

DATA COLLECTION AND PRIVACY PROTECTION

Canadian Equality's Commitment to You

DATA COLLECTION OVERVIEW

The following information is being provided to all survey participants to support their understanding of how Canadian Equality Consulting's data collection processes, the safeguards in place to protect your privacy and anonymity, and the approach we will take to reporting back to your organization on the results of the assessment.

Data Collection Purpose

To conduct the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) assessment, Canadian Equality Consulting (hereinafter referred to as "the Contractor") needs to collect a certain type of information from the people involved with your organization. This information will be used to better understand areas of strength and opportunities for growth within the organization to create a more equitable and inclusive workplace culture.

What You'll Be Asked

The survey will ask you questions about your individual experiences at your organization, including your experiences with, and perceptions of, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Questions will touch on areas related to leadership vision and commitment, organizational diversity, talent management processes, such as recruitment and advancement, and organizational culture, including feelings of belonging, safety, and organizational growth. The survey will also ask questions on experiences of harassment and discrimination. This information is used to better understand experiences of safety within the organization.

The survey will ask both closed-ended questions (i.e., those that require you to select pre-populated answers) and open-ended questions (i.e., those that allow you to expand on your experiences through your own words).

Lastly, the survey will conclude with a series of demographic questions. Demographic questions are asked for two reasons: one to better understand the current demographics of the organization to identify gaps in diversity; and second to help identify nuance or differences in experiences between identity groups (e.g., if individuals who identify as non-disabled report significantly more positive experiences than those who report having a disability, the actions and strategies we might suggest may be different than if there was no difference between these groups).

MAINTAINING YOUR PRIVACY

As consultants who work with personal information and data on a regular basis, we understand that providing this data can feel risky – that's normal! Your concerns are common, and we have detailed processes in place to ensure your privacy and anonymity is maintained throughout and after the data collection process.

Canadian Equality Consulting's Security & Data Privacy Protection Policy

Canadian Equality Consulting has a Security & Data Privacy Protection Policy ("the Policy") that governs all data collection activities for all our projects. Our Policy outlines the acceptable forms of data collection and use and commits to keeping your information secure and notes that no data will ever be shared beyond Canadian Equality Consulting's employees.

The Policy also outlines our obligations to maintain the security of your data, including having industry-accepted cybersecurity processes in place and procedures outlined in the unlikely event of a data breach.

The current Policy is attached for your reference.

Adherence to Relevant Legislation

Canadian Equality Consulting, as a private business that operates inter-provincially, is subject to the federal *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)* as it currently stands (last amended in June 2015). This legislation sets the ground rules for how businesses must handle personal information in the course of their commercial activity.

Canadian Equality Consulting has developed our data collection, use, and retention policies to be in compliance with this legislation in all areas.

For more information on this legislation, please review the [information found on the federal Privacy Commissioner's website](#).

Survey Platform and Data Storage

Canadian Equality Consulting uses the survey platform Qualtrics to conduct surveys and collect the necessary data for each project we work on. Qualtrics is a gold-standard in survey design and implementation software. It provides industry leading security protocols and ensures the data collected by us remains safe, secure, and within the borders of Canada.

Furthermore, Canadian Equality Consulting only ever distributes surveys through anonymous links (i.e., the link is the same for everyone), and we never ask for your name or email within the survey. Finally, we do not track IP addresses or other potentially identifying personal information.

It is important to note that members of the Canadian Equality Consulting team do not have the information necessary to identify individual staff members, even if we wanted to (i.e., we don't know the team personally and therefore cannot assume identity from various survey responses, such as experiences, length of service, and demographic factors).

Raw Data

Canadian Equality Consulting will never share the raw data with any member of the client organization or with any other outside party. This is a fundamental principle by which we all work, and we have never provided raw data to any client, and we never will (we have been asked, but the answer is always no).

The only potential way to identify individuals through the survey data would be to a) have access to all the raw data and b) to know the team well enough to be able to put all the puzzle pieces together. As stated above, neither of these conditions will be met and therefore your data is secure with us.

Reporting Approach

When the time comes to report back to our client on the results of the data collection, we also ensure we implement various safeguards to further protect respondent privacy and anonymity.

Minimum Reporting Numbers

The first principle we work by is that we will only report data that has a minimum reporting number of at least 5. This means that unless at least five individuals have selected a response, we will not report on it. If a finding is less than 5, we would roll it up into a larger category. This help ensure there are enough responses to both

provide adequate assessment results as well as to ensure that no one can be identified through the responses they provided.

Demographic Analysis

When it comes to analysing and reporting on the demographic characteristics of an organization, we again use the minimum n=5 reporting requirement, but also ensure that we are only reporting on demographic information when it is critical to understand the current state of the organization.

In the example provided above, where non-disabled participants were more positive than their disabled colleagues, we would report on that as a key finding. However, if the experiences were similar or if there is not a large enough number of people in each grouping (i.e., n<5) we would not report on the perspectives of this demographic sub-group at all.

In practical terms, this means were not reporting on all demographic sub-group perspectives for all questions, further blurring the connection between respondent and responses.

Qualitative Data

During the survey, we will ask various open-ended questions to allow you to provide more information in your own words. This can be immensely helpful to us as researchers as it can provide additional nuance or raise issues we might not have otherwise captured; however, we also know that people's speech and writing patterns can be identified by people who know them well, such as their long-term colleagues. It is for this reason that we will never share back the unedited comments provided by respondents, but rather we will only roll-up the information provided into broader themes for further discussion.

This may look like someone identifying that while they are encouraged to take training, they find they are never given the time to do so. We can, and do, regularly report on these themes, but we will not word them in a way as to be identifiable and to touch on the broader issue at hand, not the specific situation identified by a respondent.

Finally, we also use our best judgement when using the information provided in open-ended questions. If we feel the information provided is simply too specific to be rolled up or anonymized, we simply will not include it in our report and will work to find other methods to address the core concern, generally during the strategy and action planning phase of work.

Data Retention

Lastly, we are always happy to work with our clients to develop a retention policy that works for both parties. While we don't want to dispose of potentially useful information too early, we do recognize that long-term retention can pose additional security risks. Accordingly, we often default to a retention approach that maintains the raw data for a period after engagement with the client has closed (generally 3-7 years) but will retain the summary reports in the event a client returns to us for further services where past information would be helpful to the project.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Should you have further questions or comments about Canadian Equality Consulting's data collection approach or privacy protection, please reach out to Lindsay Rainbow (Lindsay@canadianequality.ca).