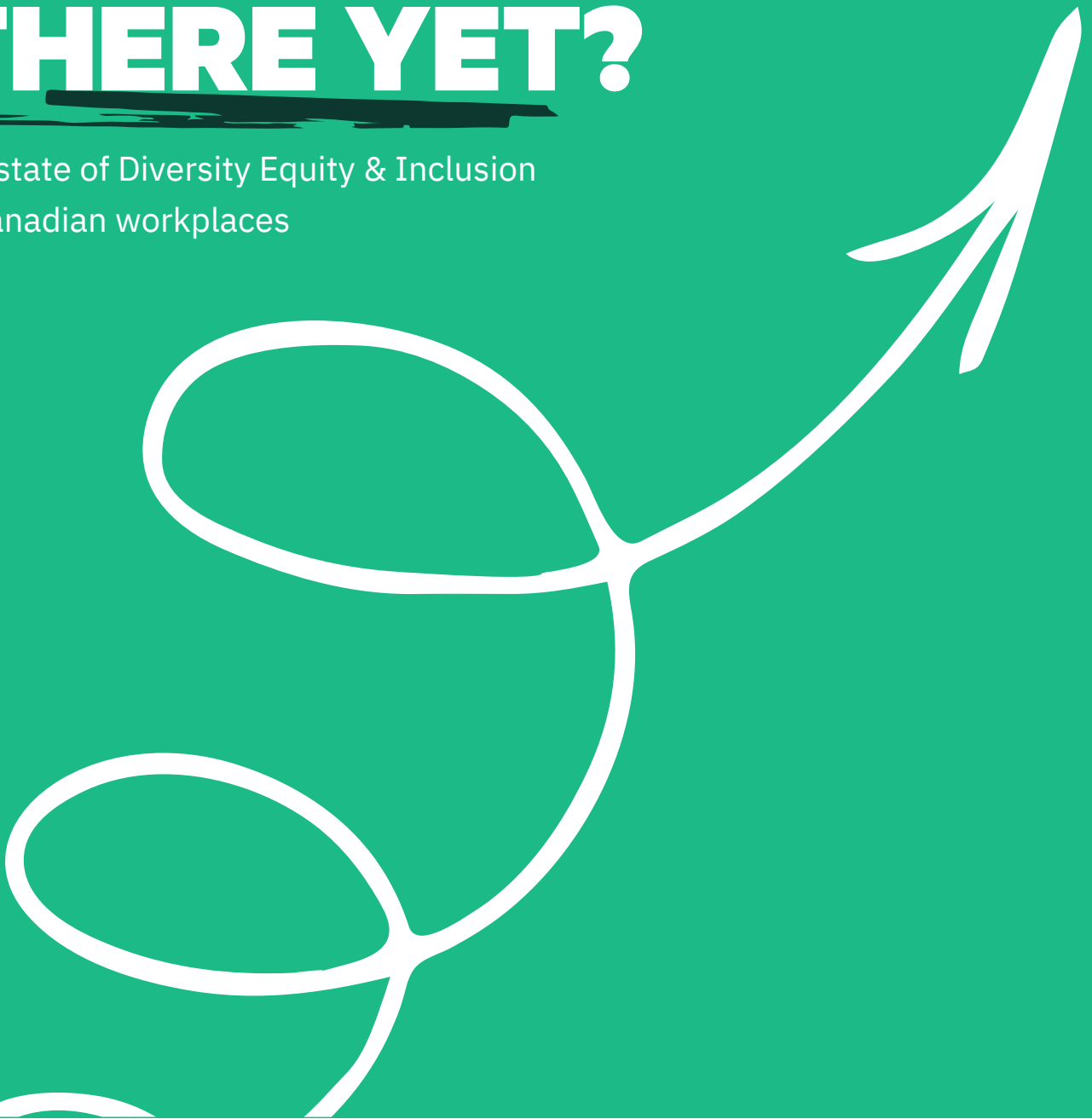


**WITH YOU  
WITH ME**

# **ARE WE THERE YET?**

The state of Diversity Equity & Inclusion  
in Canadian workplaces



# WE ARE WITH YOU WITH ME

We build talent where there are skills shortages in the technology sector.

We provide underemployed and overlooked individuals with the skills they need—from training, to testing and connecting with organizations—to secure roles and start their new careers in the technology sector.

We were founded in 2015 to solve the problem of veteran underemployment, and in doing so, exposed a problem with the recruiting model that spanned far beyond veterans.

Today, we help veterans, veteran spouses, Neurodivergent individuals, Women in Tech and Indigenous Canadians reskill for new digital careers.

## HOW WE DO IT:

We offer free career assessments, training, and job deployments to these underrepresented groups. Our Career Assessment platform has matched more than 40,000 individuals to new careers, with more than 10,000 upskilling for new roles.

## ABOUT OUR RESEARCH

This report draws on the findings of our diversity and inclusion in hiring practices survey. The study, carried out by YouGov on behalf of WithYouWithMe, was conducted online between 24 May – 1 June, 2022.

Respondents were comprised of a national sample of 512 Canadian middle managers and above from organizations with 20 or more employees. For the purposes of this study, medium organizations are considered those with 20-99 employees, while large are those with 100 or more employees.



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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CRIO

In 2022, businesses and government agencies understand that diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) are more than just human resources buzzwords. They are critical in building an engaged workplace that's more productive and innovative, and less likely to leave, than their homogeneous counterparts. As a result, organizations are making efforts to increase diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.

While much headway has been made, there's still significant room for improvement in hiring practices, and opportunities for workplaces to scratch below the surface and institute modest changes that could have a significant impact on making their workplaces welcoming for more people.

In particular, our research discovered that:

- \* The methods most organizations use to screen candidates can put diverse individuals at a disadvantage. Resumes, reference checks, and cover letters, rather than assessments like psychometric or aptitude tests, are still widely used by most organizations.
- \* Encouragingly, three in four (77%) managers report that their organizations are making efforts to accommodate candidates during the hiring process.
- \* While most workplaces (70%) have mandated training on inclusive hiring, we identified significant gaps in the subject matter covered through training and significant disparities between large- and medium-sized organizations.



- \* Only half of workplaces with written policies on diversity, equity and inclusion are engaging or consulting with staff when it comes to reviewing and updating them. This can lead to a disconnect between what employees who are regularly engaging applicants actually need to be successful and what they are receiving.

We're pleased to be able to share this research with you. Our hope is that you're able to absorb and apply these findings to your own organization and use them to help build a more equitable workplace.

**Kait McGregor**

Chief Research & Innovation Officer

“The methods most organizations use to screen candidates can put diverse individuals at a disadvantage”

**WITHYOUWITHME**

withyouwithme.com

# SETTING A *BASELINE*



At WithYouWithMe, we've used the big five personality traits framework – which includes openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism – to create our own three unique archetypes under which people identify.

## *DIVERSITY:*

Diversity: Having a mix of people in an organization. It encompasses social identity, like ethnicity, cultural background, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and age, and professional identity, like work experience and education.

These different attributes shape how people see themselves and the people around them.

## *INCLUSION:*

Getting a diverse group of people to work effectively together to improve performance and wellbeing. Inclusion is achieved when a diverse group of people feel they're:

- respected for who they are and able to be themselves
- connected to their colleagues and feel a sense of belonging
- contributing their perspectives and talents to the workplace
- progressing in their career, with equal access to resources and opportunities

Inclusion is how organizations can truly benefit from diversity.



\*Definitions provided by the Diversity Council Australia ([www.dca.org.au](http://www.dca.org.au))

**DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION  
ISN'T A POLICY THAT  
SOMEONE'S GIVEN WHEN THEY  
JOIN YOUR ORGANIZATION.**

*IT'S SO MUCH MORE THAN THAT.*

**IT LIVES IN YOUR  
MISSION, YOUR VALUES,  
YOUR CULTURE, AND  
YOUR BELIEFS AS AN  
ORGANIZATION.**



# AT A GLANCE

A nationally representative sample  
of 512+ Canadian managers

**7 IN 10** MANAGERS  
REPORT SOME FORM  
OF MANDATORY  
TRAINING ON  
INCLUSIVE HIRING.

**MASKED RESUMES ARE  
BECOMING MORE COMMON.**



20% using them all the time.  
26% using them some of the time.

**83% OF ORGANIZATIONS  
USE REFERENCE CHECKS,  
RESUMES, AND COVER  
LETTERS TO SCREEN JOB  
APPLICANTS**

**3 IN 10 MANAGERS HAVE  
NO FORMAL TRAINING  
ON INCLUSIVE HIRING  
PRIOR TO INTERVIEWING  
APPLICANTS.**

**BUT ONLY 19% USE  
PSYCHOMETRIC OR  
APTITUDE TESTS.**

**GREAT NEWS:  
95% OF MANAGERS SURVEYED  
SAY THEIR ORGANIZATION  
HAS RIGOROUS PROCESSES  
IN PLACE TO MANAGE  
WORKPLACE DIVERSITY.**

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# OPPORTUNITIES FOR DE&I BEGIN DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

**When it's time to hire for a new role, most organizations are keen to consider diverse candidates.**

Unfortunately, their screening methods during the application process may hinder these individuals. Resumes and reference checks remain the most widely used ways of screening applicants, with 69% of medium organizations and 74% of large ones relying on resumes. More than half of medium organizations (51%) and 63% of large organizations also use reference checks. For diverse candidates, this means the odds are often stacked against them from the beginning, as things like gender, educational background, age, and race can often be gleaned from resumes.

It looks like change is happening, albeit slowly. One in five (20%) of managers say that their organizations use masked resumes—removing information like names, age, and university names—all the time, while a further one in four, or 26%, say they are used frequently. This can help level the playing field when candidates are judged with resumes.

Only one in eight (13%) of managers say their organizations have a flexible hiring process that can be adapted to the position and candidates that apply.

Cognitive ability, which can be measured with psychometric/aptitude testing, is considered an important predictor of job performance, but isn't widely used in Canadian organizations. Just 18% of managers from medium businesses and one in five (20%) of managers in large businesses use testing to determine suitability of a candidate. Phasing out or, at a minimum, relying less heavily on resumes and reference checks could help progress a more diverse candidate pool through the application process.





## TOP TIP

Phasing out or, at a minimum, relying less heavily on resumes and reference checks could help progress a more diverse candidate pool through the application process.



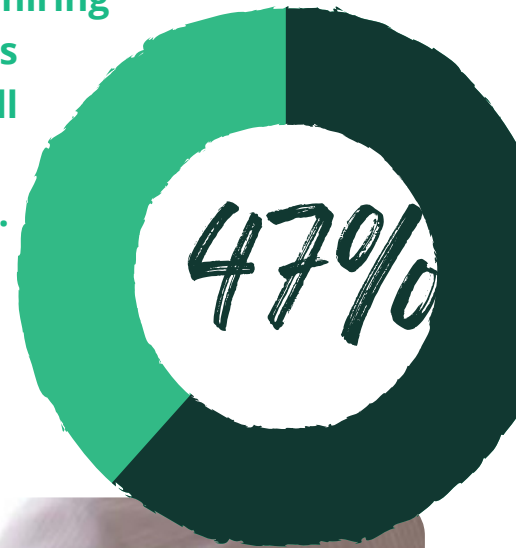
# LEAVING *SPACE* FOR FLEXIBLE HIRING

Embracing more flexibility during the hiring process might help.

As it stands, there's not much room for deviation in most organizations. Overall, among medium and large organizations, only one in eight (13%) of managers reported that their organizations have a flexible hiring process that can be adapted to the position and candidates.

Allowing for a more adaptable process, rather than the highly standardized one that nearly two in three managers adhere to, can help diversify the process. This could look like using alternative avenues for recruitment rather than the standard job boards and listings; recognizing alternative forms of work, like volunteer positions or hobbies as work experience; or allowing creativity in the application process, like accepting video applications.

*ALMOST HALF* (47%) of managers say their organizations have a highly standardized hiring process that is uniform for all applicants and positions.



# ACCOMMODATION FOR DIFFERENCES

Encouragingly, seven in 10 organizations ask candidates if they need special assistance during the application process, either via a specific check box (48%) or contact details in the ad (27%). Medium businesses are less likely than larger ones to have processes in place to ask candidates if they require assistance, at 34% and 52% respectively.

It's very promising that these questions are being asked, particularly when, overall, after a candidate requests special assistance, 67% of medium and large organizations initiate contact and provide support internally, rather than just giving out information for external services. Taking the onus off the candidate to get in touch and proactively offering solutions is a real step in the right direction.

However, there's still work to be done. More than half of managers (56%) reported that they do not accommodate for physical access or mobility barriers during the hiring process. That's a barrier for some candidates that's impossible to overcome.

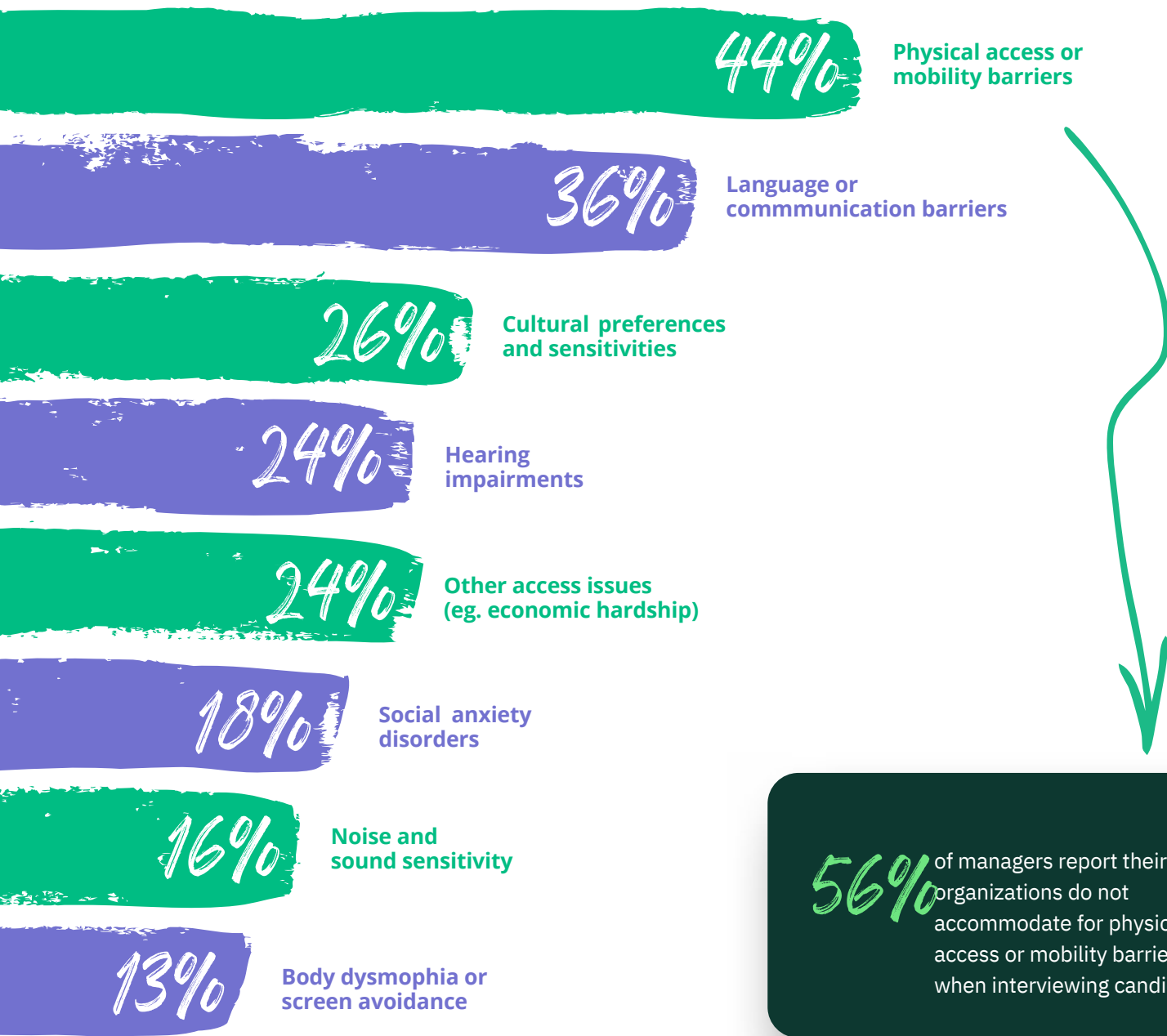
Other gaps in accommodating applicants include cultural preferences and sensitivities, language and communication barriers, and hearing impairments. Asking about assistance during the hiring process is a fantastic first step. Now, organizations must focus on the steps that come next and commit to providing a hiring process that's accessible for more people.

Taking the onus off the candidate to get in touch and proactively offering solutions is a real step in the right direction.



# EQUITY FOR APPLICANTS WHEN INTERVIEWING

Significant access gaps remain in making the interview process equitable.



# BROADENING

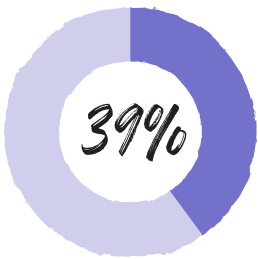
## THE SCOPE OF MANDATED TRAINING

Shockingly, 30% of organizations have no mandatory training on inclusive hiring before screening applicants.

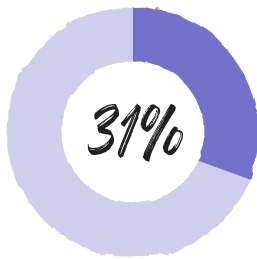
Only 39% of managers reported that there's mandated interview training for cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence. When it comes to LGBTQIA+ awareness, that number drops to 26%, and for neurodiversity awareness, that number drops to a depressing 15%.

### TOP TIP

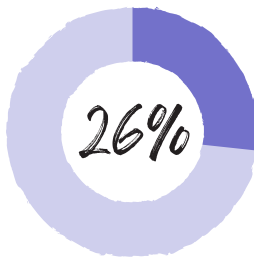
Investing in mandated training around inclusive hiring for those involved in the recruitment process is an actionable step that organizations can take immediately, allowing them to cast the talent net wider and also better support employees once they do land in roles.



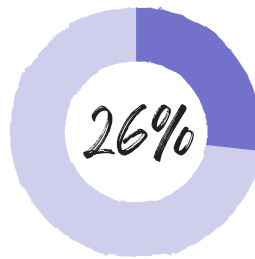
39% reported required training for cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competency



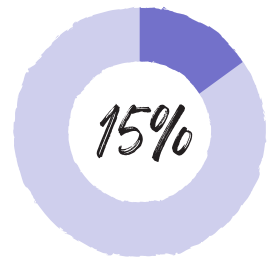
31% reported required training for disability awareness



26% reported required training for LGBTQIA+ awareness



26% reported required training for unconscious bias



15% reported required training for neurodiversity awareness







Consulting external experts and incorporating recommendations from employees who engage with applicants can only strengthen existing policies and practices.

# MEASURE, IMPROVE, *REPEAT*

You can't fix what's not measured.

In order to improve, it's necessary for organizations to understand where they're at. Just under half (46%) of managers say that their organization collects data on diversity as a standard procedure and regularly reviews their workplace's diversity.

It's very promising to see that almost all (93%) of the organizations that have written policies around diversity and inclusion during hiring also have processes in place to review and update policies.

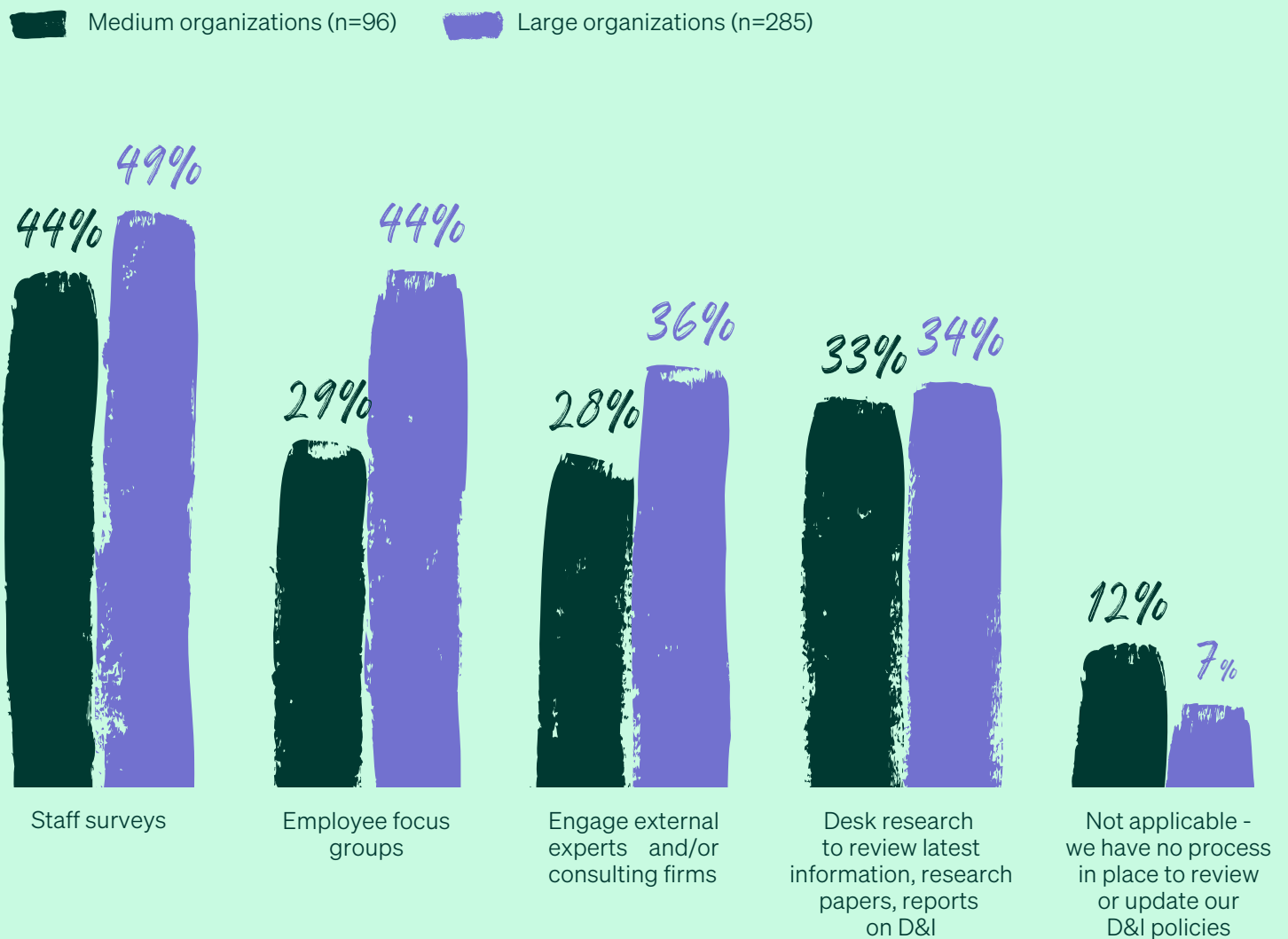
Close to half (48%) use staff surveys and employee focus groups (41%) to make changes, while another 35% engage external experts to do the heavy lifting. Consulting external experts and incorporating recommendations from employees who engage with applicants can only strengthen existing policies and practices.



**MOST MANAGERS FROM MEDIUM (88%) AND LARGE (93%) BUSINESSES WHO HAVE WRITTEN POLICIES ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FOR HIRING PRACTICES REPORT THAT THEIR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE PROCESSES IN PLACE TO REVIEW AND UPDATE THEIR D&I POLICIES.**

Managers from large-sized organizations are more likely than those from medium ones to say they hold employee focus groups (44% compared to 29%) or engage with external experts and consulting firms (36% compared to 28%) when reviewing and updating their policies on diversity and inclusion.

**WHAT IS USED TO REVIEW AND UPDATE POLICIES ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**





# WHAT'S NEXT? INCREASING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION DURING HIRING

Many Canadian organizations have made great strides in actively working to increase diversity and inclusion when recruiting for roles. To further this work, we recommend:

## 1. EXPANDING APPLICANT SCREENING

The way you screen can make or break whether an applicant will even apply for a role. Rather than sticking solely to traditional methods of screening candidates, like resumes, cover letters, and references checks, we recommend replacing or incorporating psychometric or aptitude testing and expanding the definition of “past experience” to include things like volunteer work and hobbies for more diverse applicants.

## 2. ACCOMMODATING FOR DIFFERENCES

Asking if accommodations are necessary is a welcome first step, but there must be actions in place to facilitate what comes next. Working with candidates to find creative solutions where necessary, like video interviews when physical access is an issue, and putting processes in place for applicants who require assistance, will lessen the burden on the candidate and provide a more inclusive hiring experience.

## 3. BROADENING RECRUITMENT TRAINING

For those folks who are screening and interacting with candidates, mandated training that encompasses a range of core diversity areas like cultural sensitivity, disability, LGBTQIA+, and unconscious bias, is critical. They don't know what they don't know—understanding what to look out for and how to help can make a tangible difference to your D&I efforts, quickly.



## 4. ENGAGING WITH EMPLOYEES

Engaging with employees on diversity and inclusion policies. As they're the ones working with applicants, it's important to get their experiences. Your policies shouldn't be a one-time set-and-forget document, but rather a living, breathing document that's updated and improved with lessons learnt.

# WITH YOU WITH ME

WithYouWithMe exists to create a more equitable world, helping create meaningful careers, workforces, and organizations through Human Asset Creation. Our data-led workforce solutions build productive teams from overlooked talent pools for in-demand tech roles and build careers with continuous learning.

**CONTACT US TODAY TO DISCUSS HOW OUR SOLUTIONS CAN HELP YOU UNLOCK HIDDEN POTENTIAL IN YOUR WORKFORCE.**

✉ [sales@withyouwithme.com](mailto:sales@withyouwithme.com)

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