

Passport to Inclusion

Webinar

Date: 11th July 2024 |

Time 15:00 - 16:30 GMT | 10:00 - 11:30 EST

WTTC's Passport to Inclusion webinar featured insights from [WTTC's "Creating Belonging" report](#), created in partnership with AIG and HospitableMe. Industry experts discussed how to create diverse and inclusive workplaces and traveller experiences. They emphasised the need for commitment to making the changes, taking deliberate actions, creating inclusive marketing, and implementing robust accessibility measures. The panel provided actionable strategies, highlighting the importance of education, collaboration, patience, consistency, and measurement. Attendees left with a deeper understanding of how to advance DEIB in their organisations.

Report overview

Nejc Jus, Research Director at the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), presented the findings from the WTTC's latest report, "Creating Belonging: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging in Travel & Tourism." The report aims to familiarise readers with DEIB concepts and terms, analyse employment data by age, gender, and educational attainment, and explore ways to make Travel & Tourism more inclusive. The report delves into DEIB metrics for various countries, including South Africa and the USA, as well as the EU region. The report notes that challenges did exist, such as data availability, political context, funding, and defining identities inclusively. But, it details some ways to take action including education, improved internal practices for recruitment, compensation, benefits, and broad recognition of identities.

Panel discussion

Melissa Cherry, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer/SVP at Miles Partnership emphasised that diversity and inclusion look different for each organisation based on their journey. She stressed the importance of deliberate initiatives to increase diversity, especially in executive leadership, workplace culture, and company-wide celebrations of cultural events. Destinations are also adopting more inclusive marketing and language, promoting accessible venues, and balancing local community dynamics. Melissa also advised starting small and

building up DEIB initiatives, celebrating wins, and benchmarking progress. She highlighted mentorship and sustainable thought processes.

Kenny Porpora, Partner/Head of Education at HospitableMe pointed out the disparity between the desire for engagement and the difficulty in implementing DEIB initiatives. He highlighted the growing interest in broader aspects of diversity, such as body size and disability, and the need for further education and training to understand diverse identities comprehensively. He said challenges include staffing, leadership roles, and societal pushback, but the commitment to create lasting change is evident. Kenny stressed the importance of steadfastness and curiosity about different identities, fostering diversity within organisations, and engaging leadership for effective change. He also clarified that education is foundational, covering identity challenges and best practices; while training focuses on roles and actualising DEIB principles.

Erica Cary, VP of HR Consulting and DEI&I at Hilton discussed the evolving DEIB landscape, focusing on workforce diversity, inclusive marketing, and cultural confidence. She underscored the importance of accessibility in travel experiences, inclusive workplace culture, and policies supporting diverse workers. Erica also emphasised the need for crisis response plans and the implementation of equitable strategies with measurable accountability. She urged organisations to implement bias training and continuous education, promote diversity sourcing, create diverse interview panels, and develop retention strategies. She explained how measurement through tools such as annual employee surveys to measure DEIB values and culture performance are necessary for improvement.

Clark Massad, VP of Global Partnerships at IGLTA discussed challenges facing LGBTQ+ communities, especially in regions with anti-LGBTQ+ laws. He advocated for bold commitment to DEIB policies, building trust within organisations, and comprehensive training. He warned against half-hearted approaches, which can harm brands more than help. Clark emphasised consistency, integrating DEIB commitments into the mission and core values, and using social media to harness the power of inclusion. He highlighted that an organisation's commitments to DEIB need to be visible both internally and externally. Dedication to inclusion should permeate every part of a business, he said. Clark acknowledged that this may cause discomfort but said that discomfort begets progress. He also reminded attendees that travel stands for peace and community.

The panel concluded that bold, committed, and inclusive approaches are essential for advancing DEIB in the Travel & Tourism sector, with a focus on sustainable and measurable impact.