
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Note: These guidelines are developed for SCNetwork by Diversity and Beyond Inc (www.DiversityandBeyond.com). Copying, redistributing, or adapting these for non-SCNetwork purposes requires written permission from Diversity and Beyond. They can be contacted at Rekha.Verma@DiversityandBeyond.com.

Introduction

This document aims to help SCNetwork members to develop and apply policies, procedures and processes that support inclusion, integrity and the application of sound judgement, including where there are policy gaps or ambiguity. The document will be kept under regular review and the principles revised as necessary. All SCNetwork members should refer to these guiding principles, which are based on widely accepted principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB).

The guiding principles will meet the needs of SCNetwork's members in terms of DEIB. The principles laid out here reflect SCNetwork's approach and commitment to DEIB and are not intended to be prescriptive nor exhaustive and will, as indicated, provide a basis for the use of judgement, and evolve over time to ensure that the principles remain relevant.

We look forward to working together to further develop policies, procedures, and processes under these guidelines to support the application of the guidelines and evaluate their effectiveness in the context of a rapidly changing world of work.

Part A: Context

At SCNetwork, we believe diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) are integral to how we connect or work with new and existing members and to others we interact with. We recognise that SCNetwork membership comprises different industries, provinces, and organizations who are at different points in their DEIB journey. Our collective commitment to DEIB is capable of wider influence in our respective ecosystems.

Applying the guiding principles will, we believe, help us foster and embed inclusion in all SCNetwork's work, programs, in-person meetings as well as our interactions with each other. They will help us minimize negative impacts and discrimination that members of marginalized communities are especially vulnerable to, as well as promote good relations between all members. These guiding principles will support us to demonstrate that we are proactively fostering inclusion when developing our programs, conducting our events and undertaking all our work.

Part B: Key Definitions

Diversity describes the range of human differences and identities, whether they are inherent (by birth) or acquired (by experience or volition).

As senior HR professionals, we know these differences can be the basis for exclusion or inclusion, and a determinant of opportunities or lack of and experiences, positive and negative, across the employee life cycle and member experiences.

We also know identities intersect and foreground and recede at different points raising issues requiring attention. This can compound negative impacts and exclusion. They include but are not limited to: Age and generations; sex, gender identity, gender expression, including transgender, sexual orientation; mental and physical abilities, body size, level of health and appearance; personality traits, behaviors, belief; race, ethnicity, culture; nationality; religion; language and accent; location (such as rural and urban); dependent status and family status; socio-economic; education, etc.

Equity refers to fairness and justice and is different from treating everyone the same. Equity recognizes that we do not all start from the same place, and we must acknowledge and make adjustments to address imbalances.

Instead of trying to change some people to fit the organization, equity focuses on transforming the organizations/associations to include all people and prioritize humanity.

Inclusion is about fostering a culture that embraces, respects, accepts and values differences. Inclusion is an intentional effort to meet individual unique needs of each person.

Belonging is a feeling of psychological safety, support, acceptance, and inclusion thereby allowing people to be their authentic selves.

Intersectionality is the concept that describes the ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class, and other forms of discrimination “intersect” to create unique dynamics and effects. All forms of inequality are mutually reinforcing and should be analyzed and addressed simultaneously to prevent one form of inequality from reinforcing another.

Part C: Guiding Principles in our work

These cover:

1. Membership
2. Committees and Boards
3. Partner Selection
4. Programs
5. Events
6. Communication

1. Membership

- SCNetwork welcomes HR professionals with varying identities and backgrounds. It prioritizes professionals who are interested in joining and contributing to a network of executive leaders, CHROs, senior HR leaders and talent officers, experienced consultants, academics, and business advisors.
- We are committed to making sure there is no discrimination in our processes for new and existing members. We will review, identify, and address any existing or potential barriers to membership specifically as experienced by historically marginalized groups.

2. Committees and Boards

- Volunteer committees and boards will be formed and operated equitably.
- The role of SCNetwork board members includes building a diverse and inclusive culture, reflecting diversity in its own ranks, creating an inclusive culture on the board, apply a DEIB lens when making decisions, as well as updating its charters, bylaws, vision, and mission.
- Board and committee members are expected to increase their awareness of their own biases and integrate inclusive thinking and behaviors into all the ways that the board and the committees operate.
- The board and the respective committees will have appropriate mechanisms in place to evaluate their performance against these guidelines.

3. Partner Selection

- It is important for SCNetwork to work with partners, and vendors who have inclusive policies within their own firms, management operations and display commitment to foster DEIB.

4. Programs

The design and delivery of programs should incorporate the following:

- An evaluation against these guiding principles.
- Mindfulness of the themes, the content, our choice of speakers, in our discussions and openness as we debate these topics and learn and apply these principles.
- Consideration of DEIB implications even in areas not traditionally associated with it thereby rendering our work even more meaningful and relevant.
- Peer review and feedback on programs.
- Evaluate the format of programming content for accessibility.
- SCNetwork will use the Canadian Centre for Diversity & Inclusion calendar as the mechanism to ensure we do not hold programs, meetings, or events on observed days of religious and cultural significance. Should a member feel that an important religious, culture day is not included in the calendar, they should let a member of the committee know. SCNetwork will try to move the session or make an alternate arrangement.

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- When considering the content of programming, we strive to acknowledge and respect important religious holidays and cultural awareness month or days of observance.
 - For Example: This includes awareness raising about different cultures, or diversity themes such as the International Day for People with Disabilities (IDPWD), International day against Homophobia, Black history month or Bell's 'Let's Talk' day among others.
 - Promote celebrating diversity in its many forms, members are free to share the history of religious/cultural days and other significant events.
 - For example, Kwanzaa, the meaning of Hanukkah, the joy of Christmas, the significance of Holi, and the origins of Boxing Day, to name a few.
 - All speakers are expected to respect our DEIB guiding principles and ensure professional, respectful content and discussions.
 - A disclaimer should be added to sessions with all external presenters to state that the views presented are those of the speaker and do not necessarily represent the views of SCNetwork.

5. In Person Events

- Our in-person external venue meeting spaces should be carefully selected.
- For example: Ensure they are accessible for wheelchair users, people with reduced mobility, seating for people with larger bodies, and people with visual, auditory, or other impairments.
- Accessibility is not just physical but also historical. We should consider the kind of impact a venue has on people and emotions. The venue for the in-person meeting should be decided after due consideration is given to the past legacy of the venue.
- Catering at the venue should have enough choices for those with religious or dietary preferences.
- For example: Halal, alcoholic, non-alcoholic beverages, non-dairy etc.
- When deciding gifts for the members, care should be taken to select culturally sensitive gifts. These should be decided based on consultations with members, where possible members should be offered a bouquet of gifts to choose from.
- We should use inclusive language on event invitations to ensure both members and their plus-ones (when invited) feel welcome.
- For Example: Making sure people have space to list their pronouns on their name tags as well specific additional needs to be communicated as well.
- A Land Acknowledgment will be implemented at the start of our meetings, programming, and events, based on the location of the host/speaker.

6. Communication

The way we communicate translates through words and images. Communication can reflect the people we work for and with, and it can reinforce discrimination and marginalization of specific groups of people.

When selecting language as well as photos and branding in all SCNetwork communications, we will pay attention to the following:

- Our website will strive to use inclusive and respectful language. The images on our website must be diverse, representative of different identities, abilities, body types, gender identity and expression. While selecting images, we should be attentive to how we select photos and videos and the subjects within them including power/agency being given to one person or image in the photo over another.
- The language used around DEIB is ever evolving. Context, country, culture, connotation, and individual preferences influence what language is acceptable.
- For example, language that is offensive may be reclaimed by the group it was used to harm. The usage of the term “queer” by the LGBTQ2+ community is one such example.
- When referring to a person, it is advisable to use a “person first language” instead of an “identity first language” unless you know that an individual prefers identity-first language.
- For example, “person with disability” is preferred over a “disabled person”. As these terms evolve it is always best practice to ask an individuals preferred way to be addressed.
- Members are welcome to use their pronouns and the pronunciation of their names.
- All communication related to programs and events must be inclusive and respectful. This includes careful usage of metaphors and terms.
- For example, the following terms should not be used: Blacklist, Black Hat, Grandfathered, Handicapped, Hip Hip Hurray, Chinese wall, to name a few.

If you notice something that should be added, changed, or removed to these guiding principles, or a member has a suggestion or a concern about any aspect of SCNetwork, they are invited to reach out to the Co-Presidents with a suggestion or complaint asking for situation, alternate/ desirable course of action.

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