

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (D&I)

## CASE STUDY: TEXAS INSTRUMENTS

This case study explores a process of creating an environment of accommodation through formal and informal actions at Texas Instruments (TI) with applicable lessons to all workplaces striving to champion diversity, inclusion, and productive employees.

Read only one section at a time, addressing the questions and role-based questions that apply to the role assigned to you. The instructor will lead you through each section, role and scenario.

### Employee Roles in this case study:

- Senior vice president / chief Human Resources officer (CHRO)
- Director of Diversity
- LGBTQ Employee Resource Group lead
- Faith-based Diversity Initiative representative

### Background:

- TI is a global semiconductor design and manufacturing company
- Revenues in 2018: \$15.78 billion
- Employees: 29,700 employees located in the Americas, Europe and Asia
- TI recognition and awards
  - › *Forbes*, “America’s Best Employers” (2017)
  - › *National Association for Female Executives*, “Top Companies for Executive Women” (2017, 12th consecutive year)
  - › *Minority Engineer*, “Top 50 Employers” (2017, sixth consecutive year)
  - › *Consumer Reports magazine*, “100 Best Corporate Citizens” (2017, 15th year)
  - › *Ethisphere Institute*, “World’s Most Ethical Companies” (2017, 11th consecutive year)
  - › *Glassdoor*, *Employees’ Choice Awards*, “50 Best Places to Work” (2017)
  - › *Human Rights Campaign*, inclusion in the *Corporate Equality Index* rating, LGBT workplace equality (2017, 14th year)
  - › *CAREERS & the disABLED Magazine*, “Top 50 Companies for People with Disabilities” (2017, fourth year)

In 2019, Texas Instruments’ Diversity Network celebrated 30 years of diversity leadership and trailblazing. TI was one of the early pioneers of instilling diversity into its corporate culture, embracing the premise that a diverse employee base is likely to facilitate fresh and valuable ideas, and that employees perform at higher levels when they’re permitted to “bring their whole selves to work” (and are not compelled to conform outwardly to a particular social culture before they can be welcomed and appreciated). Today the company has 15 grassroots, employee-led diversity resource groups that help foster and support a diverse and inclusive work environment.

# SECTION 1:

## ENVIRONMENT AND ASSUMPTIONS

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The story of Texas Instruments' pioneering work in religious diversity began in January 2000. At that time, very few companies had embraced employees' religious/spiritual identities as key components of a diverse workforce. Race, gender and ethnicity were the main focus of the fledgling diversity movement; sexual orientation was making some inroads. But, for many, faith seemed to be a hazardous topic. Many worried that opening doors to "religious" communications would lead to friction, fear, judgmentalism and discord. Also, there was concern that a focus on employees' religions might distract workers from matters of business.

Despite these reservations, there was a growing number of TI employees who desired to form a faith-based diversity group with a Judeo-Christian focus.

### Initial Needs/Feasibility Analysis:

- The concern that religion or belief would distract from what matters most for the business is a strategic concern. Thinking strategically, articulate how the concerns raised at TI concerning expression of religion or belief might have impacted bottom-line indicators.
- At this point, in an effort to advance diversity and a desire to establish an environment of accommodation, how should you proceed? Specifically, what does the management team need to understand, do, or not do?
- Thinking of your own workplace, do the concerns that TI wrestled with apply to your strategy and culture? How is religion, belief or faith seen in your work environment specifically? Are there fears that religion or belief may cause friction, discord, or judgment among employees of various faiths, and among atheists? What is the basis of any such fears? Who are the key stakeholders? What other barriers or concerns to faith-oriented expression are present?

### Role-specific questions:

**Senior vice president / CHRO:** As CHRO at TI, what would be your management strategy regarding D&I, the growing focus on issues surrounding sexual orientation and an interest from employees to explore religion as an aspect of D&I? Specifically, what, if anything, should be done to identify and engage stakeholders who might be most apprehensive or opinionated on the subject?

**Director of Diversity:** As the director of Diversity at TI, what would be your recommendation to senior management and vision for diversity at TI, given the growing focus on issues surrounding sexual orientation and an interest from employees to explore religion as an aspect of D&I?

**LGBTQ Employee Resource Group (ERG) lead:** As the head of the LGBTQ Employee Resource Group, how do you encourage diversity, protection of identity and an effective workplace? Members of your resource group have expressed concern over the possible establishment of a faith-based ERG, suggesting that such a group will create tension in the workplace with members of the LGBTQ ERG. How do you respond and what recommendation do you make to management?

**Faith-based Diversity Initiative advocate:** As the peer-selected representative of those at TI who would like to address religion and faith as an aspect of their personal and work identity, how do you approach this topic with management? What recommendations do you make to senior management? What is your business case for action on religious diversity? What are the objectives you have in addressing religion and belief at work? What is your plan to create understanding and buy-in for your plans?

# SECTION 2: ACTIONS TO ADVANCE

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TI management approached this “uncharted territory” with caution. The company’s diversity director mediated in-person discussions over a year’s time between the leader of TI’s LGBTQ network (which had already been made an official employee resource group) and the leader of the proposed faith-based group. An application process was created to vet newly-proposed diversity networks. The leaders discussed the following questions, among others:

1. Why do this? What beneficial purposes would be served by adding religion/faith to TI’s diversity focus? Why is faith or religion pertinent to the TI workplace?
2. If we were to embrace religion as a component of diversity, what steps would be taken to avoid possible friction among employees who ascribe to diametrically opposed beliefs (e.g., beliefs concerning sexual orientation, the very existence of God and exclusive truth claims)?

Those in-person meetings provided a solid opportunity to demonstrate in a microcosm both the desirability and feasibility of a focus on religious diversity in a company with people of many religions and one that’s committed also to LGBTQ equality. The outcome of those meetings also helped shape the company’s view of what religious diversity was about, and not about, and its diversity policies and practices.

On a broad level, the personal meetings provided a case study on how people with different fundamental views and values could truly come to esteem and support one another in the workplace, without having to change their core beliefs. It began when the two earnestly committed to listen to one another. The relationship progressed to mutual trust and then to alliance and friendship.

## Role-specific questions:

**Senior vice president / CHRO:** At this point, what are the key issues that need to be addressed before seeking a “go/no go” executive decision of a faith-based diversity initiative? What answers are you looking to see from the questions posed to the LGBTQ and faith ERG representatives? What ongoing oversight should be considered?

**Director of Diversity:** What is your recommendation to senior management and vision for diversity following these conversations between the LGBTQ and faith group representatives? What answers are you looking to see from the questions posed to the LGBTQ and faith ERG representatives? What should be done if there appear to be irreconcilable differences? How should the new policy be described in internal communications?

**LGBTQ Employee Resource Group lead:** What are your answers to the questions posed by TI leadership? If a faith-based initiative is approved, what is your plan to address concerns among members of your ERG?

**Faith-based Diversity Initiative representative:** What are your answers to the questions posed by TI leadership? How will you recommend TI leadership proceed? If the faith-based initiative is approved, what will be your engagement strategy with other diversity groups? What kinds of activities will you propose for this new diversity group? What ongoing accountability measures will you suggest?

# SECTION 3: OUTCOMES

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Over the ensuing year, conversations took place with members of TI's leadership team, including its chief executive officer, about the desirability of a faith-based diversity initiative. In June 2001, TI's senior vice president and head of HR delegated the "go/no go" decision to the company's Diversity director. A few weeks later, the Diversity director decided it was a "go."

From the start, it was made clear that a key goal of this new diversity initiative would be to strengthen interpersonal respect, trust and harmony across people of various faiths and belief systems, by building bridges of mutual understanding and that they would accomplish this without violating anyone's core beliefs. That goal of enhancing relationships continues to be a crucial focus of TI's faith-based diversity initiatives, which now include Jewish, Muslim and Christian groups, as well as ethnic groups that celebrate Hindu, Buddhist and other faiths.

TI's faith-oriented employee resource groups conduct on-premise scripture studies, worship, prayer and meditation, open to all. They also visit one another's houses of worship, collaborate in community outreach projects and stand together against religious bigotry and violence.

The outcome has been hugely positive. People across the wide religious spectrum at TI have come to treasure the freedom they have to openly "be themselves" at work. People of varied faiths feel they can relate transparently and profoundly with one another — a condition that's especially important in a workplace where mutual trust is a prerequisite to productivity. What's more, TI's commitment to religious diversity has often been cited as conferring an advantage in recruiting, motivating and retaining employees.

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## Questions to consider:

- How could this story have been different if religion was not addressed within TI?
- What constitutes a diverse and inclusive work environment?
- What were the specific components of TI's path to a diverse and inclusive work environment?