

SOCIETAL & REPUTATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

DEI in Focus: Tracking the Trends Reshaping Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Updated: March 13, 2025

GRAVITY
RESEARCH

Post-inauguration, DEI changes have surged, with a sharper focus on policies vulnerable to legal or fiduciary scrutiny.

- 1 **DEI-related policy changes have surged 340% post-inauguration.** This follows a slight dip in publicly-announced changes between the election and inauguration.
- 2 **41% of companies have explicitly cited Trump's executive orders on DEI,** but more are citing “new” or “evolving legal and social environments.”
- 3 **Among those making changes, at least 48% revised or eliminated hiring diversity goals.** Others have revised DEI language and DEI considerations for executive compensation.

HOW WE MEASURED IT

Gravity Research has been tracking publicly reported changes to corporate DEI policies since mid-2024 to assess how the DEI landscape is evolving

OUR DATABASE

Gravity Research analyzed our database of publicly reported changes to corporate DEI policies June 27, 2024 – March 13, 2025.* We tracked...

- **Types of DEI initiatives** — such as goals for hiring and supplier diversity, workplace trainings, and third-party reporting — to assess which verticals of DEI corporations feel are most at risk of scrutiny
- **Stated reasons for change** — such as internal policy reviews, activist pressure, shifting legal environment, and federal actions — to offer insight into communication strategies and drivers of pressure
- **How changes were communicated** — such as leaked internal employee memos, company announcements, and X posts — to track phrasing communication and subsequent discourse from stakeholders

VARIABLES WE TRACKED

- ✓ Activist pressure
- ✓ DEI teams and other staff
- ✓ Employee Resource Groups
- ✓ Executive pay tied to DEI goals
- ✓ Executive representation goals
- ✓ External philanthropy and funding
- ✓ Hiring diversity goals
- ✓ HRC CEI, third-party surveys
- ✓ Pride sponsorships and funding
- ✓ Senior or Chief DEI roles
- ✓ Supplier diversity goals
- ✓ Website DEI language
- ✓ Workplace bathroom policies
- ✓ Workplace pronoun policies
- ✓ Workplace trainings

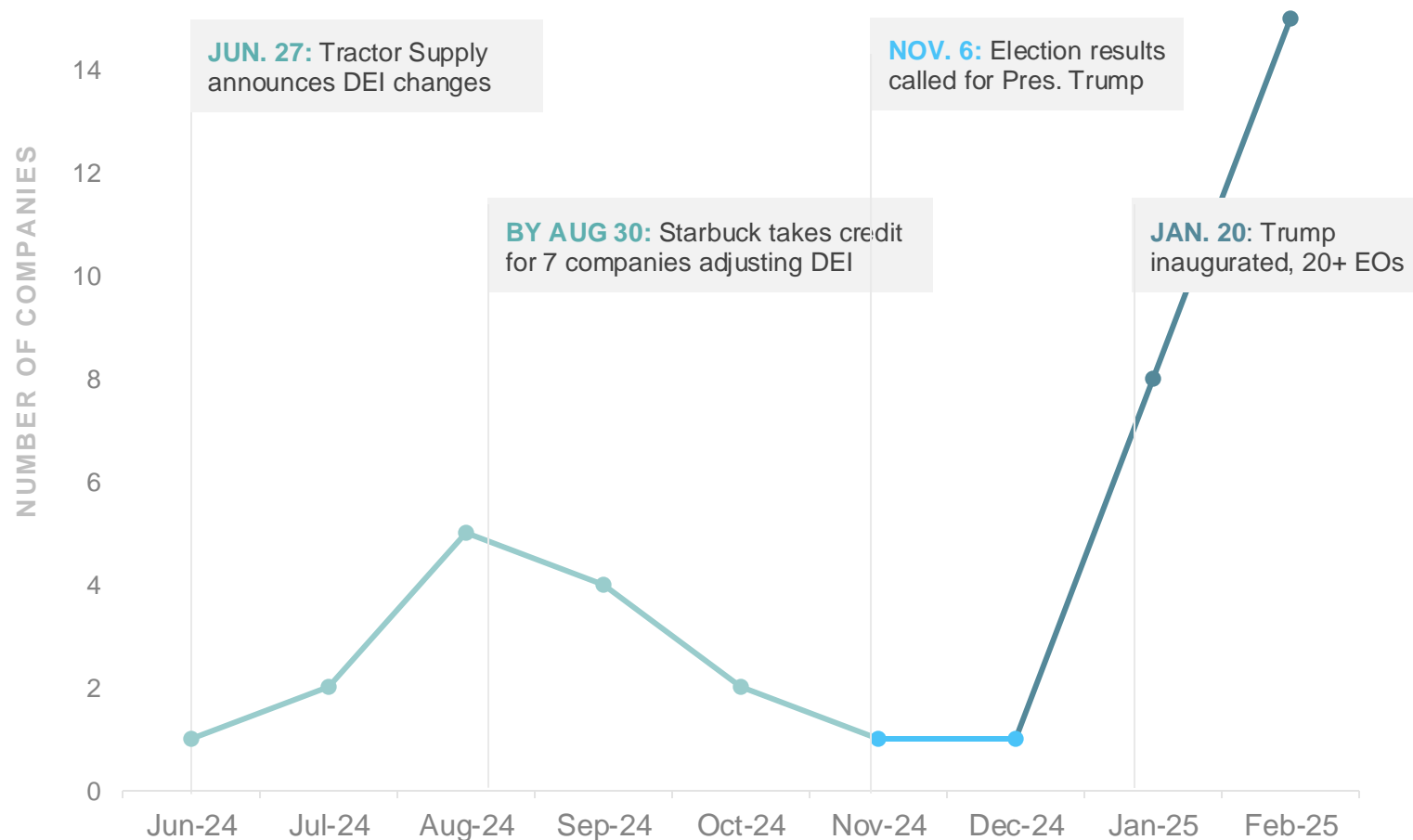
**All collected data and analysis of changes are based on Gravity Research's tabulation of publicly available/reported information as of 3/13/25. Data from 41 companies was analyzed*

OVERALL TRENDS

Reported DEI policy changes surge following Trump's ascension

Over the last year corporate DEI changes have dominated discourse. Gravity Research has tracked 350+ companies that have announced or publicly implemented changes to DEI policies or initiatives since June 2024, with a sharp increase following President Trump's inauguration

Number of new tracked companies who made public or publicized changes to DEI



PRE-ELECTION (JUN. – OCT. 2024)

- Social media attacks against corporations, led largely by **Robby Starbuck** dominated DEI discourse.
- Narratives of “woke overreach” gained traction, fueling conservative backlash ahead of the election.

ELECTION (NOV. 2024 – JAN. 20, 2025)

- A notable lull, as the transition took shape

POST-INAUGURATION (JAN. 20 – MAR. 2025)

- Pres. Trump signed **seven executive orders on DEI** Jan. 20 - Feb. 11, framing them as a return to “merit-based” principles.
- GOP investigations and right-wing media attacks escalated, targeting corporate DEI, university diversity programs, and ESG



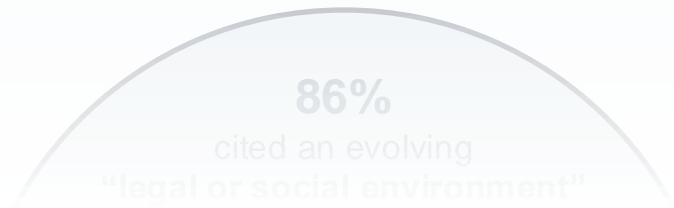
COMMUNICATIONS

Recent changes cite “legal environment” and “business priorities”

Communications post-inauguration associate changes to ongoing internal reviews of shifting external pressures and business priorities, while emphasizing a sustained commitment to DEI values. Notably, communications in 2024 tended to not credit activist campaigns.

STATED REASONS FOR CHANGE

Of the companies who made public or publicized changes to DEI post-inauguration, at least...



OTHER TRENDS

POST-INAUGURATION

Corporate values of inclusion and belonging still stand:

77% explicitly mentioned a continued focus on
“inclusion”, “belonging”, or “accessibility”

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EXTERNAL CHANGES

Public changes to externally-facing DEI efforts have dropped post-election

Pre-election changes emphasized external DEI policies like HRC CEI reporting and scholarships, some key focuses of notable activist pressure. Recent rollbacks have been notably quieter on these fronts, reflecting shifting priorities and drivers of pressure post-election

Of the companies who made public or publicized changes to DEI, at least...

WHAT

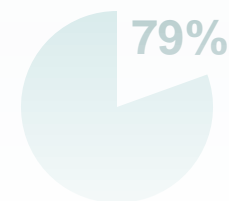
DETAILS

PRE-ELECTION¹

POST-ELECTION²

Communicated changes to **philanthropy**

Align supported causes directly to core business areas and themes



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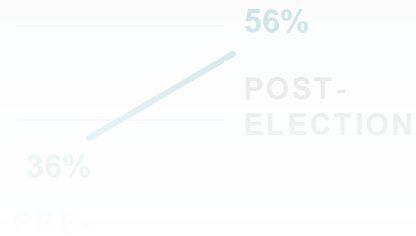
INTERNAL CHANGES

Hiring and representation goals dominate changes post-election

Companies are adapting hiring process, employee resources, and dedicated staffing and team by messaging and goal setting, and in some cases, cutting them out completely

Share of companies who made public or publicized changes about the following, sorted by most popular post-election actions and categorized by **staff**, **workplace**, and **goal-oriented** efforts...

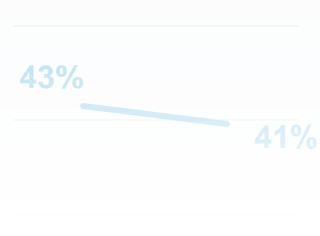
Hiring Diversity Goals



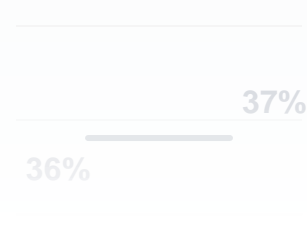
Exec. Rep. Goals



DEI Teams



Workplace DEI Trainings



TRENDS

A focus on refining representation goals

- This is likely driven by rhetoric from the Trump admin, which has criticized DEI for lacking merit-based criteria and causing

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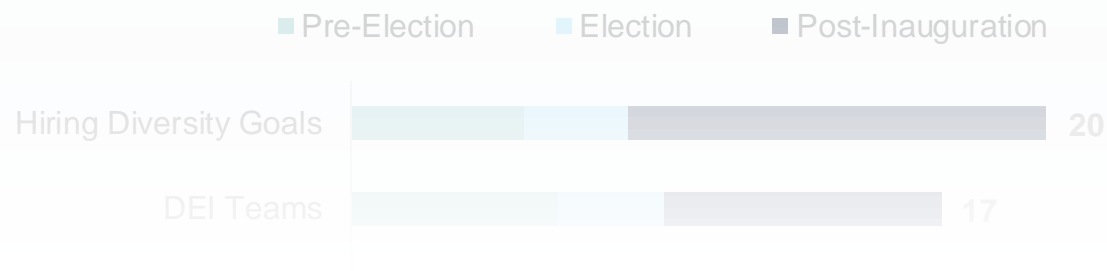
LOOKING FORWARD

The future of DEI is likely a balancing act — not a battle

The future of diversity and inclusion is not a zero-sum battle, but a complex negotiation of corporate values, business interests, legal frameworks, and social expectations

DATA TRENDS IN CORPORATE ADJUSTMENTS

Number of corporations changing, sorted by most common tactics overall...



THE BIG PICTURE

Although corporate DEI initiatives are being rebranded, scaled back, or sidelined due to fears of Trump-era executive orders and legal scrutiny, **they are not disappearing**

- Companies are adapting to a new DEI normal, which appears to align with the

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Interested in learning how Gravity
can help your company **navigate**
reputational risks?

Reach out to Katie Collins at kcollins@gravityresearch.com to start
the conversation

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