



What Are the 4 Types of Diversity?

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It's easy to say and hear the word diversity without actually ever knowing what it really means. But with only a general understanding of the word, it's likely that there are some types of diversity being overlooked.

When you're cultivating a diverse workplace, having adequate representation is important. A diverse workplace positively affects:

- Work environment
- Financial returns
- Overall business strategy
- The opinions of people outside of your organization

There are four different types of diversity: internal, external, organizational, and worldview—and you should aim to represent them all. Keep reading to learn more about each one and how diversity affects the workplace.

Why Is Workplace Diversity Important?



understanding of exactly why workplace diversity matters.

These are some of the ways diversity influences your workplace, workforce, and bottom line:

- **Varied perspectives** – Different personal experiences and backgrounds bring a wider variety of perspectives.
- **Better problem-solving** – Varied points of view result in a more well-rounded workforce—it makes people work harder, more creatively, and deliver a higher quality of work, according to [Scientific American](#).
- **Larger audience** – Your diverse workforce shows your commitment to equal opportunities, giving your company a positive reputation and capturing a larger share of the market.
- **More job applicants** – Job seekers will be more likely to want to work with your company, which in turn, gives you a larger pool of applicants to choose from.
- **Higher profits** – With high levels of racial and ethnic diversity, companies are 33-35% more likely to outperform their industry averages financially, and with high levels of gender diversity, companies are 15-21% more likely, according to ongoing studies by [McKinsey & Company](#).

Having a diverse team from different backgrounds can boost employee engagement and therefore productivity, but beyond the business-related benefits, creating a workplace that is comfortable for diverse groups is incredibly valuable. Many people aren't given the opportunities in life that they deserve because of perceived differences. Establishing a workplace that is inviting to those groups and has zero tolerance for targeted behavior and discrimination against them is a morally conscious decision that makes the entire company and your community at large a better place.

The 4 Types of Diversity

There are a lot of factors that play into diversity—some things are visible on the outside, but others are just a part of the way people were born. These distinctions are the grounds for how the four categories of diversity were created.

A good way to think of the four types of diversity is as dimensions or classifications that each hold their own list of different applicable subsets.



Internal diversity characteristics are ones related to situations that a person is born into. They are things that a person didn't choose for themselves and are impossible for anyone to change.

Here are some examples of internal diversity:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Age
- National origin
- Sexual orientation
- Cultural identity
- Assigned sex
- Gender identity
- Physical ability
- Mental ability

#2 External Diversity

In the context of diversity, the term external is used to describe things that are related to a person but aren't characteristics that a person was born with. While external diversity can be heavily influenced by other people and their surroundings, even forcibly so, they ultimately are aspects that a person can change and often do over time.

Some examples of external diversity include:

- Personal interests
- Education
- Appearance
- Citizenship
- Religious beliefs
- Location
- Familial status
- Relationship status
- Socioeconomic status
- Life experiences

#3 Organizational Diversity



between people that are assigned to them by an organization—essentially, these are the characteristics within a workplace that distinguish one employee from another.

Regardless of your position or the pay you receive, any form of work that you do solidifies your belonging to an organization. Whether you're working for a private, nonprofit, public sector, or governmental organization, and even if you do volunteer work for free, you are a part of an organized group. This could be as small as a group of two or anything higher, as long as it's more than one independent person, that constitutes an organization.

However, there are different subsets within organizational diversity, which include:

- Job function
- Place of work
- Management status
- Employment status
- Pay type
- Seniority
- Union affiliation

#4 Worldview Diversity

The fourth type of diversity is commonly known as worldview. Even though there are a multitude of factors that come together to form our worldview, including our internal, external, and organizational diversity characteristics, at the end of the day, everyone has a worldview that they align with.

Worldview diversity is another diversity type that changes with time—we conceptualize the world differently as we have new experiences and learn more about ourselves and each other.

There are still nuances within our worldviews, but some examples include:

- Political beliefs
- Moral compass
- Outlook on life
- Epistemology



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Education is key to understanding one another and ourselves—through education, people become more knowledgeable of other diverse groups and diversify themselves along the way.

Sources:

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