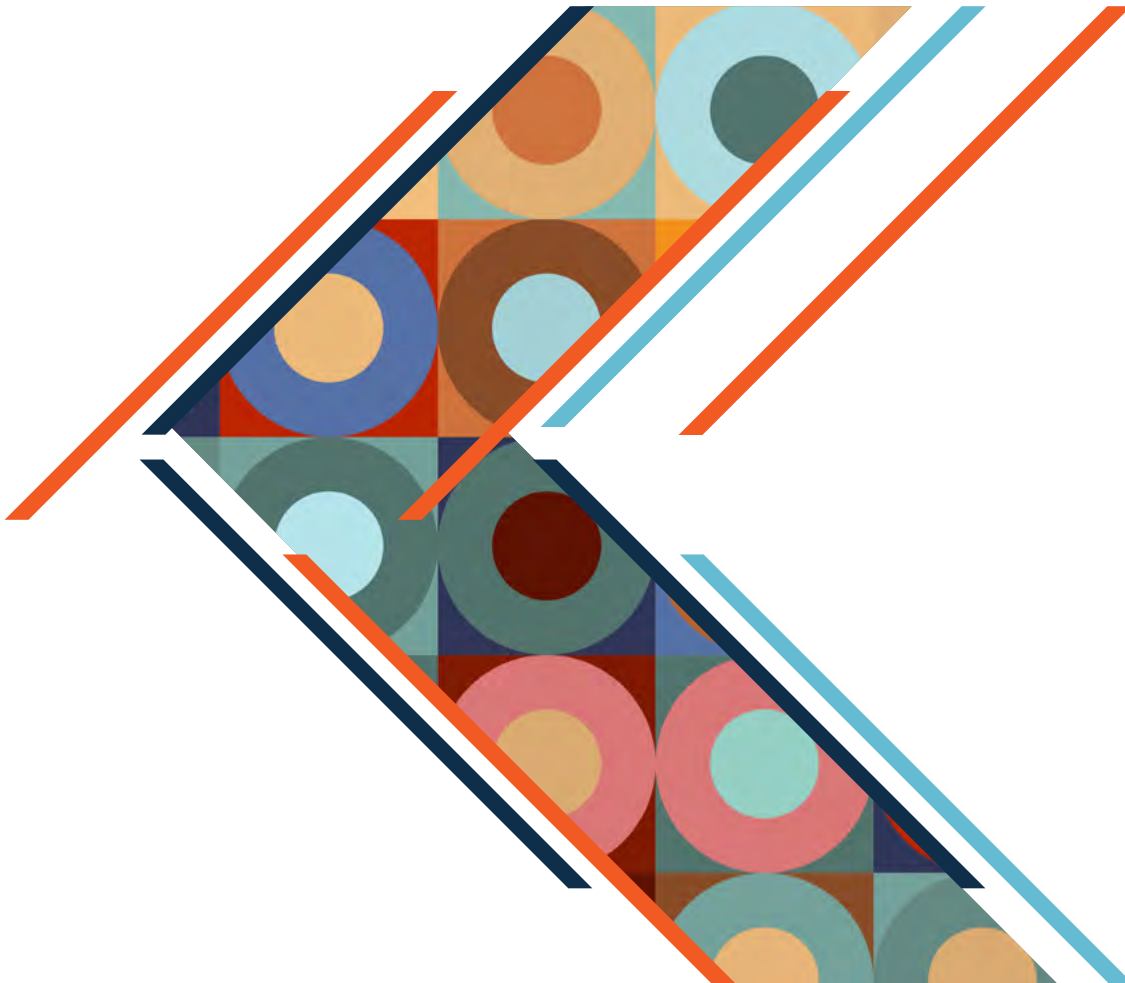




# EMPOWERING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN CORPORATE SECURITY

*Rachel Briggs, OBE, and Paul Sizemore,  
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**EMPOWERING DIVERSITY,  
EQUITY, AND INCLUSION  
IN CORPORATE SECURITY**

Full Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**We know that... diverse teams are stronger teams. They make better business decisions, they focus more on the facts and remain objective, they process those facts more carefully, they are more innovative, and they deliver stronger results.”**

–Nick Lovrien, CSO, Meta  
writing on LinkedIn<sup>1</sup>

## THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT FOR CORPORATE SECURITY

Corporations are operating in the most complicated and fast-moving environment we have ever seen—it’s volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. The external environment for corporate security has changed. Open aggression from states, including Russia and China; fallout from the Ukraine conflict; a breakdown in trust in institutions and authority; and the rise of polarization create the context in which corporate leaders are looking to their security departments to find creative solutions that mitigate risk and keep the business safe.

Changes to the way organizations do business require creative solutions to how corporate security departments work. The rise of misinformation means security’s status as fact-finding truth tellers is questioned; an increasingly diverse workforce demands diversity from its leadership; and the pandemic has shifted working patterns, with remote working creating additional burdens for security.

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY IN CORPORATE SECURITY

Diversity has been increasingly part of the corporate agenda for many years, but the murder of George Floyd in the United States in 2020

brought into sharp focus the gap between corporations talking about addressing diversity and the actions they have taken to address diversity—not just in the United States, but around the world.

The business case for diversity is clear. Diverse teams, especially those with diverse leadership, have higher levels of innovation than teams with less diversity. Diverse teams are especially adept at creating disruptive innovation, which is needed in game-changing contexts like now. Diversity also boosts productivity, and diverse teams are likely to find it easier to align with the business. Unlocking the diversity dividend rests upon relentless efforts to promote equity and maintain an inclusive work environment where staff can bring their whole self, and therefore all of their talents, to work, enabling them to compete fairly alongside colleagues.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Corporate security has started its DE&I journey but still has a long way to go*

Our research shows that DE&I work is a fairly new focus for corporate security departments, and even those who have been active for five to ten years acknowledge a change of pace and intensity. Security is not alone in grappling with DE&I; corporate leaders recognize its importance but also share their frustrations that more progress

has not been made. We also still have a lot to learn about what works.

Corporate security starts from a much lower diversity base than most other areas of the business. Data from SMR Group showed that 94 percent of their candidates for security, risk, and resiliency roles globally were men, and 70 percent came from a former government background—generally military, police or intelligence. The CSOs we interviewed recognized this talent pool limits their diverse options, but also acknowledged this background is advantageous (but not essential) in a few roles: security country managers in high-risk environments, roles requiring security clearance, investigations, and intelligence.

Almost all the CSOs we interviewed had a strong focus on increasing the diversity of their teams, enhancing equity throughout the security function, and creating inclusive work environments. We documented their work across the three areas of DE&I, which we call:

- **Collective wisdom:** Getting more diverse talent into corporate security—*diversity*
- **Rewarding talent:** Ensuring all talent can rise equitably throughout the security *function—equity*
- **Unlocking the diversity dividend:** Creating inclusive work environments—*inclusion*

*Collective Wisdom: Getting more diverse talent into corporate security—diversity*

**“It has to start with recruitment. If you’re not bringing anyone in, you’re not going to be able to move anyone up. You can’t continue doing the same thing and expect a different outcome.”**

–CSO interviewee

The research points to the following practices for corporate security functions:

- Use data to establish a baseline on diversity, measure and report on progress, and hold colleagues accountable through key performance indicators.
- Conduct outreach to diverse range of schools and colleges to encourage a wide range of people to consider a career in security, and partnership with employee resource groups (ERGs).
- Change the recruitment process to be more inclusive, including rethinking role profiles, adopting inclusive language in job descriptions, advertising in nontraditional spaces, diverse candidate slates, diverse interview panels, use of blind marked assessments, and a preference for equally qualified diverse candidates.
- Provide support for, and challenge, hiring managers to incorporate diversity into their recruitment strategies.
- Offer internships to enable diverse candidates at entry level to gain work experience.

*Rewarding Talent: Ensuring all talent can rise equitably through the function—equity*

**“The former CSO put together a succession plan for me to move into his role. I remember saying to him, ‘I don’t see it happening. I know I have the skillset, but I don’t see this company the way it is now, putting me in that role. I just didn’t see anyone at the top that looked like me.’”**

–African American CSO of a Fortune 500 company

The survey conducted as part of this project suggests minorities working within security are more likely to feel they have experienced discrimination. Sixty percent of women survey respondents answered yes compared to 22 percent of men, 60 percent of LGBTQIA+ versus 33 percent heterosexual, 48 percent nonCaucasian versus 34 percent Caucasian, 59 percent of disabled participants as opposed to 34 percent of those able bodied, and 52 percent neurodiverse compared to 34 percent of those who are not neurodiverse.

The research points to the following practices for corporate security functions:

- Use metrics to track progress and hold managers accountable.
- Provide training for managers in conducting reviews and promotions.
- Offer equal access to career development enhancing opportunities.
- Identify routes for progression for the intelligence function to transition—it is a diverse cohort but struggles to transition into mainstream security roles.

**Unlocking the Diversity Dividend: Inclusive work environments—inclusion**

**“I’m never going to sit here and tell you that I understand what it’s like to be a woman in the workplace. No one’s ever commented on my boobs, my haircut. I’ve never not gotten a job because I’m a guy. All I can say is that I**

**want to make my team, this company, a place where you don’t have to worry about that, that you feel you are equal, your voice is heard, that your opinion matters.”**

–CSO interviewee

Belonging scores are high overall for corporate security professionals; 80 percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel like I belong at my organization,” but agreement was less strong for minorities working within corporate security.

The research points to the following practices for corporate security functions:

- Model leadership on inclusion and allyship.
- Use data to understand levels of inclusion and belonging within the function.
- Use specialist and dedicated resources, including staff time, ERGs and inclusive onboarding.
- Run learning programs, including reverse mentoring, events, and DE&I stories.

**Brand Security: Driving innovation across the industry**

While there is much that corporate security departments can do within their organizations, the profession needs a whole-of-industry approach to DE&I that encompasses membership organizations. The image of the industry of being characterized by male former soldiers, federal agents, and police officers influences the candidates human resources colleagues and recruitment consultants bring forward, along with the kinds of people who see security as a viable career choice.

Security membership organizations have tremendous influence on who gets profiled through speaking platforms and volunteer leadership positions. Their events help to set the tone for norms of behavior within the industry. They have the potential to be tremendous force multipliers for good, yet the vast majority of survey respondents did not feel the security industry or security membership organizations were doing enough to address DE&I.

The research points to the following practices for security industry membership organizations:

- Collect data to understand their members and gather input and feedback on DE&I efforts.
- Revise talent spotting and selection processes to ensure diversity within boards and leadership.
- Use programing to enhance DE&I within the industry, including diversity of speakers, rules on entertainment at events, instigating and implementing codes of conduct, offering safe spaces for discussions about DE&I, ensuring fair approaches to awards, running programs for members on reverse mentoring, and promoting and supporting DE&I networks.
- Play an active role in wider industry branding efforts, such as campaigns and career pathways

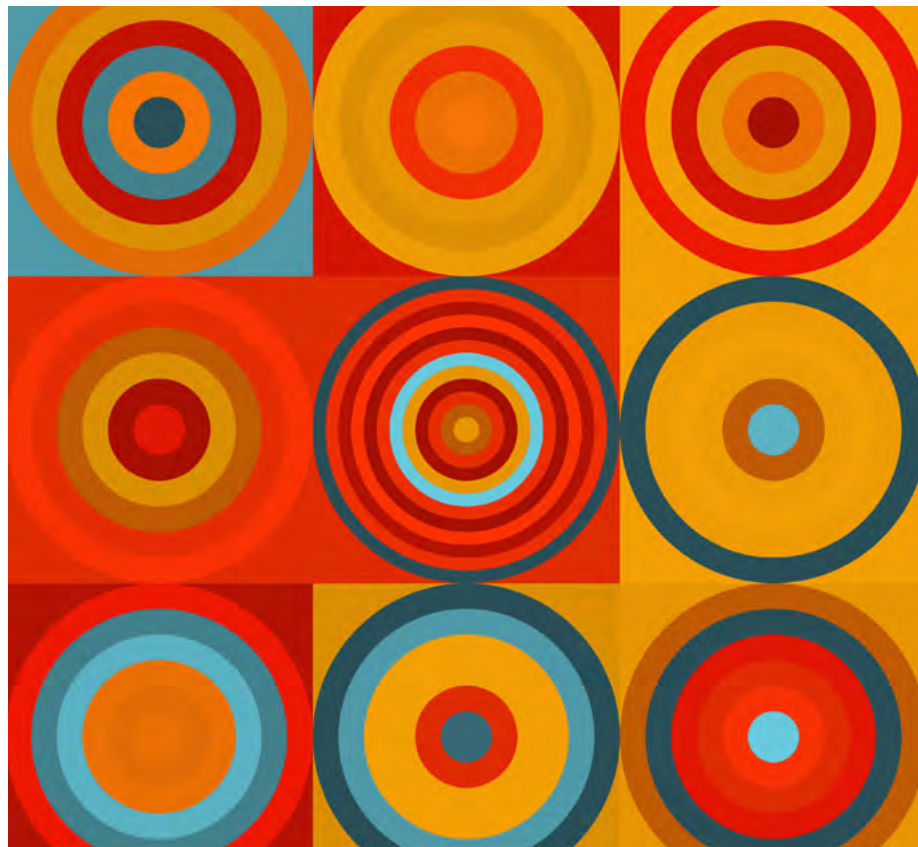
***DE&I in corporate security—  
a whole-of-industry challenge***

There is still much work to be done on DE&I: There is a vocal minority against DE&I efforts; fears about getting things wrong cause paralysis; the industry is working with a persistent legacy of recruiting almost exclusively from former government services, which are themselves fairly

homogenous; and disturbing stories of discrimination, sexual harassment, and unprofessional behavior persist.

We need a whole-of-industry approach to DE&I, where CSOs lead the charge from within their organizations, membership organizations set the tone for appropriate behavior and platform all the talents, and each one of us assumes our responsibility to lean in, listen, learn, and become an ambassador for the rights of every person working in corporate security.

This is a mission-oriented industry full of dedicated professionals. If we focus, pull together and rise to the challenge, not only will we become a fairer and more equitable industry, we will be more productive, innovative and creative—fit for the challenge of delivering safety and security to the organizations we serve, today and in the future.



## ABOUT THE RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

This research sought to understand the state of play for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) within corporate security: the nature and extent of diversity, the experience of diverse professionals within the industry, the thinking of corporate security leaders and the types of initiatives they are spearheading, the role of membership organizations, and outstanding challenges.

Researchers took a broad view of diversity, incorporating gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, and disability. It focused on equity rather than equality. “Equity” refers to fairness and justice, recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge adjustments to imbalances. “Equality” means providing the same to all. Re-

searchers defined an inclusive workplace as one that makes every employee feel valued, while also acknowledging their differences and how these differences contribute to the organization’s culture and business outcomes.

Researchers conducted a thorough literature review, spoke with scores of professionals within the industry, conducted formal interviews with 16 chief security officers (CSOs), and fielded a global survey. (Note: Excerpts from the CSO interviews are quoted anonymously to encourage candor in the interview; diversity attributes are included as needed for context.) The survey was not intended to be representative—that would have been an extensive enterprise beyond the scope of this research. A majority of survey respondents were from the United States, the UK, and Europe, so the data should be read on this basis. For a full description of the methodology, refer to the full report.



# INTRODUCTION

Corporations are operating in the most complicated and fast-moving environment we have ever seen—it's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. The external environment for corporate security has changed. Open aggression from states, including Russia and China; fallout from the Ukraine conflict; a breakdown in trust in institutions and authority; and the rise of polarization create the context in which corporate leaders are looking to their security departments to find creative solutions that mitigate risk and keep the business safe.

Changes to the way organizations do business require creative solutions to how corporate security departments work. The rise of misinformation means security's status as fact-finding truth tellers is questioned; an increasingly diverse workforce demands diversity from its leadership; and the pandemic has shifted working patterns, with remote working creating additional burdens for security.

Diversity has been increasingly part of the corporate agenda for many years, but the murder of George Floyd in the United States in 2020 brought into sharp focus the gap between corporations talking about addressing diversity and the actions they have taken to address diversity—not just in the United States, but around the world.

The business case for diversity is clear. Diverse teams, especially those with diverse leadership, have higher levels of innovation than teams with less diversity. Diverse teams are especially adept at creating disruptive innovation, which is needed in game-changing contexts like now. Diversity also boosts productivity: One study found an increase in racial diversity of one standard deviation increases productivity by more than 25 percent. Diverse teams are less likely to

suffer groupthink, which can produce overconfidence and grave error, and they are likely to find it easier to align with the business. Unlocking the diversity dividend rests upon relentless efforts to promote equity and maintain an inclusive work environment where staff can bring their whole self, and therefore all of their talents, to work, enabling them to compete fairly alongside colleagues.

Our research sought to understand the state of play for DE&I within corporate security: the nature and extent of diversity, the experience of diverse professionals within the industry, the thinking of corporate security leaders and the types of initiatives they are spearheading, the role of membership organizations, and outstanding challenges.

Researchers took a broad view of diversity, incorporating gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, and disability. (Neurodiversity refers collectively to a number of learning exceptionalities, including autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder.) It focused on equity rather than equality. "Equity" refers to fairness and justice, recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge adjustments to imbalances. "Equality" means providing the same to all. Researchers defined an inclusive workplace as one that makes every employee feel valued, while also acknowledging their differences and how these differences contribute to the organization's culture and business outcomes.

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Our research shows that DE&I work is a fairly new focus for corporate security departments, and even those that have been active in this area for five to ten years or more acknowledge a change of pace and intensity over the last two years. We documented DE&I security efforts across three areas we labelled:

- **Collective wisdom:** Getting more diverse talent into corporate security—***diversity***
- **Rewarding talent:** Ensuring all talent can rise equitably throughout the security function—***equity***
- **Unlocking the diversity dividend:** Creating inclusive work environments—***inclusion***

While there is much that corporate security departments can do within their organizations, the profession needs a whole-of-industry approach to DE&I that encompasses membership organi-

zations and associations. This is the fourth aspect of security DE&I we label:

- **Brand security:** Driving innovation across the industry.

The image of the industry of being characterized by male former soldiers, federal agents, and police officers influences the candidates that human resources (HR) colleagues and recruitment consultants bring forward, along with the kinds of people who see security as a viable career choice. The changes that are happening need to be amplified by the industry. Security membership organizations have tremendous influence on who gets profiled through speaking platforms and volunteer leadership positions. Their events help to set the tone for norms of behavior within the industry. They have the potential to be tremendous force multipliers for good.

Security is not alone in grappling with DE&I; corporate leaders recognize its importance but also share their frustrations that more progress has not been made. Corporate security has more work to do than most areas of the business, as it starts from a much lower diversity base. It has in its favor a profession of dedicated, mission-oriented individuals who are exceptionally good at coming together for a common purpose.

The time to act is now. This report offers a roadmap for how.

# METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by Rachel Briggs, OBE, and Paul Sizemore of The Clarity Factory, a corporation that conducts research, thought leadership, and consultancy on corporate security, cybersecurity, and national security.

## They used the following methodology:

- An extensive literature review of the latest thinking and best practice on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Informal interviews and discussions with 32 professionals across the security industry, along with participation in a number of informal industry networks on DE&I.
- Structured interviews with 16 chief security officers from multinational companies based in the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany. They were from the following sectors: banking and finance, extractive, energy, defense and aerospace, retail, pharmaceuticals, entertainment, technology, agriculture, and consultancy.
- An anonymous survey, which received 474 responses, concentrated in the United States, the UK, Canada, and Europe. It was not intended to be a representative survey, which would have required considerable resources beyond the scope of this project and was not analyzed using specialist survey tools to establish statistical significance. The results should be seen as illustrative and further work is needed to develop a statistical base for work on DE&I in corporate security.
- The survey's data on race and ethnicity has some limitations. We opted to ask an open question about race and ethnicity, which made the data difficult to analyze—we should have asked “do you consider yourself to be a member of a racial or ethnic diversity within your current country of residence.” We have separated the race and ethnicity data for North America (excluding Mexico), the UK, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand and classified responses into Caucasian and nonCaucasian.
- The survey respondent breakdown is as follows: 38 percent women, 11 percent LGBTQIA+, 6 percent had a physical disability, 11 percent were neurodiverse; and 21 percent of respondents residing in the US, Canada, the UK, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand were nonCaucasian.
- Throughout the report, we use the acronym LGBTQIA+, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, asexual, plus. The plus relates to individuals who do not classify as heterosexual or typical gender categories, but do not identify with the other listed identity categories. We recognize this is an area where we are all learning, and we have attempted to be as inclusive as possible.
- We also received data from SMR Group, a small, woman- and veteran-owned recruitment firm working across 75 countries, whose sole focus is security, risk and resiliency. They analyzed data from the last 5 years of job searches, which included over 5000 records, and provided the anonymized numbers to The Clarity Factory. They did not disclose any personally identifiable information about individuals.

# DIVERSITY: THE NEW COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE FOR CORPORATE SECURITY

## THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT FOR CORPORATE SECURITY

The operating environment for corporate security functions has never been so complicated. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the tip of a very large iceberg of seismic geopolitical shifts: open aggression from countries, such as Russia and China; a turn away from international institutions; the rise of populism and disenchantment with democracy are fragmenting social bonds and trust in the institutions we turn to for solutions. The fallout from the conflict on energy markets, inflation, and cost-of-living threaten social unrest. Corporate leaders look to their security teams to make sense of what's happening and find creative and effective ways of managing security-related risks.

The ability of corporate security departments to rise to the challenge is made more difficult by a number of other trends.

The growth of disinformation impacts who people trust and where they turn for information. Less than half (44 percent) of people globally trust "most of the news most of the time," with the figure as low as 29 percent in the United States.<sup>2</sup> This potentially impacts the ability of corporate security to communicate with and influence employees across the business.

The workforce is becoming more diverse. By 2030, more than one billion members of Gen Z—the most ethnically and racially diverse generation in history<sup>3</sup>—will be in the workforce.<sup>4</sup> Diversity matters to Gen Z: A majority (56 percent) would be hesitant to take a job in an organization that says it is diverse if it does not have any

unrepresented minorities in senior leadership roles,<sup>5</sup> raising questions about the extent to which they will be receptive to information and directives from largely homogenous corporate security teams.

**“In a global company where your clients are diverse, if you don't have a diverse team that can empathize with and understand their clients, think about what this means in terms of how they design their solutions and policies.... If you don't have those people who can see things in a different light and speak to that, you will fall further behind as a function. They're not going to be cutting edge, they're not going to be competitive.”**

—Security intelligence manager, interviewee.

The pace of digital transformation means technology is a key driver for most businesses. It brings extraordinary opportunities—but also creates risks of fragility and dependency. A recent survey of business leaders found that almost all boards (91 percent) consider cyber threats to be high or very high, three quarters (77 percent) of boards review updates or have discussions about cybersecurity at least quarterly, and more than one quarter (26 percent) do so monthly.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the most persistent legacy of the pandemic has been shifts in working patterns that create additional burdens and expectations for corporate security, most notably hybrid and flexible working, which is listed by *Forbes* as one of the five key trends on the future of work.<sup>7</sup>

The mantra for corporate security departments over the next five to ten years will almost certainly be: do more with less, embrace technology, adjust to a flexible workforce strategy, and find new ways to communicate with staff and business leaders. This means change—innovation, increased productivity, and creativity in corporate security are nonnegotiable.

## DIVERSITY IS A CRITICAL DRIVER OF INNOVATION, PRODUCTIVITY, AND BUSINESS-ALIGNMENT

### Innovation

There is substantial evidence of the link between diversity and innovation. A study of 171 German, Swiss, and Austrian companies found a clear relationship between the diversity of a company's management team and its revenues from innovative products and services.<sup>8</sup> The innovation boost isn't limited to a single type of diversity, it increases with organizational size, and is more pronounced in complex companies with multiple product lines or who work across many industry segments.

Having a high percentage of female employees per se doesn't increase innovation; what's critical is having female managers. The evidence also suggests that having a high percentage of female managers is positively correlated with disruptive innovation, such as the impact that Netflix had on the DVD rental market or Amazon on retail.

It found that the organizations best able to harness these benefits are those with diverse

management teams, which are open to contributions from lower-level workers, and exist within an environment where employees feel free to speak their minds. In a *Forbes* global study of more than 350 diversity leaders at large multinational corporations, a majority agreed that diversity is crucial to encouraging different perspectives and ideas that foster innovation.<sup>9</sup>

### Productivity

For corporate security leaders tasked with delivering more with less, diversity can boost levels of productivity. One study found that an increase in racial diversity of one standard deviation increases productivity by more than 25 percent in legal services, health services, and finance.<sup>10</sup> A McKinsey analysis of companies in Germany and the UK found return on equity was 66 percent higher for firms with executive teams in the top quartile for gender and ethnic diversity than for those in the bottom quartile. In the United States, the return was 100 percent higher.<sup>11</sup>

**“We know that... diverse teams are stronger teams. They make better business decisions, they focus more on the facts and remain objective, they process those facts more carefully, they are more innovative, and they deliver stronger results.”**

—Nick Lovrien, CSO, Meta—  
writing on LinkedIn<sup>12</sup>

One CSO told us: “The more you can understand and appreciate the diversity and uniqueness of the people around you, the more lasting and powerful solutions that can be brought forth. I have never seen this disproven over my career. In

fact, the times I have seen, or been involved with, sub-optimal performance has typically stemmed from the lack of teams' embracement of DE&I and belonging principles."

### Business alignment

Business alignment has been an imperative for corporate security leaders for at least two decades.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, this is harder to achieve if your team does not look like the business. Diversity remains low in corporate security, with a large majority of team members drawn from former government service, such as the military and law enforcement. As one CSO interviewee put it, "Now that we are finally being brought into business decisions, the business doesn't want someone at the table with decades of government experience, they want someone who is good at risk management." The new business realities require a broad range of skills and competencies, including technology, communication, and customer service. Business functions with a diverse talent pool will not only innovate more, they will be better placed to collaborate with other parts of the business.

### THE BEST TEAM FOR THE JOB— COLLECTIVE WISDOM

In discussions about diversity, one of the most common refrains we heard was: "I'm supportive of diversity, but I need to focus on hiring the best *person* for the job." Almost no work today is solitary; almost all tasks require collaboration with teammates, a point exceptionally well made by Matthew Syed in his book, *Rebel Ideas: The power of thinking differently*.<sup>14</sup> The complex and fast-changing threat environment corporate security operates within makes this even more relevant. The challenge is less about recruiting the right person for the job and more about assembling the right team.

Homogenous groups do not just share one another's blind spots; they reinforce them. They make fast and unanimous decisions that are rooted in extreme confidence that are more likely to result in grave error. Many of the most significant intelligence failures can be attributed to the groupthink of homogenous teams. When we surround ourselves with people who look and think like us, we feel smarter, but we tend to make poorer decisions.

A team's collective intelligence is more than twice as important as the cumulative intelligence of individual members in determining how well the team performs, and this is boosted further in particular by gender diversity. Collective intelligence emerges not just from the knowledge of individuals, but also from the differences between them. What's more, racially mixed teams engage in less groupthink and work harder.<sup>15</sup> Diversity brings competitive edge; hiring should focus as much on bench strength as individual qualifications. As Charlan Nemeth put it, "Minority viewpoints are important, not because they tend to prevail but because they stimulate divergent attention and thought. As a result, even when they are wrong, they contribute to the detection of novel solutions that, on balance, are qualitatively better."<sup>16</sup>

**"You have far more robust risk management outcomes by having diversity of thought. You also increase retention, people are more willing to contribute their ideas, [and] it benefits more creative thinking and more robust risk management measures through that diversity of thought."**

—CSO interviewee.



## UNLOCKING THE DIVERSITY DIVIDEND—OPEN AND INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

The benefits of diversity are only truly unlocked within an inclusive work environment, where divergent views can be shared without fear of being shut down. A major study by Google found that teams with higher scores of psychological safety—where members share ideas and take risks—are more able to harness the power of diverse ideas, have higher staff retention, and are twice as effective as judged by their managers.

An organization’s leaders are often the enablers—or inhibitors—of psychological safety. Dominant, alpha leadership styles are most likely to cutoff the benefits of diverse viewpoints. A study by the Rotterdam School of Management analyzed more than 300 real world projects and found that those led by junior managers were more likely to succeed than those led by a senior colleague. Researchers concluded that while the project lost the knowledge of the senior-most member, his or her absence unlocked the knowledge innovation of the rest of the team.

A study of data from more than 30,000 Himalayan climbers on over 5000 expeditions found that teams with more dominant hierarchies are significantly more likely to die. As one of the paper’s authors, Adam Galinsky, commented, “The Himalayan context highlights a key feature that creates complex decisions: a dynamic and changing environment. When the environment can change dramatically and suddenly, people have to adapt and come up with a new plan. In these cases, we need everyone’s perspective brought to bear and hierarchy can hurt by suppressing these insights.”<sup>17</sup> Corporate security departments are not climbing Everest, but they are increasingly contending with complex, ambiguous, and fast-changing challenges. Diversity might just be the new secret weapon.

## CORPORATE SECURITY HAS STARTED ITS DE&I JOURNEY—BUT THERE IS STILL A WAY TO GO

Corporate security has started its DE&I journey, but there is a wide spectrum of progress and many challenges remain. Some of the CSOs we talked to referenced a timeframe of a decade or more for their DE&I work, but for most it either started or accelerated significantly in 2020 following the murder of George Floyd, an event that happened in the United States but reverberated around the world. The impact on corporate security was similar to that on corporations as a whole. As one DE&I practitioner told us, “2020 changed everything. I could not name a bigger point in time within a DE&I career where things shifted more than 2020.” The focus changed from words to action. She explained:

“A lot of organizations put out statements of support, but were met with criticism because it was just words, and they hadn’t been doing anything to support their racially diverse employees, improve recruitment processes, become an anti-racist organization, or provide appropriate education. The organizations that managed to navigate this well were the ones that called themselves out and admitted they hadn’t done enough and took the time to learn and not place it all on their black employee resource groups. They put really clear steps in place. It fundamentally reshaped diversity and inclusion, because suddenly the focus shifted to what you are going to do in practice and how you will hold yourselves accountable.”

**“After the George Floyd murder, our CEO really leaned into this agenda and we were encouraged to have very open and transparent**

**discussions. This was a huge cultural shift because we had always been told, you can't talk about this stuff within a work meeting. We'd always had to dance around the subject. We were encouraged to dive in."**

—CSO interviewee

The vast majority of survey respondents' organizations have a diversity and inclusion program in place: 83 percent of all respondents, breaking down as almost all multinationals (92 percent) and as well as a majority of small- and medium-sized organizations (59 percent). Fewer organizations, though still a majority, mandate DE&I training for all managers (63 percent), with 71 percent of multinationals requiring training, but only 40 percent of small- and medium-sized organizations..

## WE ARE ALL FEELING OUR WAY ON DE&I

While the need for diversity, the demands for equity, and the benefits of inclusive work environments are clear, this is still a nascent area of organizational life. In a study profiled in *Harvard Business Review*, almost all leaders (93 percent) agree a DE&I agenda is a top priority, but only 34 percent believe it's a strength in their workplace.<sup>18</sup> In another survey, 80 percent of HR professionals viewed companies as "going through the motions." Yet another revealed that while 78 percent of black professionals believe senior leaders' DE&I efforts are well-intentioned, 40 percent hear more talk than action and have not noticed material changes to policies or culture. Many chief diversity officers leave their roles because of a lack of strategic, financial, and political support.<sup>19</sup>

We are still learning about what works. For example, while our survey highlights the prevalence of training, Harvard Kennedy School's Iris Bohnet's research shows that U.S. companies spend roughly \$8 billion a year on DE&I training, but accomplish remarkably little.<sup>20</sup> In interviews with CSOs, it was clear they are feeling their way and do not always understand which efforts will be effective. That is not a reason to do nothing. As one CSO put it, "If we aren't failing, we aren't doing anything." It offers an incentive to share experiences and best practice in a sector known for its collaboration.

The sensitivities inherent in DE&I inhibit risk taking for fear of offending or being criticized for not getting things right. As one CSO firmly committed to DE&I told us, "One of the challenges with DE&I is that it can be the third rail; the minute you say something wrong you're a pariah." Rightly or wrongly, some of the heat in these discussions closes down the curiosity necessary to learn, grow, and become comfortable with the journey.





A small minority of our survey respondents were fervently opposed to DE&I. When asked what more they would like to see from the security industry and membership organizations in relation to DE&I, we received, several negative responses, including:

- “NONE! Everything was fine until the left started to take over the news, politics, education, and industry. This is the road to Marxism and few people have the power to stand up to it.”
- “This whole diversity and inclusion movement is a joke. It is in itself RACIST and discriminatory.”
- “In my opinion, TOO MUCH time and energy is put into addressing diversity and inclusion. Ridiculous. Hire the best qualified, treat one another with respect, and let people work. Fo-

cus on this issue takes away from real reason companies are in business.”

- “EXCESSIVE. They are contributing to fomenting WOKENESS and a sense of entitlement in the industry and society. Humans will always have preferences.... Not all environments can/should be like a NOAH'S ARK. Whether people like it or not, realize it or not, accept it or not; there are behaviors associated with some cultures that are simply incompatible with others. You put them together and they will clash, as simple as that.”

Change never happens through the actions of the early adopters alone; it requires the mainstream to get on board. While some of the DE&I sceptics might not be willing to change their views, more needs to be done to sell the business case for diverse teams and this will only happen through a whole-of-industry approach.

# COLLECTIVE WISDOM: GETTING MORE DIVERSE TALENT INTO CORPORATE SECURITY

“It has to start with recruitment. If you’re not bringing anyone in, you’re not going to be able to move anyone up. You can’t continue doing the same thing and expect a different outcome.”

–CSO interviewee

“You shouldn’t be hiring someone for today, you’re hiring them for tomorrow. The thing that diversity can bring to an organization is adaptive capacity.”

–CSO interviewee

## THE SECURITY INDUSTRY HAS LOW LEVELS OF DIVERSITY— BUT THINGS ARE CHANGING

There is still very little robust data on diversity within corporate security, making it difficult to get a clear view of the precise types and levels of diversity and how they have changed. However, walk into most security departments or industry events in North America, Europe, and Australia and you’re likely to be met by a room of predominantly white men over the age of 50. This might not be scientific, but it is obvious. In *Security’s* annual “Security Report,” a quick, nonscientific review of the security executives included in the rankings showed that at least 81 percent of them were men in 2020.<sup>21</sup> As one CSO we interviewed, who moved into corporate security from another part of the business, told us, “When I moved into security I was shocked to find it was so male dominated, and that this was not a sport for young people. It was all men 50 and over.”

SMR Group, a leading recruiter in the security, risk and resiliency industries, provided data on five years of candidates who applied for positions they were recruiting. Across all regions—the

Americas; Asia Pacific; and Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA), 94 percent of their candidates were male, 6 percent female. The proportion of females was slightly higher in the Americas, 7.2 percent. Over the same period, almost three quarters (72 percent) of candidates in the Americas were Caucasian, 81 percent in EMEA.

Things are changing, however. Offices and conference rooms are getting more diverse every year, there are more women and people of color in leadership positions, and there is an openly LGBTQIA+ CSO in a Fortune 100 company—which, if there is a precedent it is not widely known. The results of our survey, while far from a representative sample, highlight that range of diversity—both visible and invisible: 38 percent were women, 11 percent LGBTQIA+, 6 percent had a physical disability, and 11 percent were neurodiverse. One-fifth (21 percent) of respondents in the United States, Canada, UK, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand were nonCaucasian.

Almost all the CSOs we interviewed said they wanted to significantly increase diversity in their teams. Only two had gender parity on their

leadership, and one had a slight female majority. The rest were overwhelmingly male and progress on race and ethnicity was limited. There was almost no hard data on other forms of diversity, and most said they were looking for advice on whether and how to gather this.

## PERCEPTIONS OF THE EXTENT OF DIVERSITY VARY QUITE MARKEDLY BETWEEN MOST OF THE DIVERSE GROUPS.

We asked our survey respondents the extent to which they agreed with the statement “I work in a diverse team.” Overall, almost three-quarters (74 percent) agreed or strongly agreed, but this dropped to 56 percent of women, 58 percent of LGBTQIA+, and 58 percent of disabled respondents. Some groups were much more likely to disagree or strongly disagree with the statement than others: 8 percent men versus 26 percent women; 12.67 percent heterosexual versus 30 percent LGBTQIA+; 14 percent without a disability versus 21 percent of disabled; and 13 percent not neurodiverse versus 22 percent of neurodiverse respondents. There was no difference between Caucasian and nonCaucasian. See Graph 1 on page 20.

## THE IMPACT ON DIVERSITY OF THE LEGACY OF FORMER GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALS WITHIN CORPORATE SECURITY

**“Part of our problem has been that we have gone to the traditional recruitment pools—the forces, the services. If you really want to break the mold, you’ve got to fundamentally change that way of thinking.”**

–CSO interviewee

The key reason cited by CSOs and other interviewees for low levels of diversity in corporate security is the tendency to recruit individuals from government service, notably military, law enforcement, and intelligence, which are themselves largely homogenous. The human tendency to recruit in our own image and the usually high levels of trust among those who have served together, have amplified this trend. Data from SMR Group shows that 70 percent of candidates for their roles over the past five years have former government experience. One CSO interviewee told us, “It’s easier to hire someone in your comfort zone and your network rather than put the effort into [finding] somebody that will provide you a leadership team that looks like your company, your customers, your community.”

In some corporate security teams, the majority come from a single agency background. One CSO commented, “When I joined my first corporate security team, it was a State Department shop. And as I got exposed to different external groups it became very evident that there were FBI shops, Secret Service shops, whatever shop. I would even see these cliques gathered together at industry events and that was hugely discouraging to me at the time.”

Some CSOs talked about the fact that the C-suite rather likes the idea of a James Bond or Jason Bourne character in charge of security. As one CSO put it, “Chief execs like to have someone around who’s seen a bit, done a bit. The whiff of gunpowder. It’s the industry’s job to educate people.” And some felt some of their peers play up this mystique.

**“Many of us still present a certain image of security, that what we do is a dark art, where you need millions of years’ experience in order to be able to do it. That’s in-**

**credibly unhelpful. I've had 5 or 6 jobs come through my inbox this week 'must have previous law enforcement or military experience.' We are making things worse for ourselves. We're not saying 'must have an inquisitive mind, a financial background.'"**

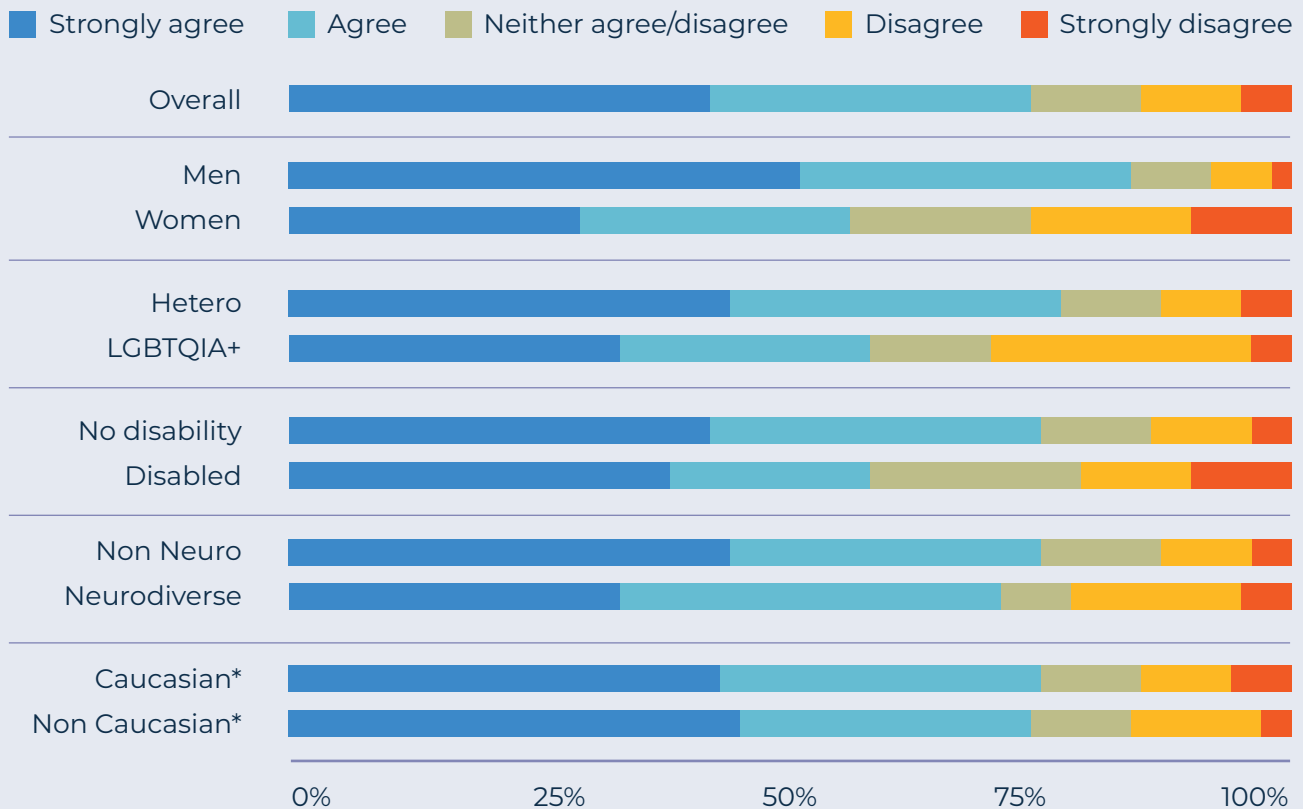
–CSO interviewee

The majority of CSOs we interviewed argued this background is much less relevant to the present-day challenges of corporate security, given

the changes outlined in the previous chapter. They pointed to just four roles where background can be a material advantage:

- Country manager (or equivalent) in very high-risk environments: Having held a particular rank in government service elicits confidence and acceptance by local government officials and access to their networks. "Sometimes it's a bit too romantic to think that someone with good project management and persuasion skills can do that job because you do need to be connected to local agencies as they tend to only recognize former colleagues," noted one CSO interviewee.
- Roles requiring security clearance: CSOs in sectors where high clearance is needed talked

Graph 1: I work in a diverse team



\*US, Canada, UK, Europe, Aus, NZ

about the frustration of having new recruits fail clearance and this triggering another long recruitment process.

- Investigations: A law enforcement background is advantageous but not essential, due to the traditionally strong skills in evidence gathering, interviewing, and forensics.
- Insider threat: Insider threat roles rely heavily on investigation.

The majority view was that security roles are largely trainable. One CSO told us, “Aside from intelligence and investigations, I can see no reason why someone would be at a material advantage having been a police officer or soldier coming into security in a financial institution.” A leading corporate security practitioner from India commented, “This domain is so trainable. This is not NASA science. If the person is smart and passionate and ready, there’s so much that you can do with that kind of candidate. Why are we always looking for 10-15 years in security?”

**“To say you can only recruit from military or law enforcement for more general security roles is a pathetic excuse. Security is nothing more than risk management, and anyone... can learn [it]. ...I want people who have a hunger to understand how we make our money. If we understand that, we understand the business priorities, and we can partner with them to de-risk, where appropriate, those issues. That**

**doesn’t need a military or police background, it requires people with good common sense and the mental agility to learn.”**

–CSO interviewee

Although most CSOs we interviewed told us former government service was not necessary, still a majority of their teams come from this background. It is also not clear the extent to which they are outliers in their views or reflective of a wider trend across corporate security. One survey respondent commented: “I have worked hard to address diversity imbalance in my security team since taking over by changing both the method for selecting new staff and promoting existing staff to ensure better fairness. I did this by not relying on any old boy networks or on candidates having to be an ex[government service worker]. ...However, I find in general the security industry as a whole still looks too much for people who have been in either law enforcement or the military (I have been in both) when there are exceptional candidates that have been in neither who can bring other skills that we need.”

## EMERGING PRACTICES TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN CORPORATE SECURITY

The vast majority of CSOs we interviewed have focused their diversity efforts on gender, with just a few references to race and ethnicity. Many confided they are uncertain how to tackle other forms of diversity due to limitations on available data and concerns about coming out at work, for example. CSOs are not alone in making gender their primary focus; a majority of DE&I leaders in large multinationals cite gender as the area they have made most progress.<sup>22</sup>

There are three areas of focus for CSOs on diversity:

- Instigating data, measurement, and KPIs on diversity.
- Widening outreach to be visible to a broader range of candidates.
- Changing the recruitment process to be more inclusive.

### **Instigating data, measurement and KPIs on diversity**

According to the DE&I experts we interviewed, and current thinking culled from our literature review, data is the foundation of an effective DE&I program. As one leading practitioner told us, “If you’re able to have data, you’re able to gauge progress.” Most of the CSOs we interviewed provided approximate data on gender—and some related to race and ethnicity—but only a small minority actively measure and track diversity data and approximately one third have set targets to increase representation among certain minorities.

It is not just CSOs who are slow to track data on DE&I. Most companies have yet to adopt metrics, even though they acknowledge diversity is an imperative that impacts their bottom line.<sup>23</sup> This is partly explained by risk, with the fear that collecting data might create legal exposure. Indeed, some diversity metrics could be useful to employment lawyers because they could provide evidence of discrimination against a protected group. As the authors of an article piece in the *Harvard Business Review* say, there is no need for concern about embracing DE&I metrics, “Companies regularly handle sensitive information and shoulder legal risk to achieve their business goals. How many firms, for example, would refuse to analyze and fix their cybersecurity vulnerabilities because they were worried that doing so might expose them to a data-breach lawsuit? The crucial question corporate leaders

## **CASE STUDY: DESTINATION SECURITY, BARCLAYS**

Building a team fit for the future starts with investing in the skills that will be in high demand in the future—because the roles and skills we have today aren’t necessarily the ones we’ll need tomorrow.

In 2021, reflecting this dynamic landscape, Barclays developed its *Destination Technology* scheme, focused on reskilling colleagues into technology roles. Following a successful pilot, Barclays launched *Destination Security* in 2022. The program provides colleagues an opportunity to future-proof their career, while also increasing diverse representation in the security industry. In particular, they were able to attract a high number of female applications.

*Destination Security* provides a comprehensive training and support pipeline for participants. Colleagues receive on-the-job training, a buddy and talent coach, as well as a structured development path through the Barclays apprenticeship program. They also have one day per week designated study time, resulting in an industry-recognized qualification at the program’s close. The roles on offer range from security engineer, solutions designer and consultant, to cyber analyst, and roles within Barclays’ CISO teams.

### **INITIAL RESULTS**

The 2022 *Destination Security* program was highly successful, generating significant and diverse interest. They filled 82 roles, with a gender split of 34 percent women. Building upon this strong foundation, they plan to launch a further cohort in 2023.

have to ask is this: Do we really want to wait until *after* we've been sued to learn that our DE&I record is problematic?"

Many of the CSOs we interviewed have some element of their performance linked to their achievements on DE&I, most commonly linked to staff survey responses on inclusion and belonging. Additionally, one CSO told us DE&I features heavily in his quarterly review meetings with his line manager, and one mentioned his bonus is impacted. According to participants in a *Forbes* survey, a range of tools are used to hold executives at multinational corporations responsible for their diversity program's performance: performance reviews (66 percent), bonuses (51 percent), salary increases (42 percent), business/department reviews (48 percent), and promotions (41 percent).<sup>24</sup>

### **Widening outreach to be visible to a broader range of candidates**

CSOs are beginning to diversify their outreach efforts to reach a wider range of candidates. As one CSO put it, "We need to change the markets we go to, otherwise nothing will change, and we need to take some risks. You also need to build a talent pipeline within the company."

This takes a number of forms:

- Outreach to schools and colleges, for example historically black colleges in the United States, and schools in working class areas in the UK.
- Partnerships with employee resource groups (ERGs). For example, one CSO described partnering with the LGBTQIA+ ERG to assist with security for Pride marches, and through the relationship the ERG has become an ambassador for corporate security in its efforts to reach potential LGBTQIA+ candidates.
- Advertising in nontraditional spaces, for example one CSO is mandated by her HR team

to choose at least one minority recruitment platform.

- Internships: a number of CSOs run internship programs which have been especially helpful in bringing diverse talent into the function. One large corporate security function has 12 to 16 interns per year recruited from university programs that traditionally attract 75 to 80 percent Black students. The CSO described it as the most effective method for diversifying his department. He lamented, "Industry has not done a good job of communicating what corporate security is all about. People have no idea that these programs exist in corporate America."

### **Changing the recruitment process to be more inclusive**

The most frequently cited area of DE&I activity relates to the recruitment and selection process, which includes rethinking role profiles, switching to inclusive language for job descriptions, and amending the selection process to make it more inclusive for diverse talent.

#### **Rethinking role profiles**

As CSOs begin to break the tie between corporate security and government backgrounds, some have taken a fresh look at the core skills and attributes they require in their roles. One highly experienced recruitment consultant we interviewed described a tendency to recruit for tactical experience rather than competencies:

"When you look at security job descriptions, most of them are really badly written. They are focused on the technical and the tactical, operational terms, which means they recruit for tactical experience rather than the essence of the job and looking at skills, competence, and future potential. When you look at any role—from CEO to the most junior person within a corporation—they tend not to get fired because they are tactically stupid or not knowledgeable. They



tend to get fired because of competencies and characteristics. It's usually about behavior and how you deal with people. No one is taking the time to understand the purpose of the role and therefore the competencies and characteristics you need to prioritize the kind of person that will be successful in the role."

## CASE STUDY: ESTABLISHMENT OF A GSOC

A former CSO described his attempt to establish a new GSOC staffed by a diverse and non-traditional staff and the frustrations of working with his embedded security staff vendor.

He drafted job descriptions without mention of security, military, or law enforcement experience in order to attract candidates with a wide range of skills—including customer service and organizational abilities. Without his knowledge, the vendor rewrote the job description to a more traditional security role, including reference to prior experience.

He described a "Tom and Jerry" scenario, where he complained and rewrote the job descriptions, they nodded and reposted their security-focused role descriptions, and over two or three rounds they failed to bring him the slate of candidates he had requested. He finally threatened to fire them and recruit candidates himself.

They posted his original job description, but he took the lead on the selection day to be sure it was conducted in an inclusive manner. Eventually, he ended up with the diverse team he wanted: 40 percent women within two years, LGBTQIA+ team members, 13 languages, 7 nationalities, and a below average age profile.

Around one-third of the CSOs we interviewed are undertaking a wholesale review of their roles. One CSO said, "It starts with understanding the attributes that are critical for success for the role. Having carried firearms in Southern Iraq is rarely one of those. Having chased robbers and shop lifters down Oxford Street is rarely one of those." There is a desire for candidates who can balance technical and soft skills. "What matters to me" one CSO said, "is that a person can explain to the business when they can take more risk, when they should take less, and that's a lot about social skills more than technical skills."

One CSO described the skills he prizes most, especially at the senior level: communication for impact, leading through influence not authority, working with ambiguity, and navigating politics and personalities to achieve best outcomes. "These are not the preserve of government service. In fact, I would argue some of them are very hard to find in government service." Another CSO with a footprint in high-risk locations where he does favor former military experience, told us he is counterbalancing this by pushing for more diversity in lower risk locations.

Offering flexibility can help corporate security departments attract more diverse talent. As one recruitment consultant told us, "Being flexible with work—place of work, working hours, benefits—really helps in attracting female candidates. It's literally the first thing we get asked by potential candidates now, it's not about money anymore, it's about how much they'll have to go into the office. That's not just from the women, it's from everyone."

### Inclusive language for job descriptions

A number of the CSOs are partnering with HR to ensure job descriptions use inclusive language, such as gender-neutral words to ensure women are not subliminally put off applying from the role. They also avoid wording that might infer age profile or former government experience. Some



have removed requirements around military or law enforcement experience, and many are ensuring benefits include things of interest to diverse candidates, such as maternity leave and menopause support for women, and inclusion of same sex partners on health insurance for LGBTQIA+ candidates. One company has rewritten all job descriptions and destroyed all previous copies from shared drives to ensure old recruitment patterns don't resurface.

One CSO gave a practical example of the impact of inclusive language in job descriptions, "I spoke this morning with a woman I really hope is going to apply for a role we are currently recruiting, a really impressive lawyer. She told me that one of the things that stuck out to her about the profile was how inclusive the language was. It's brilliant that a shift in language can help us be more competitive in hiring great talent."

### Changing the selection process

The majority of CSOs we interviewed are amending their recruitment process to be more inclusive in attracting diverse talent. We observed four ways they are doing this:

- **Diverse candidate slates:** As one recruitment consultant in the security industry told us, "Almost without exception, every single contract we sign with our clients includes a clause that contractually obliges us to present a diverse slate of candidates."
- **Diverse interview panels:** Including colleagues from outside the corporate security function who they see as more objective and less emotionally attached to any type of candidate or background.
- **Blind marked written assessments:** A blind review component guards against overly confident menacing the interview and aids the selection of a candidate for competence rather than confidence.<sup>25</sup>

- **Preference for equally competent diverse candidates:** When the final two candidates are evenly matched, some CSOs now give preference to the diverse candidate. One CSO told us, "That's where I really started to catch some flack from people because they felt like they were being disadvantaged."

## MANY DE&I CHALLENGES REMAIN IN RELATION TO THE RECRUITMENT OF DIVERSE TALENT

Supportive and determined senior leadership is a prerequisite for DE&I success in corporate security, but it does not on its own guarantee change. CSOs mentioned four challenges they faced when trying to create change:

- Lack of support from hiring managers on their teams.
- Compared to the wider enterprise, security teams are often small and resource-poor.
- Misperceptions of corporate security among HR colleagues and recruitment consultants.
- Outdated approaches by recruitment consultants in the corporate security sector.

### Lack of support from hiring managers on their teams

A number of CSOs talked about the difficulty of cascading their new approaches down through the function and ensuring that hiring managers in the middle of the team follow through on this agenda. Some said the thought this was happening because they had not done a good enough job of selling the vision and benefits of diversity. "We've spent a lot of time focusing on bringing in more diversity at the most senior level within corporate security," one CSO said, "but not quite as much on bringing the larger hiring manager population with us, ex-

plaining why this is important, the personal responsibility they have every time they hire someone or are considering who to promote within their team. The fact that we haven't brought those people with us is partly why we're not making the progress as quickly as we thought we would this year."

One company has developed a Resourcing Guide for its local hiring managers on the benefits of diversity, advice on diverse panels, the need to run written assessments, effective interview techniques, and the importance of succession planning. Others are working on coaching hiring managers and talked about the importance of leadership standing firm in the face of complaints on the challenges of achieving diverse candidate slates.

Another spoke about the importance of strong and clear leadership, and being willing to tell his team "go again" when they don't meet his expectations on candidate slates. "Three times, my team has gone out to hire, they've come back with a shortlist, and I've said 'not good enough—go again,'" he said. "When you ask people to go again and sharpen the focus ever more, they come back with a better candidate pool and ultimately a better candidate every time." Another said, "None of us enjoy having staffing gaps. If we don't go back and demand a more diverse candidate pool, we are sending the message that it's okay not to have a diverse candidate pool."

**"You've got to shock the system a little bit. You've got to help people out of the path of least resistance. You've got to help people out of lazy thinking. And you've got to hold them to account as well for delivering better results in this space."**

—CSO interviewee

Some push back is from those who do not agree with DE&I efforts, exemplified by the survey responses in the last chapter. One CSO told us, "You can't influence how many women are going to apply." Another felt it was a waiting game until the military and law enforcement feeder pools become more diverse, "If you look at our industry, we are downstream from law enforcement and the military and what you've seen over the past 15 years is an influx of women into those professions and then what you're going to see downstream hopefully over the next 10 years is that proportion increase [in corporate security functions]."

### **Compared to the wider enterprise, security teams are often small and resource-poor**

A number of CSOs mentioned the challenge of diversity in very small teams of five to ten people, especially when turnover is low. The head of intelligence for a large multinational told us, "We are a small team and, just like a start up, you initially just have to focus on getting the job done, and people don't think about DE&I until they get to a certain scale."

### **Misperceptions of corporate security among HR colleagues and recruitment consultants**

One of the most frequently cited challenges mentioned by CSOs was the fact that HR and recruitment consultant perceptions of what they are looking for have not caught pace with the changes they are instigating within their corporate security teams. One CSO told us, "HR assumes you have to have a badge to be able to do a security role, which speaks to the importance of educating them."

Some of the CSOs broadened the recruitment consultants they use, as their traditional vendors were failing to bring them diverse candidate slates. One CSO has recently established a new corporate security function and shared the frustrations of dealing with recruitment con-

sultants. “We pushed the recruiters quite hard when they continued to bring us the same types of candidates and didn’t bring any diversity,” the CSO said. “Three out of our ten hires, we ended up seeking people from our own networks and targeting them because we weren’t getting the right talent pool through our recruiters.”

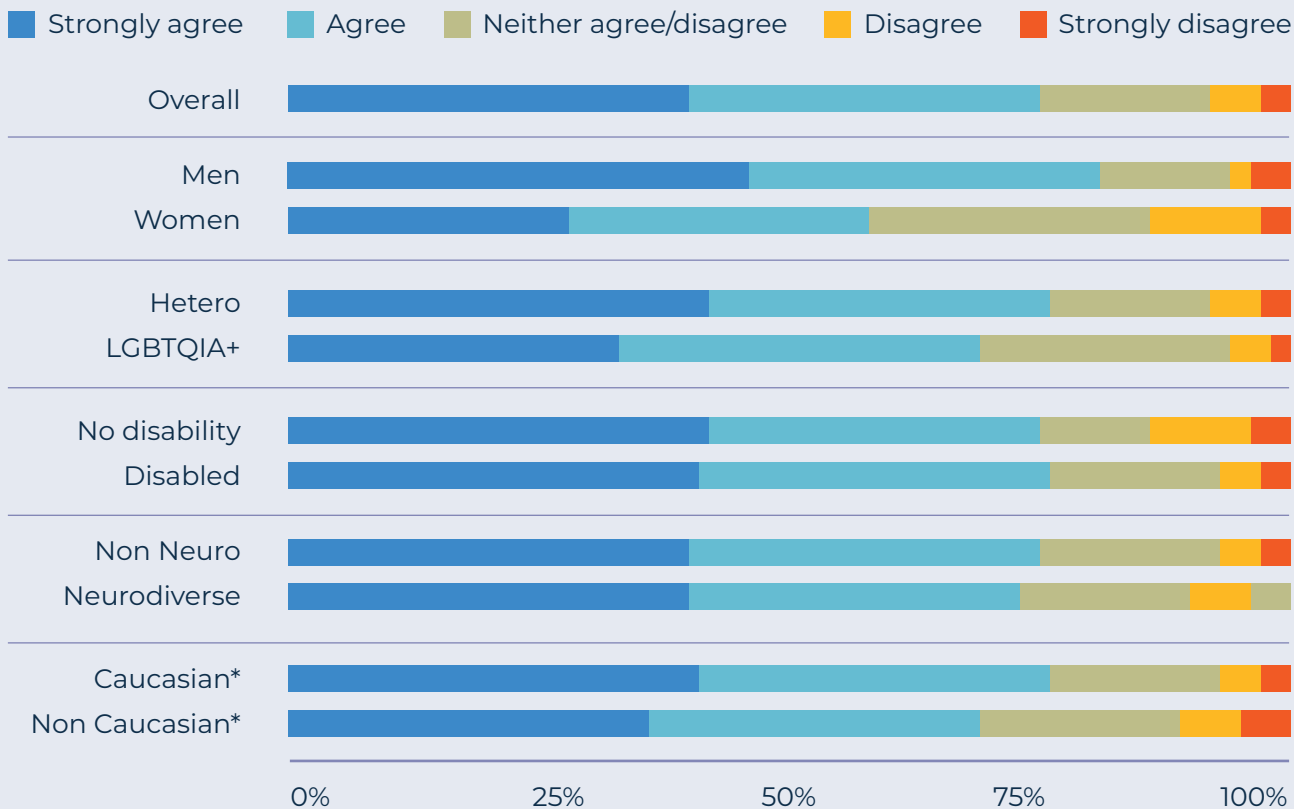
Another CSO told us, “We have extended the range of external recruiters we work with. Whilst internally we have been committed to diverse candidates slates for some time, we found that some of the recruiters we were working with were not generating diverse slates for us. It was probably because they didn’t have diverse candidates on their books, so they couldn’t meet

that expectation. We now look to use recruiters who are more conscious of the importance of diversity.” Recruitment consultants that want to be competitive need to change where and how they source candidates. As one who has been doing this told us, “It’s harder work for recruiters initially, but when you develop these networks, it becomes a huge value add.”

### PERCEPTIONS OF PROGRESS ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION DIFFER BY GROUP

Our survey data reveals that views on progress on diversity and inclusion vary according to

**Graph 2: My organization is making good progress on diversity and inclusion**



\*US, Canada, UK, Europe, Aus, NZ

group. Participants were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement, “My organization is making good progress on diversity and inclusion.” Overall, three-quarters of participants agreed with this statement, and only 8 percent disagreed. There was a large divergence between men and women, with 81 percent of men agreeing, compared to 58 percent of women. Across all other minority groups, apart from neurodiverse, two-thirds agreed with this statement compared to three-quarters of those who were in the respective majority group—Cauca-

sian, heterosexual, and able-bodied. Insert: (See Graph 2 on page 27.) There was a marked difference by age: 57 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds and 63 percent of 35- to 44-year-olds, compared to 75 percent of 45- to 54-year-olds, 82 percent of 55- to 64-year-olds, and 78 percent of those aged 65 and over.

The security industry is divided on the merits of diversity, current levels of diversity, and perceptions of progress made to date, with those in minority groups consistently less content with progress.

# REWARDING TALENT: ENSURING ALL TALENT CAN RISE EQUITABLY THROUGH THE FUNCTION

“The former CSO put together a succession plan for me to move into his role. I remember saying to him, ‘I don’t see it happening. I know I have the skillset, but I don’t see this company the way it is now, putting me in that role. I just didn’t see anyone at the top that looked like me.’”  
—African American CSO of a Fortune 500 company

“During my career, I worked for some female leaders and learned about how much harder it was for them to be taken seriously in this field. I gained a lot of empathy and understanding for the challenges a woman faces coming into a very male-dominated profession. At times how minimized they are in leadership discussions. Unless they have a very forceful personality, many times their voice was not heard, or even if it was heard it was discounted.”  
—Male CSO

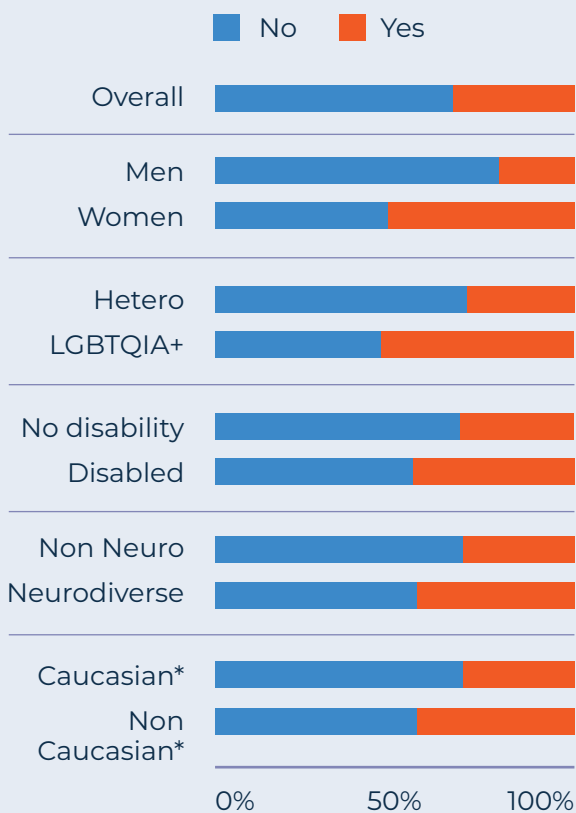
Studies show that most organizations have made more progress on recruiting diverse candidates than they have on developing and retaining diverse talent. A *Forbes* survey of DE&I leaders from multinational corporations found that while two-thirds (65 percent) had programs in place on recruitment, fewer followed that up with diversity-focused development (53 percent) or diversity retention (44 percent) programs.<sup>26</sup> The CSOs we interviewed mirrored this trend; a majority had initiatives in place for recruitment, but we found fewer examples focused on developing and promoting diverse colleagues through the function.

There is a sense of urgency to this; minority participants in our survey felt they had experienced much more discrimination. We asked, “Do you think you have experienced discrimination in the

workplace because of your identity.” Sixty percent of women answered yes compared to 22 percent of men; 60 percent of LGBTQIA+ versus 33 percent heterosexual; 48 percent nonCaucasian versus 34 percent Caucasian; 59 percent of disabled participants as opposed to 34 percent of able bodied; and 52 percent neurodiverse compared to 34 percent of those who are not neurodiverse.

In our research, we came across many stories of discrimination and harassment, including mansplaining—the explanation of something by a man, typically to a woman, in a manner regarded as condescending or patronizing—and talking over women. There were comments about “toning down” in relationship to being “out” in the workplace. Some mentioned sexual assaults or inappropriate touching. We can only

**Graph 3: Do you think your career has been held back as a result of discrimination or bias related to your identity? For example, your gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation?**



\*US, Canada, UK, Europe, Aus, NZ

reproduce a tiny fraction here, which feels inadequate in the face of the stories people were willing to share anonymously. Much more work is needed to tackle discrimination, inappropriate behavior, and, in the worst cases, criminal offenses. The quotes come from informal interviews and survey respondents. It should also be noted that there were a few comments from men who felt they were discriminated against due to their gender.

## MINORITIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO FEEL UPWARD PROGRESSION WITHIN CORPORATE SECURITY IS HARD

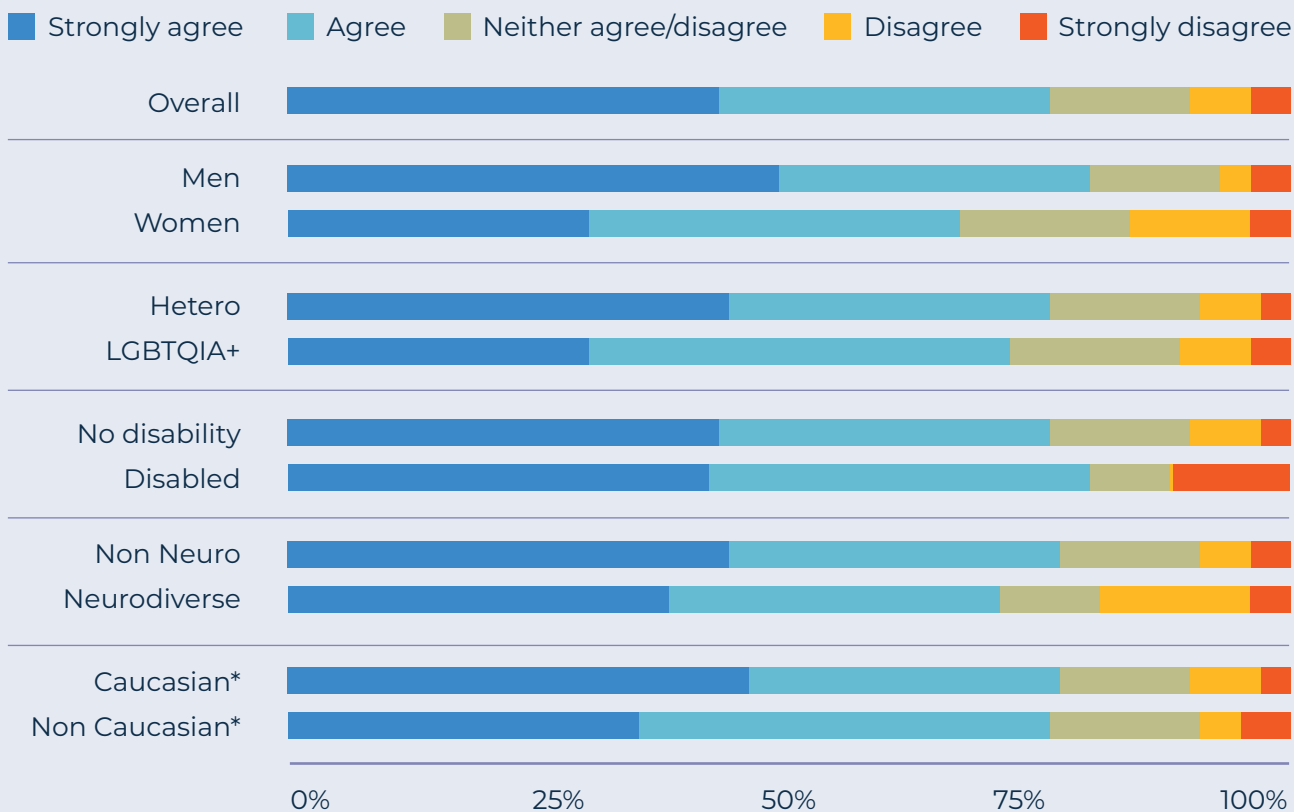
We asked survey participants whether they feel their career has been held back as a result of discrimination or bias related to their identity, and again the differences between majority and minority respondents were stark: 52 percent of women answered yes compared to 21 percent of men, 54 percent of LGBTQIA+ respondents versus 30 percent of those who are heterosexual, 44 percent of nonCaucasians versus 31 percent Caucasians, 45 percent of disabled compared to 32 percent able bodied, and 44 percent of neurodiverse respondents versus 31 percent who are not. See Graph 3 on page this page.

We also asked survey participants whether they felt their performance is fairly evaluated. While there are smaller differences in overall positivity scores (strongly agree and agree combined) between minorities and the majority, women and LGBTQIA+ respondents felt much less strongly positive—30 percent for women compared to 49 percent men, and 30 percent for LGBTQIA+ compared to 44 percent for heterosexual. Women were more than twice as likely to disagree or strongly disagree than men, as were neurodiverse respondents compared to those without neurodiversity. See Graph 4 on page 31.

## EMERGING PRACTICES TO PROMOTE EQUITY IN CORPORATE SECURITY

According to our research, the least developed area of DE&I involved initiatives designed to achieve equitable growth and progression through the corporate security function. Only around one-third of CSOs referenced these initiatives as part of their DE&I program. A number talked about the fact that it is easier to recruit for diversity at leadership and

Graph 4: **My job performance is evaluated fairly**



\*US, Canada, UK, Europe, Aus, NZ

intake levels, but harder to achieve movement with-in and up through the center of their department.

There are three areas of focus for CSOs on equity:

- Use of metrics to track progress and hold managers accountable.
- Training managers in conducting equitable reviews and promotions.
- Equal access to opportunities related to career development and enhancement.

**Use of metrics to track progress and hold managers accountable**

A handful of CSOs mentioned the proactive use

of data to track progress on career advancement of diverse security staff. This includes targets for improved diversity, especially at the leadership team level because many felt visibility was a key factor in helping diverse candidates see themselves and their chances of success differently. Leaders also tracked diversity at each level of seniority, and monitored data on appraisals, promotions, and pay rises. One CSO with systematic data monitoring told us, “In end-of-year appraisals, pay reviews, I ask for data along gender and other lines to make sure there is no inequity creeping in. In our peer-to-peer program, where people are offered opportunities for secondments, things that raise profile, I ask for data along gender and other lines, also.”



## DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCED: SELECTED RESPONDENT COMMENTS

Over the years, I've had to be very quiet about my own misogynistic scars, including the sexual harassment scars and the sexual discrimination scars. It isn't cool to talk about it. No one benefits if you talk about it. And the more profile you have, the less you talk about it.

**In one of the organizations when I was middle management level, we were in a meeting and my manager asked the whole group for a solution to a problem. And you wouldn't believe that when I started to speak, he put his hand in front of my face to silence me. I still get chills when I think of that.**

I was at a company and we did an off-site and we were staying in tents. I was the only woman, so I had my own tent. In the middle of the night, someone tried to get into my tent. Experiences like this can make you feel like handing in your resignation and sit at home doing nothing. Imagine having to have the foresight—for some reason I felt something is going to happen tonight and I locked my tent.

**Uncomfortable around an openly gay man.**

When it comes to being LGBTQIA+, it's difficult. Sometimes they don't say it out loud. They don't say it in front of your face. But when it comes to promotion... They kind of give you the hint, hey, don't act out too much. They don't tell you exactly, but they give you the hint.

**Unfortunately, sexism is a part of everyday life working as a young woman in the security industry. Mostly offensive sexist and misogynistic comments, and at times a lack of trust in my abilities compared with less qualified men, not being listened to.**

Racially pointed comments and potential lack of appointment and progression into C Suite roles.

**Micro aggression related to my gender—"Are your kids ok with you traveling?"**

Speaking down, tasks requested, being called a "clever girl" by a peer.

**Nonwhite/Western colleagues are often spoken over, not paid equally, and not considered readily for promotion.**

As a woman in security, I have been sexually harassed at social and networking events by older white men. I have been called a "girl" despite the fact that I am an adult woman. I have received unsolicited comments on my body, its shape, and have been called a "Barbie doll" or "arm candy" by senior managers.

**Not being taken seriously with certain physical security advice due to being gay or being perceived as gay.**

Comments regarding my status as a transgender woman. Team members showing an unwillingness to work with me after I transitioned two years ago. Refusal to effectively respond to a junior employee who refused to report to me based on color. Exclusion from leadership liaisons and executive meetings, although I am a manager and oversee critical aspects of the department's role.

**It was from a client, a security director from a multinational corporation, that made a comment about not understanding why women were involved in the security industry.**



Scholars have argued for the importance of this data—*process metrics* rather than outcome metrics. Process metrics relate to how many people you employ from different minority groups and at what levels. This helps to determine whether you have an issue. The authors explain, “To do better, you need process metrics, which can pinpoint problems in employee-management processes such as hiring, evaluation, promotion, and executive sponsorship...including the speed at which people of color move up the corporate ladder and the salary differential between men and women in comparable jobs.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Training managers in conducting equitable reviews and promotions**

CSOs recognize their middle managers need training and support on conducting reviews and promotions to ensure they are fair for all candidates and free from unconscious bias. One deputy CSO commented, “We are currently in the process of internal promotions within the function. Myself and the head of security had to do some quite strong intervention. The lists that were brought to us originally were 75 percent male—they are now 60 percent male. We went back to challenge where there were females who appeared to be graded the same as males, but weren’t being put forward for promotion.”

The same company has also refreshed its performance reporting resources, addressing the language used to ensure it does not contain trigger words that tend to associate certain characteristics with men—decisiveness and assertiveness, for example—and undervalue those attributes that tend to be associated with women, such as collaboration and being a team player. Because performance reviews are more freeform, the company is investing time in conversations with line managers about being conscious about the language they use. The CSO at another company reflected, “We call out red flag phrases, such as ‘she’s not quite ready’ which you would never hear said about a man.”

This challenge is not unique to corporate security. The most commonly cited barrier to successfully implementing DE&I strategies according to DE&I leaders in global companies is middle management’s failure to execute diversity programs adequately, which was mentioned twice as often as lack of attention from senior leadership (46 percent versus 23 percent).<sup>28</sup>

According to a McKinsey study, the companies leading on DE&I incorporate the following tactics:

- Use people-analytics tools and internal qualitative research to build visibility into the extent to which promotions and pay are transparent and fair.
- Train performance evaluators to minimize bias in their decision making.
- Support review committees with observers to flag decisions influenced by unconscious bias.
- Deploy software tools to debias recruiting and, increasingly, advancement processes.<sup>29</sup>

### **Equal access to opportunities related to career development and enhancement**

We came across three types of initiatives to ensure all team members get access to opportunities that help enhance career prospects:

- Tracking who gets access to high profile projects, speaking engagements, and the assignments that help to get you noticed. “We are being much more intentional about who are we sending to more higher visibility training opportunities, who’s getting stretch assignments, who’s sitting on higher visibility working groups,” said one deputy CSO interviewee.
- Encouraging minority candidates to apply for positions and pairing them with coaches or mentors, who can help them grow profession-

## CASE STUDY—MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION TACKLING EQUITY

The team had grown following the merger with another function, and the CSO arranged calls with all team members and was astonished by the female talent that was under the radar. He arranged a call with all the women in the function to learn from them their experiences and understand what they felt impacted their ability to progress. He reflected, “What struck me was all of the small things—micro-aggressions—not intended to have a negative impact, but that was exactly the impact on them.” He concluded the function had enormous untapped talent and that cultural and organizational change was needed.

He started by articulating the value proposition equity would provide for the company and the performance dividend that diversity would provide. “The women told me not to communicate that this was something we were doing ‘for them,’ but something we were doing for the team and the company to make ourselves more effective, more productive. They also told me not to focus on the statistics as they tend to generate a negative conversation.” He does have numbers, “I communicate them, but it’s a secondary mes-

sage that helps us to see we still have a lot to do. I’m interested in culture, not quotas.”

The women suggested establishing four mentoring circles globally, a monthly forum where they can share what they want the function to do next. Their message was clear, “They were [clear] that we shouldn’t focus on interventions in isolation, but rather be systematic. They wanted to look at the entire lifecycle of a woman in our security team—how we advertise, language for job ads, whether we offer roles part-time or remotely, the skills and experience we seek, the hiring process, how we emphasize benefits, day-one mentorship for women joining the team, and how we ensure high performing women have senior exec level sponsor when applying for promotion.”

The CSO organized a meeting for the whole function. He started by sharing quotes from women within the function, detailing what they have experienced at work. “I wanted people to see the comments they had made or, more importantly, the comments they had heard and done nothing about.” They focused on this

briefly to hit the message home, and then moved on to forward-looking solutions.

When we asked him whether any of the men had pushed back or been defensive, he said quite the opposite, “When they recognized their words, they were appalled at the impact. I knew I needed to shock the system. But I also knew that many of my male team members are conservative and chivalrous. I appealed to their sense of duty and sent the message that this is not who we are. The men were falling over themselves to be allies, sponsors, and ambassadors.”

When we congratulated him on his efforts, he was adamant, “If what I’m doing is outstanding, it’s outrageous. The world we live in today, where companies no longer exist to meet shareholder expectations alone—societal expectations, customer expectations, staff expectations—we need to be reflective of the world that we live in. How can some of those legacy ways of thinking still be tolerated? I don’t think what I’m doing is outstanding. Frankly, I think it’s the minimum and I’m embarrassed I’m not doing more.”

ally while also providing them with ongoing support to help them thrive in new roles.

- Internal talent development program: one very large corporate security function has created a 1.5-year talent program that rotates participants around different areas of the security function to expose them to a wider variety of leaders, opportunities, and experiences.

## MANY DE&I CHALLENGES REMAIN IN RELATION TO EQUITY

CSOs mentioned three challenges that need addressing:

- Training for managers on reviews and promotions, as outlined above
- Compared to the wider enterprise, security teams are often small and resource-poor. “The biggest problem I face in accelerating this change is the legacy of my company,” one CSO interviewee said. “If I want to increase diversity, I need free positions. And if you are not in growing mode, it’s difficult to switch positions because that means you need to get rid of people to be able to do that.”
- Persistent unconscious bias. “This company has moved far more toward diversity in their upper echelons, so in the future, you’ll



see different people get promoted that wouldn’t have been promoted in the past,” said one CSO interviewee. “It wasn’t necessarily based on race or religion or ethnicity. It was based on who you’ve worked with, who you know, and who you therefore trust. Humans are humans; they’re going to pick people they know.”

## PUSH BACK—ARE PEOPLE BEING OVERPROMOTED ON THE BASIS OF THEIR IDENTITY?

A small minority of survey respondents said DE&I efforts are discriminatory, promoting under-qualified minority candidates ahead of more experienced majority ones. It is outside the scope of this research to determine whether this is true or not—it would require access to internal company data and significant analysis to determine the fairness of recruitment, promotion, and inclusion practices—although no CSO described doing this. Equitable treatment for all must be a cornerstone of DE&I.

It is important to recognize this view to ensure DE&I practices are fair and equitable, and because cultural and organizational change is most successful when the majority can be convinced. This places a priority on a clear articulation of the business case for diversity, transparency of DE&I processes, and strong but empathetic leadership

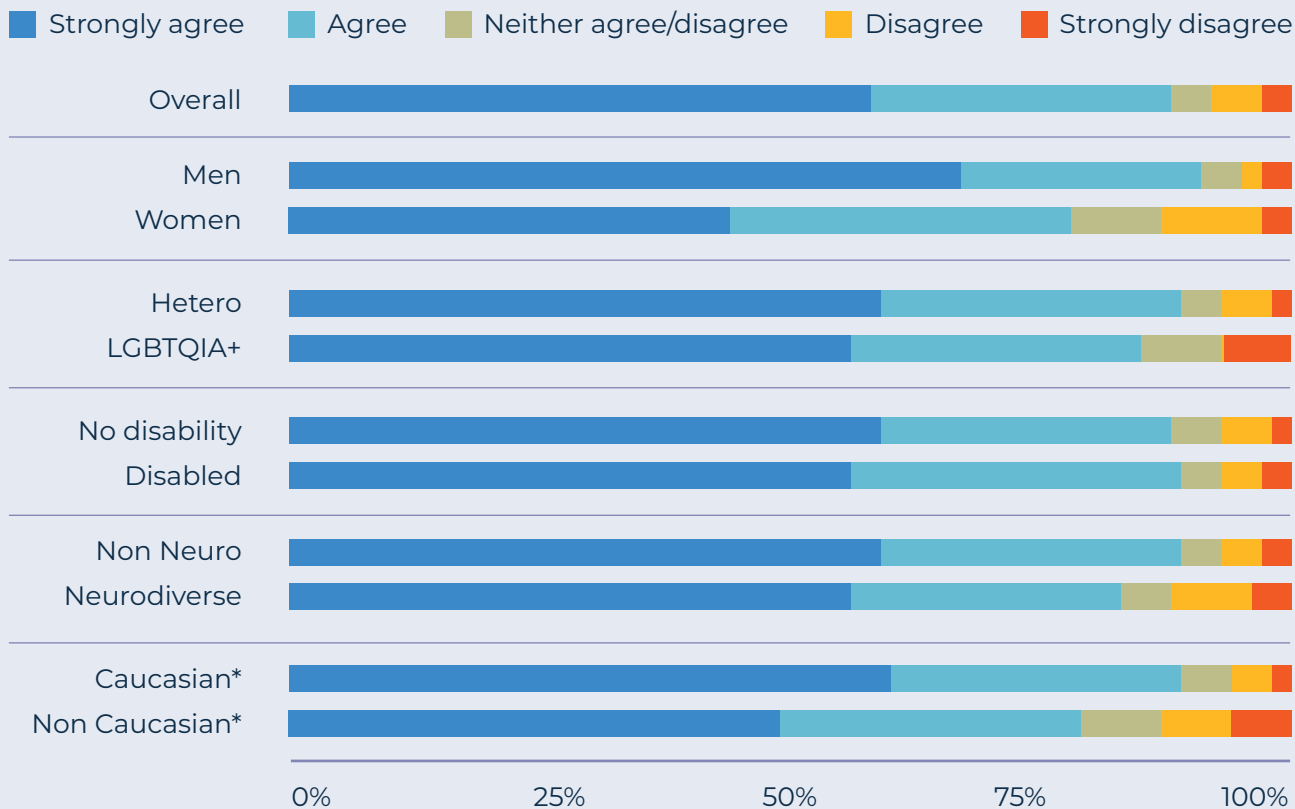
capable of navigating these differences. There is a considerable distance to travel for corporate security—and the wider security industry—in terms of DE&I. We cannot stand still—but we also cannot pretend this minority view isn't there and strongly held.

## AN UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITY—THE INTELLIGENCE FUNCTION

One of the biggest shifts in corporate security over the past decade has been a significant growth of intelligence and analysis units within corporate security. These teams tend to

be younger and more diverse. It would be an obvious talent pool to draw from, but our informal interviews suggest a glass ceiling for this professional group. This is perhaps an untapped opportunity for corporate security leaders as they seek to diversify their teams. A recruitment consultant told us: “When you think about it logically, there shouldn't be a barrier to progress for intelligence analysts; after all, most security functions are trying to be intelligence-led. Bringing analysts into the core security team would be hugely beneficial if what you're trying to do is look over the horizon and see issues coming. I don't understand why more security leaders aren't open to this.”

Graph 5: **I would feel comfortable speaking out if I saw or experienced discrimination**



\*US, Canada, UK, Europe, Aus, NZ

## THERE ARE SIGNS THAT CHANGE IS ON THE WAY

Achieving DE&I depends on a number of variables, with one of the most important being the willingness of team members to call out discrimination when they see it. We asked our survey participants to tell us whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, 'I would feel comfortable speaking out if I saw or experienced discrimination.' Overall, 58 percent of participants strongly agreed, with 88 percent either strongly agreeing or agreeing. Among all minorities except women (44 percent) and racial and ethnic minority respondents (49 percent), a majority strongly agreed with this statement. An overwhelming majority (at least 78 percent) across all groups either agreed or strongly agreed they would feel comfortable speaking out. See on page 36.

For many minorities, the MeToo movement and the murder of George Floyd and protests that followed helped send a powerful message that their struggles were being shared by those outside their identity group. The protests in many U.S. cities in the Summer of 2020 brought together all genders, ages, colors, and creeds of people, all united in the sense that enough was enough. So many of the interviewees referenced this as a turning point for them personally, whether to learn more about other peoples' experiences or to take a stand and speak up themselves. Perhaps the statistic that is most hopeful is that more than 85 percent of those within majority groups agree or strongly agree that they would speak out if they saw discrimination. The tide feels like it is starting to turn.

# UNLOCKING THE DIVERSITY DIVIDEND: INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

**“I am often asked why it is called Pride. I am proud not that I am gay—I was born that way—I am proud because I am no longer afraid to live openly as my authentic self.”**

—Nick Lovrien, CSO, Meta—an openly gay CSO—writing about Pride month on LinkedIn<sup>30</sup>

**“Discomfort is never acceptable behavior. The more people talk about it, the more we can move the needle forward.”**

—CSO interviewee

**“I’m never going to sit here and tell you that I understand what it’s like to be a woman in the workplace. No one’s ever commented on my boobs, my haircut. Nobody’s ever called me ‘hon.’ Nobody’s ever tapped me on my rear end. I’ve never not gotten a job because I’m a guy. I don’t understand how [that feels]. All I can say is that I want to make my team, this company, a place where you don’t have to worry about that, that you feel you are equal, your voice is heard, that your opinion matters.”**

—CSO interviewee

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are all important parts of a whole, but without inclusion it is difficult to see how DE&I efforts can reach their true potential. An inclusive work environment is one where everyone can bring their whole self to work. It’s only when you can do this that you can do your best work and compete fairly alongside your colleagues.

Inclusion is often seen as the ‘fluffiest’ bit of DE&I, but it is probably the hardest to achieve. It includes changing hearts and minds, building understanding between people who are different, helping individuals to overcome fears, asking employees to be honest and vulnerable about what they don’t know, and having difficult conversations—and all while we continue to do our jobs under time and resource pressures. It requires all of us to lean in, get curious, and

help one another to do better. In DE&I terms, it is where the rubber hits the road.

## INCLUSION IS HIGH IN CORPORATE SECURITY TEAMS

We asked survey respondents several questions related to belonging and inclusion and overall scores were positive. When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “I feel like I belong at my organization,” 80 percent agreed or strongly agreed, with only eight percent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Two points should be noted: inclusion scores tend to be much higher in homogenous groups and teams where a shared sense of mission pulls people together. The degree of conviction in support of the statement, however, wavered



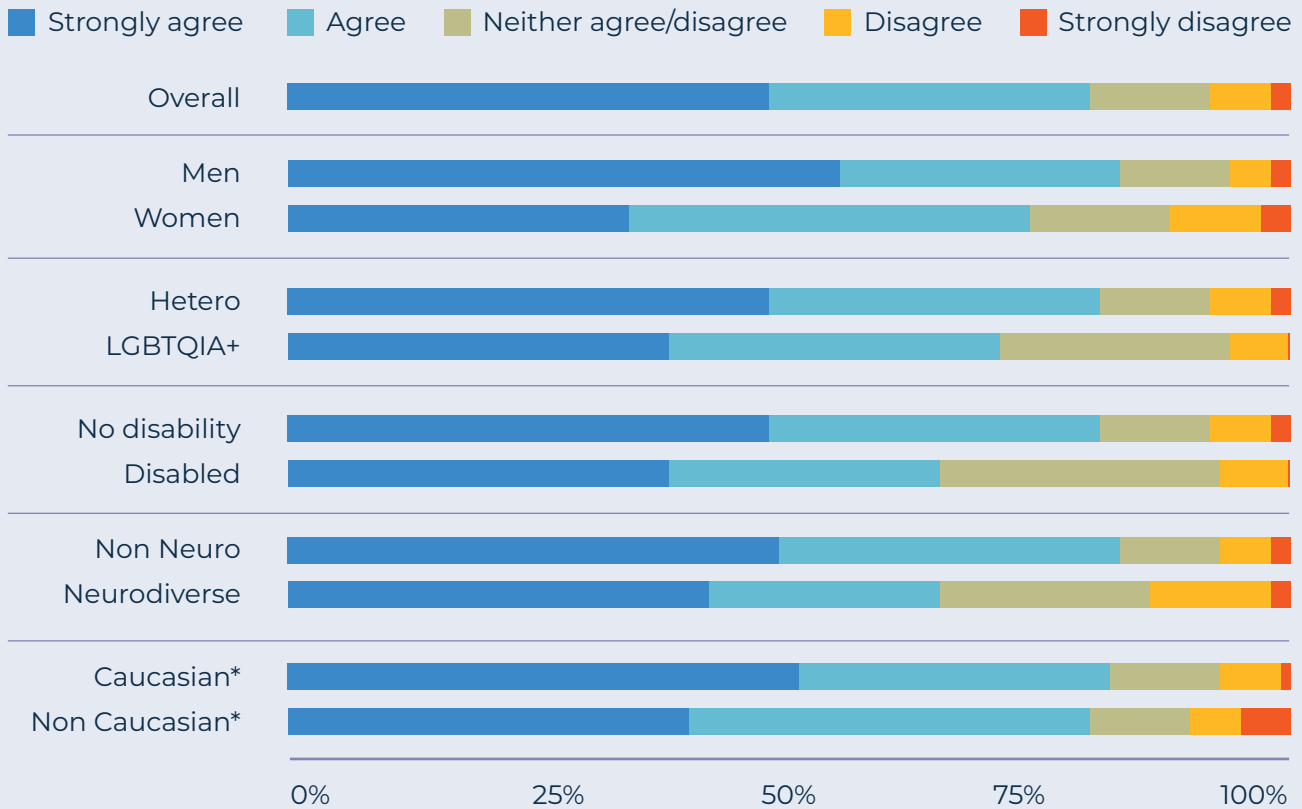
among some minority groups. Looking at the number who strongly agree versus merely agreeing, men had stronger conviction in the statement than women (55 percent vs. 34 percent); heterosexual respondents felt more strongly than LGBTQIA+ respondents (48 percent vs. 38 percent); and able-bodied respondents felt more strongly than disabled respondents (48 percent to 38 percent). See Graph 6 below.

A similar picture emerges in relation to the statement, “Racial, ethnic, gender, and disability-based jokes are not tolerated.” A large majority (78 percent) agreed with the statement. Women and disabled respondents agreed less strongly: 36 percent of women compared to 56 percent

of men, and 38 percent of disabled respondents versus 49 percent of those able bodied.

Finally, we wanted to gauge the extent to which corporate security teams feel their leadership is taking DE&I seriously. We asked survey participants to say the extent to which they agreed with the statement, “I see strong support from corporate security leadership on diversity and inclusion .” Overall, 72 percent agreed or strongly agreed. The strength of agreement varied by group with all minority groups scoring lower on “strongly agreed” than the majority: 31 percent women compared to 50 percent men, 34 percent LGBTQIA+ versus 44 percent heterosexual, 40 percent nonCaucasian compared to 44 percent Caucasian, 34 percent disabled to 43 per-

**Graph 6: I feel like I belong at my organization**



\*US, Canada, UK, Europe, Aus, NZ

cent able bodied, and 38 percent neurodiverse to 43 percent who were not neurodiverse. NonCaucasian respondents were twice as likely as Caucasians to disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. See Graph 7 on page 41.

## EMERGING PRACTICES TO PROMOTE AN INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT IN CORPORATE SECURITY

Corporate security departments are making progress on inclusion, though much work remains. Many are dovetailing with their wider organizational efforts, which have increased dramatically over the past few years, particularly in the light of MeToo and the murder of George Floyd.

There are five areas of focus for CSOs on inclusion:

- Modelling leadership on inclusion
- Use of data to understand levels of inclusion and belonging within the function
- Specialist and dedicated resources, including staff time, ERGs, and inclusive onboarding
- Learning and education programs, including reverse mentoring, programing and events, and DE&I stories
- Recognition of, and support for, allyship

### Modeling leadership on inclusion

The CSOs that had the most detailed DE&I programs and who spoke most passionately about the business case for change very clearly understood that their leadership matters. Whether that is modeling the behavior they want to see in others, calling people out when they fall short, demanding hiring managers redo it when they don't bring a diverse candidate slate,

or practicing open and vulnerable leadership to help everyone get curious about DE&I, these leaders actively worked on inclusion. They used the word “intentional” over and over again. They understood they needed to be focused and unrelenting. As the only CSO with a majority-minority leadership team said, “I have to be intentional. I can't just hope that change will come. I have to be the change, and I have to encourage change elsewhere.”

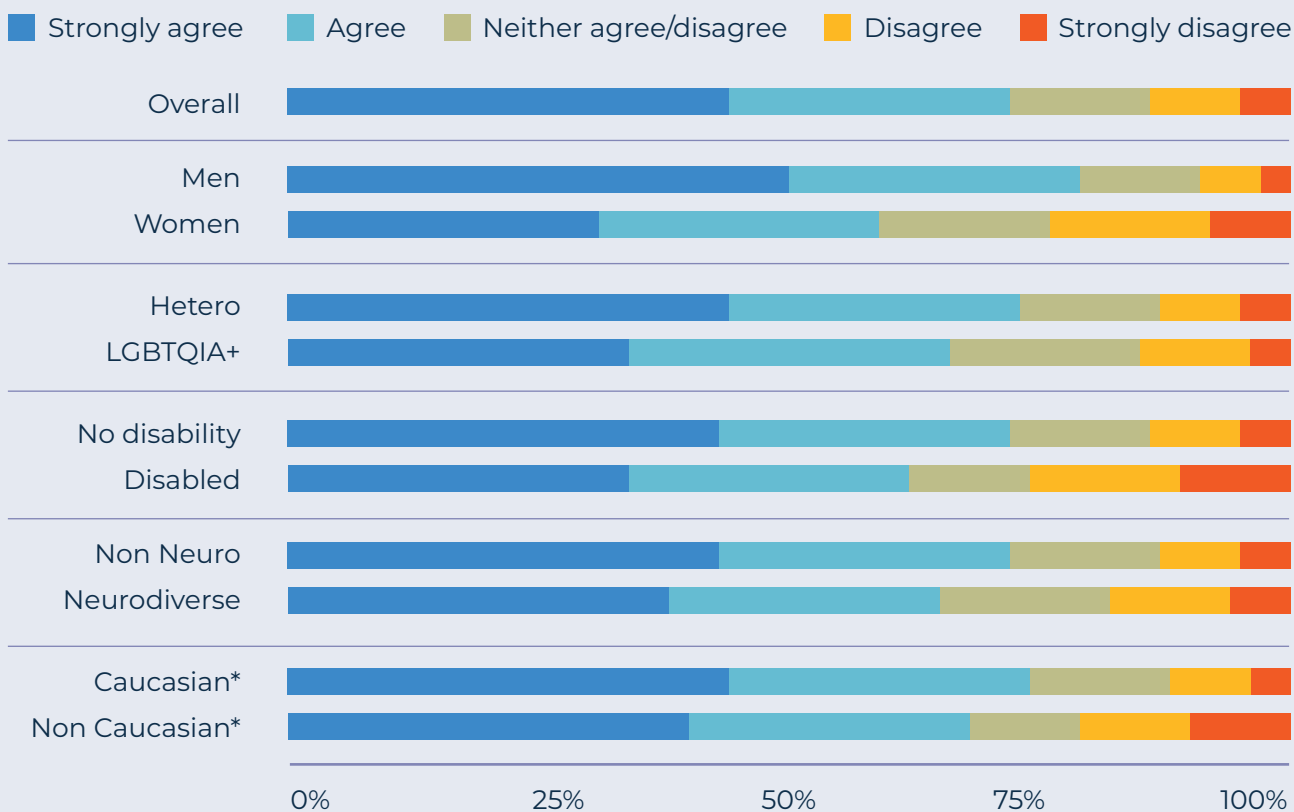
### RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS SHARED STORIES FROM WORKPLACES STRUGGLING TO GET INCLUSION RIGHT

*“It was that year that Trump started running for president and they were playing Fox News in the investigation center. Some colleagues made extremely inappropriate remarks about Black Lives Matter protesters and how the police should just shoot them, in front of black colleagues. I ended up going to our boss's boss about it. She took it very seriously. She came in and took everyone for a walk and told them that we were not allowed to talk about politics anymore and they were going to put the Weather Channel on permanently. I don't think that was the best reaction, to shut everything down. I would have preferred for her to start a dialogue about treating people with respect. It felt more like she didn't really know how to deal with it.”*

*“I go by ‘they’ and ‘their’ and that's new for me. I'm still figuring out. In a world of risk management professionals and they have to classify everything, they're fixers, they want to hammer it down to the last nail and get it done. That's just no longer the world we're in. Newer professionals, newer managers, newer leaders, they deal with this a little differently.”*



Graph 7: **I see strong support from corporate security leadership on diversity and inclusion**



\*US, Canada, UK, Europe, Aus, NZ

This can involve breaking down traditional hierarchical barriers to hear from staff at every level of the team. One CSO described getting the results of a company-wide staff survey and a theme emerging from his own team of “are you really listening to us?” He asked his team to appoint a cohort of ambassadors from across the function who attended leadership team meetings and provided feedback and thoughts from the team. In turn, the ambassadors helped share understanding of the work of the leadership team with the rest of the team. It is a concept that has stuck and delivered useful insights and improved understanding. One organization has set up a DE&I Council for Global Security which

sets the function’s strategy and manages their reverse mentoring program.

In some cases, CSOs are helping to break down cultural norms through challenge, encouragement, or support. One CSO described a scenario in her newly established team in India: “The only pushback I got was when I wanted to hire a female to lead our team in India and there was a comment about whether a female in that environment would have the cultural respect from the males in the organization. My response was that, as her line manager, it’s your job to make sure that isn’t the case. If she has the skills to do the job but the cultural barrier means she’s

## CASE STUDY: GLOBAL SECURITY TEAM MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Last year, the global security team of a major multinational corporation established a Management Advisory Group comprised of a representative mix of the department's employees across levels, teams, and regions. The security function used the Management Advisory Group to provide insight and advice on difficult and sensitive issues affecting the team. The CSO said, "We empower this group to ideate and come to our leadership group with any opportunities they identify to continue to build a strong, positive culture with our team and the wider company."

not being listened to, we need to find a way to work around that and not use it as an excuse. We need to break down those barriers."

### *Use of data to understand levels of inclusion and belonging within the function*

Most CSOs draw on the results of their company-wide staff surveys, which include questions about inclusion and belonging. Many noted that their functions have much higher response rates than others in the organization. The larger the function, the more meaningful the data.

### *Specialist and dedicated resources, including staff time and ERGs*

Very few CSOs have significant dedicated resource for DE&I initiatives, all seem to manage their efforts through team members combining this with their main security job. In talking to DE&I leaders from major corporations and consulting best practice, it is clear that systematic, long-term, and sustainable progress on DE&I requires dedicated resources. One talked about

the importance of compromise, "It's about being able to compromise and I will do that because ultimately, I know I'll get them there in the end." Arguably, you can only do this if you have a vision, a plan, a budget, and a timeline. She described tagging DE&I efforts onto other activities, making it a hot ticket, compromising on something today because you know it will enable you to achieve more a few steps down the line. This requires a long-term view. Most corporate security departments are too small to have a dedicated staff member focused exclusively on DE&I, but for large departments there is a value in creating this resource. Others might consider creating this capacity via an independent consultant.

Employee resource groups (ERGs) are common in large organizations, bringing together employees around a particular interest or characteristic, such as LGBTQIA+ or a race or ethnic group. They bring voice, visibility, recognition, and awareness and can realize change. As one DE&I professional said, "Our LGBTQIA+ group was organizing morning teas two years ago, today they are influencing company-wide policy on employees transitioning within the workplace."

### *Learning and education programs, including reverse mentoring, events, and DE&I stories*

One of the most frequent things mentioned during informal conversations and interviews was education and learning initiatives, such as those mentioned in the ERG example above. Much of this activity was triggered by events in 2020 and whole programs now exist to share resources, find time to discuss difficult topics, and learn together. One CSO described the program she established over the past year or so: They have guest speakers, share articles and YouTube videos to spark discussion, host townhall-style meetings that garner a 40 percent attendance rate. The program is overseen by a steering committee of 12 members from the security function. The mantra for the program is "ask anything."

A senior security manager at another company described their corporate requirement for each member of staff to choose one DE&I objective as part of their annual objective setting process. They must choose something they don't understand, learn about it, and then share it with colleagues. She chose to look into trans issues as a result of a team member transitioning, she hosted a webinar on Trans Awareness Day on how to be a trans ally, and has since gone on to get a qualification on gender disparity in the tech industry. Efforts like this provide an entry into sensitive topics; they are a low-risk way to get involved and learn.

### Reverse mentoring

A number of CSOs talked about profound insights gleaned through the process of reverse

mentoring, when they are paired with junior colleagues. They described being confronted by the diverse challenges their colleagues face, the microaggressions they experience, what it feels like to be a minority within the security industry and the types of behaviors that are unintentionally exclusionary. One CSO described the impact, "For me, the experience of reverse mentoring has been profound. I was paired with a young black woman on our team. She's helped me to understand how she experiences work differently [than] me, the barriers she faces. She's challenged my assumptions. It's had a sizeable impact on how I think about diversity, equity, and inclusion."

### The power of stories

Something that struck us throughout the research was the power of personal stories. Some examples include the CSO who watched his female bosses struggle to be heard and was determined to do better, the security team shocked by the stories of their female colleagues who then "fell over themselves to be allies," the empathy generated through reverse mentoring when unfamiliar terms such as microaggression become real through the experiences of the human being sitting opposite you.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion as a program is essentially human. It's about people, their differences, how this impacts how they live, how they interact and get along, and how they view one another. It is nothing if not rich in stories, color, depth, and texture. And yet so much of the language we use about DE&I is technical. That's part of what makes it scary for those who don't understand the terminology and can't keep pace with the rapid change characteristic of the field.

Human stories are what inspire us to change our behavior. Numbers keep us on track, but it's hearing from real people that helps us to understand the issue and prompts us to do things differently. As experts have said, "Stories invite perspective-tak-

## CASE STUDY: EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP

One of our interviewees described the establishment of an ERG in his company following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, "Lots of staff members felt traumatized after Mr. Floyd's murder. We had ERGs for gender and LGBTQIA+ but we didn't have anything for race and ethnicity, so this was the trigger to form one. We held listening sessions to hear from our Black employees, we hosted educational Zoom calls, we convened allyship workshops, and we circulated long reads on the internal Facebook group. In the first 10 months, there was a 40 percent growth of people following the content and we received positive feedback from staff, senior leaders, and minority staff, [who said] they felt heard and seen. Eventually, we hired a regional DE&I director and that was a game changer; suddenly it was someone's job and they have become an incredible advocate."

ing: the concept of standing in someone else's shoes and imagining what it's like to be them. It's a drastically underutilized inclusion tool."<sup>31</sup> They describe the impact of sharing stories via focus groups and listening sessions, and the lasting impact this tends to have. It can be easy to dismiss as "just another book club or focus group," but it's important to remember that these efforts can be effective in building the foundations that are needed to sustain DE&I efforts in the years ahead.

A note of caution about stories. DE&I can be an incredibly sensitive topic. Almost no-one wanted to speak on the record for this research, communications departments were brought in to review (but not censor) the questions before some of our interviews, and potential survey respondents rightly worried about anonymity. Sharing our stories, especially the difficult ones, is exhausting. Many worry about being cast as a victim or troublemaker, or simply being defined by their identity rather than the quality of their work. While stories are one of the most powerful tools in achieving change, their use is not without challenges.

### **Recognition of, and support for, allyship**

While it can be incredibly important to find companionship with people who share your struggles, whether for light relief, coping tactics, or strategizing, allyship is an important source of support for minorities. Allyship is taking actions in solidarity with DE&I ideals. People can demonstrate allyship in a variety of ways: men calling out men who speak over women; white colleagues demanding an equally talented black or Asian candidate be considered on merit; straight colleagues voice offense at jokes directed at the LGBTQIA+ popu-

lation; and when able bodied team members ask questions about accessibility of the workplace. So many interviewees and survey respondents talked about the powerful impact this has, and the need to see more of it. We also heard from CSOs who actively support members of their team joining relevant industry forums as allies: "We recognize we need to go out more and understand some of the challenges that females have, so three male members of our team are ambassadors on women in security forums."

## **WE ARE IN THIS FOR THE LONG HAUL**

We really are at the very start of the journey on DE&I within corporate security. There is no doubt the profession has made progress, but there is some considerable distance to travel. This was not lost on the CSOs we interviewed, who talked about the need to push hard and refuse to take their foot off the gas. It is a constant process of change management. "We need to take as a given that diversity is not a given," one CSO told us. When you start the process, you have to be ready for the downs as well as the ups. One CSO said, "Inclusion scores went down 10 percent at the start of this year. I formed a small group to work out why. It turns out it was because I had raised expectations but not yet delivered." Until you have achieved a fully inclusive team environment, management might get more difficult in the short term. As one interviewee summed up: "Having a team full of 40-year-old ex-military men is much easier to manage. A diverse team is harder to manage, but it's going to do much more extraordinary things."

# BRAND SECURITY: DRIVING INNOVATION ACROSS THE INDUSTRY

The efforts described so far are primarily concerned with what organizations can do to impact DE&I within their own teams. They do not operate in a vacuum; what happens within the security industry and its rich network of membership organizations and associations is highly influential. The sector's associations have a role in addressing DE&I issues and normalizing behaviors and attitudes within the profession.

## THE SECURITY INDUSTRY HAS AN IMAGE PROBLEM

Many of the people we interviewed and surveyed described the image of the security industry as problematic. It creates misperceptions that mean HR colleagues and recruitment consultants continue to bring forward candidates in the same mold: men and former soldiers, federal agents, and police officers. It also puts off women and minorities, who don't see many role models who look like them. One of the CSOs we interviewed gave a practical example, "One of the candidates said she couldn't underestimate the impact it had on her to be interviewed by a woman. She said she had never been interviewed by a woman before, let alone been managed by one. By doing that, we opened people's eyes a little bit." The security industry of today still has much work to do on diversity, but it has made progress. In too many cases, perception hasn't yet caught up with reality.

In an industry comprising hundreds of thousands of people globally spread across tens of thousands of organizations in hundreds of countries, how on earth do we bring about change?

## THE SECURITY INDUSTRY IS NOT VISIBLE ENOUGH ON DE&I ISSUES

The vast majority of survey respondents do not feel the security industry is doing enough to address DE&I. Overall, only one-quarter of respondents think enough is being done, which falls to 12 percent for women, 6 percent for LGBTQIA+ respondents, 14 percent for those with a disability, and 17 percent for those who are neurodiverse and nonCaucasian.

## MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

The rich network of security membership organizations and professional bodies play an important role in sharing best practices, testing new ideas, and providing professional development. They also play a pivotal role in codifying behaviors within the industry. The term social proof, coined by Robert Cialdini in 1984,<sup>32</sup> holds that people look to those around them to work out what's appropriate and acceptable in any given situation. This means that what happens at industry events, who is platformed on their stages, and how their leaders conduct themselves has a disproportionate impact on how individuals behave. They set the tone.

## MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS ARE NOT VISIBLE ENOUGH ON DE&I ISSUES

Survey respondents' views on the efforts of security membership organizations are slightly more

positive than for the security industry as a whole, but still low. Overall, just over one-third (38 percent) felt membership organizations are doing enough, which fell to just 23 percent of women, 20 percent of LGBTQIA+ respondents, 24 percent of those with a disability, and 31 percent for both those who were neurodiverse and nonCaucasian. As one survey respondent put it, “They are doing something, but could definitely do more.” A CSO said, “They do have a role, but what I’ve seen so far is quite tokenistic.”

Their potential to influence for good is exceptional, but just like corporate security leaders, security membership organizations are also at the start of their DE&I journey. One survey respondent said, “Most professional organizations recognize that this is a challenge, but they are unwilling or unable to make the bold changes needed.” A CSO interviewee commented, “I don’t think membership organizations have truly tapped their potential of where we should go on DE&I. I think they are hoping someone will find the magic bullet. They’ve lost sight of the value of experimenting or trying different things. They want to get from A to B as quickly as possible. They forget that the journey itself could also be very valuable. There is also a fear of getting it wrong. That’s regressive, because we’re not going to be able to move forward if we don’t have that safe zone. The membership organizations within our industry have the ability to bring people together in safe zones with a purpose.”

And finally, a survey respondent summarized the view of a sizeable group that there is at best ambivalence, at worst resistance, to DE&I within the industry at large, “We operate in a security industry where a large portion of people are not convinced DE&I initiatives are needed. They either don’t believe anything is wrong or just do not see the need because they haven’t personally experienced anything. The other portion is ambivalent and play to both houses, mostly because they are not affected by the absence of

DE&I practices. Many women have been gaslit into believing they shouldn’t be seen as supporting DE&I initiatives to be one of the boys. Or maybe they’re at a career stage where they don’t need them. A very small group of people in security walk the talk on DE&I initiatives.”

## EMERGING PRACTICES FOR SECURITY INDUSTRY MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS ON DE&I IN CORPORATE SECURITY

We came across many examples of good practice among membership organizations and received a plethora of suggestions from interviewees and survey respondents.

There are four areas of focus for security industry membership organizations on DE&I:

- Using data to understand their members
- Ensuring diversity within boards and leadership
- Using their programming to enhance DE&I within the industry
- Playing an active role in wider industry branding efforts

### *Using data to understand their members*

Data is a prerequisite for effective DE&I efforts; without it you cannot understand the challenge, set goals, or track progress. Basic information about members, in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and neurodiversity can be gathered via anonymous surveys. Given the sensitivity of some of these data points—notably sexual orientation, given it is still illegal to be homosexual in almost 70 countries—it is vital to ensure data security measures are strong and clearly articulated.<sup>33</sup> Some might



wish to turn to external independent organizations to gather, analyze, and store this information on their behalf. At present, data is routinely gathered on gender, but very little is collected on the other aspects of diversity. Surveys can also solicit views on what members want to see in terms of DE&I, feedback on initiatives, and suggestions for further work.

We do not underestimate the sensitivities around data in this area. We came across a number of membership organizations who had gathered data but decided not to publish or were currently grappling with how to do so. Others had received push back from some members about gathering this data at all. As we have seen across all DE&I efforts within the industry, there is a wide spectrum of comfort and acceptance on DE&I. It will take brave and strong leadership from membership organizations within the industry and an acknowledgement that they will likely receive pushback from somewhere, no matter what they do or how they organize their efforts.

Once membership organizations have data, they should set targets for what they consider to be appropriate levels and pace of change. As one CSO interviewee put it, “We are doing more than we have ever done, but it doesn’t mean we’re having the impact we want. I don’t know that we have set the goal or outcome that we are looking for.” DE&I should be part of the associations’ strategies and reported on annually to members, along with their other strategic goals. One survey respondent voiced their frustrations, “It is time for action. No one is taking serious action.” It’s difficult to imagine progress without data.

### **Ensuring diversity within boards and leadership**

Membership organizations are beginning to address representation within their leadership ranks, both staff leadership and volunteer positions, which tend to bring status and visibility to the position holder. One CSO who chairs the

regional board of a security industry organization described their recent strategy refresh, which resulted in diversity being baked into their recruitment for new board members. There was a debate among the board about whether they should be representative of the association’s members (majority male) or the clients of member organizations (representative of the local population). They opted for the latter. The CSO described the importance of being intentional and enshrining commitments in writing. “If you want DE&I to be at the forefront you have to have people who are constantly bringing it up and you have to get those commitments in writing,” the CSO said. Other interviewees and survey respondents called for transparency in the selection process for these roles, describing what felt like a *fait accompli* anointment of an heir apparent chosen by the incumbent.

Some survey respondents also pointed to the need for greater diversity within the staff leadership of membership organizations. “I would like to see more diverse staffing, particularly at the leadership levels of these organizations. Representation matters and until staffing reflects these organizations’ positions and public statements regarding diversity and inclusion, it is difficult to believe that their statements and efforts are sincere.”

### **Using their programming to enhance DE&I within the industry**

One of the most consequential—and most often cited—area of activity for security industry membership organizations is their own programming, which incorporates speakers, entertainment, codes of conduct, safe spaces for conversations, education, membership, and minority networks.

#### **Speakers and topics**

Some are addressing the diversity of speaker panels and keynote speakers and developing speaker databases to avoid drawing on the same small circle of speakers. This isn’t about token-

ism; it is about ensuring the best people are selected to speak and offering new perspectives to members to stimulate fresh thinking. As one survey respondent said, “Even if you don’t have a specific DE&I strand of activity, just being more representative and openly visible is really going to help in terms of raising that profile.” Many survey respondents bemoaned seeing diverse speakers limited to panels discussing DE&I: “Go beyond having a token panel on DE&I. Make your entire speaker list diverse on all fronts.”

Membership organizations can also play a role in articulating the business case for diversity by sharing case studies and good practices with their membership to raise standards across the industry. “They should lead by example, articulating the business benefits to be gained by considering as wide a range of people as possible for security related roles,” one respondent said.

### **Entertainment**

We heard criticism from both men and women of some of the entertainment at industry events, which is not inclusive for female members and presents women as the “entertainment.” One interviewee commented, “I have seen efforts to advance diversity in the security industry, mainly related to gender. I do however see examples of where the security industry could still be off-putting to women. For example, the upcoming event by a top security influencer which boasts the attendance of Miss USA Rodeo. Membership organization sanctioned events should stop including these types of gimmicks. They take efforts at DE&I back decades.” Another commented, “If you’re trying to drive a program and you’re trying to foster inclusion, you should be paying more attention to what those public facing things are.” There is no place for dancing girls and scantily clad females as entertainment in a professional context.

### **Codes of conduct**

We heard stories from women about highly inappropriate behavior from men at indus-

try events. One security intelligence manager told us, “At a recent event, I had a long sweater cardigan on over a dress. An older guy came up and said, ‘Oh, I want to talk to you.’ He slipped his hand inside my sweater and put both hands on my waist. I was like, ‘Excuse me.’ Another man there said, ‘Oh, yeah, he’s just like that.’ That is not an excuse. No one touches me without my permission, much less inside my clothing.” Another said, “There was a man at my table at a conference looking at photos on his phone of the hooker he’d hired the night before, clearly visible to those of us around him—and then he got up to deliver the keynote. He should be blackballed.” We also heard stories about sexual comments, racist language, sexual harassment, and people being ridiculed and talked over at professional industry events.

This does not represent the majority in our industry, but its persistence is a stain on the security sector. Membership organizations can play a vital role in stamping this out: having a code of conduct that must be signed as a condition of membership, an anti-discrimination version of the Chatham House rule to set the tone and expectations for behavior, clarity about how and where to report incidents, and firmer action on reports to weed out bad actors who put the safety and comfort of other members at risk and lower the professional standing of the sector. As one survey respondent put it, “Remove people who commit egregious offenses from their membership. Boycott them from the community. There are some pretty horrendous people out there who are still employed in security.”

### **Safe spaces for difficult conversations**

So many of us are working our way through DE&I issues: What is appropriate versus inappropriate behavior? What terminology should we use? How can we make people feel valued and included? These concerns and uncertainties are not the preserve of white men in the industry—we are all feeling our way. A number of the CSOs we inter-

viewed felt their membership organizations would be an ideal space to host some of these discussions in a safe, nonjudgmental way. One said, “The membership organization I am part of is ideally well suited to tackling some of the difficult conversations we need to have as an industry about diversity and inclusion. There is considerable trust among the membership, so we could have frank conversations, especially in smaller groups.” Another said, “It’s about being intentional about having this conversation and knowing as a community, a profession, that we can do better, we should do better. Because we’ll be better for it as a security community.” Another interviewee described what she saw as a contrast between increasingly rich conversations in her own organization with an apparent silence at the industry level. “You might have individual leaders in different organizations who have made it a personal priority,” she said, “but until fairly recently it was never something that was made to be an industry priority or valued as part of the industry.”

### Awards

Awards are an important way of recognizing and rewarding achievement and leadership. It is laudable to see diversity, equity, and inclusion beginning to be reflected in industry awards, such as the creation of a DE&I OSPA, for example, won in 2022 by the Corps Together campaign from Corps Security. It is also important that awards administrators ensure that all finalists are selected from the widest range of places and that there is transparency around decision making.

Run programs for members: mentoring, reverse mentoring, allyship

A number of interviewees and survey respondents called for more programming from their membership organizations, such as reverse mentoring, training on things such as unconscious bias, and best practices in DE&I drawn from their members and leading DE&I experts.

### Networks

The rich network of membership organizations is overlaid by a further layer of formal and informal networks organized by members around specific areas of interest or identity, including the OSAC Women in Security network, the various ASIS Communities, the Security Institute’s Diversity and Inclusion special interest group, and the Rainbow Alliance for LGBTQIA+ members in the UK. There are scores of groups and bodies that were mentioned during the research. These groups serve a number of purposes, including solidarity for members facing similar challenges, a coordinated voice for change, visibility to a community otherwise under the radar, networking, and the delivery of tailored professional development opportunities not provided by mainstream membership organizations.

In an ideal world, of course, these networks might not be necessary. There are also those who feel they lead to separation rather than unity. Overall, the people who spoke to us who are members of these forums are largely positive about the experience and feel they serve a purpose for them personally.

### *Playing an active role in wider industry branding efforts*

We are beginning to see a number of initiatives emerge with the aim of changing how security is depicted, to both reflect the diversity that exists and enhance efforts to attract a wider range of candidates and talent into the industry. This work is in its infancy, requires coordination, and will provide slow burn results, but it is some of the most exciting activity we came across in our research. There was support, especially among CSO interviewees, for more industry-wide partnerships. “This challenge, which is an industry-wide challenge, does lend itself to a more active industry-wide approach,” said one respondent. “Wouldn’t it be good if there was more of an industry approach, a more explicit advocacy that’s underpinned by proactive schemes.”

## Industry campaigns

There are a number of self-organized industry campaigns to change the public face of security, including #ChangeFaceSecurity to profile women, and #GettingSecurityDone that supports young professionals. The campaigns are accompanied by discussions and other activities. It would be fantastic to underpin these efforts with campaigning know-how and data analytics to help ascertain what works and where best to focus efforts for maximum impact.

We came across examples of efforts to combine limited time and resources. For example, the Security Commonwealth, an umbrella organization of independent membership bodies across the security industry in the UK, has a DE&I committee which is intended to provide some continuity between the DE&I efforts of its members.

As more activity gets underway, organized by literally hundreds of organizations and associations, having one or a small group of experts or researchers with capacity to scan, document, and understand these initiatives would help to share best practices, accelerate learning, and make better use of limited resources. A good first step would be to host a gathering of the main membership bodies and a handful of DE&I researchers and practitioners to document what is happening, provide opportunities for collaboration or information sharing, and identify gaps for further work. "Industry bodies and membership organizations need to work together to develop one unifying message, market themselves better, host a day of sharing best practices," one survey respondent said. "One of the greatest steps forward would be for cross-organizational collaboration between different professional bodies rather than badging and silo endeavors. We can't propagate meaningful inclusivity if we don't act with genuine inclusion and collaboration from the outset."

## CASE STUDY: SECURE FUTURES, EY FOUNDATION AND SECURITY INSTITUTE<sup>34</sup>

The initiative has aims to attract and provide a pathway into security for young people. It does this through the following activities:

- It targets ambitious and bright young people aged 16 to 17 from low-income backgrounds.
- It recruits from schools in target locations.
- Participants receive one week of paid employability skills training.
- They deliver sessions to boost future skills in collaboration participating companies.
- Participants undertake three to five days of paid work experience with a business host where they provide answers and insights for real business challenges and develop technical skills.
- Each young person receives one-to-one mentoring by an employee from a Secure Futures funder organization for up to 10 months.
- Ongoing networking and skills-boosting events are held for young people via EYF alumni network events.

## Career pathways

It was a common refrain among interviewees and survey respondents that the security industry needs to reach out to new candidates as part of its efforts to diversify and strengthen the sector. One area for continued and further work is

the development of career pathways for security to help communicate and market the profession and help potential recruits understand that security can offer a structured and meaningful long-term career option.

### Outreach

A number of CSO interviewees talked about the outreach they do personally to attract a more diverse range of candidates. There is scope for membership organizations to engage in these efforts systematically, too, which some are doing. As one survey respondent put it, “Outreach to the next generation is the only way to increase the presence of minority populations in the industry. Making security an attractive profession first, then bringing in people of wider backgrounds.”

## DE&I HEROES AND THE NEED FOR SUPPORT AND DEDICATED RESOURCING

One of the most inspiring things about this research has been meeting what we term “DE&I Heroes.” The heroes comprise a relatively small group of individuals who are the lifeblood of diversity and inclusion efforts within the industry. Every conversation we had, the same names cropped up; individuals who set up networks, sit on organizing committees, speak at diversity events, and convene huddles on Zoom calls to share what they are learning. Change always starts with these types of people; the early adopters, the folks who are passionate, those with skin in the game who want to make the path smoother for those who follow them. But change does not end with these people. Real, widespread, systematic change requires support, leadership, and action from the mainstream.

The security industry DE&I Heroes are flagging. In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, their longer-term efforts were met by new interest from industry bodies and colleagues who were shocked by events and determined to act. Two years on, the heroes are on their knees and disillusioned at the lack of support and investment. One such individual told us, “We are running on empty. We need [our security membership organization] to ask how we’re doing”. Surveys have been commissioned, webinars held, discussions had, but this small and determined cadre are wondering when the troops will arrive. We certainly got the impression that if just a few dozen people stopped, DE&I efforts in the industry would be severely impacted. It’s time to mainstream. One survey respondent summarized it: “Those who are making efforts towards DE&I are doing a good job. The issue is that the majority are not—change takes time, and without appropriate change management, it takes even longer.”

Another put it more bluntly, “We talk, we talk, we talk, but we do nothing.”

The time for change is now. As one of the CSO interviewees put it about the state of industry-wide efforts, “This is about making yourself fit for purpose for today and tomorrow. At the moment, we’re fit for purpose for yesterday and a little bit of today.”

We might be feeling our way, and we might not have all the answers. But we know enough to get started. This research demonstrates the outstanding work being conducted in corporate security departments and industry membership organizations across the sector. Currently they are largely disjointed and fragmented. With openness, coordination, and brave leadership, we can accelerate these efforts and bring substantial and lasting change.

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has made the business case for diversity, equity, and inclusion and has argued that it is no longer just the right thing to do or the fair way to operate—it is the chief security officer’s secret weapon. It is the only way corporate security will achieve the levels of innovation and creativity needed to face the challenges ahead—from both the external threat environment and the new internal realities of doing business. Diversity is nonnegotiable.

Work has started and some progress has been made; there is more visible diversity in the sector, CSOs report a focus on DE&I and are being measured on it, people within the industry are ready to speak out against discrimination when they see it, and membership organizations are routinely hosting diverse panels. This report documents numerous examples of good practice and makes a series of recommendations for corporate security leaders and membership organizations.

There is still much work to be done. Some of the challenges include a vocal minority who are antagonistic toward DE&I efforts, fears about getting things wrong cause paralysis, a persistent legacy of recruiting almost exclusively from former government services which are themselves fairly homogenous, and there remain disturbing stories of discrimination, sexual harassment, and unprofessional behavior, which have no place in our industry.

We need a whole-of-industry approach to DE&I, where CSOs lead the charge from within their organizations, membership organizations and associations set the tone for appropriate behavior and platform all the talents across the sector, and each person in the profession assumes responsibility to lean in, listen, learn, and become an ambassador for the rights of every person working in corporate security. Together we can become a fairer and more

equitable industry; we can be more productive, innovative, and creative; and we can better rise to the challenge of delivering safety and security to the organizations we serve, today and in the future.

The research has highlighted a number of areas of promising practice, which we recommend corporate security functions and security industry membership organizations explore in order to improve and enhance their work on DE&I. They relate to the report’s four areas of focus:

## COLLECTIVE WISDOM: GETTING MORE DIVERSE TALENT INTO CORPORATE SECURITY

The research points to the following practices for corporate security functions:

- Use of data to establish a baseline on diversity, measure and report on progress, and hold colleagues accountable through key performance indicators.
- Conduct outreach to a more diverse range of schools and colleges to encourage a wider range of people to consider a career in security.
- Change the recruitment process to be more inclusive, including rethinking role profiles, adopting inclusive language in job descriptions, advertising in nontraditional spaces, selecting diverse candidate slates, using diverse interview panels, utilizing blind marked assessments, and establishing a preference for equally qualified diverse candidates.
- Provide support and challenge for hiring managers to help them to improve recruitment from a diversity perspective.



- Partner with Employee Resource Groups.
- Offer internships to enable diverse candidates at entry level to get access to corporate security work experience

- Run learning and education programs, including reverse mentoring, programing and events, and DE&I stories.
- Find ways to recognize and support allyship.

## REWARDING TALENT: ENSURING ALL TALENT CAN RISE EQUITABLY THROUGH THE FUNCTION

The research points to the following practices for corporate security functions:

- Using metrics to track progress and hold managers accountable.
- Training managers in conducting equitable reviews and promotions.
- Offer equal access to career development enhancing opportunities.
- Identify routes for progression for employees working with the intelligence function to transition into wider security roles.

## UNLOCKING THE DIVERSITY DIVIDEND: INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

The research points to the following practices for corporate security functions:

- Model leadership on inclusion.
- Use data to understand levels of inclusion and belonging within the security function.
- Use specialist and dedicated resources, including staff time, ERGs, and inclusive onboarding.

## BRAND SECURITY: DRIVING INNOVATION ACROSS THE INDUSTRY

The research points to the following practices for security industry membership organizations:

- Collect and use data to understand members and gather input and feedback on DE&I efforts.
- Revise talent spotting and selection processes to ensure diversity within boards and leadership.
- Use programing to enhance DE&I within the industry, including using diverse speakers; sunsetting inappropriate entertainment and practices at events; instigating and implementing codes of conduct for behavior at events; offering safe spaces for discussions about DE&I to allow members to improve their understanding and discuss uncertainties or concerns; ensure fair approaches to awards; running programs for members, such as mentoring and reverse mentoring; promoting allyship; and supporting DE&I networks.
- Play an active role in wider industry branding efforts, such as industry campaigns seeking to articulate career pathways and outreach that will change perceptions of the industry and promote a more diverse range of candidates.
- Support the industry's DE&I Heroes.





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