

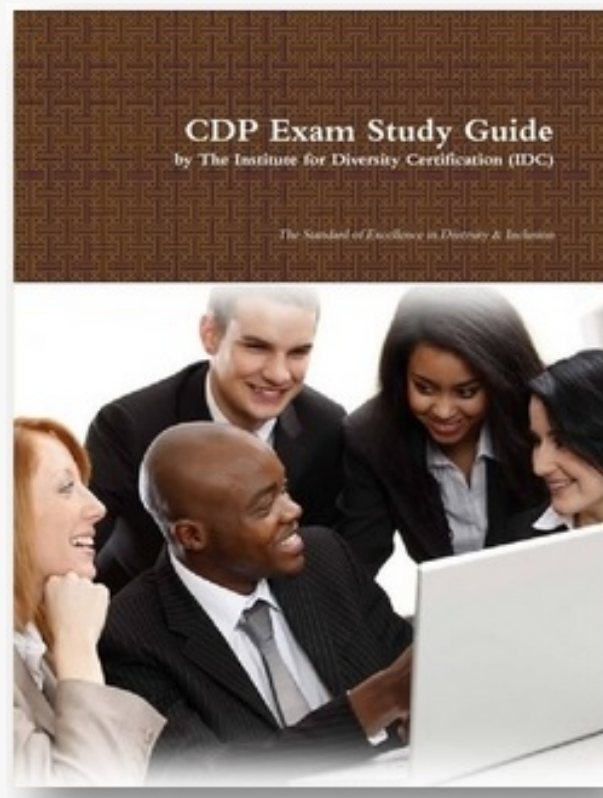
# Want a Better ROI? Get Your Diversity & Inclusion Team Certified

*As Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion positions explode, there is global value in making the position count*

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, UNITED STATES, September 6, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As a "Newbie" Navigator, Nicole L. Johnson is on a crusade to make a difference in the workplace. She currently serves as a guide for new Diversity leaders, or organizations who are new to equity and inclusion, in an effort to help them transition through the stages of culture change. Johnson says, "The function of Inclusion and Diversity has evolved significantly over the last 30+ years. We are seeing organizations in a variety of industries, from Government and Non-Profit to Education and Corporate, put this role into place. As a result, the demand for experienced, knowledgeable and capable professionals to lead these departments has exploded."

The [Institute for Diversity Certification \(IDC\)](#)® has also witnessed this explosion. IDC is the credentialing arm of [the Society for Diversity](#), the #1 professional association for Equity and Inclusion leaders. Since IDC was formed nearly 10 years ago, the organization has seen a steady increase in Diversity Certification candidates. Similar to other credentialing programs, Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) certification is an external verification process that assures an employer that leaders have the right mix of knowledge, skills and experience to impact the workplace. The process helps top companies answer strategic questions such as:

- How can we better align our organizational culture with our brand?
- How can we prepare for the future workplace and marketplace?
- In which markets will we play? How do we customize our products/services to appeal to



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The process helps top companies answer strategic questions such as:

different markets?

- What's the best way to capitalize on demographic and industry changes?

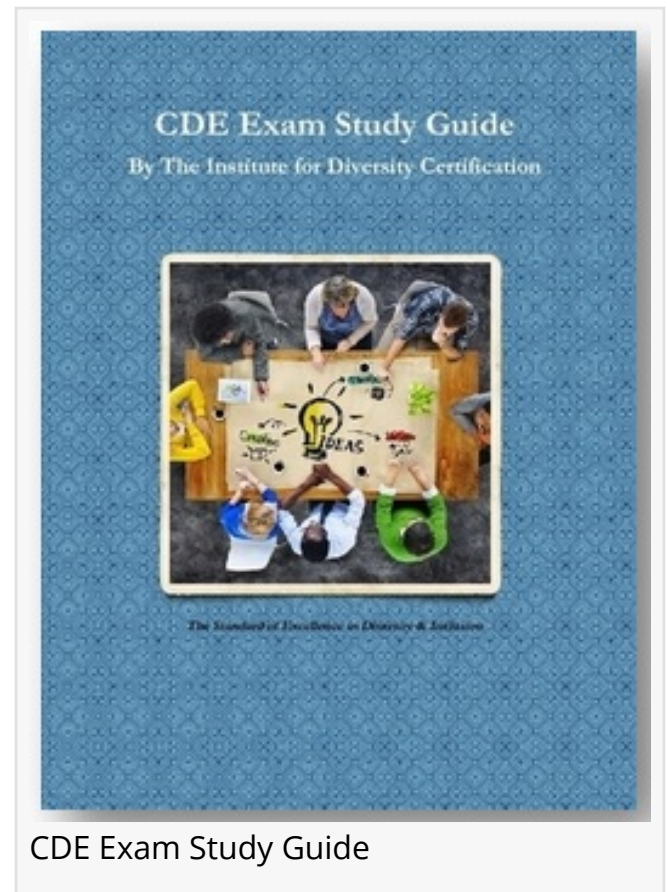
Diversity and Inclusion work is also becoming more complex for employers who operate in multiple states or abroad. For example, New York recently passed a law requiring annual, interactive sexual harassment training; California is on the verge of mandating at least one woman to serve on company Boards; and more than 11 states currently ban applicant salary history questions. Beyond legislation, companies who operate overseas must navigate through cultural nuances that can make or break partnerships or other business opportunities.

In a world where advanced education and specialized skills reign, IDC establishes a global framework for recognizing knowledgeable and highly skilled professionals. However, some employers have begun to step outside the traditional framework of certifying one Executive toward ensuring that multiple employees within the organization have credentials as a Diversity leader regardless of title. Leah Smiley, workplace inclusion expert and IDC President says, "Extending the work beyond the Office of Diversity is important. Some companies learned this the hard way because their Diversity Officer terminated, and the momentum for equity and belonging stalled. Alternatively, a few employers successfully galvanized enterprise-wide support for diversity and inclusion through cross-functional collaboration."

A key component of IDC's certification program is the acknowledgement that Diversity and Inclusion work has changed. It is no longer driven by Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity, Political Correctness, race relations, or the right thing to do. It is a business strategy that can help organizations make money, save money, and/or achieve organizational goals. Diversity leaders learn how to customize the business case and apply industry best practices in order to achieve expected outcomes. Smiley adds, "IDC updates its curriculum every two years to account for changes in terminology, the latest research, new legislation, and other advancements. It is a huge effort, but it pays off through the work of our designers."

Of the individuals who finish the certification program, 90% report that they feel more productive and effective. Almost 50% reported that they successfully introduced a new initiative such as a supplier diversity program, business resource group, training, etc. Half reported that they received more support from senior leadership, built better relationships with internal/external peers, hired new support staff, obtained a promotion or new job, or received a salary increase after completing the program. More than two-thirds of participants said after completing the program, their organizations increased their commitment to inclusion--financially and otherwise. IDC's successes have resulted in industry recognition of the Certified Diversity Professional (CDP)® and Certified Diversity Executive (CDE)® as qualification credentials for effective Diversity and Inclusion work.

The role of a D&I leader is the most challenging in any organization, as noted in Johnson's recent article, [D&I leaders Wear Many Many Many Hats](#). As a former Chief Diversity Officer for several Fortune 500 companies and IDC's Board Chair, Johnson asserts, "There are hundreds of professions that have accredited certifications such as IT, Engineers, Occupational Therapists and



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more. These professions recognized that accredited certification was necessary in order to maintain a high caliber of individuals in the profession. This is accomplished by requiring those professionals to demonstrate a sufficient level of knowledge and competency about the various elements of their work. In many cases, employers require that a job candidate have a certification from an accredited institution. As such, the level of importance and value of these roles should be on par with their peers."

Johnson adds, "Accreditation ensures that designations like the CDP and CDE are based on a rigorous, well researched, legally defensible exam. Obtaining a certification from an accredited organization elevates the value of one's certification for employers. It also ensures that those who aspire to be D&I leaders are able to demonstrate the knowledge required to perform effectively in their roles." IDC is currently the only organization pursuing accreditation for the CDP and CDE from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). Accordingly, IDC is a member of the NCCA's Institute for Credentialing Excellence, which seeks to help certification programs apply industry best practices.

Smiley is confident that the industry will continue to grow, both in the U.S. and abroad. IDC has thousands of candidates in 35+ states, as well as in Germany, Japan, Poland, Canada, and India. She says, "In recent months, I've been contacted from people in the U.K., France, Mexico, Brazil, China, Nigeria, and other markets about the need for IDC to help more global employers explore the value of a comprehensive equity and inclusion strategy. Indeed, forward-thinking companies will experience the best ROI."

Learn more at [www.diversitycertification.org](http://www.diversitycertification.org).

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