

Marriott Hotel's Practices in Mitigating Discrimination Through Inclusionary Employee Resource Groups

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Human resources experts play a crucial role in fostering safe, healthy, and equitable workplaces, emphasizing inclusivity, diversity, and anti-discrimination. Marriott International serves as a prime example by prioritizing ongoing education to create a diverse and inclusive workforce, empowering employees to cater to a global clientele. Their initiatives inspire and educate HR professionals from other companies while reinforcing Marriott's commitment to bias reduction through continuous training in areas like unconscious bias, cultural competency, harassment prevention, and prejudice awareness. Marriott's dedication extends to providing resources and training to address workplace discrimination, promoting tolerance and diversity. The company's unwavering focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion underscores the importance of senior management support and consistent promotion of these values. Marriott's transparency in disclosing diverse data sets a benchmark for organizational growth, serving as a guiding principle for HR professionals to drive similar initiatives in their respective organizations. Ultimately, Marriott's efforts illustrate the potential for creating more equitable and inclusive workplaces globally, where employees are valued, respected, and supported to thrive.

Keywords: diversity, DEI, discrimination, engagement, inclusivity, education, Marriott, employee resource groups, ERGs

INTRODUCTION

Marriott International, a prominent global hotel company, has positioned itself as a paragon of excellence in addressing prejudice and cultivating a workplace that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI). Marriott has consistently achieved a high ranking among the top 100 companies to work for by employing a comprehensive strategy that incorporates various elements such as workplace culture, equal employment policies, diversity and inclusion initiatives, monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and extensive training and education programs. From a human resources standpoint, this analysis comprehensively examines Marriott's methods for achieving this objective. This paper will explore how Marriott applies best practices to mitigate discrimination and stand out as one of the top 100 companies to work for in the United States.

Marriott prioritizes developing a workplace environment centered around respect, justice, and inclusivity principles. The company's fundamental principle, "Prioritizing the Well-being of Individuals," highlights its dedication to upholding the dignity of its employees, customers, and stakeholders. Marriott has garnered significant acclaim and acknowledgment for its commitment to diversity and inclusion, exemplified by its distinction as one of the esteemed "America's Greatest Workplaces for Diversity" by Newsweek in 2023. These honors validate Marriott's commitment to cultivating an inviting and inclusive work climate. They understand the importance of developing effective leaders to prevent the existence of an environment where destructive politics and bad management practices can exist (Noori et al., 2023; Aasland et al., 2010).

Marriott shows its dedication to maintaining fair and equitable employment practices by adhering to the policies set forth by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The organization demonstrates a strong commitment to complying with federal and state regulations that prohibit discriminatory practices on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or veteran status. Marriott's extensive EEOC standards guarantee that every facet of employment, ranging from recruiting and hiring to determining salary and promotions, is devoid of any form of discriminatory practices. Marriott's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion surpasses basic adherence to regulatory obligations. The corporation proactively advocates for diversity throughout all tiers of its corporate structure, acknowledging the significant benefits associated with a heterogeneous workforce. Noe et al., (2023) explain that managing diversity, equity, and inclusion is about creating an environment that allows and socializes everyone to feel welcome. One of the most important aspects of socializing everyone towards an ethical and inclusionary organizational culture is relevant and timely training (Mujtaba and Sims, 2006). Marriott has created a digital file explaining how they invest in their associates and providing them with access to opportunities. Marriott in 2022 presented that more than 50% of their Senior Global Leadership were diverse. The workforce at Marriott is diverse and inclusive as there are 57% women CEOs, there is 32.6% Hispanic or Latino in their total workforce, and there is a 10.5% of black or African American in management positions for a total of 20% of the total workforce (Marriott, 2022).

Marriott cultivates an inclusive organizational culture that embraces employees from various backgrounds and provides them with the necessary support and resources to flourish. This dedication is demonstrated via various programs such as employee resource groups or ERGs, which serve as a forum for employees to establish connections, develop trusting relationships, offer mutual assistance, create an atmosphere of good mental health, and advocate for diversity (Kendrick et al., 2023; Kanaris and Mujtaba, 2024).

Implementing monitoring and reporting tools is a fundamental aspect of any organization's dedication and affirmative action to addressing and mitigating instances of prejudice, excessive stress, and interpersonal conflicts (Abdelmoteleb, 2020; Mujtaba, 2023). The Marriott organization is proactive by consistently evaluating its diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and their resulting impacts. Associates are empowered to utilize robust reporting procedures to discreetly disclose instances of discrimination, harassment, or bias. The Human Rights Council at Marriott, which operates at the executive level, oversees

the company's human rights policies and initiatives. Its primary goal is to ensure responsibility and ease ongoing enhancements in this domain.

Marriott acknowledges the need for continuous education and awareness in cultivating a workplace environment devoid of discrimination. The organization implements frequent training and educational initiatives for both employees and supervisors. The programs include discrimination, harassment, unconscious prejudice, and cultural competency. Marriott eases providing these resources to its employees, equipping them with the necessary information and tools to identify and effectively respond to discriminatory actions. This initiative eventually fosters a culture characterized by respect and inclusivity.

Marriott's proactive and thorough strategy in mitigating discrimination has played a pivotal role in its acknowledgment as one of the leading organizations to be employed by, as seen by its inclusion in the top 100 businesses list. Marriott showcases its dedication to cultivating an inclusive and non-discriminatory work environment by prioritizing workplace culture, adhering to Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) policies, implementing dedicated efforts towards diversity, equity, and inclusion, setting up comprehensive monitoring and reporting systems, and emphasizing training and education. This commitment underscores the notion that fostering an inclusive and discrimination-free workplace is a moral obligation and a crucial factor in driving success within the global hospitality industry. Marriott's leadership in adapting to the evolving requirements of its workforce serves as a remarkable exemplar for businesses worldwide.

HR POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The literature examines Marriott's human resources policies and practices, focusing on their efforts to overcome bias and promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity in the workplace, which have contributed to their reputation as a prominent leader in this area. The constant acknowledgment of Marriott as one of the top businesses to work for highlights the efficacy of its approach. A comprehensive examination is conducted on the following critical domains: Workplace culture, policies implemented by the EEOC, initiatives related to diversity and inclusion, mechanisms for monitoring and reporting, as well as programs focused on training and education.

This research aims to fully comprehend how Marriott strategically integrates these components to effectively address and minimize instances of discrimination, thereby establishing itself as a leading employer in the industry. This study aims to provide insights into the most effective strategies that can be utilized as a beneficial resource for human resources professionals and organizations seeking to establish inclusive and non-discriminatory work environments.

Workplace Culture

What is the importance of an organization's work culture? An organization's culture allows employees to create a working environment where everyone contributes to its goals and personal growth (Mujtaba, 2022). Culture defines significant stakeholders such as employees, customers, suppliers, and competitors (Noe et al., 2023, p. 85). Employees that have shared values and core beliefs in a company are a prime example of workplace culture. An organization needs to have a positive work culture as it helps motivate employees and increase engagement amid continuous changes (Raza et al., 2018). An organization's culture is defined whenever you have an experience at an organization such as shopping at a grocery store or staying at a hotel. Every organization in the hospitality industry has its own work culture, and Marriott Hotels stands out among others because of how they present their culture to the world (Noe et al., 2023, p. 85). An organization will continue to "benefit from a positive and widespread organizational culture as it fosters engagement, enthusiasm, unity, identity, and uniformity that promote job satisfaction for employees" (Reidhead, 2020, p. 434). Leaders that provide affirmative action training, along with a balance of relationship orientation and task orientation to eliminate biases in their day-to-day management styles, are likely to have a productive work environment where employees want to be engaged and inclusionary (Alvarado and Mujtaba, 2023; Mujtaba, 2023; Mujtaba and Kuzak, 2023; Cooper and Mujtaba, 2022).

The Marriott's website mentions four factors on how they pride themselves in their organization's culture. First on their list is that they put people first before anything else. Having happy employees and customers has helped the Marriott's organization grow and retain customer satisfaction. By putting people first, Marriott gives employees the opportunity and space for growth. Second is that Marriott pursues excellence in their line of work. Their website mentions that they take pride in every detail "every day and every destination worldwide" (Marriott International, n.d.). When organizations take pride in their excellence, they feel empowered. Marriott is keen on reaching their fullest potential.

Third is that they embrace change in their work culture to build new locations and have new guest experiences. An organization needs to adapt to change as the times are changing fast. They are also innovative and constantly challenging the status quo. While adapting to change in their organization, Marriott allows employees to learn new skills and explore endless opportunities. Fourth, Marriott managers seem to act with integrity. When an organization has integrity, they gain their team and colleagues' trust. Organizations that can hold themselves accountable foster a positive work culture. They believe that how they manage the day-to-day challenges among their employees is just as important as the business they do (Marriott International, n.d.). This extends to their employee and supply chain policies, environmental programs, human rights, and social responsibility commitment. Companies that effectively face the three competitive challenges (ESG - environmental, social and governance, globalization, and technology) will increase the importance of human resource management practices. Marriott takes these challenges seriously in their day-to-day operations and management. For ESG, Marriott states that they emphasized their customer service and quality while also dealing with legal and ethical issues. They also want to open new locations worldwide, which means they are prepared to deal with the global economy. They are ready to compete in the international markets. For technology, Marriott uses their application for mobile devices and uses virtual meeting solutions "to accommodate in-person and remote attendees" (Marriott Bonvoy, n.d.). With these factors taking place, Marriott hotels have an outstanding future.

Employee Engagement

What is employee engagement like at the Marriott, and why is it important? Given that this organization takes full pride in their work along with their employees and customers, there is high employee engagement that has affected the work culture positively and healthily. Employee engagement is the degree to which "employees are fully involved in their work and the strength of their job and company commitment," since engaged employees are passionate about their work and the company and work hard to contribute in any way they can (Noe et al., 2023, p. 23). Employee engagement affects the work culture of every organization. Engaged employees help bring sustainable value and success into an organization. Strong employee engagement "shows that the workforce is engaged in the strategic and tactical transformational priorities of their organization such as strategic change initiatives, competitive strategies, revised work processes, new product strategies, and reorganizations" (Taneja et al., 2015). Marriott's unified employee dynamic has brought these strategic and transformative business plans into their work culture. Because Marriott prioritizes their innovation in the company, it can step up their business dynamic and boost employee engagement (Lawrence et al., 2023). Marriott is also known to have a competitive advantage globally. Of course, organizations can achieve sustainable competitive advantages by efficiently and effectively increasing their employment engagement (Taneja et al., 2015). With plans to engage everyone and build more hotels across the globe, employees feel more connected with their organization's culture across borders. Marriott mentions that they are committed to social responsibility since every organization needs to be socially responsible as it helps achieve employee engagement and goodwill (Taneja et al., 2015). By pursuing a strong corporate social responsibility policy, Marriott stays unified with its employees and customers. It is also recommended that organizations have a strong focus on their customers as this could help employees identify the company's reputation and become invested. When customers perceive an organization that is high quality and highly valued, customer service will be excellent, allowing employees to feel more engaged in their organization (Taneja et al., 2015).

Awards and Recognitions

Marriott is known to be an outstanding organization and because of their global success, they have won many awards. The Marriott Awards stand out from other hotels because of their diverse and inclusive culture. Some of these awards were given because of Marriott's hard work and trustworthiness. In 2022, Marriott received several awards, such as the "Americas Best Large Employer" by Forbes, along with "The Best Employers for Diversity," and "The Best Employers for New Graduates" (Marriott Careers, 2023). This shows how diverse and inclusive Marriott is, which is fundamental to their core values. *Fortune* awarded Marriott for "100 Best Companies to Work For" and "World's Most Admired Companies" designation. Marriott has become admired by organizations worldwide because of their work culture and employee engagement. They are also admired for putting people first and valuing their employees and customers. They have also been awarded the "Fortune 500" which ranks companies by how much revenue they receive in their fiscal year. Another award that Marriott received is the "Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality," by the *Human Rights Campaign Foundation*. The Marriott prioritizes equality and diversity, especially because people are their priority. Their website states, "With our foundation built upon the wellbeing and happiness of our associates, embracing differences is critical to our success as the largest hospitality company with an ever-growing global portfolio" (Marriott International, n.d.). *Newsweek* also awarded Marriott as one of "America's Most Trusted Companies" in 2022. This is because of how Marriott treats their customers. They take care of each customer with the utmost professionalism. Employees are always attentive, kind, and outgoing with customers. Because Marriott is deemed trustworthy, this hotel offers their customers an experience rather than just a stay. In the last award and recognition listed on their site, *Fast Company* awarded Marriott as "World Changing Ideas Honoree (Enhanced Human Trafficking Awareness Training)". Marriott has mentioned that they care deeply about human rights and that keeping employees and customers safe is a high priority. Marriott is dedicated to training employees on how to identify the potential signs of human trafficking. They also encourage employees to monitor such situations and act or report on suspicious activity (Hertzfeld, 2023). Marriott takes training and safety seriously, so it is no surprise that they received an honorary award. The awards given to Marriott show how seriously they take their work culture. From the employees to the customers, they pride themselves on how they stand out among other hotels in the industry.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

EEOC "was established by the United States federal government to enforce federal laws governing employment such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), Equal Pay Act (EPA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)" (Fritz & Kleiner, 2000, p. 5). EEOC has three responsibilities: obtaining information, administering guidelines, and investigating/resolving all discrimination complaints they receive. The goal of the administration is to ensure that individuals are not discriminated against and that they have "equal employment opportunity, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin" (Noe et al., 2023, p. 121). Employees can be discriminated against in various ways, and EEOC governs most of them.

Are there benefits to a diverse workplace, and if so, what are they? Firstly, diversity garners more work commitment from employees. Second, employees who present themselves authentically are shown to form stronger work relationships, thus receiving higher performance ratings. Thirdly, companies benefit financially from employing diverse, highly qualified individuals. Also, companies that value diversity and employ individuals from other countries have a competitive advantage in foreign markets (Barrett, 2019). Lastly, the most common reason to implement a diversity program among corporations within the United States is "to positively impact firm financial performance by targeting diverse customers and markets (often referred to as the business case for diversity)" (Kalargyrou et al, 2016, p.99). One of the ways this is done is through diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

Marriott as a Top 50 Diverse Companies

Some companies have included diversity programs to not only build a diverse and inclusive environment but also safeguard against any potential EEOC complaints and lawsuits related to discrimination. Fifty companies have excelled at building a diverse working environment (Gajjar et al, 2018). Marriott was noted as one of the top 50 diverse companies that appear to be taking the EEOC requirements seriously.

Marriott is a global company with over 4,000 hotels/properties and over 200,000 employees. “DiversityInc reports their employment of African Americans and Latinos in management as more than double of the Top 50 list average,” and they have “been ranked for executive women, diversity councils, LGBT employees, recruitment, mentoring, and supplier diversity” (Gajjar et al, 2018, p. 916). Marriott does have several programs and trainings for their employees. For example, the company holds workshops for managers to help them understand the concept of diversity and to help build their awareness of cultural differences. Another program that has proven to be effective is that the 53% of women employed in upper management partially credited to Marriott’s Women in Leadership Development Initiative.

Plus, Marriott’s supplier diversity includes relationships with thousands of minorities, woman, service veteran, those with disability, and LGBT-owned businesses around the globe. Marriott participates in educational initiatives by hosting Supplier Diversity 101 sessions at the National Black MBA Association, U.S. Business Leadership Network, and the National Urban League. They also have global diversity and inclusion programs in the Americas, Caribbean, Latin America, Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East, and Africa including partnerships with minority-based associations (Gajjar et al, 2018, p. 917).

Best Practices for Companies

How does Marriott apply best practices to mitigate discrimination and stand out as one of the top companies to work for? Even though the public may not be able to view all of Marriott’s policies regarding diversity, a great deal can be gained from exploring their programs and best practices of training, inclusion, and diversity. Best practices are particularly important to the hospitality industry because many women and minorities are employed. As noted above, there are many benefits for organizations that embrace diversity; however, it is not enough to be aware of the benefits; implementation of policies and procedures which include EEOC compliance (best practices) should be a priority. Seven best practices were observed when evaluating the top 50 companies in the DiversityInc list: “corporate diversity councils, diversity training programs, supplier diversity, employee mentoring and networking, cultural awareness, support for women, and LGBT programs and same-sex benefits” (Gajjar et al, 2018, p. 920). These seven best practices were initially noted in the Madera (2013) study of the best practices on the Diversity Inc list. Marriott’s website shows that the company is implementing six of the seven suggested best practices. For example, in 2008, Marriott’s diversity officer implemented a diversity program outreach that extended beyond the United States. The program aimed to educate Marriott employees on cultural competence to improve relationships with diverse customers and colleagues. This outreach is an example of cultural awareness (Madera, 2013).

Barrett (2019) studied and found several best practices to mitigate discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin and to increase diversity. These best practices are: “achieving executive management buy-in and communication, driving the culture, utilizing diversity and inclusion departments, using cross-departmental cooperation, setting goals and measuring them” (Barrett, 2019, p. 119).

In addition to their adherence to the EEOC’s policies and, including diversity and inclusion which will be discussed in the next section, Marriott’s extensive Equal Employment Opportunity Commission standards and motto guarantee that every facet of employment is fair and equitable. Marriott’s corporate website boasts their company motto, “We put people first. Take care of associates, and they will take care of the customers” (Marriott International, 2022, para. 1). This was the original philosophy of the founder of Marriott, so their aim from the start has always been to “put people first.” Marriott has demonstrated their commitment to adhering to the EEOC standards by creating an equitable and open working environment for employees and transparency for applicants. When applying for a job, candidates can view the “know your rights” EEOC document, which highlights the EEOC policy. Within the document,

candidates are given instructions and contact information on how to report a violation (Workplace Discrimination is Illegal, n.d.).

Lastly, to ensure that best practices are followed and that all employees adhere to the law, Marriott has issued a business conduct guide and requires employees to read and acknowledge receiving the guide. Although Marriott does not expect every employee “to be subject matter experts in all areas of law, every individual is held responsible for being familiar with the pertinent laws governing his or her areas of responsibility” (Our Tradition of Integrity Business Conduct Guide, n.d., p. 2). They strive to be uncompromising with “ethical and legal standards. This extends to our day-to-day business conduct, employee policies, supply chain policies, environmental programs and practices, and commitment to human rights and social responsibility” (Marriott International, 2022, para 4). Marriott values their brand, so every employee is instructed to follow the guide and report violations. Marriott is taking all the above measures to ensure they are EEOC compliant by consistently demonstrating their motto and goals. They require that employees act with integrity, avoid wrongdoing, be honest and fair, implement best practices, and foster a diverse working community.

COMMITMENT TO DEI

Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives have become fundamental components of contemporary corporate culture, transcending mere buzzwords. They underscore an authentic commitment to establishing equitable workplaces where the contributions of diverse individuals are valued, celebrated, and leveraged. As a renowned global hotel chain, Marriott has consistently exemplified its dedication to these principles throughout its history. Marriott’s commitment to diversity and inclusion can be traced back to its founder, J.W. Marriott. He envisioned an organization that went beyond the superficial aspects of diversity and emphasized the core values of treating all employees with respect and dignity, regardless of their background, culture, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. This foundational belief served as the bedrock upon which Marriott’s culture of inclusivity was built.

Marriott’s journey towards fostering diversity and inclusion has been a dynamic one. The company has continually evolved its approach to align with the changing landscape of diversity and inclusion in the corporate world. Marriott’s journey reflects its genuine intent to create a workplace where individuals from varied backgrounds are welcomed and actively included in decision-making processes and contributing to the company’s success. Throughout the years, Marriott has made significant strides in promoting diversity and inclusion within its organization. These efforts include initiatives to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, implement inclusive leadership practices, and provide opportunities for career development and advancement to all employees, regardless of their background.

Marriott has implemented various initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion within the organization. For example, they have diverse talent recruitment and development programs. They have been actively engaged in recruiting and developing a diverse talent pool. The company’s commitment to hiring individuals from different backgrounds is evident through its partnerships with organizations such as the National Association of Black Hotel Owners, Operators & Developers (NABHOOD). This partnership aims to increase the representation of African Americans in the hospitality industry (Marriott International, 2020 Annual Report). In addition, Marriott’s Voyage Global Leadership Development Program is designed to identify and groom high-potential employees from underrepresented groups for leadership roles within the company. This program provides mentoring, networking, and leadership development opportunities to nurture diverse talent (Marriott International, 2020 Annual Report). Another program is the supplier diversity program, the idea with this program is to actively seek to engage diverse suppliers, including minority-owned, women-owned, LGBTQ+-owned, and veteran-owned businesses. The company’s supplier diversity program supports economic growth and inclusion in its communities (Marriott International, 2020 Annual Report).

These initiatives showcase Marriott’s multifaceted approach to diversity and inclusion: recruitment, leadership development, supplier diversity, employee resource groups, community engagement, and accessibility. Marriott’s commitment to these initiatives reflects its core values and a strategic approach to

drive innovation, enhance employee engagement, and maintain its status as a leader in the hospitality industry.

Another initiative is inclusive leadership training. With this initiative Marriott invests in training its leaders to embrace inclusive leadership practices. This initiative fosters an environment where all employees feel valued and included. The positive impact of inclusive leadership on employee outcomes has been documented in research (Carmeli et al., 2019).

Marriott has also established ERGs (Employee Resource Groups) that provide employees with networking, mentorship, and support spaces. These groups cater to various communities, including LGBTQ+ employees, veterans, and women. ERGs contribute to a sense of belonging and empowerment among employees (Marriott International, 2020 Annual Report).

The significance of these initiatives lies in their crucial role in cultivating a diverse workforce. Madera's (2013) research article, "Best Practices in Diversity Management in Customer Service Organizations" underscores how top executives' active engagement in diversity-related functions is a powerful indicator of an organization's unwavering dedication to diversity. In Marriott's case, this commitment has been clear from its start, as the company's leadership has consistently proved its involvement in and support for initiatives such as those mentioned above, in addition to others.

Marriott's commitment to diversity and inclusion extends beyond its workforce to the communities it serves. Through philanthropic initiatives and partnerships with organizations like the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), Marriott invests in education and community development (Marriott International, 2020 Annual Report). And Marriott has made its properties more accessible to individuals with disabilities. This initiative aligns with its commitment to diversity and inclusion and is in line with research (Johnson et al., 2018).

Marriott's commitment to diversity and inclusion extends beyond its internal operations. The company actively seeks to foster diversity and inclusion in its communities. This approach aligns with the understanding that a diverse and inclusive workforce and community contribute to broader societal benefits, including economic growth and social cohesion. Marriott's proactive stance on diversity and inclusion is evident in its partnerships with organizations that share similar values and goals. Through collaborations with various diversity and inclusion advocacy groups, Marriott has amplified its impact and learned from best practices in this field. The evolution of Marriott's diversity and inclusion initiatives is a testament to the company's adaptability and commitment to remaining at the forefront of best practices in this area. This dynamic approach ensures that Marriott embraces diversity and inclusion as part of its corporate identity and uses them as tools for innovation, competitiveness, and continued growth.

One key milestone in Marriott's history is the establishment of the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities. Johnson and colleagues (2018) highlight Marriott's efforts to employ individuals with disabilities. The article points out that Marriott's work in this area promotes diversity and serves as a benchmark for the industry.

Marriott's commitment to diversity and inclusion is exemplified through its leadership. The company has implemented inclusive leadership practices, as discussed in scholarly articles. Carmeli et al. (2019) highlight the positive effects of inclusive leadership on employee engagement and organizational performance. Marriott's leadership practices align with these findings, as the company actively promotes a culture of inclusion.

Marriott's diversity initiatives have significantly impacted its workforce and reputation. Research published in the *Academy of Management Perspectives* (Joshi et al., 2015) discusses how diverse initiatives can enhance organizational innovation. Marriott's diverse workforce has enabled it to innovate and adapt to changing customer preferences, making it a leader in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, Marriott's commitment to diversity and inclusion has resulted in many accolades and awards, including in Forbes' list of "America's Best Employers for Diversity." Such recognition enhances the company's reputation and attracts top talent, contributing to its continued success.

Despite its commendable efforts, Marriott has faced challenges in its diversity and inclusion journey. Scholars like Cox and Blake (1991) discuss the challenges organizations may encounter when managing diversity. Marriott, too, has faced issues related to cultural differences and varying perspectives within its

global workforce. However, the company has remained committed to addressing these challenges by continuously refining its diversity and inclusion initiatives. As Marriott continues to evolve, it must remain vigilant in addressing new challenges and opportunities that emerge in diversity and inclusion. By doing so, it can maintain its status as a global hospitality leader and serve as an exemplar for other organizations seeking to foster diversity and inclusion in their workplaces.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Implementing monitoring and reporting tools is an important aspect of Marriott's dedication to mitigating discrimination. The organization takes a proactive approach by continually monitoring and evaluating its initiatives and resulting impact. In an interview with Marisa Milton, the Senior Vice President of Global Talent Acquisition and Inclusion, she stated that Marriott uses a scorecard to monitor their current initiatives. Marriott has a metric system to measure their current diversity goals, implemented two decades ago. Their board of directors committee meets regularly to assess the accountability metrics of the goals put in place. "The committee establishes annual goals for each dimension of diversity and monitors progress with a diversity excellence scorecard and metrics related to associates, customers, owners and suppliers" (Holtgrieve, 2021, para. 14). The committee's accountability measures have resulted in Marriott's increased diversity.

Marriott actively monitors its workforce demographics, tracking the representation of individuals from various racial, ethnic, gender, and cultural backgrounds. This monitoring process involves regular assessments of the composition of its employees, including leadership positions, to identify areas where greater diversity and inclusivity can be promoted. Marriott's commitment to transparency is evident in its annual diversity and inclusion reports, which provide stakeholders with a comprehensive overview of the company's progress and challenges in this area (Marriott International, 2021).

Moreover, Marriott's commitment extends beyond workforce representation to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all employees and guests. The company has implemented various initiatives and training programs to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. These efforts are closely monitored through feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and focus groups, which allow the company to assess the impact of its programs and make necessary adjustments. Marriott's dedication to reporting on the effectiveness of these initiatives is evident in its corporate responsibility report, where it details its efforts to foster inclusivity, eliminate discrimination, and promote diversity throughout its global operations (Marriott International, 2021).

In addition to internal monitoring and reporting, Marriott actively engages in external partnerships and collaborations that further underscore its commitment to diversity and inclusion. The company has forged relationships with organizations and associations dedicated to advancing diversity and equality in the workplace. These partnerships serve as a testament to Marriott's values and provide valuable insights and benchmarks for the company's diversity and inclusion efforts. Marriott's annual reports highlight these collaborations and their impact on the broader community, reinforcing its commitment to inclusivity as a key driver of its corporate strategy (Marriott International, 2021). Marriott has tried to make their diversity initiatives and equal opportunity reports transparent by adding the results to their corporate website.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Significance of Education and Training

Goldberg (2020) asserts that corporations bear a legal and ethical need to establish a work environment devoid of discrimination and harassment. Legislation and regulatory frameworks require the equitable treatment of employees, irrespective of their color, gender, age, sexual orientation, and other legally safeguarded attributes. The absence of a discrimination-free atmosphere can lead to legal obligations, financial penalties, and harm to the organization's standing (Goldberg, 2020).

Conflicts arising from discrimination can disrupt and damage the overall harmony within a workplace setting. According to Goldberg (2020), implementing education and awareness initiatives can equip

employees and managers with the necessary knowledge and abilities to identify, confront, and mitigate instances of discrimination, hence cultivating a work climate characterized by harmony and collaboration.

Hampson et al. (2020) highlight the profound emotional and psychological consequences that individuals may endure from experiencing discrimination. The authors provide additional explanation regarding the correlation between a hostile work environment and the heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and unhappiness experienced by employees. Hampson et al. (2020) argue that implementing education and awareness efforts can effectively mitigate the adverse consequences by fostering comprehension and empathy.

Goldberg (2020) asserts that discrimination and harassment can lead to expensive legal disputes, harm to an organization's reputation, and financial ramifications. Goldberg (2020) contends that implementing appropriate training and education initiatives effectively reduces the likelihood of such instances by fostering employee comprehension of corporate standards, equipping them with the knowledge to report concerns, and instilling an understanding of the ramifications of engaging in discriminatory conduct.

According to Johnson and Chaudhuri (2020), Managers and leaders assume a pivotal role in establishing the prevailing atmosphere inside the company. Education and training programs provide individuals with the necessary information and abilities to effectively demonstrate leadership, ensure consistent policy enforcement, and foster an atmosphere characterized by respect and inclusivity (Johnson & Chaudhuri, 2020).

According to Cooper et al. (2022), discrimination and biases are nuanced and exhibit variability throughout time. Ongoing educational initiatives and efforts to raise awareness ensure that employees and management remain informed about the dynamic nature of diversity and inclusion, enabling firms to adjust and enhance their strategies (Cooper et al., 2022).

The importance of education and training cannot be emphasized enough for managers and employees within organizations, as they have a pivotal role in upholding legal compliance, cultivating a diverse and innovative workforce, promoting employee welfare, minimizing risks, and ultimately facilitating overall corporate achievement. Organizations demonstrate their commitment to cultivating an inclusive, courteous, and non-discriminatory work environment by allocating resources to educational initiatives and raising awareness (Johnson & Chaudhuri, 2020).

Marriott's Commitment to Training and Education

Marriott recognizes the need for continuous education and awareness to uphold a discrimination-free work environment. The organization consistently conducts training and educational initiatives for its personnel and supervisors. Marriott has established a variety of training and education initiatives to foster diversity and address issues related to discrimination. These programs' main objective is to educate employees and executives about the significance of fostering respect and promoting inclusivity within the workplace. The following delineates several training programs implemented by Marriott to keep their employees engaged, culturally competent, and inclusionary (Marriott, 2021; Great Place to Work, n.d.).

- *Anti-Harassment Training*: Training programs designed to prevent workplace harassment are essential. These programs teach employees and managers how to identify, report, and prevent all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, racial harassment, and discrimination.
- *Leadership Training*: Marriott offers leadership development programs that emphasize inclusive leadership. These programs assist leaders in comprehending their responsibility to promote diversity and inclusion within their teams and organizations.
- *Cultural Competency Training*: Assists employees and leaders in comprehending and appreciating diverse cultures, origins, and points of view. It encourages effective communication and teamwork in diverse organizations.
- *Unconscious Bias Training*: Seeks to identify and address biases held unconsciously by individuals. These programs assist participants in recognizing and mitigating decision-making biases. This form of training focuses on ensuring that the recruitment and hiring processes are

equitable and inclusive. It assists recruiters and hiring administrators in avoiding bias when selecting candidates.

- *Inclusive Recruitment and Hiring Training:* This training focuses on ensuring that the recruitment and hiring processes are equitable and inclusive. It assists recruiters and hiring administrators avoid bias when selecting candidates (Great Place to Work, n.d.)

Marriott's commitment to educational aspects and related policies and practices plays a pivotal role in championing diversity, equity, and inclusivity, ultimately positioning it as one of the top 100 companies to work for in America. Employee resource group support, regular diversity and inclusion updates, external partnerships diversity, supplier diversity programs, and inclusion councils are resource groups and initiatives that underscore Marriott's dedication to fostering an inclusive and discrimination-free workplace (Marriott International, 2021).

Marriott's dedication to these educational elements and activities fosters a workplace culture that promotes a commitment to ongoing learning and awareness. Marriott employs many strategies to ensure that its workforce is adequately prepared to recognize and successfully respond to discrimination. These strategies include facilitating easy access to training and education programs, actively engaging with employees through resource groups, providing regular updates, fostering partnerships, and establishing councils (Marriott International, 2021). The dedication to education enhances the workplace environment for employees and strengthens Marriott's standing as an employer that prioritizes diversity and inclusivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HR PRACTITIONERS

Human resources professionals play a crucial role in shaping organizational culture, fostering inclusivity, and combating bias in the modern workplace. The exemplary strategies implemented by Marriott provide valuable insights for human resources professionals across all sectors. This paper examined the implications for professionals in human resources, with a focus on the core principles of continuous learning, effective leadership, and proactive efforts in promoting inclusive programming.

Education forms the fundamental basis for establishing a workplace environment that is devoid of discrimination. Regardless of the specific sector in which they operate, human resource professionals should acknowledge the significant importance of ongoing education in fostering inclusivity and eliminating discriminatory practices. Marriott's prioritization of education establishes a compelling model for human resources personnel.

Human resources professionals must give precedence to the implementation of comprehensive training initiatives that effectively equip employees with the requisite information and abilities to proficiently recognize, resolve, and proactively avoid instances of prejudice. These programs should extend their focus beyond mere adherence to legal requirements and instead prioritize cultivating empathy, cultural competence, and emotional intelligence. Marriott's strategic approach spans various areas like unconscious bias, cultural competency, and harassment prevention, all regarded as crucial components of employee education.

Acknowledging that a uniform approach may not be suitable for all circumstances, establishments should take measures to customize training initiatives in accordance with the organization's unique requirements and cultural aspects (Langaas and Mujtaba, 2023). The success of Marriott across the globe can be attributed, at least in part, to its adeptness in tailoring its educational activities to effectively engage its heterogeneous workforce locally, nationally, and internationally. Human resources professionals should adhere to this practice by completing comprehensive needs assessments to determine the areas where education is most required and modifying their programs accordingly.

Education should transcend a singular occurrence and instead be regarded as a continuous and perpetual undertaking. Human resource professionals should promote and support ongoing learning opportunities for employees, regardless of their hierarchical position within the organization. Marriott's dedication to furnishing a comprehensive four-week remunerated training program and providing virtual training opportunities for employees to engage in from the comfort of their homes amidst the pandemic serves as a prime illustration of the organization's recognition of the significance of continuous education. This method

has the potential to be applied in several industries in order to cultivate a culture that emphasizes ongoing learning.

One of the fundamental lessons from Marriott's success is the acknowledgment that leadership dedication is crucial in cultivating a work environment that is free from bias. Human resource experts must have a tight collaboration with organizational executives to ensure that inclusivity and non-discrimination are not surface ideals, but rather integral components profoundly ingrained throughout the core structure and culture of the company.

Establishing a strong collaborative relationship between human resources professionals and organizational leadership is paramount. This relationship is crucial for continually promoting the values of inclusivity and non-discrimination throughout all levels of the business. It is crucial for leaders to actively participate in training programs and effectively promote these ideals through their verbal expressions and behavioral exemplifications. The involvement of high-level executives in Marriott training sessions highlights this dedication's importance.

Implementing systems that foster accountability in leadership is of utmost importance for human resource practitioners. This involves establishing clear and specific expectations for leaders to maintain the organization's commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion. Ensuring the alignment between performance assessments, feedback loops, and diversity objectives is of utmost importance to mitigate the risk of discrimination. The practice of recognizing and offering rewards to executives who actively promote diversity within an organization can have a significant impact on motivating the entire staff.

Establishing a diverse and inclusive workplace demands more than the mere formulation of policy statements. It requires the implementation of proactive initiatives and a steadfast dedication to fostering a sense of belonging among employees. Human resource professionals play a vital role in leading initiatives to promote diversity, empower marginalized groups, and foster a sense of value and inclusion among all employees.

Consistent with Marriott's established practice, it is recommended that human resources practitioners actively support and assist in forming employee resource groups that cater to various demographic segments within the organization. These groups provide platforms for employees to create professional networks, share personal experiences, and engage in educational activities related to diversity and inclusion. Exemplary cases include groups focused on issues about gender, race, disability, and LGBTQ+ categories (Alvarado and Mujtaba, 2023; Cooper and Mujtaba, 2022).

Human resource professionals should actively promote and advocate for organizations to establish meaningful connections and collaborations with the communities in which they operate. By establishing partnerships with local organizations, actively engaging in community events, and providing support for initiatives that promote social equality, firms can expand their influence and foster diversity and inclusion.

By Marriott's commitment to advancing supplier diversity, it is recommended that human resources employees take proactive measures to aggressively seek out and support a diverse range of suppliers, including businesses owned by persons from minority groups, women, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. By engaging in such initiatives, organizations actively contribute to advancing economic inclusivity and assist the availability of opportunities for all individuals (Alvarado and Mujtaba, 2023).

Human resource professionals must establish and enforce efficient mechanisms for monitoring and reporting diversity indicators, encompassing metrics related to workforce representation and leadership diversity. The concept of transparency is of paramount importance in holding organizations accountable for their commitment to promoting diversity and preventing discrimination. Consistently disseminating these indicators to employees and other stakeholders indicates a dedication to advancing toward goals.

CONCLUSION

Marriott International's dedication to establishing a work environment free from discriminatory practices and embraces diversity and inclusion serves as a noteworthy model for human resources professionals everywhere (Serve 360 Report, n.d.). Upon contemplation of Marriott's diverse range of

techniques, several significant insights arise that might guide human resources professionals in their endeavor to establish a work environment devoid of discrimination.

Education is identified as the fundamental catalyst for societal transformation. Marriott's commitment to ongoing education and awareness initiatives, encompassing a wide range of subjects such as cultural competency and unconscious bias, highlights the significance of providing employees at every organizational level with the necessary information and abilities to recognize and address instances of prejudice. Human resource professionals should prioritize training activities that extend beyond simple adherence to legal requirements. These initiatives should aim to cultivate empathy, cultural competency, and emotional intelligence among the workforce.

Moreover, it is imperative to emphasize the indispensability of leadership commitment. The achievement of Marriott in this undertaking is enhanced by the active participation of executives within the business in training initiatives, as well as their steadfast dedication to promoting diversity and inclusion (Serve 360 Report, n.d.). Human resources professionals should establish strong partnerships with their leadership teams to ensure that inclusion and non-discrimination are fundamental elements of the business culture.

Implementing proactive inclusion measures, such as the establishment of employee resource groups and active community engagement, plays a crucial role in the recognition and promotion of diversity and the empowerment of marginalized and underrepresented groups (Serve 360 Report, n.d.). Human resource professionals should aggressively endorse and advance such programs inside their firms, acknowledging that they cultivate a robust feeling of affiliation and cultivate inclusiveness.

The consistent surveillance and documentation of diversity measures are essential for promoting transparency and ensuring accountability. Marriott's transparent disclosure of its diversity indicators to both internal workers and external stakeholders serves as a tangible demonstration of its dedication to advancing diversity and inclusion. Human resource professionals should implement comparable systems to evaluate and provide information regarding the composition of the workforce and the diversity within leadership positions.

Marriott's comprehensive strategy serves as a reminder that establishing a workplace devoid of prejudice is achievable and highly advantageous. Implementing this approach leads to an increase in employee satisfaction, the attraction of highly skilled individuals, and a favorable influence on overall corporate performance, all while making a significant contribution to broader societal advancement.

Given the growing heterogeneity of the workforce, human resource professionals possess a pivotal role in effecting significant changes. Marriott's trajectory is a prime example of how firms may foster inclusive workplaces that promote the success of employees from all backgrounds via education, dedication, and a commitment to diversity. By adopting these values, human resource professionals can act as agents of change, guiding their businesses toward a future marked by fairness, inclusiveness, and the absence of prejudice. The success story of Marriott serves as evidence of the significant influence that human resources professionals may exert in influencing future work environments.

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