

Ten Characteristics of an Inclusive Organization

1. *It accepts diversity and inclusion as a way of life.*

In an inclusive organization, one sees diversity at every level within the institution. Many cultures, traditions, beliefs, languages, and lifestyles are prevalent in both the workforce as well as the customer populations, and are respected without judgment. People are viewed as individuals who have come together to coordinate action towards the achievement of common goals.

2. *It evaluates individual and group performance on the basis of observable and measurable behaviors and competencies.*

Employees have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are evaluated based upon their actions, not the opinions of others. Goals and expectations are achievable.

3. *It operates under transparent policies and procedures.*

There are no hidden rules of behavior that may be apparent to some groups and unknown to others.

4. *It is consistent in its interactions with everyone.*

There is no double standard. Rules are applied appropriately and regularly throughout the institution. No one group is favored over another.

5. *It creates and maintains a learning culture.*

Career development is encouraged and supported for all employees by management. Mentoring programs are robust, and include both formal and informal systems that meet the individual learning needs of all employees. Mistakes are recognized, and their consequences addressed, but they are viewed as learning opportunities rather than character flaws.

6. *It has a comprehensive and easily accessible system of conflict resolution at all levels.*

It recognizes that conflict is inevitable in a complex multicultural organization, and it has systems in place to address conflict in a non-confrontational manner that respects the dignity and confidentiality of all parties.

7. *It recognizes that it is part of the community that it serves.*

Employees, managers, and customers all come from the community. An inclusive organization is an active participant in community activities, and plays a vital role in addressing its needs.

8. *It lives its mission and core values.*

People work for an organization because they believe in its purpose and goals. An organization that promises one thing and delivers another, risks losing the trust and confidence of its workforce as well as its customers.

9. *It values earned privilege over unearned privilege.*

Employees are recognized for their actions and accomplishments, not simply because of their titles or degrees. Customers are treated with respect regardless of their socioeconomic status or class.

10. *It accepts and embraces change.*

Change is inevitable. An inclusive organization recognizes that current and past practices must constantly be reviewed and updated to meet the changing demands and needs of the industry, workforce, and customers.