

CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS:

Embedding Diversity & Inclusion within a Pharmaceutical Company

How Biogen included Diversity & Inclusion within and across the organization's culture and strategy.

Biogen, a multinational biotechnology corporation dedicated to neuroscience and neurological disease, endeavored to embed a philosophy of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) within the organizational mission and corporate culture.

Recognizing the value of diversity, Biogen developed an organization-wide strategy to reflect and operationalize this philosophy in the workplace, within its research and development priorities, and as an expectation for their external ventures and partnerships.

APPROACH

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGIC COUNCIL

Biogen established the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Council (DISC) and tasked it with addressing how diversity, inclusion, and equity can intersect and enhance the company's strategic priorities. The DISC offers a governance structure to guide diversity initiatives and ensure accountability.

The DISC developed a three-tiered strategy for global diversity and inclusion:



Build Inclusive Talent Systems by disrupting bias that may occur during key moments of decision-making across the talent life-cycle



Own Diversity & Inclusion by embedding D&I principles and practices into all parts of the business



Drive Health Equity in the Disease Areas We Treat by understanding and addressing the existing health disparities and inequities

EXAMPLE

Part of Biogen's product portfolio is treatment for multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's disease, both of which disproportionately affect women. In addition, the patient, the majority of caregivers are women.

These realities drive Biogen's diversity priority setting. Biogen works to promote women's voices within the company and embed gender equity into its governance structure.



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INTERNAL STRATEGIES

Within internal company operations, Biogen integrated the Workforce Development, Diversity, & Inclusion principles (WDDI) adopted by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO).

Additionally, internal groups (e.g., Employee Resource Networks - ERNs) were established for employees who share life experiences and interests. These groups enable knowledge exchange, mentorship, and support, with focus areas including:



- **Disability**
- **Veterans**
- **Multiculturalism**
- **LGBTQ**
- **Gender equality**
- **Early-career professionals**

EXTERNAL STRATEGIES

Biogen engages responsibly with the external community, both commercially and philanthropically, through several D&I initiatives:

Advocacy and Community Engagement – including advocacy for public policy issues affecting underrepresented communities and providing directed education, engagement, and support for students from underrepresented communities in the Scientific, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field.

Supplier Diversity Initiative – Biogen’s procurement procedures ensure that small businesses and enterprises owned by underrepresented groups have an equitable opportunity in competing for Biogen’s business offerings. Partnering with a diverse network both fulfils a social responsibility and also spurs economic growth, fosters innovation, and provides Biogen with a competitive advantage.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Biogen measures D&I objectives using performance indicators based on a process called “materiality assessments”, conducted every few years to identify corporate responsibility issues most important to the business and its stakeholders. They correlate these issues against those deemed a priority internally by Biogen employees. Examples of indicators include:

- Proportion of spending on local suppliers
- New suppliers that were screened with social criteria
- Negative social impacts in the supply chain and actions taken
- Diversity of governance bodies and employees
- Ratio of basic salary and remuneration of women to men

RESULTS

Since 2014, Biogen has achieved a score of 100% on the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index, was named best Workplaces for Women Italy, and Forbes’ Best Employers for Diversity in 2019.

At Biogen, integrating commercial strategy and social D&I objectives resulted in financially sustainable and socially impactful programs.

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CONCLUSION

Biogen is an example of how a sponsor can prioritize health equity in its research vision through emphasizing and supporting diversity and inclusion in its business functions, and it has been recognized globally for developing and applying inclusive practices.

The company’s efforts toward inclusivity translate into an environment where everyone has a voice, creates a culture of respect and trust, and drives creativity by asking for alternate perspectives. The commitment to D&I generates employee ownership and responsibility to the principle, as well as company-wide accountability for its successful execution.

For citations and more information on this case, please see the [MRCT Center toolkit](#).