



Promoting diversity and inclusion

A beginner's guide



At Funding Circle, we're always looking forward: toward the success of the businesses we support, toward the returns of our investors, toward building a better financial world. As a part of this, we believe in continually working to make our company a better place to work for everyone.

This is a topic that matters deeply, both to the success of our company as well as to the world. Our in-house employee diversity groups, FC Allies and Women@FC, are just two examples of how we think that change starts at home.

We aren't perfect by any means, and we don't have all the answers. But we believe that sharing knowledge is the first step to making both the financial services and tech sectors more accessible and welcoming to everyone.

We hope you'll join us.

Sincerely,

Sam Hodges

Co-founder, Funding Circle



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Why this matters

It's easy to identify the need for diversity and inclusion at your company as a moral imperative. And while we believe that doing the right thing should always be a company's first concern, there's also another reason you should have an eye on diversity: the success of your company.

Studies have shown [over](#) and [over](#) and [over](#) again that the more diverse your company is — in your teams, your board, and your leadership — the higher propensity for success you'll have. In short, diversity = \$.

This isn't surprising. Diversity of gender, sexual orientation, race, and more brings diversity in perspectives and experiences. And the more ways your business has to approach a challenge, the better off you'll be to come up with the best solution.

Think of the last time you were in a meeting, facing down a complex problem. As you discussed what action to take, did everyone unanimously agree, or was there lively discussion about what to do next? That discussion — the presentation of different ideas, which are often a byproduct of different ways of thinking and different experiences — can be the most important factor in a company's success.

At Funding Circle, we believe our differences help us grow and thrive — as a business and as individuals.



Walk the walk

Approaching diversity at your company should take on two forms: hiring for diversity and promoting inclusion among employees. At first glance, hiring for diversity may seem like a funnel issue — you're just not getting enough diverse applicants! But this is rarely, if ever, the real problem. Think about these three things when you're hiring:

How your job listing is phrased. Sure, it's all the rage to talk about foosball in the kitchen and beer pong at happy hour, but the message you may inadvertently be sending is that [not everyone is welcome](#). And be wary of the urge to look for a marketing "ninja" or programming "wizard" — these stereotypically masculine words could leave you losing great candidates before they even finish reading the job listing. Try using a job listing writing platform like [Textio](#), which can help provide suggestions of how to maximize the performance of your job listings.

Where you're looking for candidates. Are your sourcers looking for keywords like "Stanford" and "Yale," without taking into consideration the makeup of those candidate pools? Make sure to target more diverse schools, like Howard University, or organizations, like the National LGBT Bar Association.

Whether you're putting your best foot forward. Pay attention to the diversity presented in your interview panel — your candidates certainly will. Even if you do get diverse candidates in for an interview, do all of your interviewers reflect the same demographic? Be mindful of your selection of people you choose to represent your company.

Remember: it's not about rejecting qualified candidates in favor of diverse ones. It's about giving your company every opportunity to find the absolute best person for a role. Think about what you're doing to give your company a leg up.



Creating employee diversity groups

Employee diversity groups serve a few purposes. They help foster a sense of belonging, and offer a specific space where ideas about inclusion can be introduced. They also raise the profile of diversity at your company, and express both internally and outwardly that it's a priority.

Creating a diversity group doesn't have to be daunting. Think of it in these three easy steps:

Create a task force. Your group's founding members should all be passionate individuals who are enthusiastic for the cause. It's often helpful to have someone from your HR or legal departments on this team, who can help navigate the potentially stickier areas.

Create a mission. Even if it's just a single line! Just like setting business objectives for the quarter, writing down your goals helps focus your team. And it's okay to reevaluate and revise periodically — the group will continue to evolve over its lifetime, just like your company will.

Looking for ideas? Women@FC's mission statement is simple:
To be the best fintech company for people to work for.

Additionally, you can create more detailed pillars or a charter to help guide the group's decisions and planning. When in doubt, ask yourself whether an event or initiative aligns with your original goals.

Create an event or initiative. Give your newfound group something to do and get other people involved. A great way to kick off is by brainstorming ways you'd like to see people come together — do you think your company would be interested in an educational lunch and learn? A fun themed happy hour? (Tip: for more ideas, check out Events and initiatives ideas in this guide!)



Dos and don'ts

When it comes to creating your diversity groups, it's important to bear in mind a few important dos and don'ts to make sure this is a fair and fun effort. Here are some of the ones we keep in mind at Funding Circle:

- Do continue to ask for feedback. Women@FC has a set of delegates on a variety of teams across the company who act as ambassadors to help figure out what the company is interested in seeing and where there might be gaps. Additionally, periodic surveys can gauge enthusiasm and collect ideas.
- Do invite others to help and be inclusive. Women@FC and FC Allies are open to anyone, regardless of rank, tenure, or identity. We believe the best ideas are formed when a variety of experiences and backgrounds inform them. Lead the way by demonstrating dedication to the cause, and fostering a contagious enthusiasm for the work your group does.
- Do be mindful of representation. While we believe “the more, the merrier,” be conscious of whose voices you're amplifying most. Your group's leadership should reflect the values and people you're focusing on promoting.
- Do reach out. Find other organizations in your space and encourage them to join in. Co-hosting events is a great way to get to know new faces, and even promote your company name.
- Do try, experiment, learn, and try again. Not all of your events will be a resounding success (or turn out quite like you envisioned), and that's okay! Be proactive about receiving feedback so you can continue to learn as a group.
- Do have fun. One of the main pillars of both FC Allies and Women@FC is community. So whether you're learning from a speaker, working on a community service project, or sharing a drink at a happy hour, remember you're all in this together and encourage your employees to bring their compassion and enthusiasm first.
- Don't pander. Your employees are adults — treat them as such. No one will appreciate cheap ploys and empty gestures. Be sincere.
- Don't expect every person who falls into a particular minority group to participate. It's not fun if you make it homework, and no one appreciates being tokenized.



- Don't turn it into a publicity stunt. Remember: a couple of diversity events does not a press release make. While there are a number of ways diversity groups can be a boon to your company's success, remember that it's not a good look to seem like you're only doing it for press attention — it could easily backfire and damage your reputation as well as your internal culture.



Event and initiative ideas

Your best resource for events and activities will be your employees. But here are a few ideas based on events we've done at Funding Circle to get the discussion going:

- Host a potluck lunch. Whether there's a particular occasion or it's just for fun, this is a great low-cost opportunity to get people together. Send out a sign-up sheet about two weeks ahead of time so people have the chance to decide what they'll contribute.
- Plan a fun outing. Last year, Women@FC planned a group outing to see free Shakespeare in the Park! Think about what cost-effective activities people might be interested in doing outside of the office.
- Celebrate holidays. FC Allies hosted a Pride Week, which included a themed happy hour and a lunch presentation about the history of Pride. We've found that offering multiple ways to participate works well, since not everyone has a free lunch hour or is able to stick around after work.
- Create a Meetup group and invite others in your community. Women@FC hosts happy hours with other [women in fintech in San Francisco](#). Bonus: This can also be a great networking and recruiting tool!
- Give women and minorities at your company a voice. Women@FC hosts regular lunch and learns with a variety of women in leadership positions at Funding Circle to learn about their backgrounds, career paths, role models, and perspectives on growing your career as a woman in fintech.
- Watch a movie. Movie screenings are an easy way to entertain and educate your audience. Select a documentaries or biopics about key moments and figures in diversity history, and then host a discussion group.



Get involved

- Looking for a new job with a company that's diversity-conscious? [Check out our careers page.](#)
- Is your business expanding and it's time to explore financing options? [Apply for a business loan.](#)
- Do you currently hold a loan from Funding Circle? We'd love to hear about your experience. Email us at pr@fundingcircle.com.