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Culture & Diversity Playbook for Project Professionals

A practical guide



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Purpose of the Playbook

What this playbook is

This Culture & Diversity Playbook helps professionals strengthen their leadership and collaboration skills by understanding how culture and diverse perspectives influence project success.

It's designed for practitioners across industries, experience levels, and methodologies — grounded in the belief that every professional contributes unique value to the field.

What it helps you do

- **Act ethically**, applying PMI's Code of Ethics—responsibility, respect, fairness, and honesty—to every project decision.
- **Work across differences**: Navigate roles, functions, cultures, and locations to reduce friction and make stronger decisions.
- **Build habits that last**: Use a simple four-phase model—**Awareness, Understanding, Adoption, Ownership**—to cultivate behaviors that enhance collaboration and results.

How to use it

- Apply ideas to your current project and adapt them to your organization's culture.
- Reflect after each milestone to identify lessons learned and growth opportunities.

Before applying these ideas, keep in mind:

- **Culture is an ongoing journey:** Understanding team culture isn't a one-time exercise. It requires awareness, reflection, and adaptation throughout the project life cycle.
- **Acknowledge bias:** Every professional carries assumptions shaped by experience and environment. Identifying and managing them supports a more inclusive environment, fairer decisions and stronger stakeholder relationships.
- **Empower every voice:** Create conditions where all contributors can share insights and concerns openly. Their experiences are invaluable for driving meaningful change and uncover missed opportunities.
- **Measure and celebrate progress:** Track how cultural and behavioral changes affect engagement, communication, and project outcomes. Celebrate progress as part of learning.
- **Integrate perspectives:** Recognize that people bring multiple dimensions — professional, cultural, generational, and personal — that shape how they collaborate. Understanding these different perspectives, and the challenges individuals may face, builds trust, inclusion, and innovation within project teams.

Applying what you learn

Each Phase includes examples, metrics, and reflection questions to help you apply cultural and ethical principles directly to your projects.

To make this real, each section features “Steph,” a Project Manager navigating her culture journey, demonstrating how awareness and ethical leadership translate into project success.

Culture, Ethics, and the Project Profession

Culture and ethics are inseparable in project management. Ethical awareness, adaptability, and respect for diverse perspectives are not optional—they are essential for achieving sustainable project success. And our profession is grounded in the principles of responsibility, respect, fairness, and honesty—the foundation of PMI’s Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. These values guide every decision and interaction, shaping how teams collaborate and how outcomes are achieved.

- **Responsibility** reminds us to create a fair environment and ensuring that all team members are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their differences.
- **Respect** calls us to treat all team members respectfully, regardless of background, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other personal characteristics.
- **Fairness** urges us to make impartial and transparent decisions, avoiding favoritism or bias.
- **Honesty** requires us to act truthfully and transparently, building trust with team members, clients, and other stakeholders.

When practiced together, these values foster integrity and professionalism—the hallmarks of effective leadership. Ethical awareness and cultural understanding strengthen each other: recognizing diverse perspectives helps teams make fairer, more informed choices. Acting ethically means creating environments where people feel respected and valued, even in challenging moments. By linking ethics and culture, project professionals build trust, inspire innovation, and sustain long-term success.

Applying Ethics and Culture in Practice

Building on these principles, reinforced in the PMBOK® Guide, Seventh Edition, the PMI® Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct encourages Project Managers to:

- **Encourage** diversity when forming teams or selecting partners, considering varied backgrounds and experiences.
- **Foster inclusion** by creating environments where everyone feels respected, heard and valued.
- **Be aware of unconscious bias**, that may influence decisions or collaboration, reflecting and actively mitigating assumptions.
- **Promote cultural learning** so teams understand how diverse perspectives improve project outcomes and value.

Practical ways to embed these principles in projects:

- **Include culture goals in the project charter** to ensure good culture is a project priority from the start.
- **Create safe spaces for dialogue** –use retrospectives, meetings, or workshops for open-perspective meetings.
- **Offer team learning** on key topics such as unconscious bias, psychological safety, and inclusive communication.
- **Recognize and celebrate contributions**, cultural observances, and stories that reinforce culture diversity, teamwork and belonging.

These actions set the foundation for the Awareness Phase, where culture move from values into everyday practice.

Culture & Diversity Journey

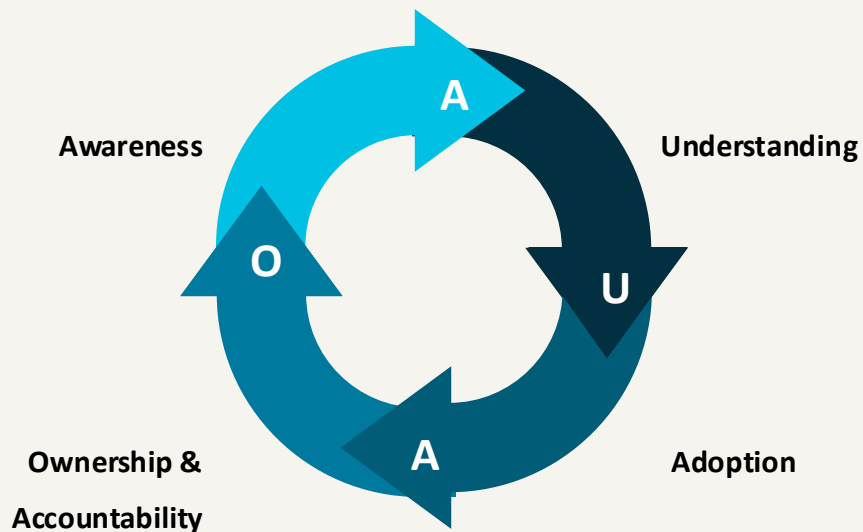


Figure 1: The four phases of a Culture & Diversity journey

1. **Awareness** – Recognize how personal and team behaviors influence collaboration and outcomes.
2. **Understanding** – Explore how cultural and organizational contexts affects communication and decision-making.
3. **Adoption** – Apply inclusive, ethical behaviors that reinforce trust, transparency, and accountability.
4. **Ownership & Accountability** – Sustain progress by modeling the values and behaviors that strengthen trust and accountability.

The next sections explore each of these phases in detail, helping you connect culture and ethics to real project situations.

Applying what you learn

Each phase includes examples, metrics, and reflection questions to help you apply cultural and ethical principles directly to your projects.

To make this real, each section features “*Steph*,” a Project Manager navigating her culture journey, demonstrating how awareness and ethical leadership translate into project success.

Phase 1: Awareness

Awareness is the first phase toward fostering a culture of fairness and inclusion. During this phase, a Project Manager unpacks what culture means in practice –its dimensions, expressions, and how it influences project collaboration and performance.

Recognizing culture at this level helps practitioners understand how their own behaviors and assumptions affect others, shaping collaboration and decision-making. Without this awareness, team harmony can suffer, and empathy may be lost when colleagues raise issues about fairness, respect, or inclusion.

Before rolling out any Culture & Diversity initiative, please be aware of the following key concepts and terminology:

- **Diversity** - the presence of different perspectives, experiences, and identities within a group or organization. It includes social, cultural, gender, generational, ethical, sexual and cognitive differences that enrich how we work and solve problems.
- **Fairness** - impartial and just treatment or behavior without favoritism or discrimination.
- **Inclusion** -The active practice of ensuring that everyone has equitable access to opportunities and resources to feel valued for their contributions.
- **Belonging** – A sense of security and support that comes from feeling accepted, respected, and seen as one’s authentic self within a team or organization. Belonging is a critical outcome of culture.



Building Shared Awareness: Benefits & Actions

This phase builds a shared understanding of how culture shapes project environments. It helps teams identify baseline data—such as engagement, collaboration, and retention patterns—that inform leadership decisions and strengthen trust. These insights create foundations for ethical, inclusive, and high-performing project cultures.

Recommendations:

- Align Culture & Diversity values with your organization’s purpose, ethics, and vision.
- Strengthen cultural intelligence to navigate communication styles, expectations, and work norms. Create allies and mentors who model and sustain inclusive behavior.
- Treat Culture & Diversity awareness as a continuous learning process, turning reflection into practical action.
- Replace vague goals like “be inclusive” with clear actions such as creating space for all voices.
- Tailor culture communication to bridge the gap between current and desired behaviors at both team and organizational levels.

Metrics:

To measure awareness progress, use perception and participation-based indicators that show how understanding of Culture & Diversity begins to grow. Examples include:

- **Surveys and Assessments:** Gauge awareness of Culture & Diversity concepts before and after learning initiatives. Ask questions related to culture, diversity, inclusion and psychological safety can provide valuable insights into awareness levels. *Metric: % increase in awareness scores across baseline and post-program surveys.*
- **Pre- and post-assessments:** Measure shifts in collaboration and understanding before and after workshops or key milestones. *Metric: Average change in self-reported confidence applying Culture & Diversity concepts.*
- **Focus groups and interviews:** Gather qualitative insights about team experiences, perceptions, and challenges around culture, fairness, respect, and inclusion. *Metric: # of focus groups held and % of recurring themes showing improved perceptions of inclusion or respect.*
- **Organizational metrics:** Track engagement, retention, satisfaction, engagement, cross-functional collaboration, and other indicators of a healthy culture.

Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods provides a more complete picture of how cultural and diversity awareness evolves and impacts project success.



Case Study – Awareness Phase

Steph has been a Project Manager for three years and just started a new assignment in a middle-sized company, ABC.

She inherited a project team of 5 people, all diverse in age and academic backgrounds and reports to Joe, a manager with 20 years of experience.

An influential stakeholder, Melissa, asked for clarity on how ABC setup its Culture & Diversity policies.

Steph realized she didn't fully understand what "culture" and "diversity" meant in this context. When she asked Joe, he gave a brief answer and sent her a link, but the information felt abstract.

In her next meeting, Steph shared her concern: "It seems to be quite a complex topic." Joe replied, "It's just a trend—don't spend too much time on it."

She opened about this at her next meeting with Joe. "It seems to be quite a In her next meeting, Steph shared her concern: "It seems to be quite a complex topic." Joe replied, "It's just a trend—don't spend too much time on it.". Steph began to wonder how to approach this conversation differently to create awareness rather than resistance.

What should Steph do?

3 reflection questions:

- What is Culture & Diversity defined and experienced in your organization?
- What expectations or practices share collaboration and fairness?
- How aware are you and your team of behaviors that foster respect, inclusion and belonging?

Phase 2: Understanding

During the Understanding Phase, individuals and teams deepen their awareness of inclusive practices and recognize how diverse experiences and cultural behaviors shape how teams collaborate and make decisions. The goal is to build a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities that come with fostering a fair, respectful, and inclusive project environment.

This phase establishes the foundation for cultural growth — creating conditions where inclusion and fairness strengthen trust, empathy, and performance. As understanding grows, project professionals become better equipped to embed these values into daily work, enhancing both culture and project outcomes.

The Understanding Phase involves three key components:

- 1. Knowledge Acquisition:** Learn about inclusion, fairness, and cultural awareness through research, training, mentoring, and open dialogue that connect diverse perspectives and build shared understanding. Shared learning builds a common language and understanding of how inclusive practices enhance collaboration and trust.
- 2. Awareness Reinforcement:** Identify and challenge biases or patterns that affect collaboration, ensuring equitable and effective ways of working.
- 3. Empathy and Perspective-Taking:** Deepen appreciation of others' lived experiences. Empathy builds bridges across perspectives, transforming understanding into meaningful action that improves both team cohesion and project impact.

Building Shared Understanding: Benefits

- **Informed Decision-Making:** A broader understanding of inclusion and fairness helps project professionals and organizations to make decisions that enhance transparency, participation and business impact.
- **Cultural Transformation:** Embedding inclusive values and behaviors strengthens culture, creating environments where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute.
- **Reduced Bias:** Recognizing unconscious bias helps teams address behaviors that limit participation or equity, resulting in more balanced and collaboration.
- **Stronger Commitment:** As understanding grows, individuals and organizations demonstrate greater accountability and consistency in applying inclusive practices throughout projects.
- **Collaboration and Engagement:** Teams that value diverse perspectives work more effectively, leveraging differences as strengths to drive innovation and better outcomes.
- **Empowered Advocacy:** Practitioners who internalize inclusive principles and recognize how diverse experiences and cultural behaviors shape collaboration become advocates for fairness and belonging within their teams — promoting lasting cultural impact in organizations and communities.

In essence, the Understanding Phase builds the foundation for sustained progress — fostering shared language, empathy, and awareness that strengthen trust, inclusion, and long-term cultural growth across projects and organizations.

Best practices:

- **Foster a Culture of Learning:** Encourage curiosity and openness to new perspectives through workshops, cross-cultural exchanges, and learning experiences that expand understanding and empathy.
- **Engage in Inclusive Training:** Offer training that addresses real-world challenges such as bias, microaggressions, and communication barriers, equipping participants with actionable tools.
- **Promote Inclusive Language:** Ensure that all communications and materials use respectful, neutral, and inclusive language that reinforces belonging.
- **Seek Diverse Perspectives:** Proactively invite feedback and ideas from people with different experiences or backgrounds, recognizing that inclusion enriches innovation and results.
- **Analyze Data and Metrics:** Use data to identify areas of improvement and track progress. Regularly assess representation, employee engagement, and satisfaction to measure the impact of Culture & Diversity efforts.

Recommendations:

- **Customize Learning Approaches:** Adapt learning experiences to fit your team's cultural context and preferred styles of engagement — from workshops and mentoring to peer learning and self-paced modules.
- **Collaborate with Experts:** Leverage partnerships with professionals experienced in cultural intelligence, inclusion, and ethics to strengthen strategies.
- **Encourage Leadership Support:** When leaders model inclusive behaviors and take accountability, they send a powerful signal about what the organization values.
- **Create Safe Spaces for Dialogue:** Build environments where individuals can share ideas and challenges openly, fostering psychological safety and trust.
- **Integrate Inclusion into Values:** Embed fairness, respect, and openness within organizational values and project principles. These become the foundation of sustainable culture.

By applying these practices, organizations reinforce diversity, fairness and inclusion as a driver of culture — and culture as a driver of project success.

Metrics:

The Understanding Phase builds a foundation of measurable learning and progress. Tracking these indicators helps assess how knowledge, participation, and inclusive behaviors evolve — showing how understanding translates into culture shifts and better project outcomes.

Examples of metrics include:

- **Learning Participation and attendance:** Track engagement in training or reflection opportunities that strengthen understanding of Culture & Diversity. *Metric: % completing learning or awareness programs and reporting practical takeaways.*
- **Feedback and Evaluation:** Surveys or focus groups assessing the relevance, usefulness, and behavioral impact of these programs. *Metric: % rating learning as relevant and applicable to their projects.*
- **Knowledge and Perception Application:** Anonymous surveys measuring how teams apply training to collaboration practices. *Metric: % improvement in reported psychological safety, fairness, or team collaboration indicators.*
- **Employee Resource Group (ERG) Engagement:** Participation in ERGs or inclusion initiatives reflecting advocacy and shared ownership of culture. *Metric: % employees engaged in ERGs or related initiatives; % reporting higher belonging.*
- **Organizational Commitment:** Resources and leadership time dedicated to culture-focused initiatives. *Metric: % of budget or employee hours allocated to Culture & Diversity efforts.*
- **External Recognition:** Awards or acknowledgments for inclusive practices that demonstrate credibility beyond the organization. *Metric: # of external recognitions, nominations, or partnerships tied to Culture & Diversity initiatives.*



Case Study – Understanding Phase

Steph met with Melissa, a key stakeholder who made the initial request.

"So, how did you integrate Culture & Diversity into your project at ABC?", Melissa asked.

Steph answered hesitantly, "Well... I've begun looking at it...".

Melissa interrupted her, "Just look? You need to do more than have a look. This is important to our stakeholders. I expect you to devise a clear plan at our next follow-up meeting."

The next day, Steph looked at the company intranet to enroll in a 3-day training about Culture & Diversity to explore how biases and cultural dynamics influenced team participation.

During her learning, she discovered issues she hadn't thought about before. For example, She recalled a meeting where a quiet team member, woman of color, never spoke up — and wondered whether the environment truly encouraged everyone to contribute. Steph decided to read a book about this topic to learn and inspire more ideas and strategies.

Steph's journey helped her recognize the importance of empathy, dialogue, and equitable collaboration as enablers of strong culture and project success.

How can Steph use her growing understanding to make team discussions more inclusive and ensure all voices are heard?



The following reflection questions invite individuals to explore their learning journey during the Understanding Phase of implementation. By critically assessing their insights and considering practical applications, we become better prepared to take proactive steps that drive positive change and contribute to a more inclusive and fairer environment.

3 Reflection Questions:

- What key insights have you gained from your research or training? How can this knowledge help you create a more inclusive and fairer environment in your organization, community, or project?
- How has your perspective on Culture & Diversity evolved through conversations with colleagues, peers, or community members? Have these interactions challenged any assumptions or biases you may have held?
- How can you apply what you've learned in the Understanding Phase to advocate for inclusive practices and strengthen a culture of respect and belonging within your team or community?

Phase 3: Adoption

Adoption is the third phase in integrating Culture & Diversity more deeply into how we work. At this phase, Project Professionals apply what they've learned through awareness and understanding, translating it into everyday practices that foster inclusion, fairness, and shared ownership. This phase focuses on turning awareness into action—becoming a more culture-driven Project Professional.

Building Shared Adoption: Benefits

Reflecting solely on the business or financial benefits of diversity can backfire during implementation. By adopting Culture & Diversity practices, Project Professionals cultivate a stronger sense of belonging and foster an environment of psychological safety within themselves, their teams, and their organizations.

Additional benefits of intentional adoption include:

- Greater psychological safety, leading to more stable, innovative, and effective project teams and outcomes.
- Stronger strategic connections between organizations and their social, economic, and political contexts, creating new opportunities for impact.
- Deeper collaboration with diverse stakeholders and beneficiaries, improving both outcomes and value creation.
- Authentic commitment to diversity, fairness, inclusion, and belonging—enhancing trust and expanding the scope and depth of project success.



Recommendations:

Adoption applies across the multiple spheres of influence a Project Professional has — individual, team, project, and organization. Progress at each level reinforces the others. Professionals should integrate Culture & Diversity practices through a layered approach that strengthens team dynamics, project performance, and organizational culture.

Adoption Strategies:

Adoption means incorporating Culture & Diversity principles into one's leadership and daily work. Beyond understanding these ideas, this phase emphasizes living them through consistent behaviors and decisions.

- **Journey Check:** Confirm that you've completed the Awareness and Understanding phases before moving into adoption.
- **Demonstrate Emotional Intelligence:** Practice empathy, manage relationships constructively, and model inclusive behavior throughout the Adoption Phase.
- **Promote Cultural Intelligence:** Develop the ability to work effectively across cultures. Consider local contexts, participate in intercultural training, and seek coaching or mentoring for new environments
- **Set Ground Rules and Review Regularly:** Establish inclusive team norms and revisit them periodically. Building a healthy culture is a shared responsibility, not just an HR function.

Team-Adoption Strategies:

Team adoption focuses on embedding Culture & Diversity practices within teams to improve collaboration and belonging. These can include:

- **Meeting Management:** Use meetings as opportunities to infuse inclusion—ask who is in the room, who isn't, and whose voice needs to be heard. Be intentional about engagement. Introduce pronouns, invite different perspectives, and ensure varied experiences and expertise are represented.
- **Collaborative Tools:** Choose tools that accommodate all participants, with translation and accessibility options.
- **Time Zones and Flexibility:** Respect global working patterns and adapt meeting cadence accordingly.
- **Communication:** Use inclusive language—avoid expressions that unintentionally exclude others (e.g., gendered terms).
- **One-to-One or Team Meetings to Tackle Issues:** Address challenges early, including those related to collaboration or fairness. Demonstrating openness in difficult conversations strengthens trust and team cohesion.



Project-Adoption Strategies:

Project adoption embeds Culture & Diversity practices into project design, delivery, and outcomes so that inclusion and fairness become integral to success. These can include:

- **Assess Project Outcomes:** Evaluate how project results can be made more inclusive and accessible for a broader range of stakeholders. This includes—for example—ensuring accessibility ramps during a construction project, reducing bias in technology or software projects, engaging with beneficiaries to co-create outcomes in social or education projects, and more.
- **Inclusive Supply Chains:** Source from a diverse range of suppliers to increase socio-economic participation and long-term community impact.
- **Improve Stakeholder Engagement:** Use innovative outreach to involve a wider set of voices and perspectives.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Use data to identify gaps, ensure representation, and guide inclusive, evidence-based decisions.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Use data to locate project gaps by emphasizing the importance of intersectionality and disaggregating data for inclusive decision-making and more representative project outcomes.

Organization-Adoption Strategies:

Organization adoption occurs when Project Professionals influence systems and norms at the institutional level, embedding culture-driven practices into policies and processes. The strategy will depend on the organization's level of maturity and the project professional's power within the institution. Some of these strategies include:

- **Advocate for Cultural Norms:** Set norms and standards against bullying or unfair behavior within your team and advocate for these policies at an organizational level. If the organization lacks policies supporting or protecting Culture & Diversity, consider working with other departments or teams to maximize efforts.
- **Capacity-Building Efforts:** Promote professional development and training to strengthen awareness and adoption of Culture & Diversity. Consider different approaches to Culture & Diversity that align with the project, industry, cultural, or social context in which you are located.
- **Influence Talent Management / Hiring Policies:** Project Professionals may inherit a project team or hire members directly. Encourage diverse hiring and ensure inclusive considerations in team selection and decision-making.
- **Engage Other Departments / Teams:** Partner with other areas to share lessons, align efforts, and build stronger networks.
- **Culture Café, Forums, or Stories:** Provide spaces where individuals can share stories that highlight culture, diversity, belonging and collective learning. This empowers organizations to develop role models, influencers, and leaders within the Project Management space.

Metrics:

To measure progress and effectiveness during the Adoption Phase, combine reflective, behavioral, and organizational indicators.

- **Personal Self-Reflection:** Evaluates individual growth and awareness in applying Culture & Diversity principles. *Metric - % of professionals completing self-reflection exercises and reporting growth in inclusive behaviors.*
- **Team Focus Groups:** Measures collective understanding and collaboration within teams through quarterly sessions with your team to gain perspective on team culture, strategy, and adoption. *Metrics: # of focus group sessions per quarter; % of participants reporting increased team trust, openness, and inclusion.*
- **Individual Check-Ins:** Tracks progress through one-to-one conversations about Culture & Diversity adoption. *Metric: % of employees engaging in inclusion-focused check-ins with documented follow-up actions.*
- **Comparison with Industry Metrics:** Benchmarks the organization's maturity in Culture & Diversity against peers and recognized standards. *Metric: Culture and diversity index score vs. industry average, or % year-over-year improvement in inclusion and belonging indicators.*



Case Study – Adoption Phase

After her training, Steph introduced her team to new practices such as creating rituals to reinforce cultural values, adding pronouns and being mindful of the phrases the team uses during meetings. She also proposed a session to review how Culture & Diversity practices were being applied.

Franz and Jenna, two technical experts, questioned the need for additional meetings due to tight deadlines. Steph replied, “How we collaborate is essential to our project and team success.”

The next day, Steph found an anonymous message on her desk, “Thank you so much for what you’re trying to implement. I was waiting for it for a long time.”. Later, her manager Joe said, “I got negative feedback following the team meeting yesterday. Our best customer is waiting for the release of the new product. The team is under pressure. Once the product is delivered, you can organize your Culture & Diversity sessions.”

Steph asked, “Can we try one meeting to discuss these practices? Some appreciated them but didn’t feel safe speaking up—and this aligns with Melissa’s request.”

Joe paused and asked, “Did you not understand what I said?”

What should Steph do?



3 Reflection Questions:

- What consistent challenge have you faced in your journey to adopt Culture & Diversity practices?
- Which practices have helped you embed inclusion and fairness in your projects?
- What one action can you take to strengthen a culture of respect and belonging within your team, project, or organization?

Phase 4: Ownership & Accountability

This phase focuses on collective responsibility — every team member takes ownership of creating and sustaining an inclusive, culture-driven workplace. Everyone should be aligned on the importance of Culture & Diversity and what it means to embed inclusive practices within their specific context. Unlike previous phases, this phase shifts the focus from internal awareness to external influence. Project Professionals now cultivate an ecosystem where Culture & Diversity extend beyond their teams to impact their organizations, industries, and communities.

Building Shared Ownership: Benefits

In this phase of the Culture & Diversity journey, Project Professionals become advocates and role models. They move from understanding and applying inclusive principles to influencing systems, processes, and networks. A key benefit is the empowerment to give back to the profession — helping others build similar capabilities and advancing collective maturity across PMI's community.

Additional benefits include:

- Supporting other Project Professionals to become more diverse, inclusive, and culture-driven leaders.
- Advocating for deeper, more meaningful integration of Culture & Diversity within projects, teams and organizations.
- Guiding others through earlier phases of the journey (Awareness, Understanding and Adoption).
- Scaling culture-embedded project practices across industries and geographies.
- Becoming a recognized Culture & Diversity advocate who leads proactively and purposefully.

Ownership Strategies

Ownership of Culture & Diversity is demonstrated through intentional, visible actions that reflect PMI's value of Together We Can — fostering collaboration, accountability, and shared success. These strategies include:

- Speaking up and speaking out when witnessing bias or exclusion.
- Setting clear goals: What does the team want to achieve in Culture & Diversity, and what steps will make it happen?
- Hosting webinars or presentations on culture-driven practices within your field.
- Organizing informal learning sessions (e.g., brown bags) to share lessons and encourage dialogue.
- Creating or updating resources, toolkits, or onboarding materials that promote Culture & Diversity.
- Partnering with community or industry groups to expand impact beyond your organization.
- Advocating for project outcomes that serve broader audiences and diverse communities.
- Coaching new Project Professionals on inclusive practices and cultural intelligence.
- Documenting and embedding Culture & Diversity practices in templates and project artifacts.
- Celebrating contributions that advance inclusion and belonging within your teams.

Metrics:

To measure ownership maturity, combine reflective, behavioral, and influence-based indicators that show sustained impact in Culture & Diversity.

- **Personal Self-Reflection:** Evaluate how consistently you model Culture & Diversity values in daily actions and decisions. As a qualitative self-check, your self-reflection can include questions like: what have been my grows and glows during this journey? How satisfied am I with my personal, team, or organizational impact? Which project(s) am I most proud of? Which project(s) could use a more intentional approach?. *Metric: % completing reflection exercises and identifying specific leadership behaviors to strengthen.*
- **Elicit Formative Feedback:** Gather ongoing feedback from peers or mentees to assess how your behaviors and advocacy are perceived. *# of feedback interactions or 360 reviews referencing inclusive or culture-driven leadership.*
- **Mentorship & Knowledge Sharing:** Track how you transfer learning by coaching, mentoring, or presenting on Culture & Diversity topics. *Metric: # of mentorships or knowledge-sharing sessions held per quarter.*
- **Community Engagement:** Measure influence through partnerships, volunteering, or initiatives that promote Culture & Diversity externally. *Metric: # of cross-industry or community collaborations active each year.*
- **Recognition & Influence:** Evaluate acknowledgment of your impact and influence on Culture & Diversity across teams or organizations. *Metric: # of recognitions, nominations, or references to inclusive leadership annually.*



Case Study – Ownership Phase

One month after the Culture & Diversity strategy call, Steph is motivated to implement regular culture-driven training focused on language inclusion and diversity, given her team's global diversity. Her manager, Joe, questions the need, arguing that such efforts distract from deliverables and calls a meeting with HR to discuss it.

In the meeting, Joe argues that Culture & Diversity shouldn't take away from valuable time that the team needs in delivering products to their clients. "This Culture & Diversity stuff is just a politically correct phase – why do we have to continue down this line?"

Steph responds, "Culture and diversity aren't a phase. It's like the idea of professional communication or ethical practices – it needs to be built into the work we do. In the initial phases while we're on this learning journey, I may ask for an hour here or there to improve team practices. Why is that so wrong if we are getting the work done?"

The HR representative has been quietly observing the heated discussion between Steph and Joe. She calmly enters the conversation "Joe and Steph, I understand both of your concerns for the client deliverable and for team and personal health. We need to find a compromise because we cannot sacrifice the client for the team or the team for the client. Is there really no middle ground on this?"



After a moment of reflection, Steph suggests, “If I can get one hour every two weeks to discuss diversity, fairness, and inclusion—while ensuring that the team’s deliverables remain on track—would that be acceptable? This way, we maintain focus on client work while also keeping Culture & Diversity on our regular agenda. This is important for our team; we need to own this as a workplace.”

Joe replies, “It’s fine for now, I guess. But I’ll keep a close eye on this.”

The meeting ends, and Steph returns to her desk to schedule the first Culture & Diversity sessions.

If you were present during this meeting, what would you say or do to uphold PMI’s Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct—particularly the principles of Responsibility, Respect, Fairness, and Honesty—while ensuring both project delivery and team wellbeing?

Final Reflection:

There is no end-state to developing culture-driven competencies. Each phase of the journey—Awareness, Understanding, Adoption, and Ownership—deepens our ability to lead with empathy, fairness, and purpose.

Reaching this phase means beginning again—better informed, more intentional, and more connected.

What impact do you hope to have through your own culture & diversity journey?

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Thank You

This playbook is the result of a true collaboration between PMI volunteers and PMI Team members — a reflection of how, together, we turn shared purpose into action.

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