

Behind the curtain: corporate DEI

Level: Intermediate (B1–B2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Overview: This article discusses how DEI work continues quietly in the corporate world despite the political backlash.

Business topics: Equality, diversity, inclusion initiatives, controversial DEI decisions

Business language: Useful vocabulary, business phrases, collocations

Activities: Key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, DEI research / controversial decisions, email writing (optional)

Groups: Whole class, one-to-one, small groups

1. Warmer

- a. Ask students to compare their opinions in small groups or pairs. After talking for a few minutes, get students to share their thoughts and ideas with the rest of the group. Write students' contributions of relevant target language on the board.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to compare their answers in pairs or small groups before going over the answers.

Key:

1. *backlash*
2. *affirmative action*
3. *ethnic group, ethnic groups*
4. *mentorship*
5. *initiative*
6. *discriminate, discriminated*
7. *minority*
8. *demographic*
9. *shortage*
10. *talent*
11. *progressive*
12. *diversify*

3. Understanding the article

- a. Ask students to skim the article first. Then, have them scan the article to locate the relevant paragraph for each statement and select the correct answer.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>a</i> | 6. <i>a</i> |
| 2. <i>b</i> | 7. <i>b</i> |
| 3. <i>b</i> | 8. <i>b</i> |
| 4. <i>a</i> | 9. <i>a</i> |
| 5. <i>a</i> | |

4. Business language – idiomatic language / collocations

- a. Ask students to see if they can guess the answers before referring to the article again if necessary.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>b</i> | 4. <i>d</i> |
| 2. <i>a</i> | 5. <i>c</i> |
| 3. <i>e</i> | |

- b. Ask students to work together to complete the activity. Ask them if they know any synonyms.

Key:

1. *action (sue)*
2. *programmes (change, start, manage)*
3. *budgets (cut funds/money available to ...)*
4. *workforce*
5. *staff (keep employees, personnel)*

- c. Ask students to do this individually before comparing their answers. Ask early finishers to use more of the phrases in their own sentences.

Key:

1. *slash our department budget*
2. *diversifying their workforce, screaming it from the rooftops*
3. *recruiting new staff*
4. *neck-and-neck*
5. *take my hat off to them; stayed the course*

5. Discussion

- a. Put the students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. When students have covered all the questions, bring the whole class back together so that they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

6. Wider business theme – controversial DEI decisions

- a. Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss the situation and questions. Encourage them to focus on their personal experiences and knowledge.
- b. Give students some time to think of their own ideas of possible things to research. Have students discuss their ideas in pairs to help them brainstorm. Then, allow students to examine their chosen situation individually or in pairs and make notes about the answers to the questions.
- c. Regroup students so that they form groups where each student has researched a different DEI decision/ company. Have them share their findings and discuss each situation by giving their opinion and agreeing or disagreeing about its success.

If time allows, ask students to share the most successful case from each group with the rest of the class.

Extension

Students can write an email about a DEI initiative they would like to see implemented. You could suggest a structure as follows:

1. the background to the DEI issue in the specific context
2. a summary of the suggested initiative with examples from a successful case
3. suggested action points or next steps