

# DEI Experiences in Ramsey County's Industrial Sector

Monicat Data, in partnership with the Saint Paul Port Authority, conducted a DEI Manufacturing Study to better understand the experiences of both employees and supervisors in Ramsey County's light industrial sector. Using a combination of focus groups and online surveys, Monicat Data connected with a total of 161 individuals, with a balanced split between employees and supervisors of 3:1.

## Demographic Snapshot

Of those surveyed, there was almost an equal number of males and females, with 64% identifying as white or Caucasian, and 21% identifying as Asian. From an age perspective, there was a wide range from 18 to 65+. Notably, 50% of supervisors and 76% of employees who took the survey had only been with their current employer for five years or less.

***TO CONSIDER:** Expand the research to include a more racially diverse sample and segment data by short-term and long-term employment status.*

## Assessing DEI Readiness

When evaluating an organization's readiness for DEI initiatives, an impressive 90% of supervisors believed that top executives were either "supportive" or "very supportive" of DEI when making hiring and promotion decisions. To foster a diverse and inclusive workplace, the top initiatives that were cited in the survey results include actively eliminating bias and discrimination, along with recruiting a diverse team of employees. According to the survey, most respondents believe that a diverse and inclusive workplace enhances employee engagement and retention, brings in a wider range of perspectives and ideas, and fosters increased innovation and creativity. Furthermore, when asked about the benefits of an internal DEI program, the top advantages highlighted were creating a positive workplace culture, improving employee retention, and fostering increased collaboration.

Only 13% of supervisors indicated that their organization had a strong DEI program in place that was positively impacting business success. Another 30% shared that their organizations have programs in place, and they have room for improvement. Another 20% of supervisors expressed that their organizations have invested in DEI efforts but struggle with prioritization and maintenance. 17% acknowledged that their organizations could benefit from a DEI program, but they either lack the resources needed or don't know where to start.

The chart below illustrates feedback from supervisors on whether their organizations have DEI strategies in place that focus on key initiatives.

	Yes	In Progress or Considering	No/Don't Know
RETENTION	27%	40%	33%
RECRUITMENT	40%	40%	20%
JOB PROMOTION	26%	37%	37%
BIAS TRAINING (SUPERVISOR LEVEL)	70%	33%	27%
CULTURAL ACCOMODATIONS	53%	n/a	47%

***TO CONSIDER:** Through HR roundtables, gather best practices and innovative solutions. This is also the justification behind the identifying best practices and creating tools that organizations can use to guide them through their journey with foundational materials in place.*

## Diversifying Leadership: Commitment and Impact

40% of respondents believe that a lack of cultural diversity in leadership hampers racial equality in the workplace. Moreover, 27% believe the absence of cultural role models and mentors also impacts the situation. In the quest for a more diverse leadership team, only 17% of supervisors feel their organization is fully committed, 60% are somewhat committed, and 20% are not committed yet but are considering it.

When asked about the potential for promotions, 17% believe their age puts them at a disadvantage, while 13% feel like their race is holding them back. Another 11% cited their country of origin and/or language barriers as a hinderance. And that's not all - some respondents also mentioned gender, disability, and veteran status as potential barriers to advancement, although to a lesser extent.

***TO CONSIDER:** This could be one of the most important concepts to lean into and better understand. Relevant information could include best practices, opportunities, gaps, and potential impacts. Further research and discussions during the HR roundtables would be logical next steps.*

## Impact of Policies and Practices: Work-Life Balance and Transparency

The policies and management decisions that have the most impact on an organization's culture and personal job satisfaction were identified as work-life balance and flexible schedules, transparency and open communication, management decisions that prioritize employee feedback, and management decisions that prioritize DEI in hiring, promotions, and training. These factors play a crucial role in shaping a positive and satisfying work environment.

***TO CONSIDER:** Through HR roundtables, gather best practices and innovative solutions.*

## DEI Training: Gaps and Opportunities

Our survey revealed some gaps in DEI training for employees. Almost half of those surveyed (47%) were not aware of DEI training being made available to **new employees**. Another 23% indicated that there was training available, but it could be enhanced. On a positive note, 23% of respondents found their organization's new employee DEI training program to be comprehensive. As for ongoing training, 40% of supervisors have not received any DEI training, while the remaining 60% did and found it to be useful.

***TO CONSIDER:** Do further research to better understand what kinds of trainings are beneficial. What makes a program effective? How do organizations fit training into their normal course of business?*

## Discrimination in the Workplace

Only 9% of respondents admitted to personally experiencing discrimination in their current position, but 30% say they have witnessed it around them. In addition, 18% of people surveyed believe they have been treated differently because of their age and another 13% because of their gender or race.

***TO CONSIDER:** Segment results to better understand by demographics (age, race, gender, etc.) for those who have or have not experienced discrimination. Enhance info by connecting with a more racially diverse audience, filling a gap from the first phase of this project.*

## Immigration: Barriers and Perceptions

Most individuals do not perceive any barriers for immigrants to progress within their organizations. However, 14% of individuals feel that there is a lack of opportunities available to immigrants. Additionally, 12% believe that cultural and social stereotypes hinder their advancement, while 5% believe there is outright discrimination and bias against immigrants.

***TO CONSIDER:** Verify the immigration status of those surveyed and collect more responses if needed to increase relevancy. Consider asking employers about the role new immigrants play in their strategy to stay fully staffed. Once more information is available, leverage as a brainstorming activity during an HR roundtable.*

## Mentoring: Varying Perspectives

Interestingly, only 27% of supervisors believe they would have had a better experience at their place of employment if they had received mentoring. In contrast, 54% of front-line staff believe that they would have benefited from mentoring opportunities.

***TO CONSIDER:** Do further research to better understand how successful mentorship relationships are developed and managed. Through HR roundtables, gather best practices and innovative solutions.*

## Next Steps

1. Share results with stakeholders (Q4 2023)
2. Expand upon the research (if financially feasible). (Q4 2023)
3. Leverage data for HR roundtable discussions (Q4 2023 + Q1 2024)
4. Collect, analyze, and report information from HR roundtable discussions (Q1 2024)
5. Host employer focus groups to react to the information from step 4 (Q2 2024)
6. Work with a third party to convert information into a DEI workbook with best practices and tools included (Q2 2024)
7. Identify ways to distribute the workbook with employers throughout Ramsey County (Q3 2024)