

A person with short dark hair, wearing a light-colored collared shirt and a dark vest, is seen from behind, standing at a crossroads. Two asphalt roads branch out from a single point in the distance, leading into a landscape of rolling green hills under a dramatic, cloudy sky. The overall tone is contemplative and strategic.

ED&I at a Crossroads

Shifting Priorities in Business Strategy

Session Overview

- ED&I is at a turning point, what is the research saying?
- Understand the potential impact of this landscape changing
- Q&A session with Mark Lomas, Chartered FCIPD, Lloyds of London



Mark Lomas
Head of Culture
Lloyd's of London

Introduction

“Inclusion was never meant to be a trend — so why is it being treated like one?”

The Scale

76%

of large employers (over 5,000 employees) are reporting ED&I efforts as part of ESG disclosures

say their company's ED&I programs have been "absorbed" into ESG or social value efforts

of HR leaders

42%

35%

of companies have renamed ED&I programs to remove explicitly identity-based language (e.g., replacing "diversity" with "belonging")

report a reduction in ED&I-specific staff or budgets since late 2023

24%

The Shift

Many employers are repositioning or scaling back standalone ED&I strategies.

ED&I is increasingly integrated into broader ESG or Social Value frameworks, often deprioritised in practice.

Business leaders cite the need for “more measurable business outcomes” from ED&I initiatives.

2025: The Peak | United States

ED&I Retrenchment in Major Corporations

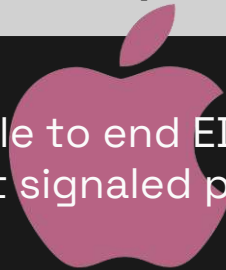


Shifting Corporate Messaging on ED&I



US Political Climate & Corporate Decision-Making

While Trump publicly urged Apple to end ED&I initiatives, the company have maintained ED&I so far but signaled potential compliance shifts.



2025: The Peak | United Kingdom

Shifting Corporate Messaging on ED&I



Maintaining ED&I targets and commitments



2025: The Peak | Internal Turbulences

UK Strategy	Company	US Strategy
Maintains ED&I, cautious adaptation	Apple	May change due to legal pressure
Reaffirms ED&I targets	Deloitte	Ends ED&I programs, removes pronouns
UK HR pushback to US stance	Citigroup	Ends diverse hiring requirements
Unknown/undisclosed local response	Accenture	Global rollback of ED&I goals
Possibly affected, no statement	Google	Ends hiring goals, legal issues
Continues, rebranded efforts	JPMorgan Chase	Rebranded as “Diversity, Opportunity & Inclusion”
Promotes ED&I on website	Aldi	Removes ED&I visibility
Channel 5 defends ED&I commitment	Disney/Channel 5	Shifts focus to business outcomes

The Workforce

Feelings of Abandonment

Employees, particularly those in minority groups, perceive a “retreat” from previous ED&I commitments.

Disillusionment

Loss of dedicated ERG funding and cancelled inclusion events have created distrust. Employees feel ED&I is “only for show” and lacks accountability.

It feels like we were promised change, and now we’re back to square one.

The Consequences

Employers



Short-term risk mitigation, but potential reputational damage among Gen Z and Millennial talent.



Loss of trust from employee groups and declining engagement scores.



Inconsistent messaging internally and externally, causing increased confusion.

Employees



Reduced psychological safety, especially for underrepresented groups.



Decreased participation in ERGs and inclusion initiatives.



Growing sense that ED&I is no longer a priority, impacting retention and morale.

The Path Forward

The road ahead will require courage, clarity, and commitment — not just to frameworks, but to people.