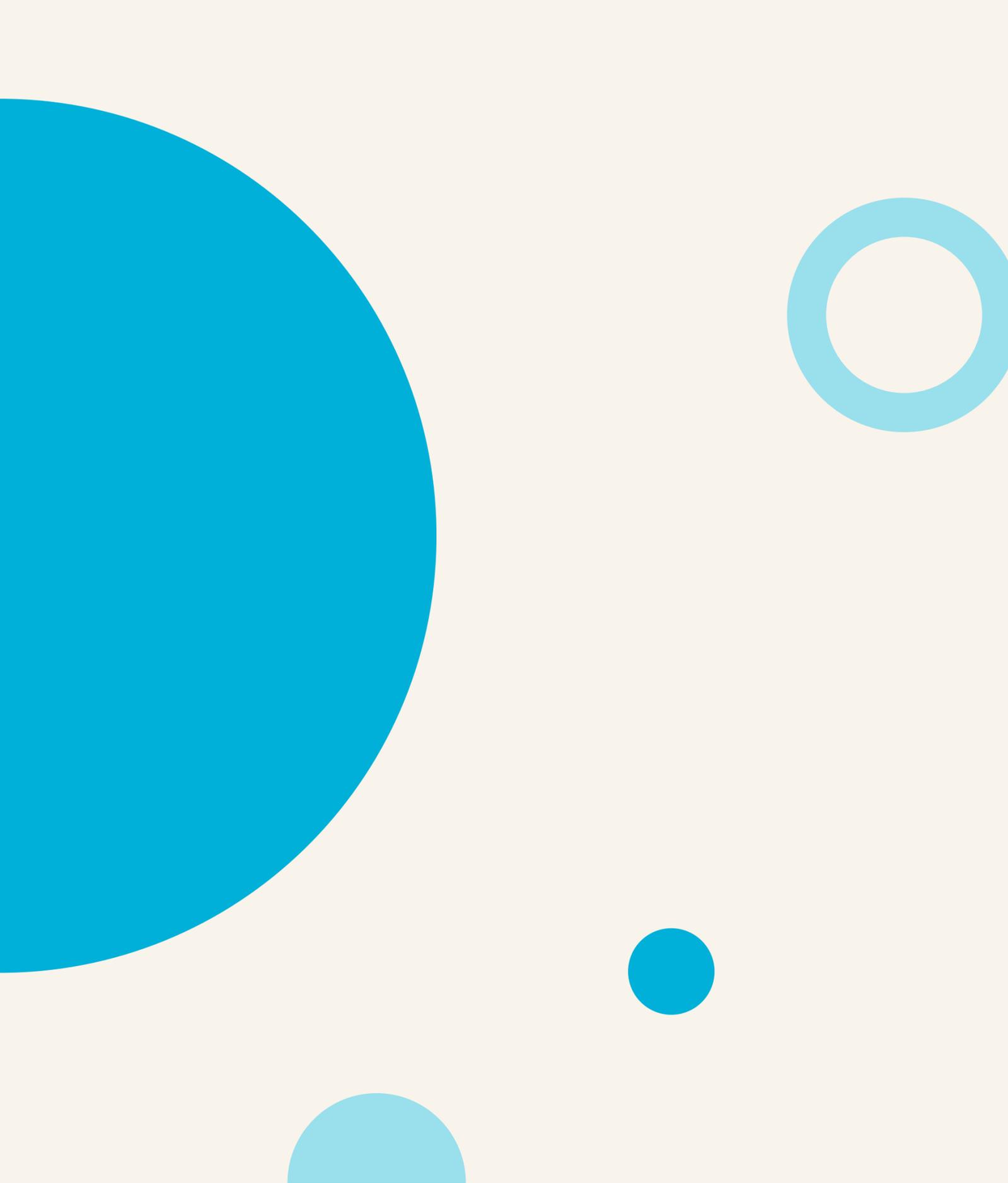


Top 10 Tips to Build an IDEA Mindset

DEI Toolkit for the Biotech Community

Brought to you by:
CvilleBioHub and IDEA Minds





IDEA Mindset

Inclusion, diversity, equity, and accountability (IDEA) is one area of every business that is constantly evolving, requires an ongoing commitment to learning, and is elemental to innovation and market expansion. Explore the 10 action areas in this document. Wherever your organization is along the journey, there is an insight to inspire thought and drive action.



#1

Define your why.

What calls your organization to do this work? Brainstorm key words. Talk about desired outcomes. Put on paper where you are going and why. Recognize that the words will evolve and carve out time to revisit, and likely update, the statement annually. Knowing the why will provide direction when making key decisions.



#2

Inclusion is fertile soil for diversity.

There are typically two stories. 1) We have no diversity and we don't know where to begin. 2) Every person at our organization is different and we get along fine, but you can't see that in our pictures. OK. Both are descriptions of who is on the team...the diversity. What about the how? Is it safe to ask questions, experiment, and learn from mistakes? Do individuals know that they are valued, that their experiences and ideas matter, and openly contribute regardless of position? Is it safe to challenge the status quo, speak up, and expose problems? Do colleagues maintain open dialogue, have mutual access, and have constructive debate? Is there psychological safety? These are questions that should be answered and challenges that can be worked on...without visually perceived diversity. In fact, improving inclusive practice makes it more likely that the organization culture will cultivate difference.



#3

You can do it all, just not all at the same time.

Many organizations recognize a need for diversity. But, what does that mean? If you ask the next 5 people you see to define diversity, you will likely get 5 different answers. Diversity is highly contextual. In biotechnology, underrepresented populations include women, Black, and brown people. In the sciences, first generation and low socioeconomic status college students are underrepresented. While these are known trends, how does your company define diversity? Further, what are the organizational priorities? Focused effort drives progress. In other words, going for all kinds of diversity is a thin approach that will likely produce equally thin results.



#4

The outside and inside narrative should match.

If a customer, employment candidate, current employee, prospective investor, or potential partner read your website and LinkedIn, what would be their impression of your organization? Would they see the work that has gone into the development of organization culture? Would they understand the company commitment to IDEA? Would their impression of the business align with the reality? Odds are that the outside and inside narratives do not match. Manage your brand to authenticity so that stakeholders experience harmony rather than dissonance.



#5

Why is that degree (or anything else) required?

According to an internal Hewlett Packard report, “men apply for a job when they meet only 60% of the qualifications, but women apply only if they meet 100% of them.” So, it is safe to conclude that the more requirements there are the fewer women will apply. This is one reason that organizations should think carefully about job requirements. Thinking about this another way, why is a degree a requirement? If you are filling a CPA role a degree may be the most likely pathway, but even then, isn't the CPA a more appropriate requirement? Often, the degree requirement is a reflex rather than a clear description of the competencies needed to do the work assigned. Take the time to think through and articulate needs to create the widest possible net for attracting talent.

Requiring a degree rather than creating space for experience and performance can unintentionally limit the gender, race, and socio-economic diversity of the applicant pool.



#6

Humanize and personalize language.

When recruiting talent, it is important to comply with Equal Employment Opportunity Law that requires an employer to prohibit job discrimination based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, equal pay, disability, or genetic information. It is more compelling to say why you are seeking all talented individuals than giving a list of what you are legally obligated to ignore. Think about why your organization will consider all talented individuals and craft your own statement that can be included in job postings to highlight organizational commitment.



#7

Learn something, every day.

The business landscape is always shifting and changing. The IDEA space is a case in point. Inclusion is a verb and diversity is highly contextual. Concepts and terms are dynamic. It is impossible to know everything, but it is our responsibility to maintain a constant learning posture. Read the Harvard Business Review daily digest.

Listen to the Code Switch podcast. Subscribe to the Forbes raceAhead or The New York Times Race/Related updates. Look up terms you don't recognize in the Berkeley Hass Equity Fluent Leaders Glossary of Key Terms.



#8

Get help.

It is OK to say you don't know. No one person or organization has the definitive collection of IDEA knowledge. There is a relevant saying that is popular among IDEA professionals. "Don't have conversations about them, without them." Said another way, it is hard for an insider to provide outside perspective. As with any other area of a business, external consultants can provide needed perspective, resources, and direction. When in doubt, ask. When stuck, ask.



#9

Quant = What and Qual = Why

In business we are taught to measure what matters. Yes, and do so in both quantitative and qualitative ways. IDEA work is about the numbers; demography, salary equity, promoting and hiring trends, etc. IDEA work is also about ethos; psychological safety, belonging, opportunity, voice, and more. Quantitative data will tell you what and it needs to be paired with qualitative data to understand the why. It is tempting to start and stop with demography. It is necessary to assess culture, to have stay interviews, and to have discovery conversations where the quantitative data indicates exception (good or bad).



#10

Keep going!

This work is of vital importance. And, it is hard. Oft times effort does not equal outcome. Yet, it is worth trying and trying again. Think of it like working out.

The first session is hard and may leave one feeling spent. But when repeated, the workout becomes a habit. Over time, there are setbacks and advances, plateaus and spikes. Intent is not enough, adjustments to approach will be necessary to gain or maintain impact. And, with each passing day it is clearer that stopping would cause a void and regression. Keep going! Build the muscle. Benefit from the strength. Inspire others. Take pride in process.