

LinkedIn Post, Consultancy Founder

Some of us feel the need to diminish—or outright hide—elements of our identities for fear they might lead to our marginalization at work. This includes those with marginalized identities whose elements aren't concealable (e.g., visibly belonging to a marginalized racial background) and can manifest in various ways, from changing the way one dresses to choosing to distance oneself from others who share the elements of the identity they seek to hide. In their study for Deloitte University, *Uncovering Talent: A New Model of Inclusion*, Kenji Yoshino and Christie Smith define this phenomenon as “covering.”

Before I started my consulting firm, the concept of being open at work was one I feared couldn't become a reality. So, for a while, I covered by neglecting to mention my partner, Michelle. But that wasn't sustainable, and soon enough, I confronted my boss with a photo of Michelle, explaining that my boss needed to know who she was and why she was important to me. My boss was caught off-guard, but she was open, and I was so, so relieved.

At my firm, we work with organizations to recommend and facilitate affinity groups that identify internal issues in a culturally competent and respectful manner. Our goal is to help organizations create workplaces where all employees feel listened to and valued and—critically—that the burdens associated with covering are not theirs to bear.

Instagram Ad, DEI Practitioner's Program

If you're invested in fostering a workplace environment that encourages people to feel comfortable regardless of background, the process of implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a highly navigable one. Not only is prioritizing DEI an effective way to ensure you're creating a culture of belonging, but relative to those that don't, organizations that lead in DEI also have:

- 22% lower turnover rates
- 27% higher profitability
- 22% greater productivity
- 39% higher customer satisfaction

If you're interested in learning more about and advocating for DEI in your organization or workplace, but aren't sure where to start, our six-week course helps beginners learn the language and best practices they need to begin working toward a more equitable future.