

## From the Master Brewers DEI Committee

### Diversity in the Workplace

#### Introduction

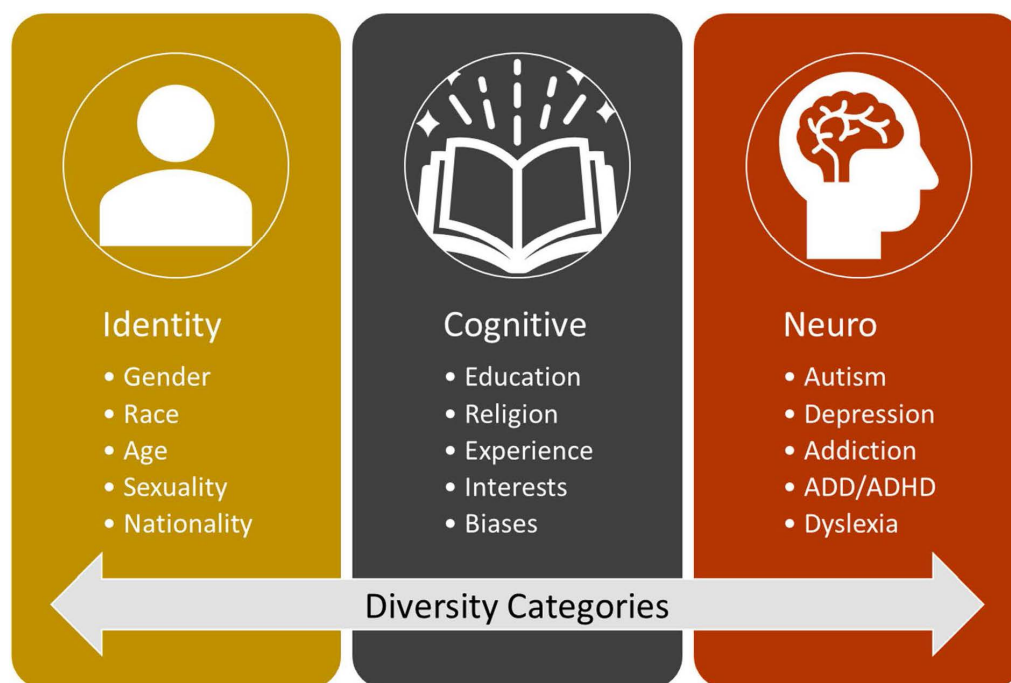
As the brewing industry continues to grow and diversify its offerings, so is the organizational composition of its members. Census data from the United States and Canada (which account for 93% of Master Brewers membership) show an increasing level of population diversification (1,2). This type of diversity, based mostly on visible attributes (e.g., gender, race, age, nationality, sexuality, etc.), can be referred to as **identity diversity** and is but an axis in a multidimensional realm (3). These dimensions can be grouped into categories based on the objective at hand (Figure 1). Two other categories are cognitive and neurodiversity. **Cognitive diversity** is composed of dimensions that may explain how an individual thinks about the world (e.g., education, values, religion, risk aversion, etc.). **Neurodiversity** encompasses neurological variations such as ADHD, depression, autistic spectrum disorder, dyslexia, and others (4). Diversity categories can be defined depending on context (e.g., financial, family, etc.), but their relevance is to identify and embrace the benefits of diversity in the workplace.

#### Benefits

The beer market is in a constant state of flux that requires a high level of adaptability. A diverse workforce faces difficulties with a variety of backgrounds, abilities, and experiences that boost creativity and innovation. Additionally, a heterogeneous group that combines the three diversity categories previously mentioned may lead to better decision making by considering myriad variables when solving a prob-

lem. This combination lends itself to an innovative workforce that can rise to the occasion when presented with unforeseen tasks (5). Furthermore, as breweries retool their product offerings to expand revenue streams, a diverse workforce can help inform the direction of the organization to maintain relevancy. New generations bring new consumer perspectives and preferences when entering the beer marketplace. Interpreting their wants and likes can be better achieved when members of their cohort are also part of the supply side. When companies grow their product portfolio, job positions tend to become more specialized. Hiring talent with the right abilities and experience for new positions can become increasingly difficult. By incorporating diversity in its hiring practices, a brewery can have a better chance of promoting existing employees for new roles and creating better opportunities for professional growth. Additionally, when hiring external resources, focusing on diversity may increase the talent pool.

Product development can come from an existing opportunity in the market or by creating new markets. With the alcohol per capita expenditure expected to decrease in the United States (6) and per capita alcohol consumption expected to decrease in Canada (7), creating new markets is likely to become a common strategy for sustaining the longevity of breweries. A recent example is the adoption of low- and non-alcoholic beers. Diversifying the workforce can help inform product development efforts that are relevant to the communities with whom they identify. Given these benefits, it is imperative that breweries make diversity a priority.



#### Challenges

Incorporating diversity into the workplace is likely to introduce its own challenges. Breweries, like any other business, have operational goals that require specific skills for their fulfillment. Some skills are obtained through a formal education, which may be regarded as a privilege in some population sectors, whereas other skills may only be learned through work experience. For that reason, leadership should take an active role in recruiting and mentoring employees to promote cross-pollination of ideas and skills. Moreover, diversity should be reflected at every level in the organization, from the executive board, to leadership, to the shop floor.

Interpersonal conflicts can arise as a diverse workforce enters the organization.

Figure 1. Diversity categories. Modified from “The Types of Diversity” by Dr. Andrea Jones-Rooy (3).

continued

Differences in identity, cognitive, and neurodiversity can cause non-productive behavior (8). Leadership must face these challenges as education opportunities and as part of the conflict resolution process.

Resistance to change, even if unintentional, can interfere with the effectiveness of a diversity program. The inertia associated with diversity change management is known as diversity resistance (9). Breweries seeking to benefit from a diverse workforce must invest in educational resources that align with their diversity priorities. After establishing a diversity statement, the organization should establish a recurring training program (e.g., quarterly, semiannual, etc.) for employees at every level. Training efforts should include the following areas (10):

- Diversity sensitivity
- Integrity with differences
- Interacting with differences
- Valuing differences
- Team inclusion
- Managing conflict over differences
- Self-bias assessments

It should be noted that new joiner training isn't enough to generate a lasting impact. Breweries should measure gaps in training areas and address them through continuous learning. As employees are trained, gaps are bound to shift. Tools like surveys and exit interviews can help assess the state of these gaps.

## Resources

Resource	Type	URL
MBAA DEI	Webinars and whitepapers	<a href="https://www.mbaa.com/DEI/Pages/default.aspx">https://www.mbaa.com/DEI/Pages/default.aspx</a>
Right To Be	Organization	<a href="https://righttobe.org">https://righttobe.org</a>
Crafted For All	Entity	<a href="https://craftedforall.com">https://craftedforall.com</a>
BRU Coalition	Group of DEI entities in the brewing industry	<a href="https://www.brewersassociation.org/press-releases/industry-groups-form-coalition-to-foster-an-equitable-and-inclusive-brewing-community">https://www.brewersassociation.org/press-releases/industry-groups-form-coalition-to-foster-an-equitable-and-inclusive-brewing-community</a>
UC San Francisco	Training	<a href="https://diversity.ucsf.edu/programs-resources/training/unconscious-bias-training">https://diversity.ucsf.edu/programs-resources/training/unconscious-bias-training</a>
Project Implicit	Bias self-test by Harvard University	<a href="https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html">https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html</a>
The Communication Network	DEI resource compendium	<a href="https://comnetworkdei.org/dei-resources">https://comnetworkdei.org/dei-resources</a>
Build an employee resource group	Article	<a href="https://www.indeed.com/lead/how-to-start-employee-resource-group-program-tips-and-best-practices?hl=en&amp;co=US">https://www.indeed.com/lead/how-to-start-employee-resource-group-program-tips-and-best-practices?hl=en&amp;co=US</a>
Making Spaces Safer	Book	<a href="https://shawnapotter.com/home#/making-spaces-safer-book">https://shawnapotter.com/home#/making-spaces-safer-book</a>

## Actions

Ensuring the survival of a DEI strategy requires the entire organization's effort. Core documentation and programs that guide a brewery's decisions must be updated to include its diversity objectives. The following should be revised as part of the implementation of a diversity in the workplace plan:

- Value statement
- Code of ethics
- Code of conduct
- Diversity assessments
- Leadership support
- Continuous learning

Once updated, documentation should be revised on a yearly basis. It should be noted that some of these documents and activities are likely to change more than others, but in order to stay relevant in an ever-changing world, an organization's priorities and methods must evolve.

## Discussion

Diversity extends to more than what meets the eye. Identity, cognitive, and neurodiversity are but three ways to categorize what makes each person unique. Implementing diversity in the workplace can have numerous benefits, ranging from inclusiveness of employees and innovation to future-proofing the organization. However, building a di-

verse workforce takes a conscious effort from the organization to ensure its effectiveness and longevity. The brewing industry must understand its own biases and overcome diversity resistance if lasting change is to be made.

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