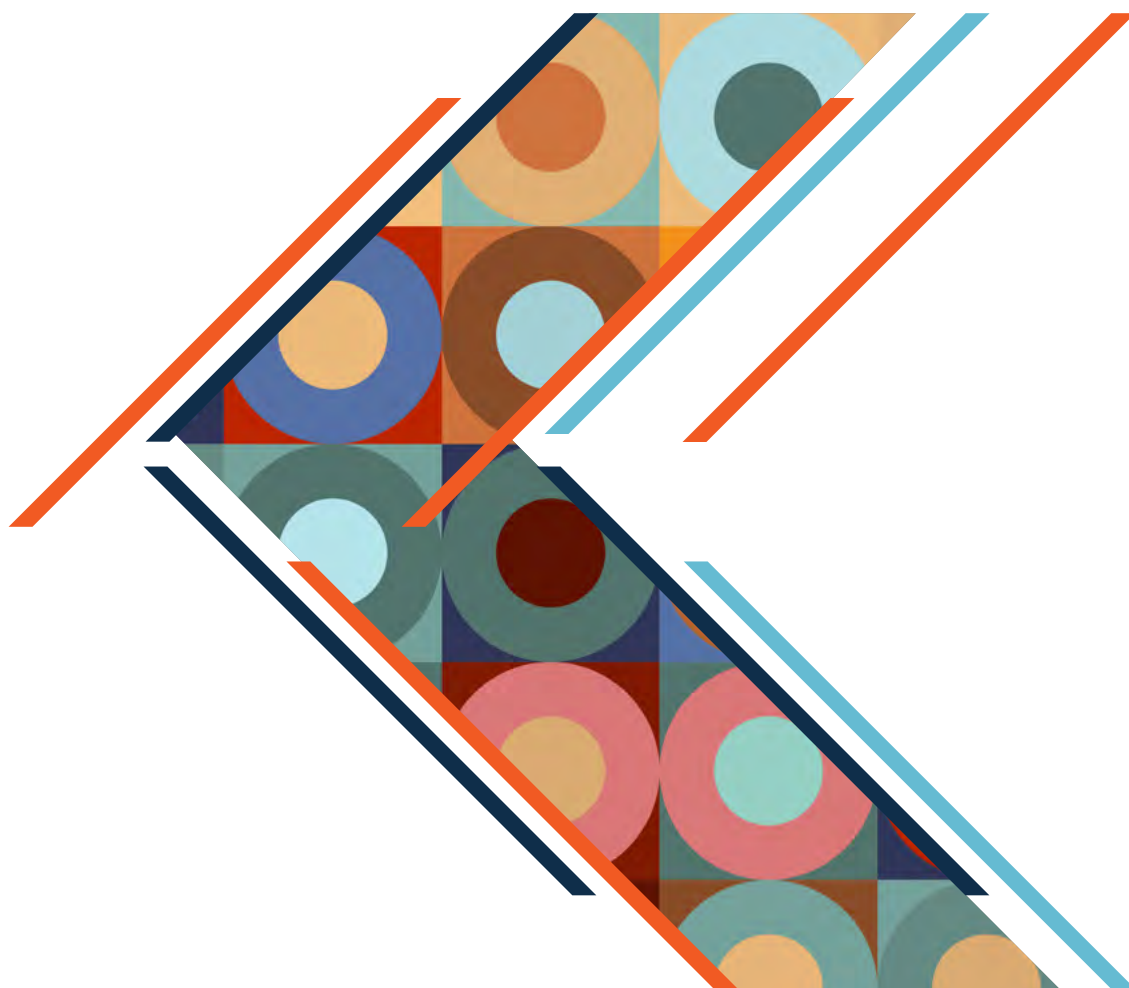




EMPOWERING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN CORPORATE SECURITY

*Rachel Briggs, OBE, and Paul Sizemore,
The Clarity Factory*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



We know that... diverse teams are stronger teams. They make better business decisions, they focus more on the facts and remain objective, they process those facts more carefully, they are more innovative, and they deliver stronger results."

—Nick Lovrien, CSO, Meta
writing on LinkedIn¹

THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT FOR CORPORATE SECURITY

Corporations are operating in the most complicated and fast-moving environment we have ever seen—it's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. The external environment for corporate security has changed. Open aggression from states, including Russia and China; fallout from the Ukraine conflict; a breakdown in trust in institutions and authority; and the rise of polarization create the context in which corporate leaders are looking to their security departments to find creative solutions that mitigate risk and keep the business safe.

Changes to the way organizations do business require creative solutions to how corporate security departments work. The rise of misinformation means security's status as fact-finding truth tellers is questioned; an increasingly diverse workforce demands diversity from its leadership; and the pandemic has shifted working patterns, with remote working creating additional burdens for security.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY IN CORPORATE SECURITY

Diversity has been increasingly part of the corporate agenda for many years, but the murder of George Floyd in the United States in 2020

brought into sharp focus the gap between corporations talking about addressing diversity and the actions they have taken to address diversity—not just in the United States, but around the world.

The business case for diversity is clear. Diverse teams, especially those with diverse leadership, have higher levels of innovation than teams with less diversity. Diverse teams are especially adept at creating disruptive innovation, which is needed in game-changing contexts like now. Diversity also boosts productivity, and diverse teams are likely to find it easier to align with the business. Unlocking the diversity dividend rests upon relentless efforts to promote equity and maintain an inclusive work environment where staff can bring their whole self, and therefore all of their talents, to work, enabling them to compete fairly alongside colleagues.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Corporate security has started its DE&I journey but still has a long way to go

Our research shows that DE&I work is a fairly new focus for corporate security departments, and even those who have been active for five to ten years acknowledge a change of pace and intensity. Security is not alone in grappling with DE&I; corporate leaders recognize its importance but also share their frustrations that more progress

has not been made. We also still have a lot to learn about what works.

Corporate security starts from a much lower diversity base than most other areas of the business. Data from SMR Group showed that 94 percent of their candidates for security, risk, and resiliency roles globally were men, and 70 percent came from a former government background—generally military, police or intelligence. The CSOs we interviewed recognized this talent pool limits their diverse options, but also acknowledged this background is advantageous (but not essential) in a few roles: security country managers in high-risk environments, roles requiring security clearance, investigations, and intelligence.

Almost all the CSOs we interviewed had a strong focus on increasing the diversity of their teams, enhancing equity throughout the security function, and creating inclusive work environments. We documented their work across the three areas of DE&I, which we call:

- **Collective wisdom:** Getting more diverse talent into corporate security—***diversity***
- **Rewarding talent:** Ensuring all talent can rise equitably throughout the security ***function—equity***
- **Unlocking the diversity dividend:** Creating inclusive work environments—***inclusion***

Collective Wisdom: Getting more diverse talent into corporate security—diversity

“It has to start with recruitment. If you’re not bringing anyone in, you’re not going to be able to move anyone up. You can’t continue doing the same thing and expect a different outcome.”

—CSO interviewee

The research points to the following practices for corporate security functions:

- Use data to establish a baseline on diversity, measure and report on progress, and hold colleagues accountable through key performance indicators.
- Conduct outreach to diverse range of schools and colleges to encourage a wide range of people to consider a career in security, and partnership with employee resource groups (ERGs).
- Change the recruitment process to be more inclusive, including rethinking role profiles, adopting inclusive language in job descriptions, advertising in nontraditional spaces, diverse candidate slates, diverse interview panels, use of blind marked assessments, and a preference for equally qualified diverse candidates.
- Provide support for, and challenge, hiring managers to incorporate diversity into their recruitment strategies.
- Offer internships to enable diverse candidates at entry level to gain work experience.

Rewarding Talent: Ensuring all talent can rise equitably through the function—equity

“The former CSO put together a succession plan for me to move into his role. I remember saying to him, ‘I don’t see it happening. I know I have the skillset, but I don’t see this company the way it is now, putting me in that role. I just didn’t see anyone at the top that looked like me.’”

—African American CSO
of a Fortune 500 company

The survey conducted as part of this project suggests minorities working within security are more likely to feel they have experienced discrimination. Sixty percent of women survey respondents answered yes compared to 22 percent of men, 60 percent of LGBTQIA+ versus 33 percent heterosexual, 48 percent nonCaucasian versus 34 percent Caucasian, 59 percent of disabled participants as opposed to 34 percent of those able bodied, and 52 percent neurodiverse compared to 34 percent of those who are not neurodiverse.

The research points to the following practices for corporate security functions:

- Use metrics to track progress and hold managers accountable.
- Provide training for managers in conducting reviews and promotions.
- Offer equal access to career development enhancing opportunities.
- Identify routes for progression for the intelligence function to transition—it is a diverse cohort but struggles to transition into mainstream security roles.

Unlocking the Diversity Dividend: Inclusive work environments—inclusion

“I’m never going to sit here and tell you that I understand what it’s like to be a woman in the workplace. No one’s ever commented on my boobs, my haircut. I’ve never not gotten a job because I’m a guy. All I can say is that I

want to make my team, this company, a place where you don’t have to worry about that, that you feel you are equal, your voice is heard, that your opinion matters.”

—CSO interviewee

Belonging scores are high overall for corporate security professionals; 80 percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel like I belong at my organization,” but agreement was less strong for minorities working within corporate security.

The research points to the following practices for corporate security functions:

- Model leadership on inclusion and allyship.
- Use data to understand levels of inclusion and belonging within the function.
- Use specialist and dedicated resources, including staff time, ERGs and inclusive onboarding.
- Run learning programs, including reverse mentoring, events, and DE&I stories.

Brand Security: Driving innovation across the industry

While there is much that corporate security departments can do within their organizations, the profession needs a whole-of-industry approach to DE&I that encompasses membership organizations. The image of the industry of being characterized by male former soldiers, federal agents, and police officers influences the candidates human resources colleagues and recruitment consultants bring forward, along with the kinds of people who see security as a viable career choice.

Security membership organizations have tremendous influence on who gets profiled through speaking platforms and volunteer leadership positions. Their events help to set the tone for norms of behavior within the industry. They have the potential to be tremendous force multipliers for good, yet the vast majority of survey respondents did not feel the security industry or security membership organizations were doing enough to address DE&I.

The research points to the following practices for security industry membership organizations:

- Collect data to understand their members and gather input and feedback on DE&I efforts.
- Revise talent spotting and selection processes to ensure diversity within boards and leadership.
- Use programing to enhance DE&I within the industry, including diversity of speakers, rules on entertainment at events, instigating and implementing codes of conduct, offering safe spaces for discussions about DE&I, ensuring fair approaches to awards, running programs for members on reverse mentoring, and promoting and supporting DE&I networks.
- Play an active role in wider industry branding efforts, such as campaigns and career pathways

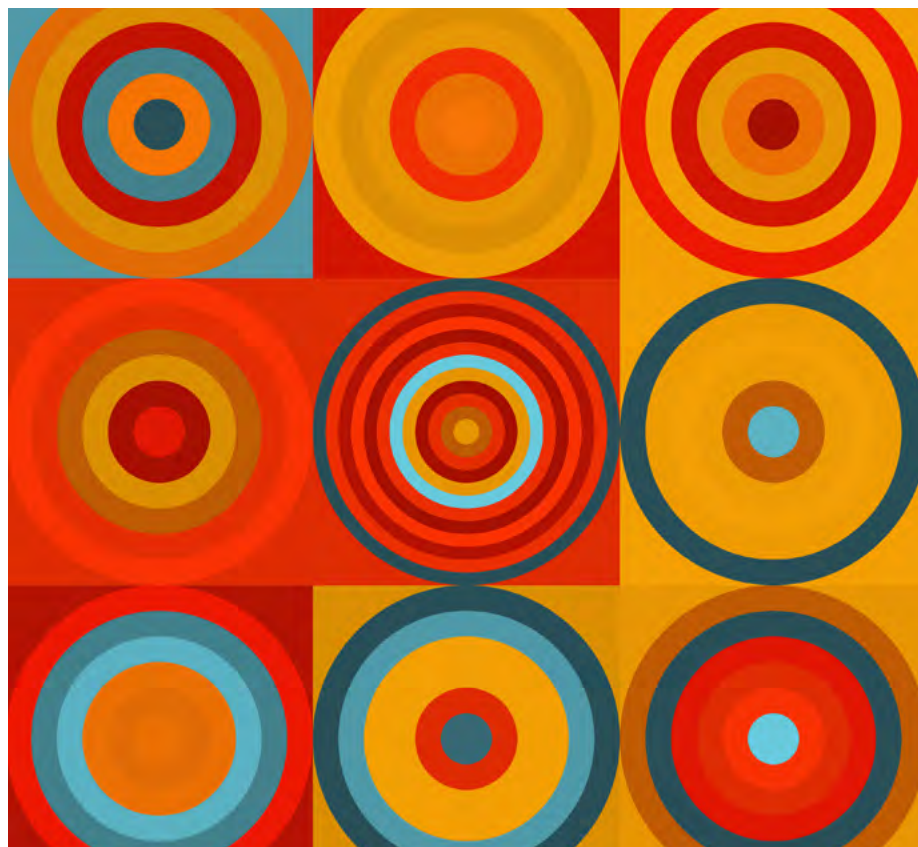
DE&I in corporate security— a whole-of-industry challenge

There is still much work to be done on DE&I: There is a vocal minority against DE&I efforts; fears about getting things wrong cause paralysis; the industry is working with a persistent legacy of recruiting almost exclusively from former government services, which are themselves fairly

homogenous; and disturbing stories of discrimination, sexual harassment, and unprofessional behavior persist.

We need a whole-of-industry approach to DE&I, where CSOs lead the charge from within their organizations, membership organizations set the tone for appropriate behavior and platform all the talents, and each one of us assumes our responsibility to lean in, listen, learn, and become an ambassador for the rights of every person working in corporate security.

This is a mission-oriented industry full of dedicated professionals. If we focus, pull together and rise to the challenge, not only will we become a fairer and more equitable industry, we will be more productive, innovative and creative—fit for the challenge of delivering safety and security to the organizations we serve, today and in the future.



ABOUT THE RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

This research sought to understand the state of play for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) within corporate security: the nature and extent of diversity, the experience of diverse professionals within the industry, the thinking of corporate security leaders and the types of initiatives they are spearheading, the role of membership organizations, and outstanding challenges.

Researchers took a broad view of diversity, incorporating gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, and disability. It focused on equity rather than equality. “Equity” refers to fairness and justice, recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge adjustments to imbalances. “Equality” means providing the same to all. Re-

searchers defined an inclusive workplace as one that makes every employee feel valued, while also acknowledging their differences and how these differences contribute to the organization’s culture and business outcomes.

Researchers conducted a thorough literature review, spoke with scores of professionals within the industry, conducted formal interviews with 16 chief security officers (CSOs), and fielded a global survey. (Note: Excerpts from the CSO interviews are quoted anonymously to encourage candor in the interview; diversity attributes are included as needed for context.) The survey was not intended to be representative—that would have been an extensive enterprise beyond the scope of this research. A majority of survey respondents were from the United States, the UK, and Europe, so the data should be read on this basis. For a full description of the methodology, refer to the full report.