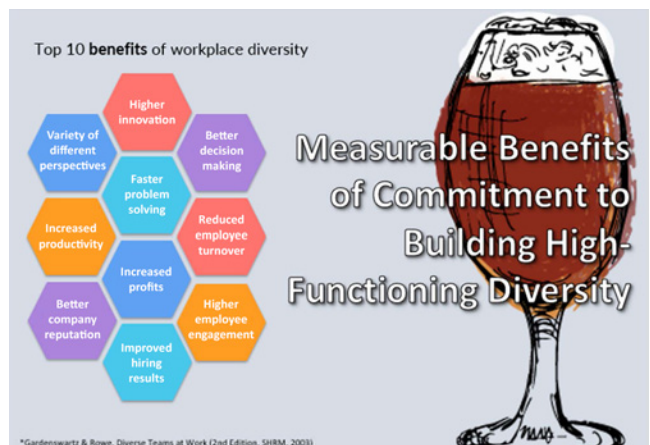
Much attention has been given to both the lack of diversity and the widespread tolerance of misconduct and harassment in brewing. Although we have substantial evidence about such shortcomings in gender and racial diversity in craft brewing compared with the population at large from the Brewers Association (BA) 2018 Brewing Operations Benchmarking Survey (2) and from social media and beer journalism, the challenges of building

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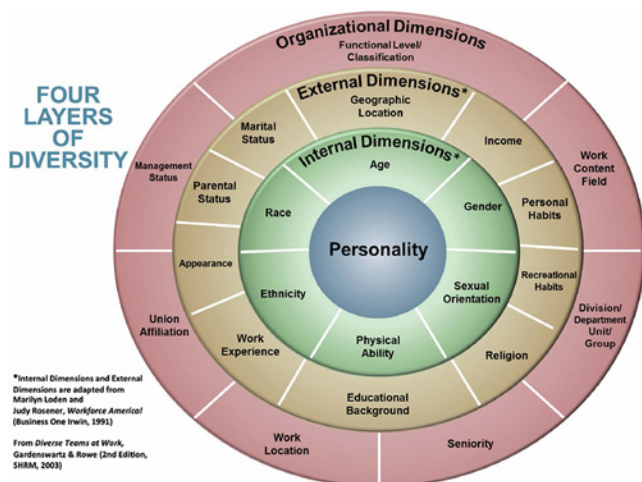
healthy diversity across our industry and our organization are not limited to the craft sector of brewing alone. Commercial breweries, global breweries, and allied businesses large and small are reflecting on their values, culture, and practices when it comes to DEI—with varying degrees of success. With a simple Google search, one discovers that both InBev and Molson Coors have embraced highly publicized DEI initiatives, including the hiring of high-level diversity officers, in recent years.

Companies across our industry are establishing new practices and norms to reap the benefits of healthy workplace diversity, including, but not limited to, diversity in gender and race. (The Four Layers of Diversity illustration shows various types of individual diversity to consider.)

The potential benefits of healthy workplace diversity are well documented: employers can attract more and better-qualified potential employees in their hiring process by establishing a diverse workplace culture focused on equity and inclusion—an important factor to consider in today’s competitive job market for employers. Employees are happier and more confident in inclusive work settings; empowered individuals help teams innovate; and innovation can open doors to new channels for our industry’s future growth. In a recent report, evidence-based research from BetterUp (a mobile coaching pioneer that drives transformational behavior change, resulting in positive business outcomes for organizations) shows that happier, more confident employees are better employees (1).

BetterUp surveyed 1,789 full-time employees across a diverse set of industries (1). It also included live participant experiments to observe and measure tangible impacts of inclusion and to test interventions. Key findings, published in September 2019, include the following:

- **Belonging is good for business:** Employees who feel a strong sense of belonging, versus a weak one, experience a 56% increase in job performance, a 50% reduction in turnover risk, and a 75% decrease in sick days.
- **Lack of belonging is costly:** If all workers at a 10,000-person company felt a high degree of belonging, productivity gains would top \$52 million a year.
- **Belonging is the best recruiter:** Employees who feel they belong are 167% more likely to recommend their company as a great place to work to others.
- **Exclusion hurts performance:** A single incident of micro-exclusion can result in a 25% decline in an individual’s performance on a team project.



The BA data from its 2018 Brewery Operations Benchmarking Survey (2) shows there are racial and gender gaps between the U.S. population and employment in the craft brewing industry. The BA acknowledged recently that results in this survey may have been skewed to overreporting by women and minorities, which only creates more disparity between the dominance of white males in our industry versus women, LGBTQ-plus, and/or underrepresented ethnicities. No data is yet available regarding other underrepresented populations, such as neuro-divergent individuals (those whose brain functions are different from an established norm), disabled individuals, etc. If other data exists related to measuring diversity in commercial brewing or allied industries, our committee has yet to discover it.

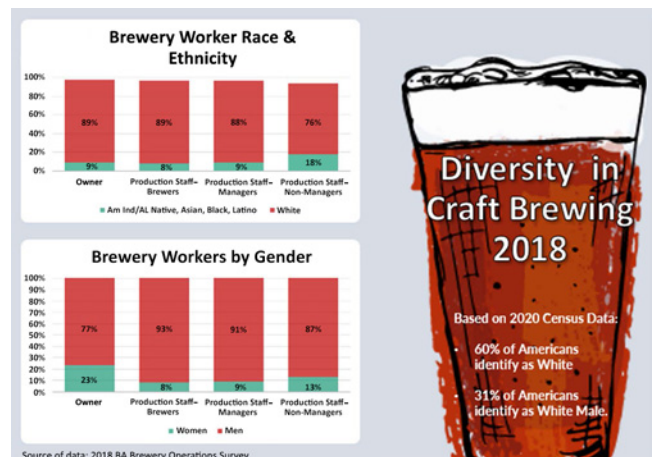
The Master Brewers DEI Committee’s first benchmarking survey was completed by over 800 association members in 2020. We were heartened by the good response from membership, which reflected the professional status of the overall Master Brewers membership: 73% of respondents were brewery employees, while 15% were from allied industries. In terms of gender and race representation in the industry, approximately 25% of respondents identified as non-white male.

When asked about the importance of improving DEI at their workplace over the next year, 70% of respondents replied “Very Important” or “Somewhat Important.”

However, in terms of availability of workplace DEI awareness and educational and best practice resources, respondents perceived a shortcoming in what is commonly accessible to the industry. A majority of respondents had never, or very infrequently, received any kind of diversity training. Forty-five percent of respondents’ companies did not utilize internal resources, such as a DEI committee or dedicated personnel, or external resources, such as consultants or the BA D&I Best Practices.

When asked if various DEI resources potentially provided by Master Brewers would be valuable, 60% of respondents responded with “Very Valuable” or “Somewhat Valuable.” Of the resources we asked about, respondents were the most drawn to training on inclusive language and implicit bias; recruitment, retention, and employee development; and solutions to eliminate socioeconomic barriers to entry in the industry. In short, our survey results indicated that not only is there a need for more DEI resources, but that Master Brewers could provide them to members, as well.

Equally important to the Master Brewers’ role in providing tools and resources to its members to help build healthy diversity is an acknowledgement that the Master Brewers organization requires internal assessment and retooling around our own culture,



norms, and practices. What can we do as an organization to be more equitable and inclusive? As a first step in addressing this challenge, the Master Brewers DEI Task Force arranged for a small team to complete a DEI self-assessment tool. This tool was developed by Dr. J. Jackson-Beckham as part of her “Crafted For All” LLC consultancy, which champions equity, inclusion, and justice in the craft brewing community through education and professional development (4). The Master Brewers DEI Task Force assessed the current environment of our individual districts and the organization as a whole. Categories for assessment included

- DEI Vision and Strategy
- Leadership and Accountability
- Inclusivity, Equity, and Justice (IEJ) Structure and Implementation
- Pipeline Development and Recruitment
- Retention and Advancement
- Assessment and Research
- IEJ Learning and Skill Development
- Internal Communication
- Marketing and External Communication
- Community Relations and Social Responsibility
- Products, Services, Events, and Spaces
- Supplier and Partner Diversity

Shortly after completing the Crafted for All self-assessment of the Master Brewers, and with the results of the member survey in hand, the Master Brewers DEI Task Force drafted a DEI Value Statement that was approved by the Executive Committee. (The document is available on the Master Brewers website.)

In early 2021, the Master Brewers DEI Task Force established a two-year action plan with four strategic objectives that were approved by the Executive Committee in August 2021:

- Promote DEI and a culture of accountability within the Master Brewers organization.
- Provide DEI tools for members for their professional development.
- Grow Master Brewers membership through DEI-focused outreach initiatives.
- Be an active participant and leader in DEI efforts across the brewing industry.

The DEI Committee action plan details projects, timelines, and budgets for each of these strategic objectives, which we are currently pursuing. Some of the key projects focus on providing DEI resources to members and providing recommendations to the Master Brewers Executive Committee on DEI best practices for our organization, including

- DEI resource gathering and Master Brewers DEI website presence
- DEI presentations/presenters available for district meetings
- Master Brewers “Norms & Practices” review and recommendations
- DEI Perspectives (topical white papers/toolkits)
- DEI Community of Practice launch
- DEI best practices webinar series
- DEI recommendations for inclusive and safe Master Brewers events
- DEI biennial benchmarking survey
- Master Brewers membership growth through a DEI lens strategy

- DEI Committee content for Master Brewers Conferences (e.g., workshops and/or technical session presentations)
- DEI support of BRU (Brewing with Respect and Unity) Coalition work

For the first half of 2022, we are focused on delivering materials to members across several platforms around the following topics:

- Leadership and accountability
- Inclusive hiring and retention
- Psychological safety in the workplace
- Taking on diversity building in the workplace
- Community engagement

### Platforms

The DEI Community of Practice (CoP) launched in January 2022, and we are excited to foster community engagement and discussion around DEI in the brewing industry and growth within our membership. We encourage all members to join the DEI CoP—the first step in building healthy diversity within our own ranks is communication in which trust, respect, and curiosity are present in equal parts. Currently the DEI CoP is moderating a forum (<https://community.mbaa.com/communities/cops>) in which members can post and respond to questions regarding workplace DEI. We hope to expand the CoP to include a book club, virtual happy hours, and a presence at Master Brewers Conferences.

The DEI Committee will continue to develop DEI Perspectives (high-level white papers, similar to the Brewery Safety Committee’s Toolbox Talks). Our most recent paper, “Hiring and Retention through a DEI Lens,” is available on the DEI web page of the Master Brewers website.

Following the 2022 content categories mentioned earlier, we will also continue our series of webinars, which are currently hosted or curated by Liz Pratt and Ren Navarro (Beer.Diversity.com). These can be accessed in real time and always include a vibrant Q & A session. Posted webinars can be viewed through the Master Brewers DEI web page.

In the months preceding the 2021 Master Brewers Conference in Cleveland, OH, the DEI Committee provided the Executive Committee with a Letter of Recommendations around the safety and inclusion of all members at the conference. Many of our recommendations were implemented, such as a DEI booth where materials were available, a wider selection of low- and non-alcoholic beverages from which to choose, and ongoing “upstander/bystander” training for members who are interested in gaining skills in diverting misconduct and harassment as it occurs. We look forward to continuing the conversation around safe and inclusive Master Brewers events in the coming months.

An important objective of the Master Brewers DEI Committee is to be an active participant and leader in DEI efforts across the brewing industry. In early 2021, a group of individuals representing industry organizations, including the BA, the ASBC, the Pink Boots Society, Cicerone, and the Master Brewers, came together to address the problem of misconduct, harassment, and violence in the brewing industry. The resulting BRU Coalition is an alliance of beer community stakeholders committed to driving positive change in the brewing industry.

The BRU Coalition will provide access to training materials and promote adoption of best practices around key themes for both employers and individuals:

- Organizational codes of conduct
- Complaint processes

- Anonymous reporting tools
- Trained complaint investigators
- Individual education
- Responsible alcohol service and consumption
- Bystander intervention training
- Support networks

Adopting evidence-based best practices for preventing and responding to harassment, discrimination, and violence can reduce incidents of misconduct and improve the well-being of those who produce, distribute, sell, and enjoy craft beer.

The Master Brewers DEI Committee is working closely with the Master Brewers Executive Committee to participate in the ongoing planning and development of the BRU Coalition. Master Brewers will either directly provide our members with meaningful resources in the above categories or will make them available through the BRU Coalition itself.

Within breweries of all sizes, within allied industries and trade associations like the Master Brewers, efforts are underway to provide individuals and organizations with tools and resources to integrate equity, inclusivity, and justice into the workplace culture. These are the guiding principles that will bring us to greater diversity. Greater diversity will better mirror the commu-

nities we serve and will create greater resiliency and healthy industry growth.

## Conclusions

As Dr. J. Jackson-Beckham outlined in her 2021 Master Brewers Conference Keynote Address (4), we can approach DEI with tools borrowed from other brewing industry hot topics, such as the management of brewhouse safety, quality assurance, and sustainability. We can approach it by applying known and measurable best practices that prioritize the outcomes we want across functions, where barriers to equity and inclusion exist. When properly integrated, these best practices will become a normal and expected part of working in the brewing industry.

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