



Leading with Data and Leaning into Authenticity at Frost Brown Todd

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[Diversity, Equity,
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There are the people for whom diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) resonate in a personal way, conforming to what they feel is right and just. I have many colleagues like this at Frost Brown Todd. They don't need to be convinced of the business case for DEI; they're all in. Still, at nearly every organization, there are people who view the time and financial investment DEI demands as a distraction or drag on the bottom line. So, how do you reach those who do not see the value in a robust DEI framework and strategy?

Enter data, one of the most effective tools DEI leaders have at our disposal. Data can not only inform DEI priorities, but it can demonstrate a clear, quantifiable case for DEI as a driver of revenue and the innovation needed to keep your business relevant well into the future. When your DEI strategy is justified and driven by analytics, you can reach people who are more deliberative and calculating in nature, and for good reason—many are in leadership positions because their judgement has served the business well, historically.

A friend and DEI leader at a global company often says, "In God we trust, but in all else, bring data." Let me provide two examples of how Frost Brown Todd is intent on leading with data. The first example is actual; the other, aspirational.

Independent Assessments and Equity Audits

For the third consecutive year, Frost Brown Todd underwent the rigorous, yearlong Mansfield RuleTM certification process and again earned the "Plus" distinction in 2022. Mansfield was inspired in part by the NFL's Rooney Rule, which has been controversial because, despite the rule's implementation, the league still suffers from a dearth of diversity in its leadership. Like Rooney, Mansfield required our firm to affirmatively consider a certain percentage of diverse

candidates (defined as women, BIPOC, or LGBTQ+) for open positions and advancement opportunities.

Looking purely at the numbers, Mansfield has had a material impact on our firm. Promotions of diverse attorneys to equity partner are up more than 10%, and we've seen a similar jump among a key stakeholder group critical to talent development at the firm, our practice group leaders. What Mansfield does not track, however, is retention and attrition rates. Nor does it measure the extent to which employees feel a sense of belonging and connection to the team, to the enterprise. And given the still-simmering effects of the Great Resignation, our team understands the criticality of holding on to our best and brightest talent.

DEI Has Evolved—and Now, so Must We

Data can help reinforce the story, but behind those stories are real people with unique expectations and motivators contributing to their personal and professional success. As Frost Brown Todd enters a new phase of DEI, we recognize that our efforts must evolve to meet the changing expectations of the workforce of the future. We must evolve the way we communicate successes and failures to more authentically and transparently let our team and our stakeholders into the sausage-making process. As leaders, we must embrace the notion that vulnerability and authenticity isn't weakness. And transparency is now the measure by which organizations can display the kind of openness that new generations of employees and future clients respect.

Frost Brown Todd's DEI 2.0 strategy leads with an increased emphasis on employee engagement and belonging, and includes a significant investment in data collection and governance, in partnership with our firm's Data and Innovation, Legal Talent and Marketing teams. It is clear—it takes a "whole organization" approach to ensure we care for and execute on the DEI goals and performance indicators that help define success for our internal teammates and external partners.

Leading with inclusion and taking the next step toward a culture of true belonging are our firm's strategic differentiators. We believe

this is what can (and will) help all of us win.

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