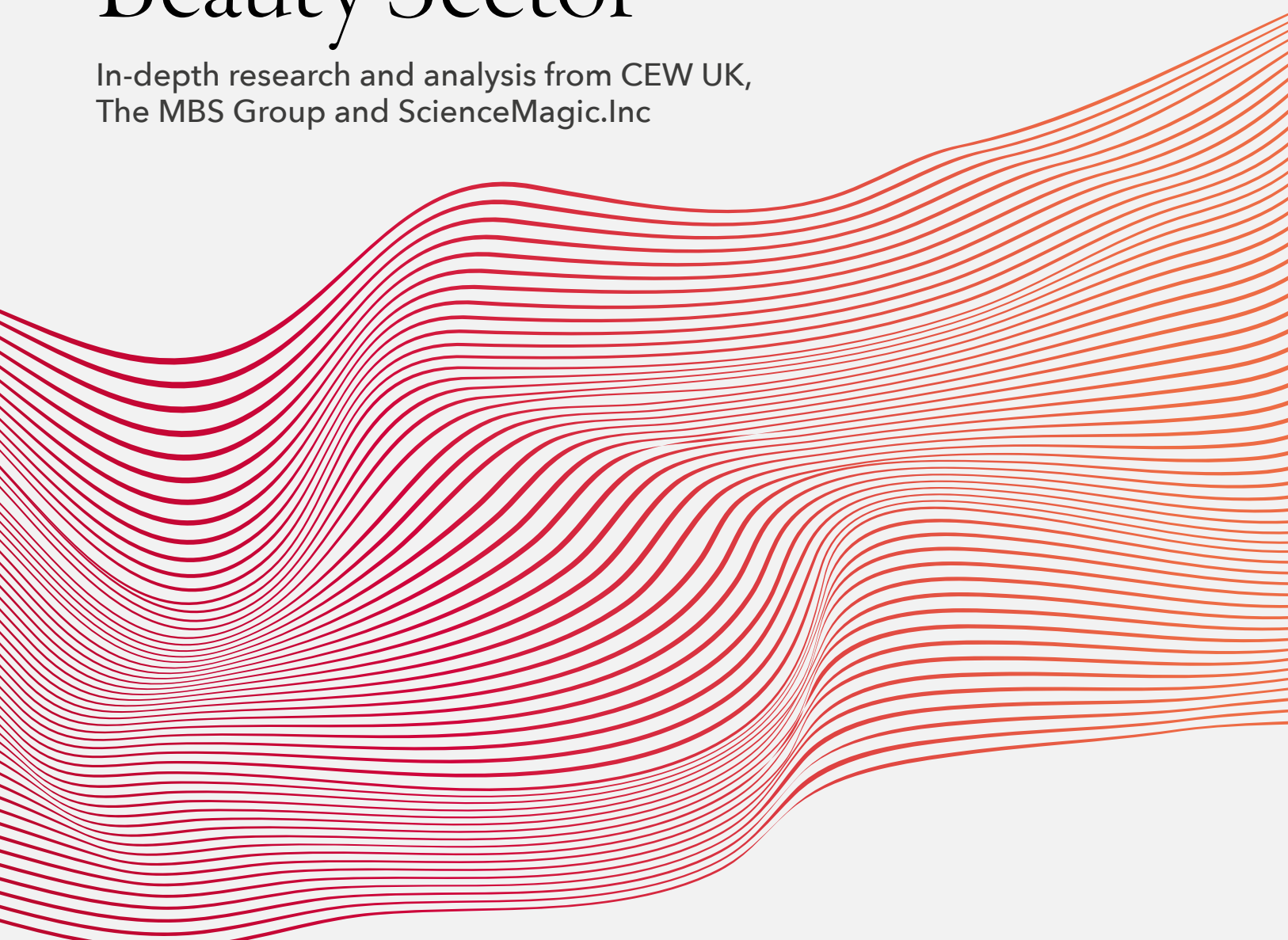


MBS Intelligence

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Beauty Sector

In-depth research and analysis from CEW UK,  
The MBS Group and ScienceMagic.Inc



# Forewords

The MBS Group is delighted to partner with CEW and ScienceMagic.Inc for this publication, a unique report looking into the status of diversity, equity and inclusion in the beauty sector.

Over the past decade, the industry has evolved. We've seen brands move away from narrow definitions of beauty and provide inclusive offerings that cater to everyone. Encouragingly, we are starting to see a similar process happen within leadership teams, as organisations in the sector recognise the many benefits of diverse workforces and inclusive environments.

To provide a snapshot of what diversity, equity and inclusion looks like in the sector, The MBS Group has gathered quantitative and qualitative data from beauty companies operating in Europe. Our research found that while there is an appetite for progress, and a number of excellent initiatives in place across the sector, there is still some way to go to.

Through this report, we hope to shine a light on the industry, provide examples of best practice that can be replicated, and kick-start an important conversation about how to foster inclusive organisations and drive up diversity. After all, with an evolving industry identity, and a large proportion of women in the customer and employee base, the beauty sector is particularly well placed to progress on DE&I – and to quickly see its benefits.

I would like to thank the Chairs, CEOs and HRDs who generously gave up their time to be interviewed for this research, and to Sallie Berkerey at CEW and Julietta Dexter at ScienceMagic.Inc, for their passion and commitment to this publication and to creating a more inclusive beauty industry. I'd also like to thank the team at MBS for their contribution to delivering these insights.



**Huw Llewellyn-Waters**

Director, Consumer Goods Practice  
The MBS Group

The UK is home to a dynamic beauty and wellbeing market, and celebrating inclusivity and diversity must be at the heart of maintaining and growing our industry.

In the past few years, the industry has gone through major consumer-facing shifts to create products relevant to all ethnicities, skin colours, tones and needs, and yet it continues to face challenges to become an inclusive industry to work in.

In conducting this report, we have seen that while there is an appetite for change and discussion, DE&I is a relatively underdeveloped topic in comparison to other sectors such as retail, travel and consumer goods. We also recognised that there was a reluctance in the sector to openly discuss DE&I strategies and performance, and we hope to see a change in this as we move forward and encourage the whole industry to be more active in the discussion.

The beauty industry is multi-disciplined and includes many small, independent businesses as well as much larger multi-national, global corporate entities. This makes for real differences in practices, with some stand out companies showing true best-in-class disciplines for making real, positive change. I hope that businesses, both big and small, will find this report a helpful tool for providing practical advice and guidance when implementing effective DE&I strategies to make dynamic, measurable positive change.

CEW is committed to being a force for good in the beauty and wellbeing industry, and this report is an essential first step in understanding the current situation and challenges we face.

We are proud to have worked alongside The MBS Group and ScienceMagic.Inc to deliver this first report on the beauty and wellbeing sector, which we hope will act as a guide and platform to help to drive our passionate and empowering community as we move forward.



**Sallie Berkerey**

Managing Director  
CEW UK

ScienceMagic.Inc is a creative and strategic company that connects brands and talent to their communities to create enduring value. ScienceMagic.Inc is a B Corp company that believes business must be a growing force for good.

SMI is delighted to partner with The MBS Group and CEW UK to publish this important report on diversity, equity and inclusion in the beauty industry. We hope very much that this will be the first of many reports that will drive positive change in the industry.

ScienceMagic.Inc believes fundamentally in the unique power of the connection between Magic, the art of real engagement through storytelling, communication and creativity; Science, the intelligent use of data and AI to inform strategy and identify business-building opportunities, and Experience, the creation of digital products, technology and interfaces that connect brands and talent directly with their communities.



**Julietta Dexter**

Co-founder and Chief Growth  
& Purpose Officer, SMI

*Julietta published her first book about business values, 'Good Company: How to Build a Business without Losing Your Values', in April 2020.*

# Executive summary

## This is a first-of-its-kind report into diversity, equity and inclusion in the beauty industry

For this report, The MBS Group, CEW and ScienceMagic.Inc set out to discover the true status of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) in the beauty industry. By reaching out to the 100 largest companies operating in Europe, we have gathered quantitative and qualitative data which demonstrates the diversity of the industry's leadership teams, and the extent to which organisations are prioritising DE&I.

Our research has revealed a lot of positives, but also that there is still a long way to go in the beauty sector, both on achieving diversity and embracing inclusion.

## The sector is performing relatively well on gender and ethnic diversity compared to other consumer-facing industries

As part of our research, we assessed the composition of beauty businesses' top levels of leadership: the Board, the executive committee, and direct reports (into the executive committee).

By comparison to other consumer-facing industries – including retail, consumer goods and hospitality, travel and leisure – our research shows strong levels of gender and ethnic minority representation at these most senior levels.

As with other industries, representation is strongest at the direct reports level (59% women and 19% ethnic minorities), dipping at the most senior levels of leadership.



## Diversity is a business-critical issue

Diversity is not only right morally, but it is a commercial imperative. As detailed in PwC's report 'Diversity is the solution, not a problem to solve', there are five reasons why diverse businesses perform better. Diversity brings:

1. Better outcomes for customers
2. Better business returns
3. Greater innovation and new ideas
4. Improved reputation and brand
5. Greater attractiveness to employees

There is plenty of evidence for this. Research from McKinsey has shown that executive teams featuring gender diversity are 25% more likely to outperform those that don't, and teams with ethnic diversity are 36% more likely to outperform those without it. Indeed, McKinsey's [latest report](#) shows that the relationship between diversity on executive teams and the likelihood of financial outperformance has strengthened over time.

## The beauty industry is well placed to make progress on DE&I

There are a number of reasons why the beauty sector is particularly well placed to harness the opportunities of diverse and inclusive workforces:

- Beauty standards have evolved to become more inclusive, and workforces which reflect this will lead to better organisations and products for all
- The sector's customer base is predominantly women, and beauty companies should strive for their leadership teams to reflect the communities they serve
- Women make up a large proportion of the sector's workforce, providing a significant opportunity to develop internal pipelines of female talent

## Are beauty companies nervous to talk about DE&I?

Compared to previous research conducted by The MBS Group in other consumer-facing sectors, the response rate from beauty companies was low – less than 50%.

This response is somewhat reflective of the status of DE&I in the beauty sector. While there is appetite for change, DE&I is an underdeveloped topic in the industry. Businesses and brands are hesitant to talk openly about it, for fear of doing or saying the wrong thing, and the strategies that are in place are not as sophisticated as in adjacent consumer sectors such as retail, consumer goods or hospitality, travel and leisure.

As the response rate from businesses for interviews was low, we augmented our analysis of the sector with desk research, collecting information on leadership diversity in the beauty industry where it was publicly available and verified.

Despite the hesitancy to discuss DE&I, we found that the industry is performing fairly well on diversity and representation, relative to other consumer-facing sectors.



# Beauty is well-placed for progress

## Opportunity #1: beauty standards have changed

Over the last decade or so, the historical and narrow standards of beauty have dissolved. Reflecting this shift, businesses of all sizes have changed their marketing approach and adapted their product development strategies, tweaking their propositions to appeal to a wider audience and broaden what it means to be beautiful. Against this backdrop, the industry is well placed to focus on leadership diversity which will lead to better products, more creative problem solving and forward-looking branding.

In particular for beauty businesses, which specialise in creating products for an increasingly diverse range of skin and hair types, for example, diversity of thought is not only a nice-to-have but critical to business success.

## Opportunity #2: women make up a large proportion of beauty's customer base

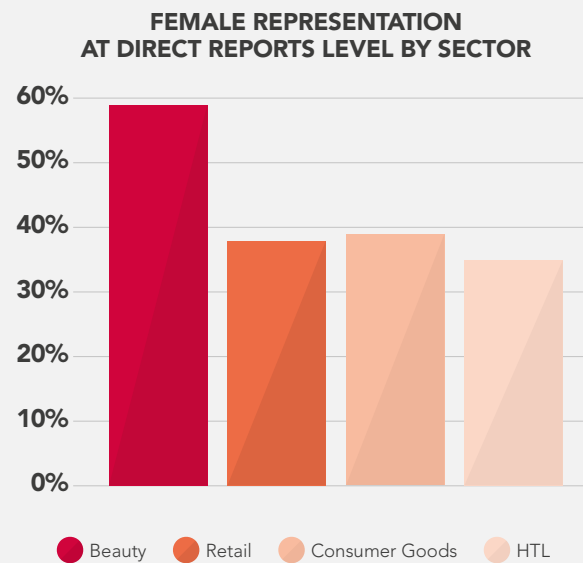
Leadership teams should reflect the communities they serve. While businesses and products aimed at men and non-binary customers are emerging at a rapid rate, the sector's customer demographic remains predominantly female.

Companies should therefore be targeting gender diversity in their leadership teams in order to make business decisions which speak to their customers.

## Opportunity #3: there is a healthy pipeline of female talent

In other industries, companies often point to the limited pool of female talent as a barrier to progress on gender diversity at the most senior levels.

However, beauty does not have this problem. Indeed, the proportion of women at direct reports level (executive committee minus one) is substantially higher than in its adjacent consumer sectors:



Moreover, many companies we spoke to told us that there are substantially more women than men in their business, with some suggesting that attracting male employees was a high priority when it came to DE&I.

Against this backdrop, why are there not more women at Board and executive committee level?

# The key findings

## 1 Gender diversity is high compared to other sectors, but still drops off at the most senior levels

As an industry with a high proportion of female customers, gender diversity should be high on the list of priorities for beauty businesses. To measure female representation in the sector, we augmented the information we collected with publicly available and verifiable data.

There is a relatively high proportion of women in beauty business leadership teams. In fact, the data shows that beauty is outperforming its adjacent sectors when it comes to female representation.

However, as in all businesses, the number of women at direct report levels is still far above the corresponding figure at executive committee and Board level. Developing the pipeline of female talent and placing women in the top positions is a commercial imperative for businesses looking to succeed in the future.

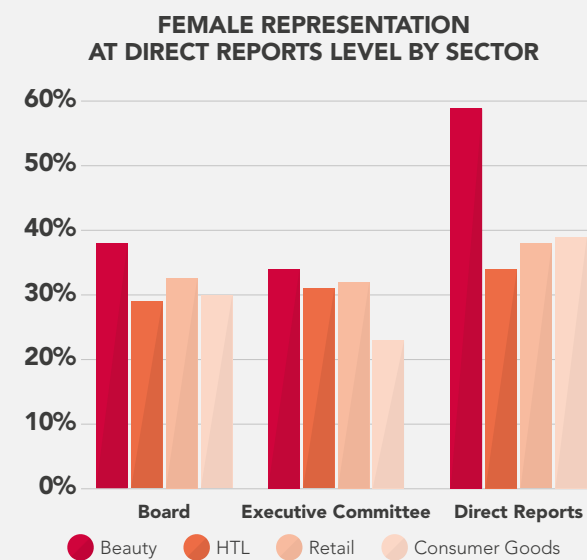
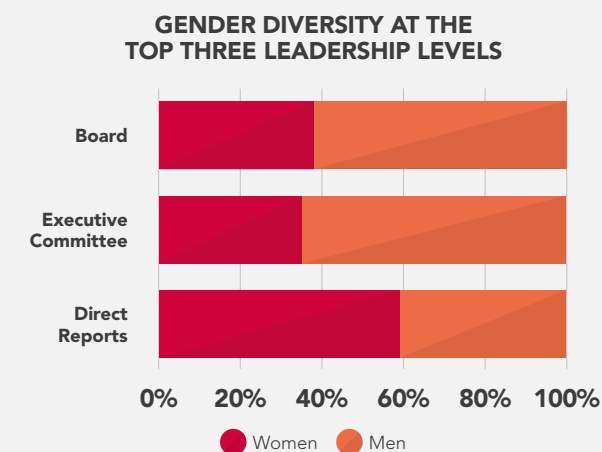
## This is an industry-wide problem: the sector's top businesses are being led by men with decades of sector and company experience

As part of our research, we analysed the executive committees of the five biggest beauty businesses operating in the UK.

We found that 71% of executive committee seats in these businesses are being held by men, most of whom have decades of sector experience at their company.

Most of the female executive committee members, by contrast, have been brought in from external organisations and sectors. Instead of developing their own pipelines of female talent, businesses are hiring from outside the beauty industry – from FMCG, retail or manufacturing. Indeed, most female executive committee members hold roles that are not directly related to the beauty industry, such as legal or HR.

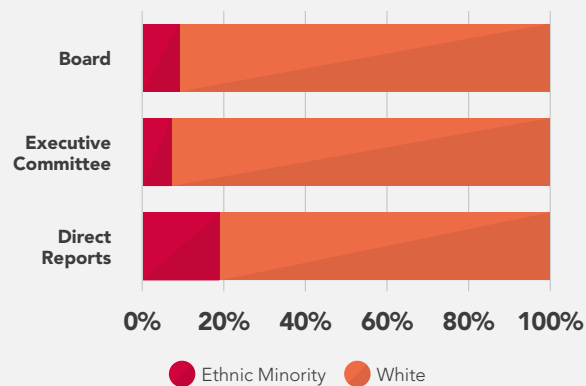
This tells us that the sector's biggest companies have not been sufficiently developing their pipelines of female talent, and preparing high potential women to take up executive committee seats.



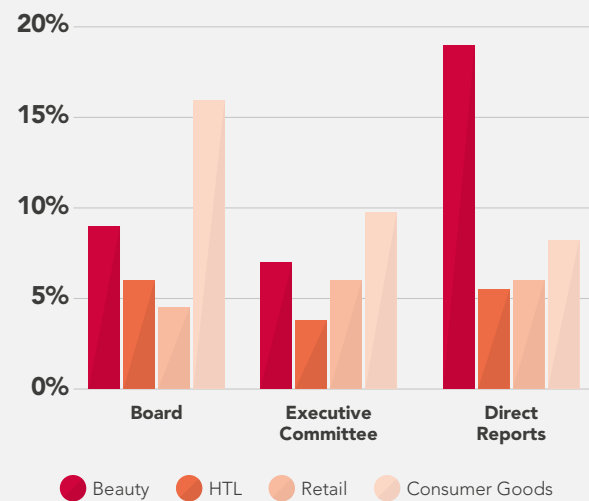
## ② There is ethnic diversity in the beauty industry, but it is not widespread

The Parker Review states that 12.5% of the UK working-age population identify as an ethnic minority. The beauty industry has surpassed this figure at direct reports level, but is some way from reflecting it at executive committee and Board level.

**ETHNIC DIVERSITY AT THE TOP THREE LEADERSHIP LEVELS**



**ETHNIC MINORITY REPRESENTATION AT THE TOP THREE LEADERSHIP LEVELS BY SECTOR**



According to the data we have collected, the beauty sector is performing well on ethnic diversity, relative to its adjacent consumer sectors.

However, progress in this area is not widespread. Just under half (48%) of beauty businesses have no ethnic minority representation on their Board, and just over half (51%) have no ethnic minority representation on their executive committee.

Those businesses with a high level of ethnic diversity – usually those public companies which are subject to greater scrutiny – are bringing the statistics up for the entire industry.

## ③ There is a hesitancy to discuss I&D in the beauty sector

One of the starkest findings from this research is the nervousness from beauty businesses to engage in the topic of DE&I.

Of the 100 largest beauty companies operating in the UK, fewer than 50% responded to our request to be interviewed for this research, despite strong relationships between the brands and this report's authors. In one case, a business opted not to be included as a case study, despite performing excellently on diversity and having one of the most advanced DE&I strategies of those we spoke to.

### Beauty businesses are under the microscope

Like most consumer-facing sectors, the beauty industry is under significant consumer pressure to perform on DE&I. Consumers are increasingly factoring in a company's diversity credentials into their purchasing decisions – and speaking up if they feel a brand or business isn't inclusive.

As an industry, beauty is particularly susceptible to scrutiny. As brands embrace more diverse marketing strategies, customers are keen to know if inclusive values are being reflected internally. In the past few years, particularly in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, online campaigns and dedicated social media accounts have sprung up to challenge businesses to disclose their DE&I credentials and to call out companies which are felt to have acted badly.

## There may be a fear of saying the wrong thing

Against this backdrop, brands are nervous about what they share, and there's a real fear of saying the wrong thing. The campaigns designed to drive diversity forward in the industry may be having the opposite effect, as leaders shy away from open conversations about how to improve on DE&I.

### Forward-looking businesses are blazing the trail

Despite this hesitancy, pockets of best practice can be found right across the sector, from inspirational businesses of all scopes and sizes that are driving positive and lasting change.

The beauty sector is home to some highly comprehensive DE&I frameworks; best-in-class academy schemes and forward-thinking partnerships with external organisations. In the case studies section of this report, we highlight companies which are leading the way on inclusion.

# The strategies

## 1 Different businesses are taking different approaches

The beauty industry is extremely fragmented, including a large number of small businesses. There is no one-size-fits all approach to DE&I, and across the sector, businesses are taking different approaches depending on their size, ownership structure and priorities.

### Examples of best practice can be found right across the sector

- Many businesses have set up DE&I committees to discuss, implement and measure the impact of efforts to encourage inclusion
- Employee Resource Groups are common, for team members to listen and share learnings and experiences about different areas of DE&I. Most ERGs are focused around a specific area of inclusion, like race or LGBTQ+
- Some have joined external networks such as the LEAD Network
- Many have established more inclusive hiring processes, such as using blind CVs
- The most forward-thinking businesses have made recent hires to lead the DE&I agenda

### Larger businesses are rolling out data collection programmes

Unsurprisingly, bigger businesses are performing better on data collection efforts than their smaller counterparts. The furthest-along businesses are rolling out engagement surveys to measure the diversity of their workforce and track metrics like how long it takes one group to progress versus others.

## Small businesses face budget issues

Our research revealed that progress on DE&I in smaller businesses is slowed by a lack of resources. This is especially true of the past two years, when Covid-19 restrictions dampened sales and organisations were forced to implement cost-cutting measures. However, despite limited budgets, smaller businesses have still showed dedication to furthering the DE&I agenda.

“We brought somebody in to do one-off training with the diversity committee and some senior leaders. Based on that training we put together workshops for our team. In an ideal world, we would have somebody come in and train the managers – but we had to do it ourselves as we don’t have the money.”

## Being part of a group has a mixed impact

In the main, brands which are owned by large conglomerates benefit from greater resources and a more developed understanding of the importance of DE&I.

One HR lead told us that they benefit from being part of their brand’s parent company’s DE&I team. As part of this structure, they attend group-wide meetings, and can share best practice across the different brands.

However, others reported that being part of a group can slow down policy implementation in the individual brands, when individual initiatives require sign off at group level.

## Geographic structure can impact progress

Businesses operating across several international markets reported difficulties with establishing a joined-up strategy. Firstly, international laws can prevent thorough data collection, especially on ethnicity. Secondly, differing cultures mean that DE&I can be a top priority in one market, but low on the agenda in another.

“One of the biggest challenges is that we have eight central markets. They are all so different, so diverse and they’re all in a completely different space. Leaders in some markets don’t even want to use diverse models, as they say this doesn’t represent their customer demographic.”

## 2 There is a key opportunity to focus on social mobility

One theme that resonated strongly in our conversations was the socioeconomic barrier to entrance in the beauty sector. This blocker can significantly limit diversity of thought, and have a negative impact on ethnic minority representation in particular.

While the beauty services sector is known for being an accessible industry to those from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, corporate roles remain dominated by employees from relatively privileged backgrounds.

One driver of this trend is the industry’s historic reliance on unpaid or low-paid internships as vehicles to entry. As these internships very often take place in metropolitan centres with a high cost of living, they are inaccessible for many.

Across the sector, beauty businesses are aware of this barrier. The beauty sector is home to some excellent social mobility-focused initiatives, including:

- Company-specific academies
- Government-backed traineeships with organisations like London College of Beauty Therapy
- Targeted hiring

As well as placing a social mobility lens on hiring strategies, some larger businesses are addressing social mobility by developing their existing workforce. One company reported that it was looking at ways to engage its retail workforce population, which is considerably more diverse than its head office employees.

“We thought: are we really tapping into the incredible talent that we already have within the organisation and equipping them for success?”

Outside of the sector, more and more organisations are embracing social mobility as way to drive up diversity of thought. Professional services firm KPMG, for example, pledged in September 2021 to recruit more working class staff, aiming for 29% of its partners and directors to come from working class backgrounds by 2029.

While larger businesses have initiatives in place to tackle this issue, small businesses told us that they were aware of the socioeconomic barrier to entry in their sector, but were unsure how to respond to it with limited budget and resources.



### ③ Most DE&I strategies in beauty are under-developed

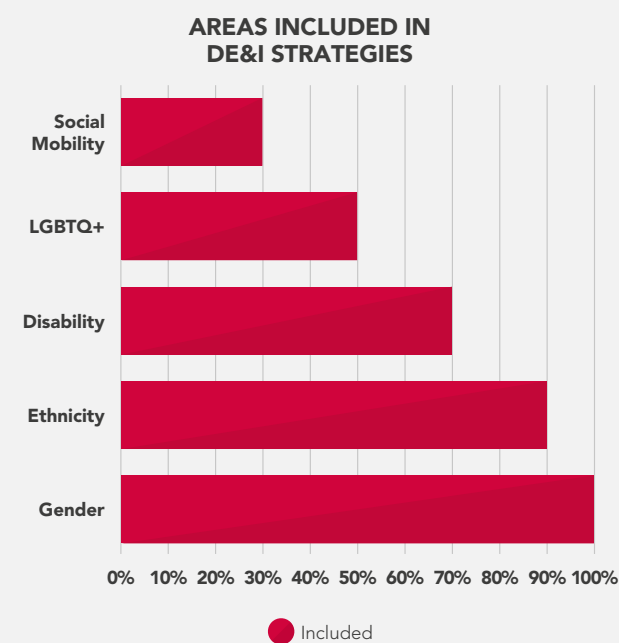
Alongside a hesitance to discuss DE&I, we found that the diversity strategies in place in the beauty sector are less sophisticated than those in the adjacent consumer sectors. This stands to reason: the less businesses feel they can have open conversation, the less developed their strategies will be.

#### There is an opportunity to broaden the scope of DE&I policies in the sector

A large majority (76%) of businesses we spoke to in the beauty sector have a DE&I strategy. This is compared to 75% of companies in hospitality, travel and leisure, 89% of retailers and 45% of consumer goods businesses. While this headline figure is promising, there are a few things to consider.

Firstly, our response rate was low – so this figure is only demonstrative of the businesses we spoke to, which were engaged in the topic and therefore more likely to have a strategy in place. Secondly, our discussions revealed that the strategies in place were less sophisticated than those in other sectors, with many not covering areas beyond gender and ethnicity.

Here's what they cover:



Typically, all strategies include gender. This is largely because of the introduction of mandatory gender pay gap reporting, as well as the women-focused nature of the beauty industry.

The second priority is race and ethnicity. Across our conversations, a significant number of respondents told us that they find it difficult to achieve ethnic diversity in their business, pointing to deep-rooted socioeconomic barriers to entrance in the industry, plus the prevalence of white people in the existing talent pool. Many businesses mentioned the murder of George Floyd and the increased awareness of Black Lives Matter movement, which accelerated – or in some cases kickstarted – conversations about ethnicity.

As is consistent with the rest of the consumer-facing sector, the next priority for beauty businesses is disability, then LGBTQ+, then social mobility. However, the number of businesses focusing on these areas is very small, and most strategies remain focused on gender and ethnicity only. Moreover, there is a lack of age diversity in the sector, and no real understanding on the importance of this area of DE&I.

#### DE&I is rarely embedded into long-term strategy

While some businesses are rolling out excellent initiatives, for others, diversity is not high enough up the agenda. In the consumer-facing sectors and beyond, the furthest-along organisations are those that have embedded DE&I into long-term strategy, made specific hires to lead the diversity agenda and ensured ownership of the issue from the Board.

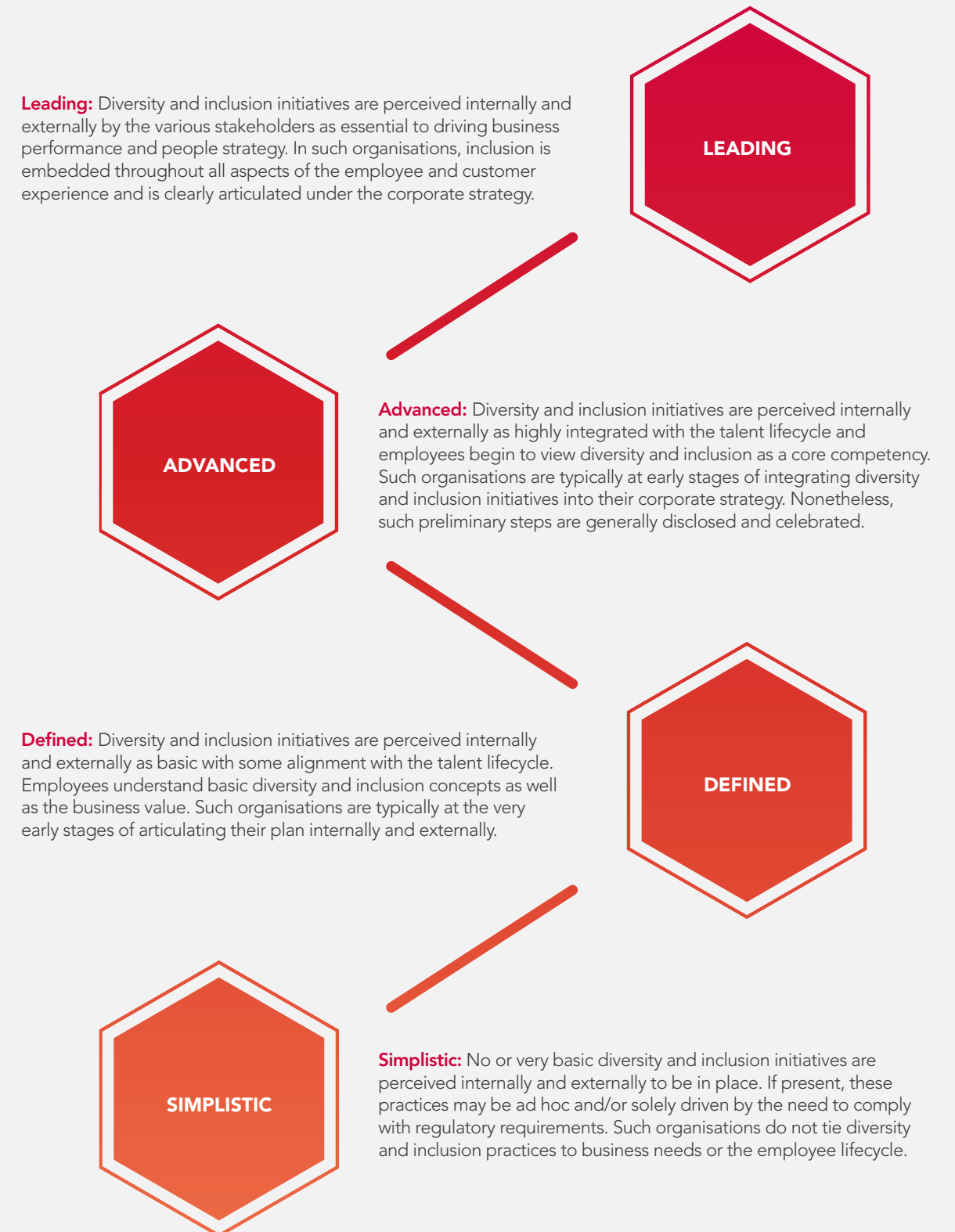
In the beauty sphere, we found that many strategies are not baked into long-term strategy, and that in some businesses, leaders are less aware of barriers to progress, and less open to discussing what they might be.

#### Lack of data is a blocker to progress

While some businesses have excellent data collection strategies in place, most are not gathering information about the diversity makeup of their leadership teams and workforces, or are in the very early stages of doing so. With the understanding that what gets measured gets done, beauty companies should prioritise data collection efforts in order to spot biases and be able to cater strategies towards problem areas.

### Defining maturity

This maturity framework is adapted from PwC's report 'Inclusion in the investment management industry'. After applying our analysis of the beauty sector to this framework, we have found that most DE&I strategies in the beauty sector fall under the 'defined' category.





# Case studies

Examples of best practice can be found right across the sector, in companies of all sizes and scopes. In the case studies over the next few pages, three businesses at different stages of their DE&I journey share insight on how they are harnessing diversity in their organisation. From building a strategy from scratch to implementing best-in-class academy programmes, these case studies provide practical examples of how to drive-up diversity and foster an inclusive environment.





# Kickstarting progress: building and developing a DE&I strategy at Benefit



**Andrea Lansbury**  
HR Director, Benefit

## What are the priorities for DE&I at Benefit?

We're in the early days of our DE&I journey, and like many other brands who are starting out, we know that the real work starts internally; looking inward within ourselves. We've recently hired our first Head of DEI to drive a long-term global DEI strategy across the entirety of our business. Since then, we have rolled out our first engagement survey to collect and measure DEI data points to inform our key priorities.

What we're trying to do is move beyond just focusing on equality in the workplace, and try to rebalance the privileges that some people have over others. Our goal is to foster a culture of belonging, where every individual feels accepted and valued for who they are. We recently introduced Employee Resource Groups to increase visibility and strengthen connections of underrepresented diverse employee populations.

Ultimately, we believe that it is everyone's job to cultivate inclusivity across all levels of our organisation and we want everyone to feel empowered to challenge the status-quo.

## Which external organisations are you partnering with to help drive-up inclusion in your business?

Forging partnerships has been excellent for us. We're working with the London College of Beauty Therapy and running government apprenticeship schemes to open up the beauty industry and encourage social mobility. We've focused on specific underrepresented groups – for example people from an ethnically diverse background and those who are from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

We're in our third cohort now. Those on the programme do some time with the London College of Beauty Therapy in preparing for work, and then they come and do at least 70 hours work experience with our brand. As well as this, we help the intake with CV writing and interview tips, and give them an insight into our own selection criteria to really set them up for success.

We also work with Girls Like Us, a charity designed to empower young Black women. We've done a couple of evening classes with them, where we introduce the brand, host speakers and lead CV workshops. One highlight was hearing from an incredibly successful woman, who is a member of the Black community, with her own business. She spoke about her start in life and offered some excellent tips.

## How are you focusing on DE&I in your recruiting?

It starts with setting aside budget. We've put budget behind attracting more diversity into the business, and it's really made an impact. Since that decision, a fifth of our new recruits have been from under-represented groups, which is pretty significant because the average prior to this was between 5 and 7 percent.

Our recruitment initiatives focus on reaching the broadest possible talent pools. We do this by building awareness and relationships with diverse, often marginalised, communities to present opportunities in beauty.

We also undertook a full HR audit of every process within the business to make sure that any unhidden or direct discrimination, or any conscious or unconscious bias, in the way we attract, recruit and select our team was addressed.

It is important that our teams align with recruitment partners, to help them evaluate their biases in the hiring process. That way we can truly hire the best and the brightest at Benefit.

## Benefit is part of the LVMH ecosystem. What impact does being part of a large group have on DE&I in the business?

LVMH has made it clear to all of its brands that DEI is an important aspect of its business, both as a moral imperative and a business imperative. With changing demographics and societal shifts in our global world, DEI is a crucial element for the group to continue to evolve and grow. Our Benefit DE&I strategy leverages LVMH's fundamental belief that "People make the difference" – this is very much ingrained in the shared value system.

So there's a really close connection. The group provides training and resources, and opportunities for discussion and education through Zoom calls and webinars. Our Head of DEI sits on the LVMH D&I Council, representing a diverse group of leaders within LVMH, who develop recommendations and initiatives to champion DEI efforts across a number of the brands.

## We know that for DE&I to be the most effective, it needs ownership and sponsorship from the top. What does that look like at Benefit?

At Benefit, our people remain at the core of what we do. They will always be at the heart of our success and our leaders really believe and stand by that. We absolutely believe that DEI is essential to our overall business strategy. It's the brand, it's the product and it's the people – not just an HR issue.

Our CEO sits at the top of our Global D&I Council, alongside the Head of D&I EMEA and our general manager for the UK. The D&I Council works to help drive our overarching DEI strategy and identify any major priorities (as well as roadblocks) for our DEI efforts. I think it's important to have these decision-makers and stakeholders alongside the employees at these sorts of groups. Not only does it mean that senior leaders know what's going on in the business, but it sends a message that we're taking this seriously and that diversity is part of Benefit's DNA.



# Empowering employees: launching an Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Council at Estee Lauder



ESTÉE LAUDER

## Monica Rastogi

Regional Director Inclusion, Diversity & Equity  
Estee Lauder

### Tell us a bit about your ID&E council

While Inclusion, Diversity & Equity (ID&E) has always been a core tenet within the business, the events of Covid and the racial injustice movements really showed us that we needed to step back and think about what inclusion, diversity and equality meant for us at Estee Lauder Companies in the UK and Ireland.

The core of our approach is ensuring we are listening to and learning from our employees to develop and embed our strategy. The best way to do that was to develop a council of employees - because ID&E is not just about one person or one team.

The council varies between 25 to 30 people, and it's made up of employees across different functions, brands, levels and locations, comprising people who work at our distribution centre in Southampton, in manufacturing plant in Petersfield and our corporate offices in London.

The success has been in the fact that the power is in the hands of the people. They are thinking about inclusion and authentic belonging, and highlighting areas where we're succeeding but also places where there's room to improve.

### Who makes up your ID&E council?

It is an application process. We want to make sure that we are getting people who are truly dedicated and who have the time, because it is on top of their day jobs.

But we also wanted it to be a true mix - we think inclusion becomes a lot more palpable within the business when the group is a collective, bringing perspectives from retail, head office and distribution.

### Your ID&E strategy has an excellent training and education focus. Can you talk a bit about that?

We talk a lot about people leadership, but that isn't something that only sits within the management level. The people at the top have to live out those principles and make sure that they're training their teams, who are then training their teams, and so on.

Last year an important focus for us was around unconscious bias training and really making sure all employees - including in retail and in-store - had the opportunity to take part.

It is important that our internal approach to ID&E is reflected in how we engage with the diversity of consumers we connect with everyday, whether that's creating a marketing plan or engaging with customers at the counter.

### How do you keep the wider business engaged in the ID&E agenda?

Education is a cornerstone of our journey and this is not only through formalised seminars but also learning from external experts and advocates.

Our UK & Ireland President, Sue Fox, hosts a quarterly 'In Conversation' series with external thought leaders. We've held a session with June Sarpong, Director of Creative Diversity at the BBC, for instance. We also do specific activities, around mental health and the LGBTQ+ community. We like to give colleagues the opportunity to learn, and to hear from those that they wouldn't necessarily hear from in their day-to-day life because they don't have the exposure.

We also do a Quarterly ID&E Newsletter, giving everybody an update on the commitments and the progress we're making. Our business strategy Townhalls also have a section dedicated to ID&E.

Excitingly, we recently hosted internal diversity awards which were great, celebrating successes in areas like being an ally and applying unconscious bias training in practice.

### You're doing some excellent work around accessibility and disability inclusion. Can you expand on this?

We are constantly trying to push that conversation to be broader, in particular around accessibility and what that looks like for visibly and non-visibly disabled and neurodiverse consumers.

We're looking at the employee journey internally, and asking how are we supporting our employees? How are we making sure that we are able to hire employees and future talent who might have a neurodiverse condition and can't interview, for instance, in a traditional way?

We're also auditing our website, and working with a third-party agency to really look at some of our freestanding stores. Thinking about the façade of the shop, for example, can you get in? Does it feel friendly? Is there a sensory overload with music and scents that might feel overwhelming to neurodiverse people? We want to ensure we're giving everybody the same best-in-class treatment.

### What one piece of advice would you give to companies looking to drive up inclusion?

All employees need to be empowered to be included in the journey for there to be sustainable progress and movement. ID&E is not something you do, it is constantly evolving and moving.





# Creating opportunity: encouraging social mobility through The Revolution Academy



**REVOLUTION**  
BEAUTY LONDON

**Carole Pharoah**  
Group People Director, Revolution Beauty

## The Revolution Academy aims to ensure that anyone can break into the beauty industry. What were your priorities when launching the initiative?

We piloted the Academy this year, wanting to give people clear equal opportunities regardless of their background or where they lived.

We utilised our social channels and said: “if you want to be part of the Revolution, come and join us.” We had four entry role positions available for The Academy in key areas of the business, with all training provided on the job. This makes up about 10% of our new roles.

We decided to look specifically for those from an ethnically diverse background, and those with a disability, with no prior experience required. We wanted to give opportunities to communities who have historically had less access to work in beauty, and where we know we need to do more to increase representation in our business. After all, Revolution Beauty is for everyone, so it’s important that our team is a reflection of our consumer.

## How did the application process work?

We asked people to apply however they’d like – we didn’t want to put barriers in the way by asking for a CV. We got some amazing applications, including lots of fantastic videos. Our internal D&I forum, Power the Revolution, did the first round of selection and interviews supported by the People Team. We heard some incredible stories and eventually narrowed it down to four amazing people.

## What does the Academy programme consist of?

The offer was for a twelve month fixed term contract

paid at market rate. It was important to us that these weren’t token roles. These are proper roles, which will remain as permanent Academy positions in the business going forward, so that we can continue to give more people opportunities.

We’re providing lots of support to help them settle into the business and to gain valuable skills, knowledge and experience. We’re paying them London salaries regardless of where they live and supporting travel for those that live much further away. We’ve matched them with a mentor in the business and provided extra training and development. Feedback so far is that they’re loving it.

## What are your key learnings from launching the Academy?

It’s made us think even more about how we recruit in general and brought up important questions about how we can achieve diversity and represent our customer base among our teams. As a business we’ve learnt so much and we continue to listen to ideas on how we can be even more inclusive.

## Tell us more about your employee resource group Power the Revolution

Power the Revolution was launched off the back of the BLM movement. We always had people that were actively encouraging D&I in the business, but the events of 2020 made us think “this is a real opportunity for us to do more”.

The group is made up of different people at different levels across the entire company and in different locations. Their purpose is to challenge us as a senior team, to bring us ideas and different perspectives. The Revolution Academy is just one of the great ideas that they have come up with.

Power The Revolution’s strapline is: “We are the revolution. We fight for diversity. We rebel against elitism and exclusivity. We believe in our ability to unite for a common goal, and to share ideas, to listen, to respect different opinions and bring out each other’s best self.”

I don’t sit directly on the group because I think it’s important that it’s not seen as an HR initiative, I’m very clear about that. But Adam, who’s the CEO and co-founder, sponsors the group alongside myself. Nicola Wing, who’s our Group Strategy and Investor Relations Director, has also recently joined the group to really spearhead it.

## What impact has focusing on DE&I had on the rest of the business?

We are having more open conversations, and our team members are responding. We recently ran an engagement survey and specifically asked six D&I questions. We were really delighted by the response, which told us that the vast majority of people who responded feel that Revolution Beauty celebrates and embraces people’s differences; that they belong in this company; that their opinions are valued and respected and that they trust the leaders to stand up and do the right thing. We know there’s still more work to do, and our teams are completely behind us in driving lasting change to make Revolution Beauty even more inclusive and diverse.

## What else is Revolution Beauty doing to drive up diversity?

We’ve recently announced a new flexible working approach. It includes things like core hours and hybrid working, not being tied to one location and also early-finish Fridays. This is helping us attract and retain a more diverse team, meaning we can widen our talent pool.

We always want to improve and do more. Power The Revolution have now developed a D&I strategy which includes company wide training and awareness as well as some new revolutionary things so watch this space...



# About us

## About The MBS Group

For more than 30 years, The MBS Group has been a leading sector-specialist executive search firm advising all consumer-facing industries, with a particular focus on the consumer goods industry. Clients consider us to be the partner of choice when searching for critical leadership roles that make a difference. We work at board level and on executive positions across all functions of strategic importance.

For more information, visit [www.thembsgroup.co.uk](http://www.thembsgroup.co.uk)

## About CEW UK

CEW UK is part of an international professional membership organisation of over 10,500 individual members who represent a cross-section of beauty and related businesses. CEW's primary purpose is to provide programmes to develop the careers and businesses in, and knowledge of the beauty industry for all of its members and to recognise exceptional talent, achievement and innovations in the industry. CEW provides opportunities for its members to connect and gain industry knowledge through networking events, mentoring programmes, trend reports, industry newsletters, workshops and industry leader talks.

For more information, visit [www.cewuk.co.uk](http://www.cewuk.co.uk)

## About ScienceMagic.Inc

ScienceMagic.Inc is a creative and strategic company that connect brands and talent to their communities to create enduring value.

For more information, visit [www.sciencemagic.inc](http://www.sciencemagic.inc)

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