

What does "DEI" mean?

Mar. 27, 2024 Rumi Tomiya

Diversity Management Wellbeing



(Photo by Getty Images)

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DEI, which stand for diversity, equity, and inclusion, is getting increasingly attention in recent years.

What is DEI? And why is it now attracting attention from so many companies?

In this article we aim to clarify what we are referring to and explain the concrete application to our daily life.

DEI: Diversity, equity, and inclusion

Diversity

The differences that exist among individuals and groups



Equity

Equal treatment and adjustment for inequality



Inclusion

The diversity of each individual recognized so that everyone can contribute to the organization



Definitions of the terms that make up DEI

What is DEI and what we mean with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion?

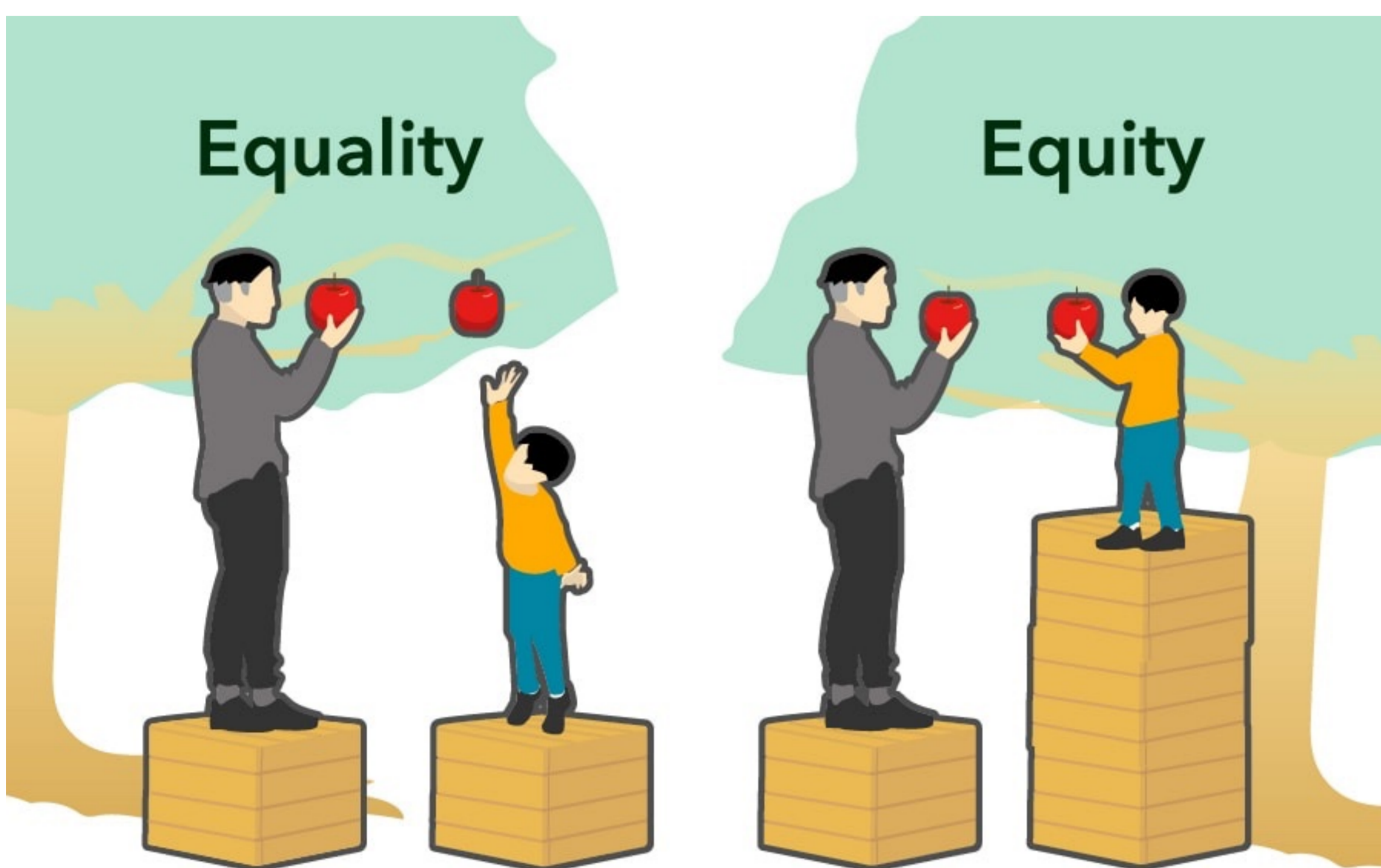
Diversity is a fact, because everyone is unique. It refers to differences that exist among individuals and groups. In Hitachi, Diversity means that there is a place for everyone, and we embrace and value everyone's unique contribution, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, disability, or other differences.

Equity is a choice, it means every employee has access to everything they need to succeed and is treated with fairness and transparency. We recognize that each of us needs different conditions to thrive. We put policies, tools and accommodation in place to allow everyone to be able to access the same opportunities.

Inclusion is an action, it means ensuring everyone feels recognized and valued, and they are empowered to contribute to the organization at their best. We believe everyone should feel respected, heard, involved and able to speak up. It implies an open, empathetic culture and attitude that secures psychological safety, where individuals are free to be themselves, without fearing negative consequences.

As globalization progresses and opportunities to work with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds increase, companies are under pressure to provide opportunities for diverse human resources to flourish.

Equity is not Equality



The difference between equity and equality

Equity is an important part of DEI, but it is often mistaken for equality.

Equality means to provide everyone with the same conditions. As shown in the picture, if two people of different heights are given the same number of steps, without taking into account the difference in height between the two, only one of them can actually pick the apple.

If we apply Equity, as the picture on the right shows, the difference in height is taken into account when preparing the steps in order to give to both of them the same opportunity to pick the apple.

For example, colleagues with physical disabilities may require specific adaptations to access the workplace. Or again, it's important to allow flexibility in changing work hours for employees who need time to raise children or care for family members.

Attracting outstanding human capital via the promotion of DEI



(Photo by Getty Images)

Why is DEI important for the business growth?

First of all, DEI enables diverse talents to leverage their skills and create innovation.

Lorena Dellagiovanna, Senior Vice President and Executive Officer, Chief Sustainability Officer and from April 1st CHRO at Hitachi, Ltd., confirm:

"DEI leads to innovation and creates new technologies and solutions that improve people's lives. It also improves the company culture, creates new businesses and jobs, and fulfills the role of supporting the global economy. As a result, companies that successfully implement DEI will be able to attract the best talents and to shape a better future for the world."

This is why there is a growing movement to activate DEI on a global level, as well as in Japan.

For example, a major consumer goods manufacturer is implementing a DEI program to support women business career and hold seminars to increase the awareness and allyship for LGBTQIA+ community. Furthermore, the company has established flexible work systems, such as remote working and flextime, which allow employees to choose the best way to work based on their needs.

An electronics manufacturer is implementing internal activities to ensure equity, such as holding DEI awareness events, making its major manufacturing sites in Japan barrier-free, and establishing its own two-year childcare leave program that can be taken at any time up until the child starts elementary school.

Hitachi actively promoting DEI



(Photo by Getty Images)

Hitachi is committed to create an inclusive and equitable work environment for everyone increasing awareness on DEI topics, such as unconscious bias, and making structural changes to ensure everyone has the same opportunity.

Furthermore, in September 2022, Hitachi established the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Policy, which commits to creating a work environment that respects DEI and declares the following:

"We respect and value these and other differences because only through diversity can we drive innovation and creativity to contribute to society. Our commitment to diversity ensures long-term and sustainable business growth, improves our ability to serve global customers effectively and strengthens our global footprint. Embracing diversity helps us open new markets and attract, as well as retain, talents from all around the world."

To track progress on DEI, Hitachi has set the target of 30% of women and 30% of non-Japanese among executive and corporate officers by 2030.



(Photo by Getty Images)

Hitachi employees also play an important role in boost bottom up activities. One example is the "Hitachi Inclusive Future Project", an ERG dedicated to disability inclusion with the aim to ensure an inclusive work style and improve the accessibility of our internal systems.

Having online calls, for example, - which became more and more common during and after the COVID-19 pandemic - can create some communication difficulties for employees with visual and hearing disabilities. The ERG organized an online event to discuss how to increase the accessibility to a digital work environment for employees with disabilities. The outcome of this event led to implement some concrete actions to improve the company's internal systems.

This is why today DEI is not only a business imperative, but also a concrete chance to improve people life not only in the workplace and in the wider society.

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