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Diversity Corner

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August 2025 DEI Brief: A Travel Manager's Guide to Inclusive Programs

Why DEI Matters Now

- Demographics are shifting. Travelers increasingly come from diverse backgrounds age, gender identity, disability, ethnicity so travel programs should reflect and support this diversity.
- Corporate accountability. While some leading brands are dropping DEI amid political pressure, many travel and hospitality companies (Delta, Marriott, Intrepid Travel, Flight Centre, etc.) are doubling down on inclusive practices.
- New expectations from travelers and employees. DEI isn't just internal—it affects guest experience and how your travelers feel supported.

Key DEI Trends Impacting Travel Management in 2025

1. Intersectional & Systemic DEI

- Moving beyond one-off training to inclusion-by-design: embed equitable processes into booking, supplier selection, traveler feedback, and performance management systems.
- Capture intersectional data (e.g. overlapping identities like gender + neurodiversity + disability) to ensure programs serve every traveler equitably.

2. Tech & Algorithm Bias Awareness

- As AI tools (travel booking platforms, duty-of-care alerts, traveler profiles) become more prevalent, it's critical to audit for unintended biases—especially around disability accommodations or identity-based preferences.

3. Supplier & Destination Equity

- Prioritize partnerships with diverse-owned suppliers (hotels, transport, experiences). Flight Centre Travel Group Americas, for example, increased diverse supplier spend by nearly 11% year-over-year.
- Ensure inclusion of accessible and culturally respectful offerings tailored to female, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and disabled travelers.

4. Employee Inclusion & Program Support

- Encourage diverse representation within your travel operations and decision-making teams. Invite frontline travel & meetings staff into Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to center emerging needs.
- Marriott and Delta—with programs like managerial equity training and resource groups—are modeling inclusive leadership within travel/hospitality.

5. Quiet, Strategic DEI Leadership

When DEI becomes contested, subtle leadership wins. Shift from symbolic gestures to structural change: inclusive policies, procurement, training, and travel logistics integrated into broader enterprise frameworks.