DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL

2020 EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STUDY

ON DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

NOVEMBER 2020

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Message from the President & CEO

Destinations International believes in the importance of cultivating a tourism industry that represents a wide variety of individuals at every level of a destination organization. We celebrate the broad range of human differences among us, while also embracing the commonalities we all share.

We firmly stand by our belief that all industries should be open to everyone for opportunities and growth and that it is critical for destination organization CEOs and executive leaders to commit to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to drive a vision for change and be accountable for implementing that change.

In 2017, with the support of our board of directors, Destinations International decided to make Equity, Diversity and Inclusion a strategic goal for our organization to tackle key areas within the travel and tourism industry focused on CEO Engagement, Workforce Development, Industry Partnerships, University Partnerships and Research.

Through the passionate leadership of our committee co-chairs – Kellie Henderson of SearchWide Global, Al Hutchinson of Visit Baltimore and John Percy of Destination Niagara USA – and the entire Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, we have made EDI a priority for our organization. Since our first meeting in 2018, the committee has helped to shape the strategic direction to advocate and recognize that our industry must be a leader in cultivating an environment where everyone is welcome, where there is equitable access for all, and where everyone's voice and perspective can be heard.

This report, which first launched in 2019 with a survey to benchmark the diversity and inclusion within destination organizations, continued into 2020 to further collect baseline data by directly surveying our individual members. Our work to benchmark this research was made possible by the leadership and guidance of our EDI Research Sub-Committee. Special thanks to the Research Sub-Committee Chair, Connie Kinnard at the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau and all of the following sub-committee members:

- Amir Eylon, Longwoods International
- Jennifer Foster, STR, Inc.
- Charles Jeffers, Visit Baltimore
- Dzidra Junior, MGM Resorts International
- Alex Krosney, Travel Manitoba
- Neetu Singhal, Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Jessica Strasser, Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Crystal Walker, Dayton Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Sabrina Wilson, Miles Partnership

It is critical for destination organization CEOs and executive leadership to commit to EDI to drive a vision for change and accountability. A diverse and inclusive workplace is central to our industry's ability to attract, develop, and retain the talent it needs to remain competitive, drive innovation and maintain relevancy. We stand committed to our vision to implement Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategies and best practices and promise to work with our members and industry leaders to be the catalyst for change. There is much work to be done and we must all come together to advance these dialogues to drive solutions.

Don Welsh
President and CEO,
Destinations International

Introduction

Destinations International is committed to transforming destination communities through thought leadership, best practices and tools-based initiatives on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) principles to empower our members so their destinations excel. To develop and advance strategies to achieve our vision, we needed to gather baseline data from our members to establish a starting point on behalf of the destination marketing and management industry.

In 2019, Destinations International launched its first study to benchmark the diversity of our destination member organizations to advance our conversations on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion by examining demographics of board leadership, executive leadership and some general policies. In August 2020, we looked to further document and collect baseline data by directly surveying individuals within the Destinations International membership to help establish a snapshot of our workforce examining overall demographics and perceptions on EDI within their destination organizations.

We know it will be critical for destination organization leaders to embrace the role that Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will play to move our industry forward, especially at a time when our industry must face one of the most challenging moments in modern history to recover from the devastating impact on the travel industry due to COVID-19.

The following summary report outlines baseline results, collected from 718 respondents, identifying age, gender, title, racial ethnicity, sexual identity, religion, ability and military veteran status. Additionally, nearly 20 statements on EDI were developed to measure how destination organizations and staff embrace Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

> ***We know it will be critical for destination organization leaders to embrace the role that equity, diversity and inclusion will play to move our industry forward.***
>
> *- Don Welsh, President & CEO, Destinations International*

Special thanks to the EDI Research Committee for their leadership, guidance and support to produce this study:

Connie Kinnard,
Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (Chair)

Amir Eylon,
Longwoods International

Jennifer Foster,
STR, Inc.

Charles Jeffers,
Visit Baltimore

Dzidra Junior,
MGM Resorts International

Alex Krosney,
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Arlington Convention & Visitors Bureau

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Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau

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Miles Partnership

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY

The Business Case for EDI

McKinsey & Company researched the financial impact of diversity of companies across industries. Their May 2020 report, *Diversity Wins*, reviewed 1,000+ companies in 15 countries globally. They found that companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 36% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians and 25% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians for gender diversity. In contrast, their report also revealed the negative impact to companies in the bottom quartile for both gender and ethnic and cultural diversity as being 29% less likely to achieve above-average profitability than were all other companies in their data set.

"Companies in the top quartile for both gender and ethnic diversity are 12% more likely to outperform all other companies in the data set," according to the 2020 *Diversity Wins* report by McKinsey & Company

In addition, there has been countless published research from academia, corporations and other organizations that further supports that diverse and inclusive teams tend to be more creative and innovative than homologous teams by bringing different experiences, perspectives and approaches to solving day-to-day business challenges.

Diverse teams are also better equipped to target and serve diverse customer markets, such as women, ethnic minority, and LGBTQ+ communities who currently represent an increasing share of consumer purchase power that is often overlooked or not leveraged by many organizations.

Also, according to the McKinsey & Company Report, the business case for diversity suggests that diversity beyond gender and racial ethnicity, as well diversity of experience, are also likely to bring some level of competitive advantage for organizations that are able to attract and retain diverse talent.

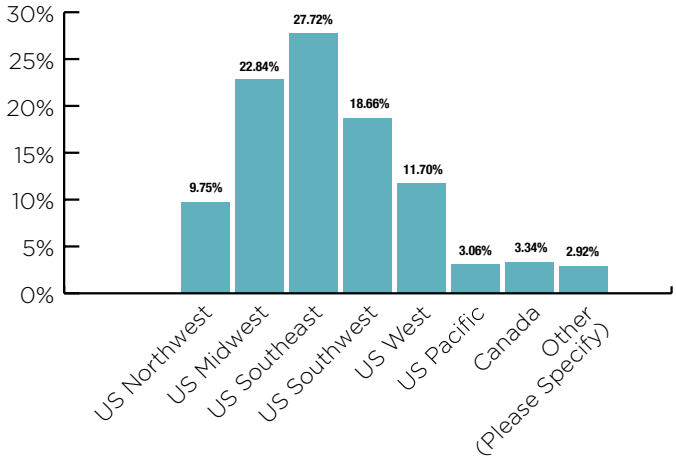
In the report that follows, Destinations International will highlight the opportunities and importance of why initiating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion best practices will be critical for the recovery and growth of our industry.

> ***"Companies in the top quartile for both gender and ethnic diversity are 12% more likely to outperform all other companies in the data set."***
>
> *- 2020 Diversity Wins report by McKinsey & Company*

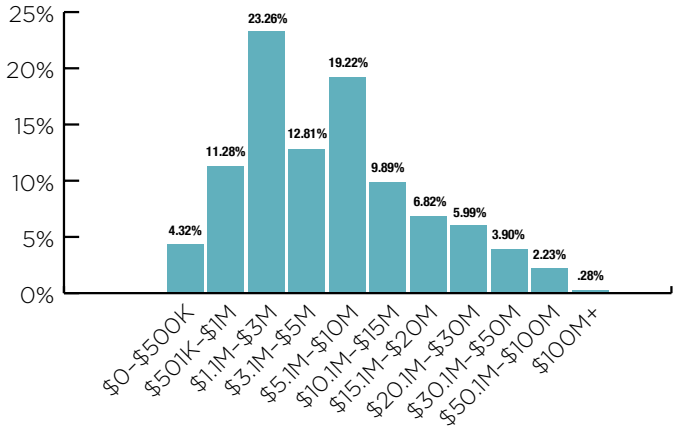
DATA, INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

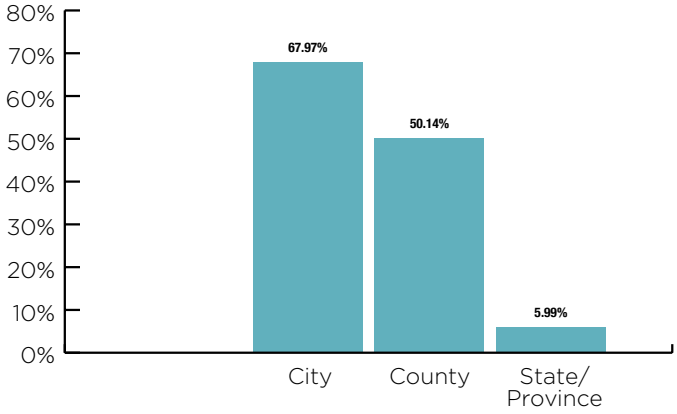
Geographic Region



Annual Operating Budget

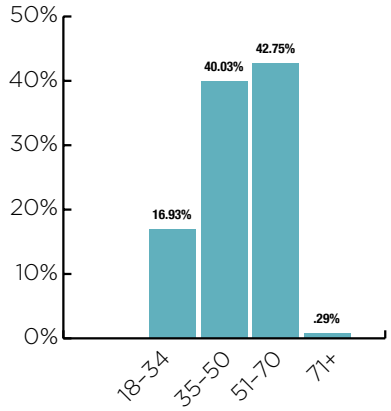


Promotional Geography

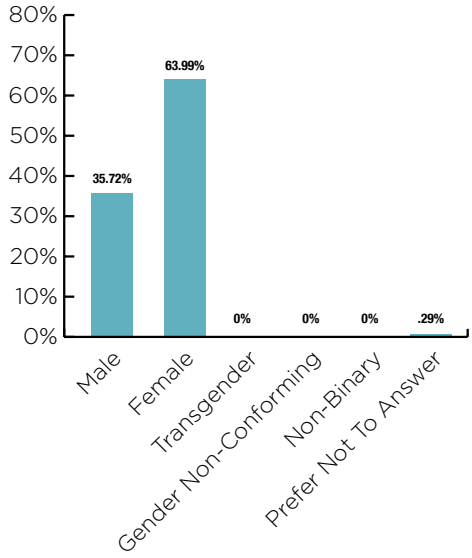


DEMOGRAPHICS

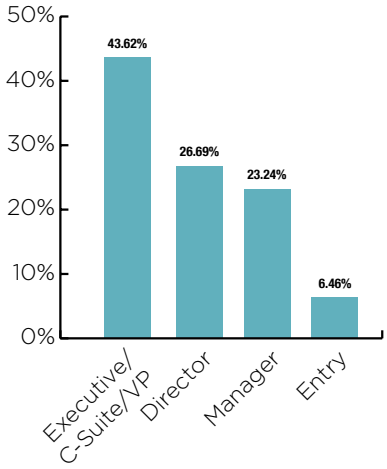
Age



Gender

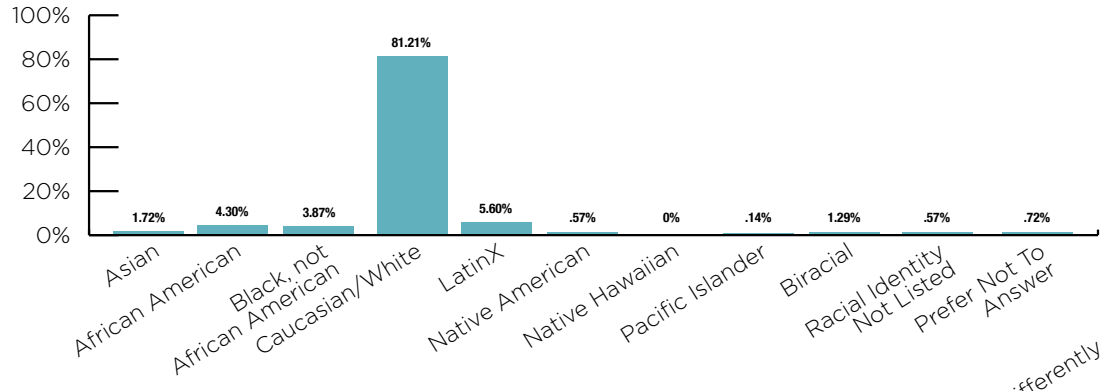


Title

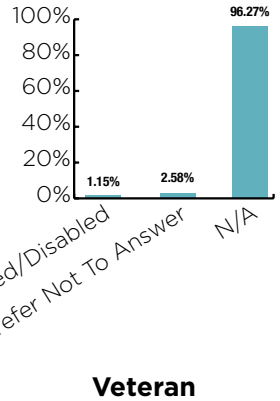


I CURRENTLY IDENTIFY AS:

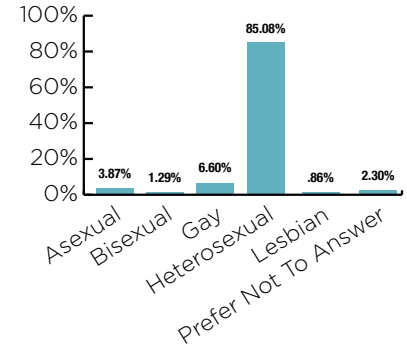
Racial Ethnicity*



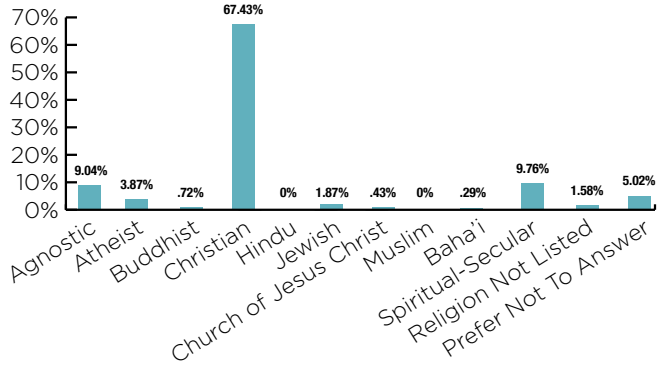
Ability



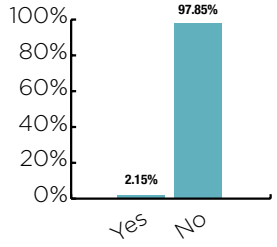
Sexuality



Religion



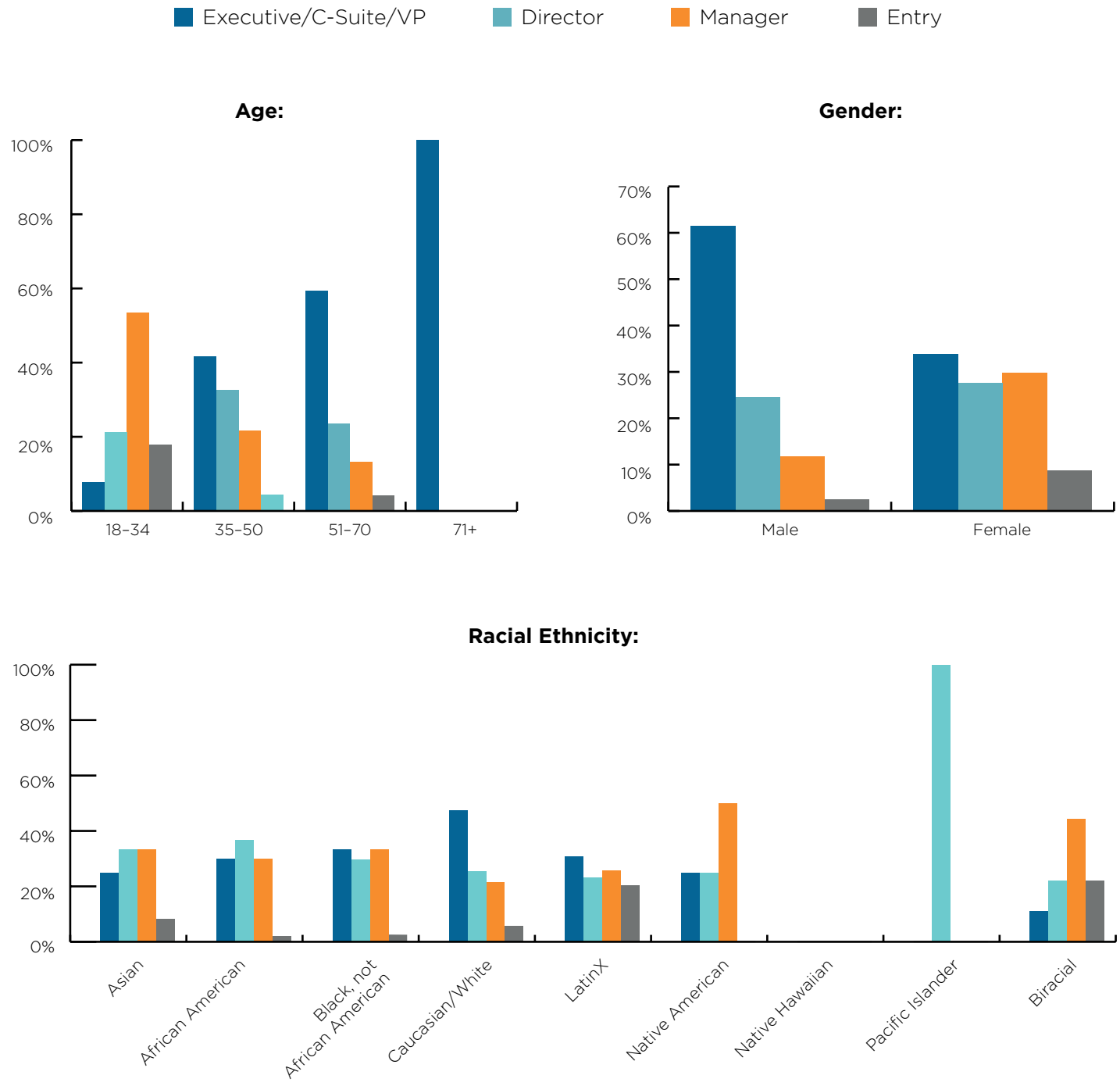
Veteran



*For the purposes of this survey the racial categories selected align with the employment data collected by the EEOC. We recognize that the categories do not fully represent the diversity within groups.

AGE, GENDER & RACIAL ETHNICITY

To take a deeper look at what diversity looks like within destination organizations, the below data looks at age, gender and racial ethnicity as it relates to title within the workplace.



UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

We asked respondents to rate their level of agreement, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, on statements summarizing the role Equity, Diversity and Inclusion plays within their destination organizations.

Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree

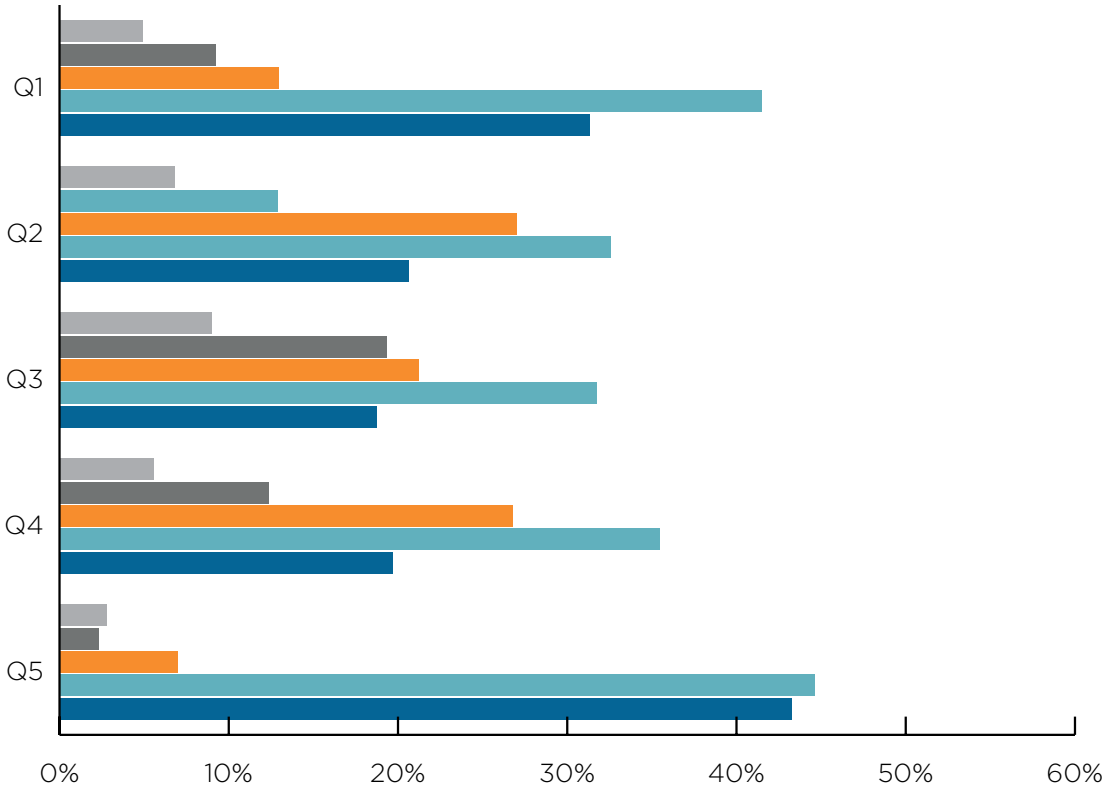
Q1: Our destination organization utilizes diverse representation in our marketing and media promotions.

Q2: Our destination organization embodies equity, diversity and inclusion.

Q3: Our destination organization does a good job at bringing up equity, diversity and inclusion in meetings and annual planning.

Q4: Our destination organization does a good job of bringing in a diverse workforce and being inclusive.

Q5: I have a clear understanding of what cultural diversity and inclusion is.



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Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree

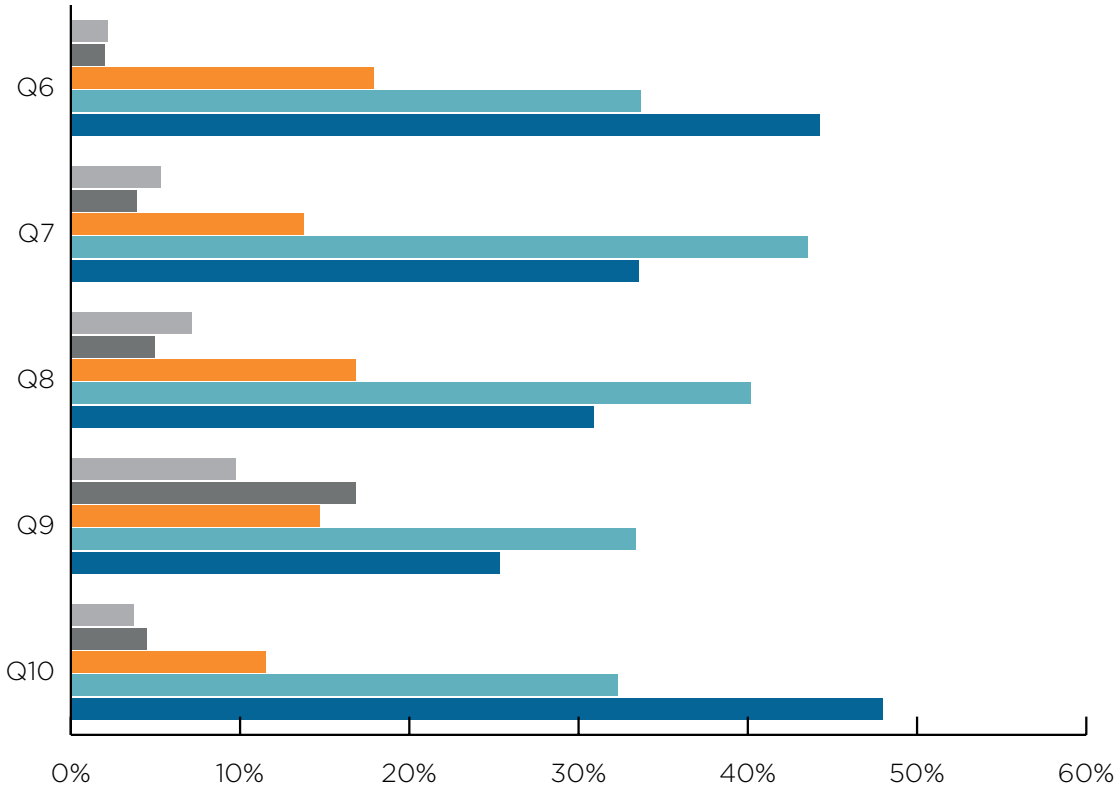
Q6: I want to see more cultural diversity in our destination organization.

Q7: Perspectives like mine are included in decision making.

Q8: I can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences.

Q9: There is cultural diversity among the employees at our destination organization.

Q10: Our destination has provided everyone access to equal employment opportunities regardless of their difference.



UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

We asked respondents to rate their level of agreement, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, on statements summarizing the role Equity, Diversity and Inclusion plays within their destination organizations.

Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree

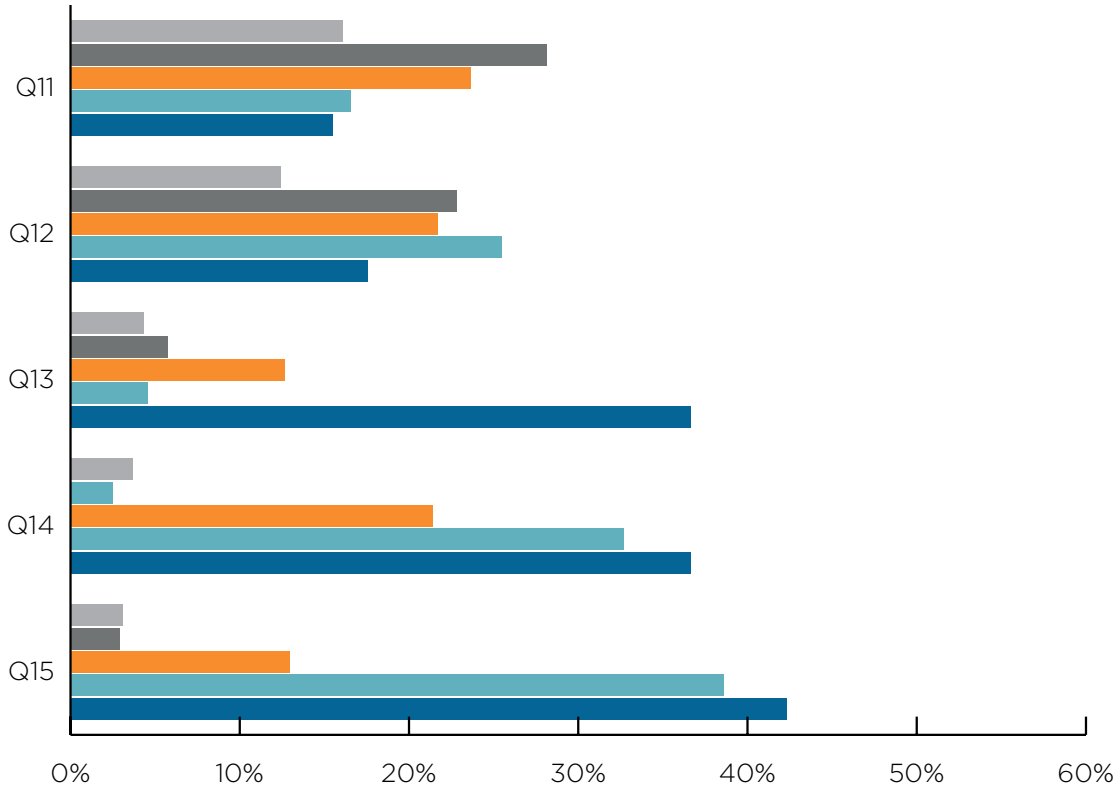
Q11: Our destination organization has provided training programs that promote understanding and mitigation of unconscious bias.

Q12: Our destination organization has provided training programs that promote diversity and inclusion.

Q13: Our destination organization provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs.

Q14: Management demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of employees with disabilities.

Q15: Employees of different backgrounds interact well within our destination organization.



UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

We asked respondents to rate their level of agreement, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, on statements summarizing the role Equity, Diversity and Inclusion plays within their destination organizations.

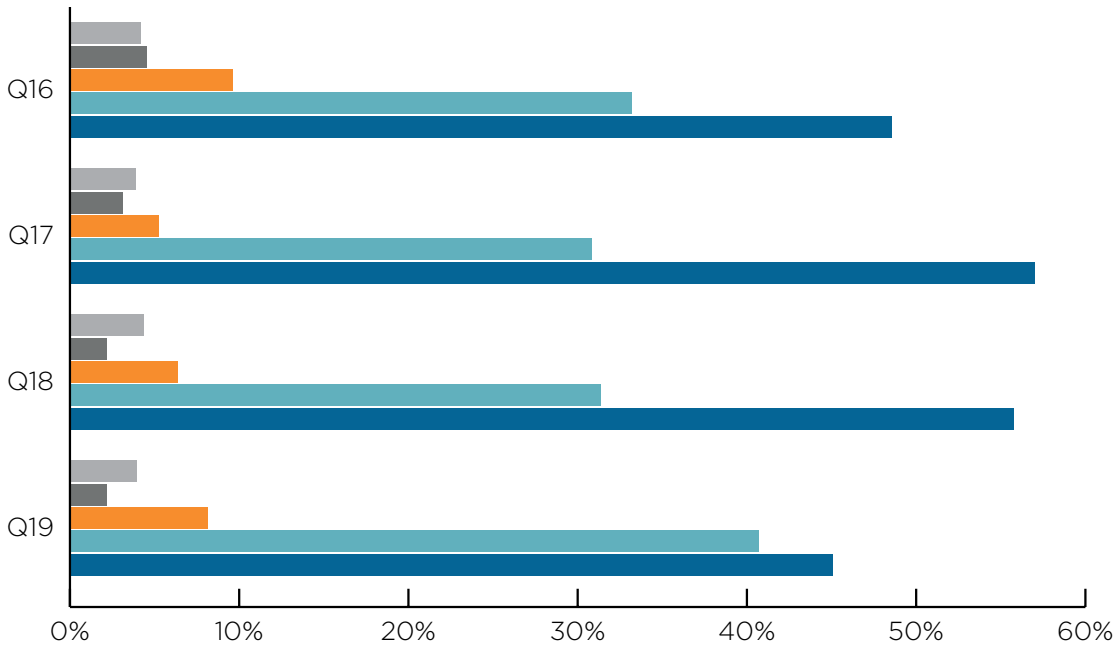
Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree

Q16: I am comfortable talking about my background and cultural experiences with my colleagues.

Q17: I feel included and respected within my destination organization.

Q18: People of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued at our destination organization.

Q19: Our organization is committed to diversity and inclusion.



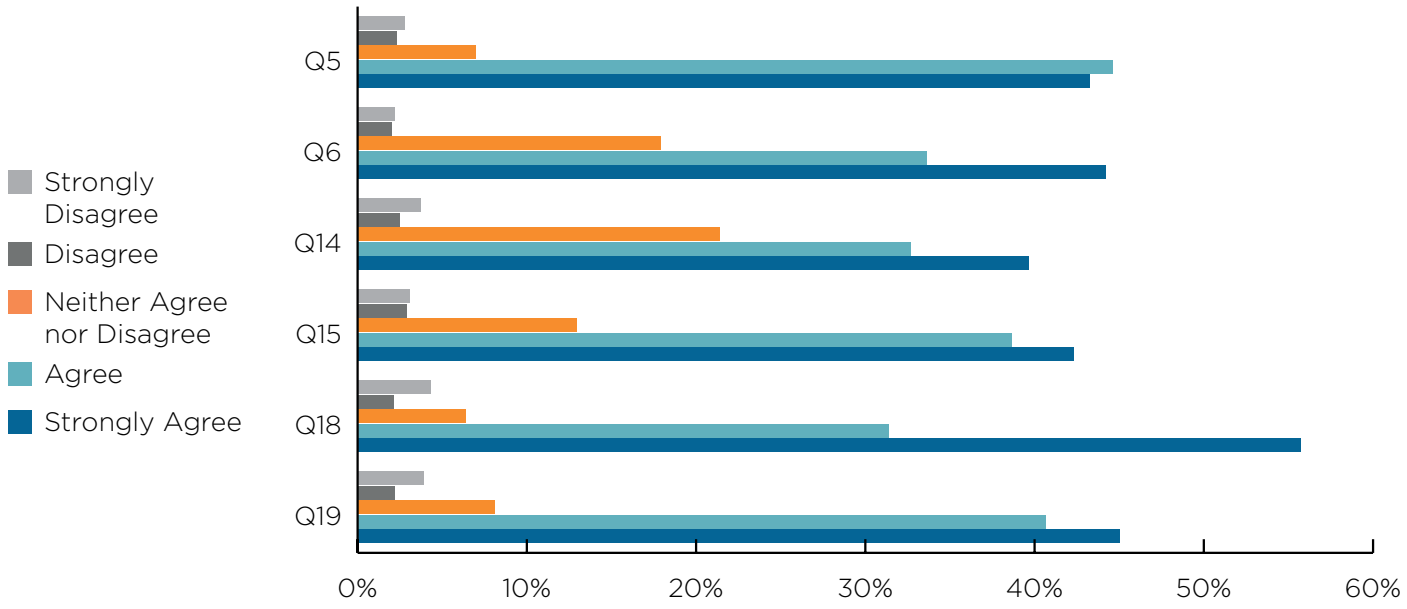
UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

Generally, across the board, respondents agree or strongly agree with the below statements:

- I have a clear understanding of what cultural diversity and inclusion is. (Q5)
- I want to see more cultural diversity in our destination organization. (Q6)
- Management demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of employees with disabilities. (Q14)
- Employees of different backgrounds interact well within our destination organization. (Q15)
- People of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued at our destination organization. (Q18)
- Our organization is committed to diversity and inclusion. (Q19)

Opportunity:

There is a general sense of support and desire for Destinations International members to support and grow Equity, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives within their respective organizations. The above sentiments are only a starting place, however. Additional data in this report also reveals the need to help foster a deeper understanding on how to define and implement EDI strategies.



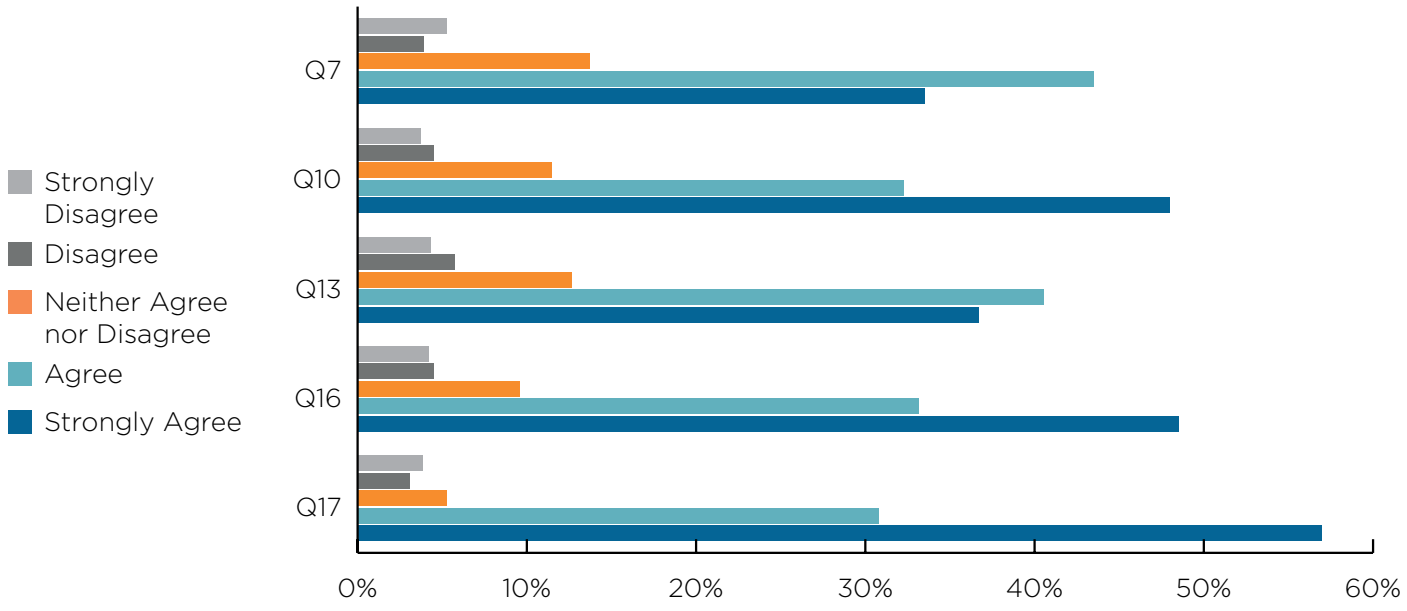
UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

Data reveals there is an opportunity to be deliberate on how destination organizations can create a career path for entry to mid-level employees and 18-34 year olds to cultivate and develop future leadership.

- Perspectives like mine are included in decision making. (Q7)
- Our destination has provided everyone access to equal employment opportunities regardless of their difference. (Q10)
- Our destination organization provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs. (Q13)
- I am comfortable talking about my background and cultural experiences with my colleagues. (Q16)
- I feel included and respected within my destination organization. (Q17)

Opportunity:

Studies on EDI show that diversity is particularly important to Generation Y, also known as Millennials, born between 1981–1996. There is an opportunity for training and education for entry and mid-level employees that would have a long-term impact to implement EDI practices and be deliberate on succession planning to grow diverse candidates in executive roles and positions. Additionally, sentiment reveals that there is a need to establish best practices for this group to have a voice to foster a culture of inclusion and openness to build a sense of community within organizations. Finally, an inclusive destination organization represents an inclusive community. One that will help acquire new talent not just for the destination organization, but potentially new residents through the halo effect of the promotions and investments destination organizations provide.



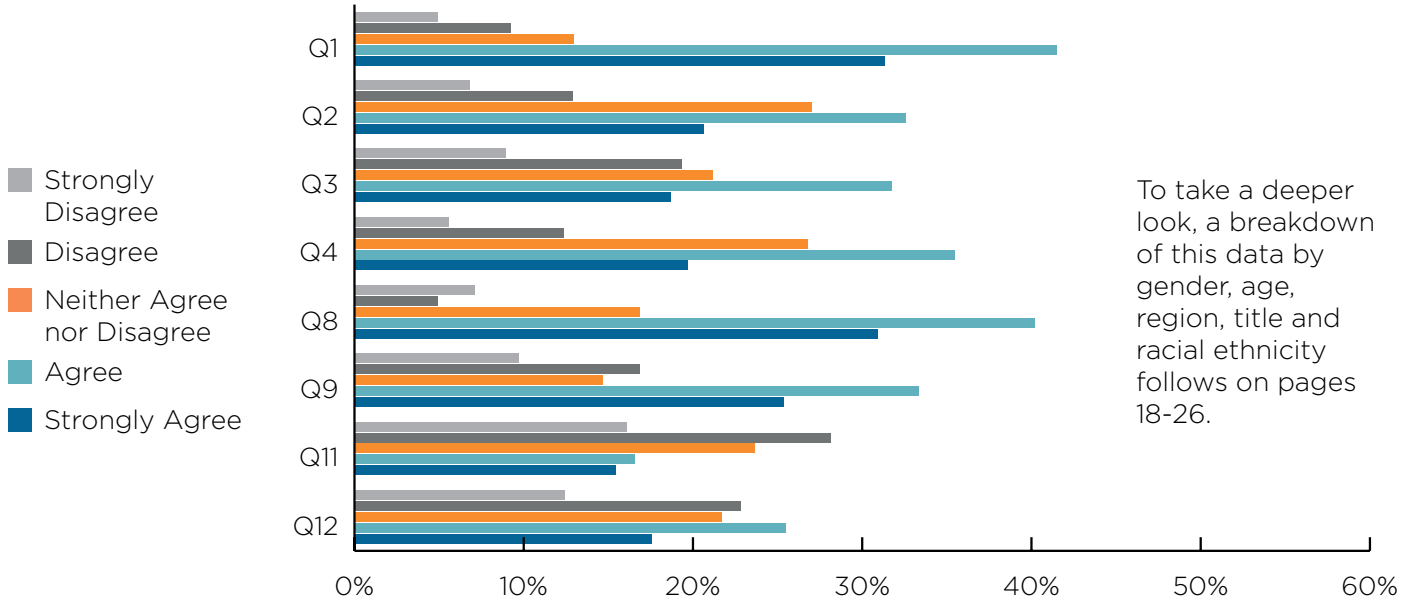
UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

Data reveals there is an urgent need and opportunity for self-awareness training and additional educational offerings on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

- Our destination organization utilizes diverse representation in our marketing and media promotions. (Q1)
- Our destination organization embodies equity, diversity and inclusion. (Q2)
- Our destination organization does a good job at bringing up equity, diversity and inclusion in meetings and annual planning. (Q3)
- Our destination organization does a good job of bringing in a diverse workforce and being inclusive. (Q4)
- I can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences. (Q8)
- There is cultural diversity among the employees at our destination organization. (Q9)
- Our destination organization has provided training programs that promote diversity and inclusion. (Q11)
- Our destination organization has provided training programs that promote understanding and mitigation of unconscious bias. (Q12)

Opportunity:

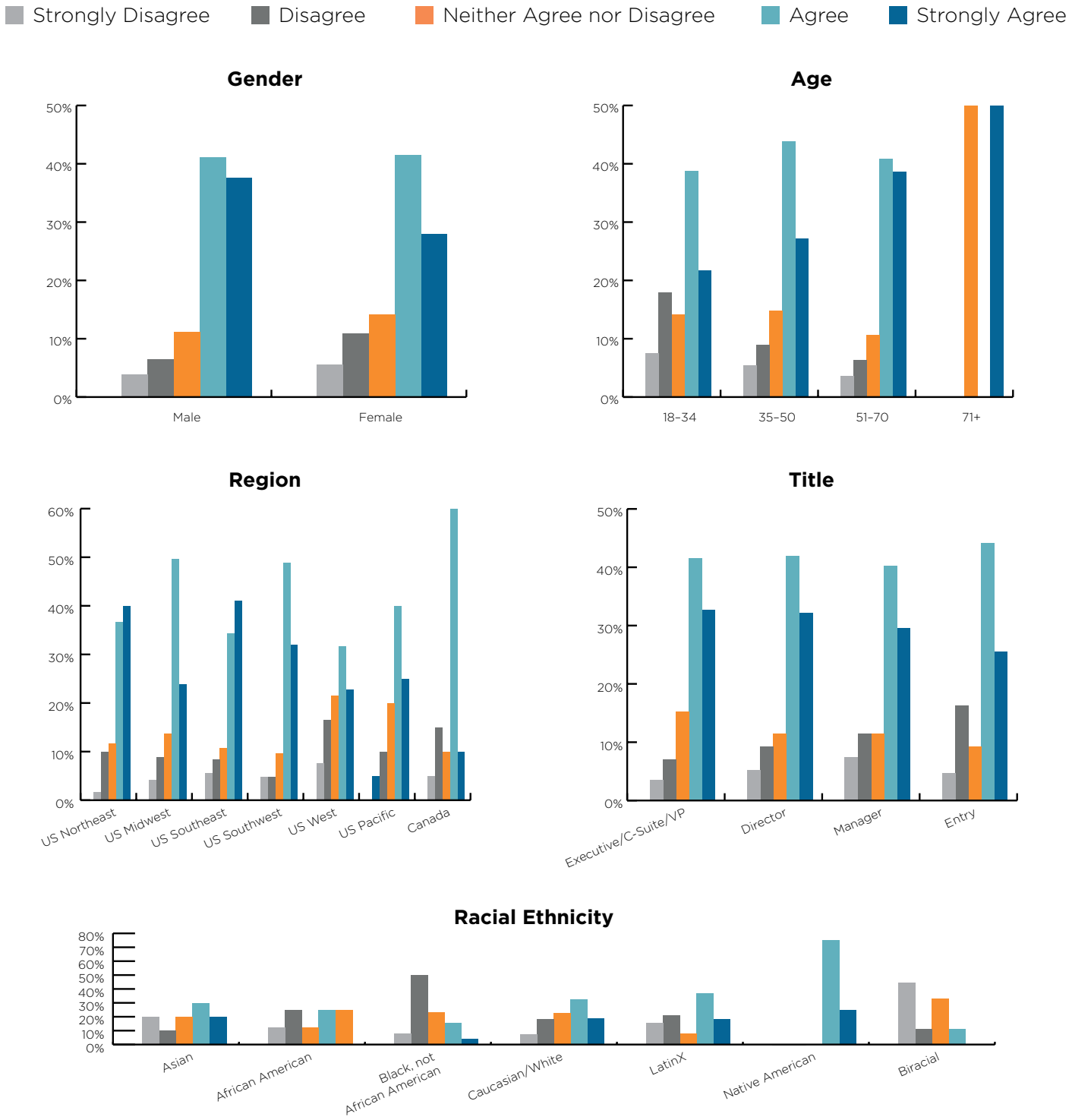
In general, there is a desire amongst individuals for more education and training on EDI within the destination marketing and management industry. Data displays a critical need for training and education program offerings to gain a better understanding of one's self-awareness on topics and terminology surrounding EDI, specifically understanding unconscious bias and microaggressions, and their impact on decision making and organizational culture.



To take a deeper look, a breakdown of this data by gender, age, region, title and racial ethnicity follows on pages 18-26.

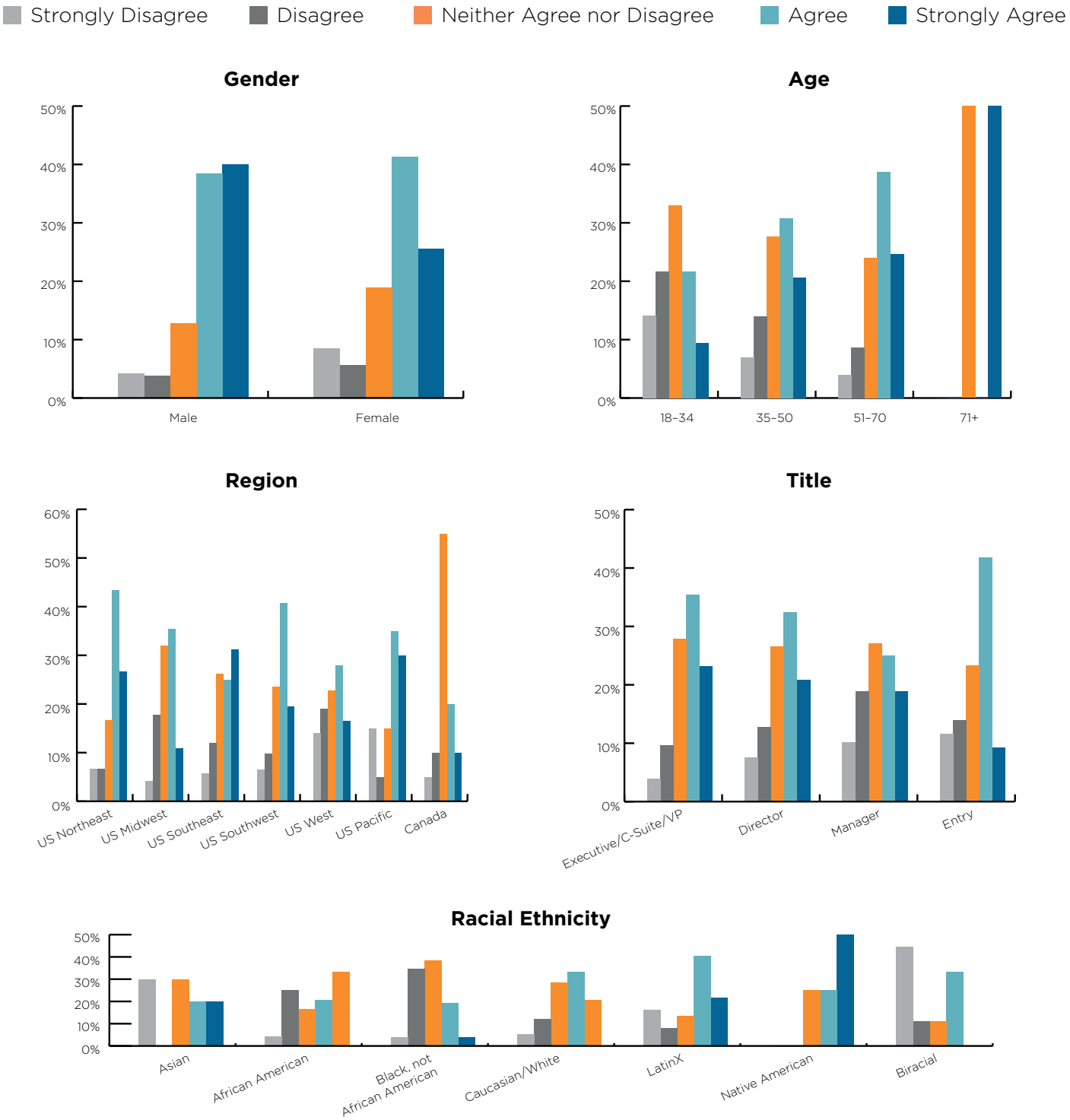
UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

Our destination organization utilizes diverse representation in our marketing and media promotions.



UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

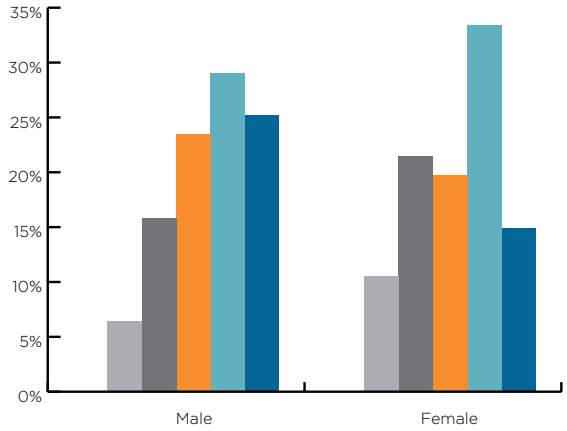
Our destination organization embodies equity, diversity and inclusion.



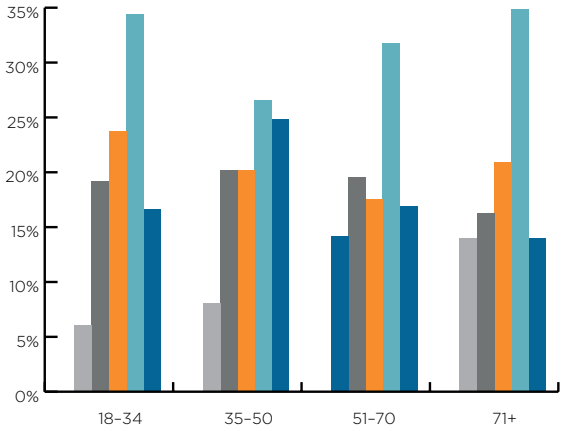
UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

Our destination organization does a good job at bringing up equity, diversity and inclusion in meetings and annual planning.

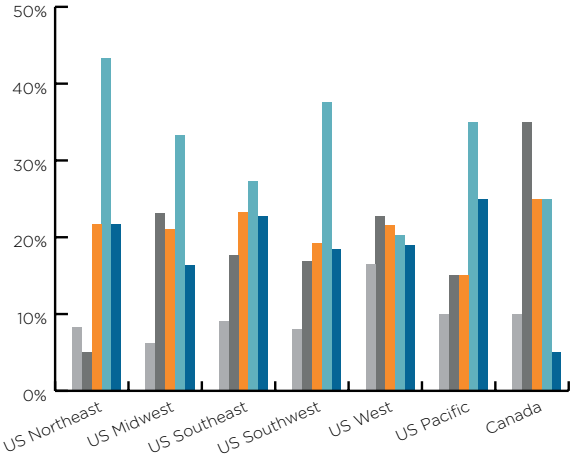
Gender



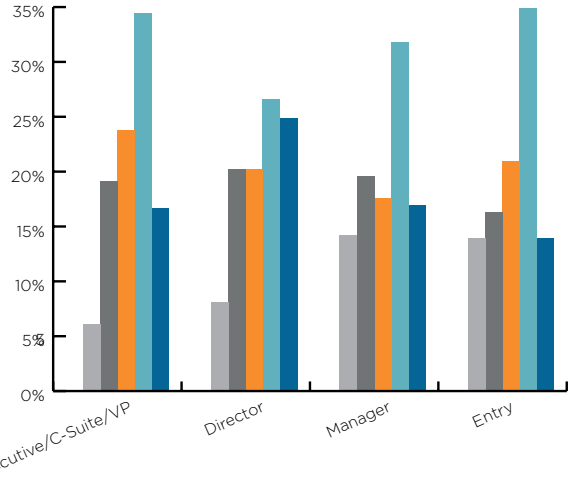
Age



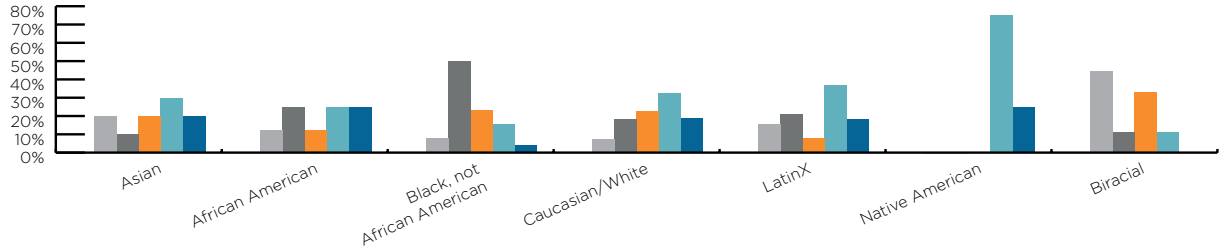
Region



Title

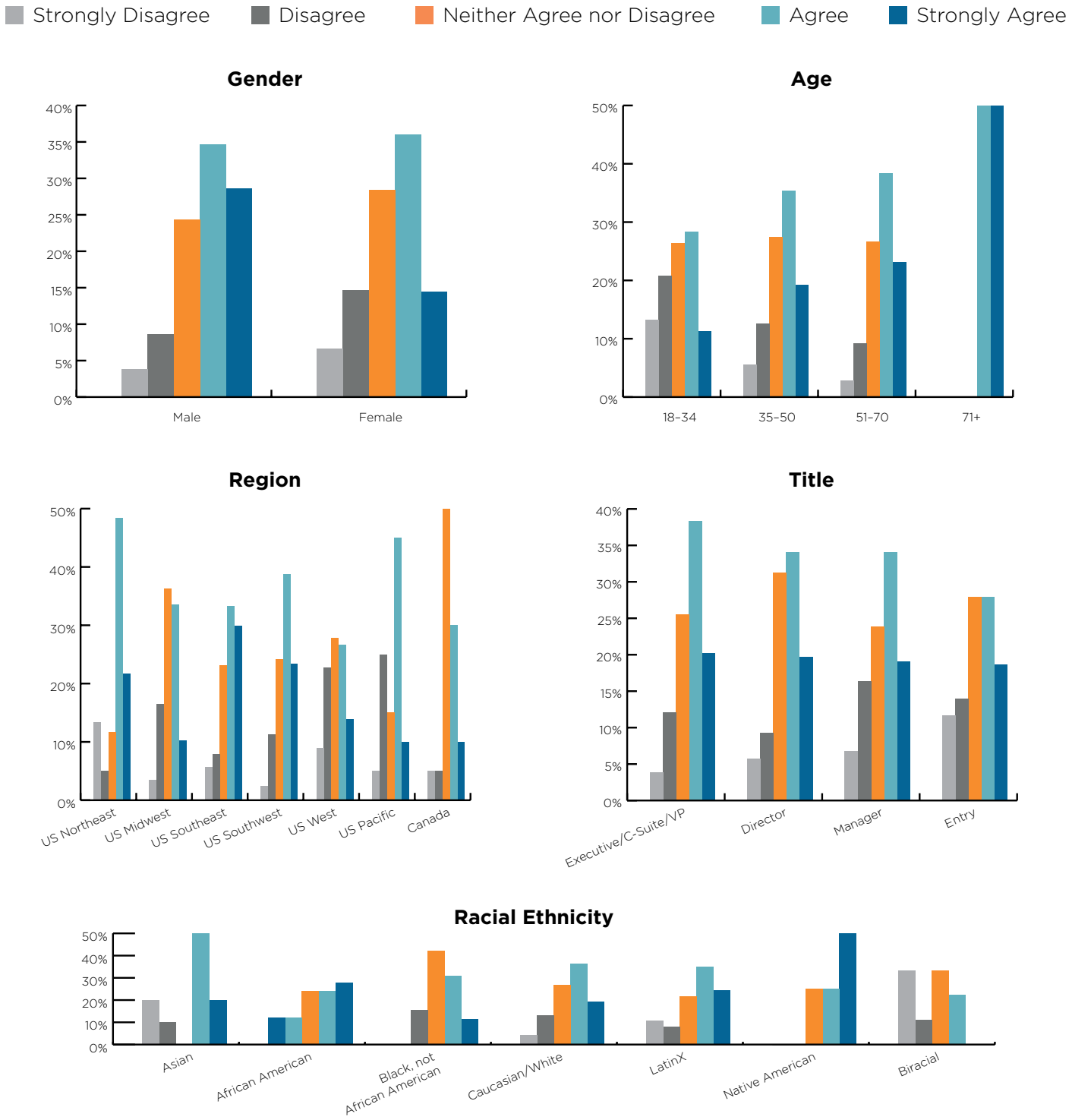


Racial Ethnicity



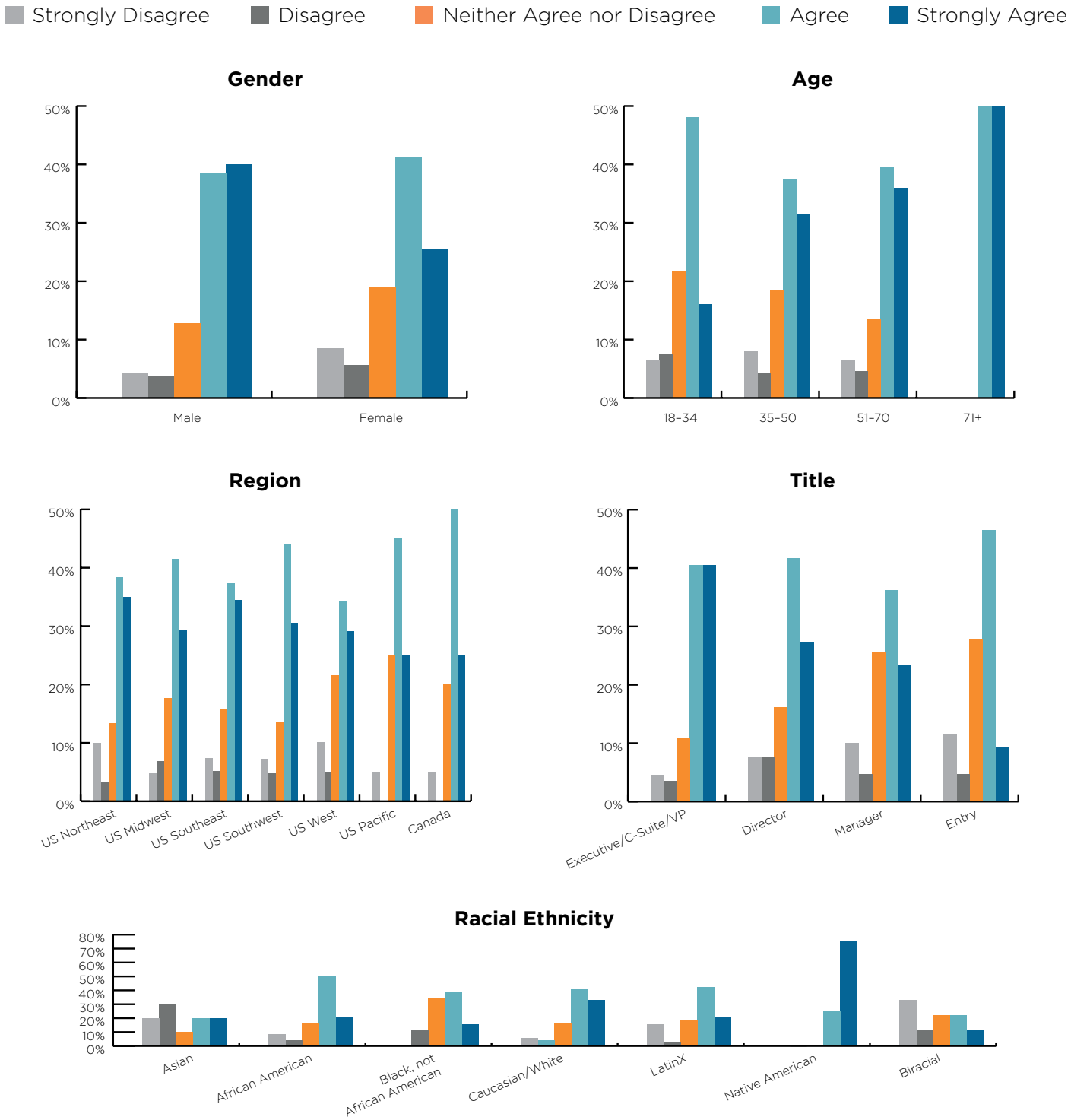
UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

Our destination organization does a good job of bringing in a diverse workforce and being inclusive.



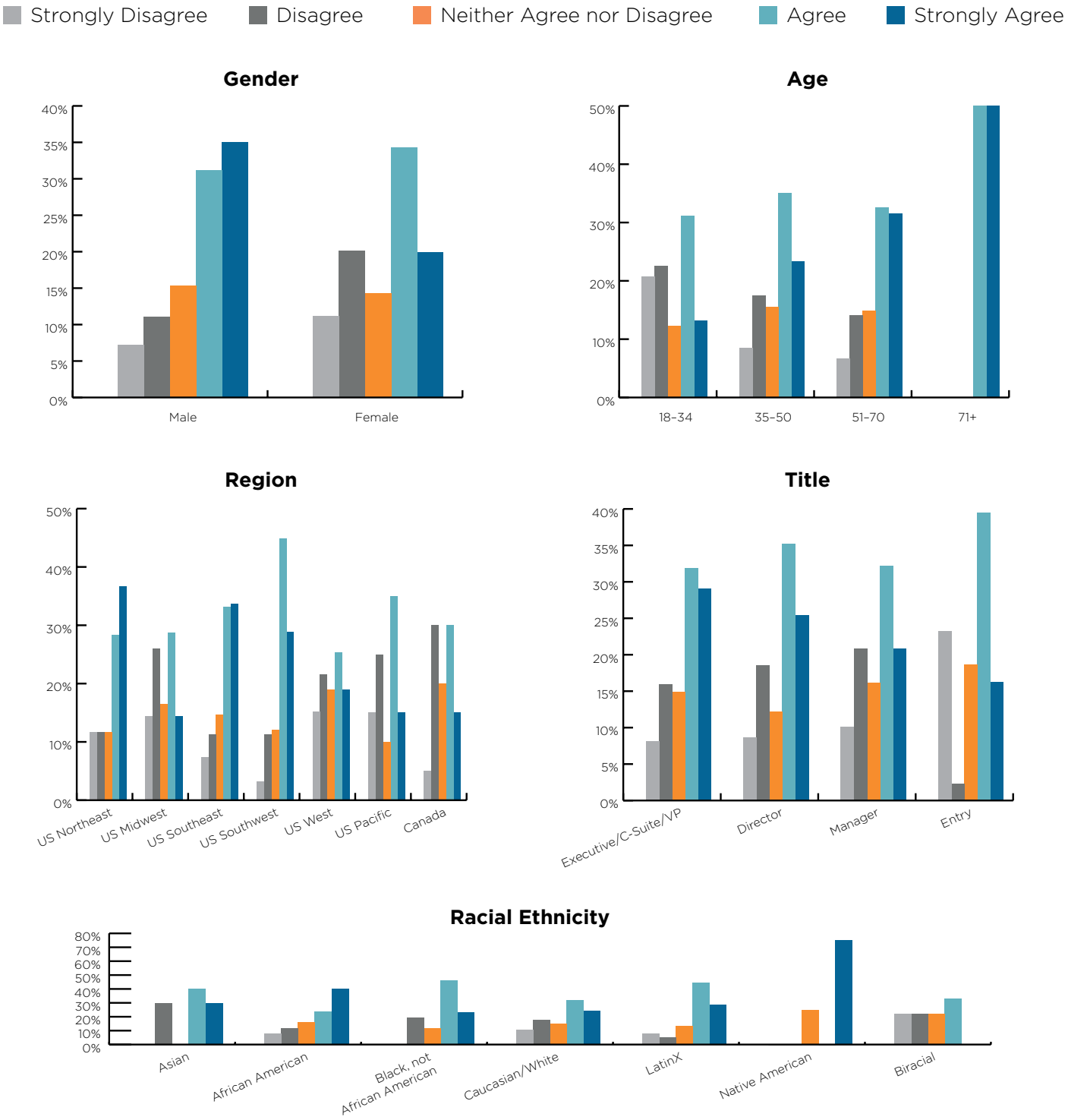
UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

I can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences.



UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

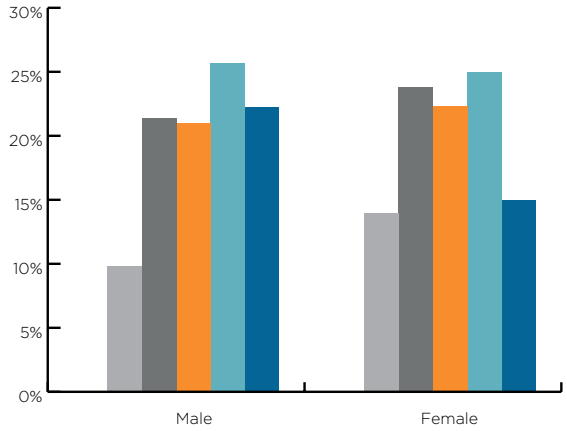
There is cultural diversity among the employees at our destination organization.



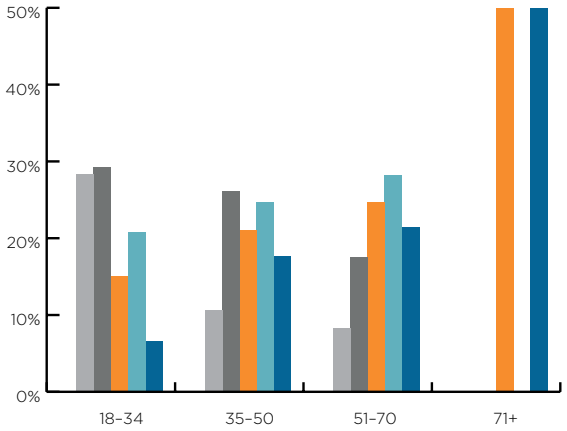
UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

Our destination organization has provided training programs that promote diversity and inclusion.

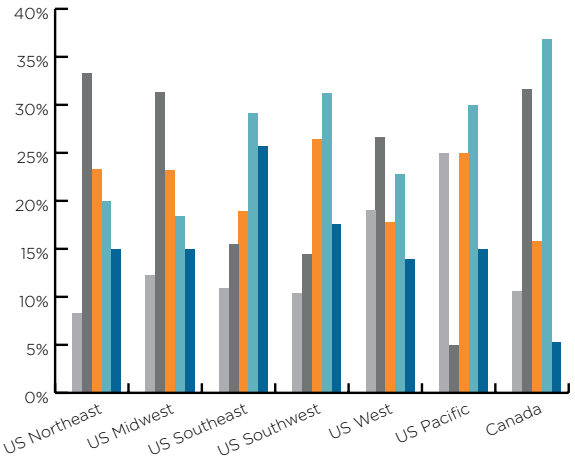
Gender



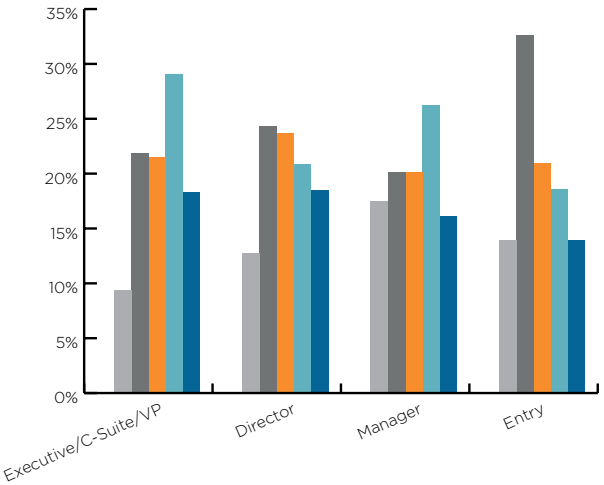
Age



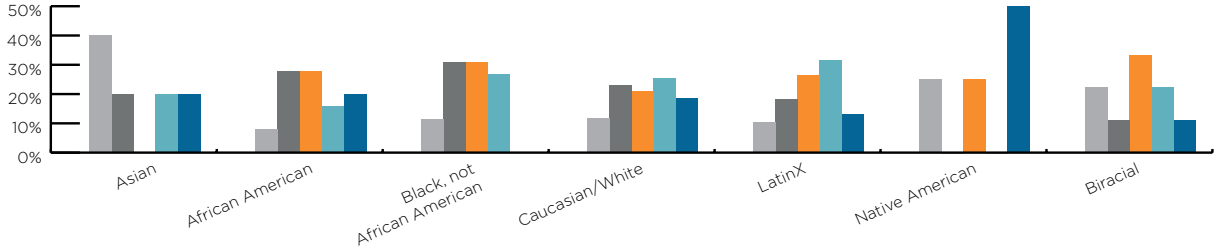
Region



Title

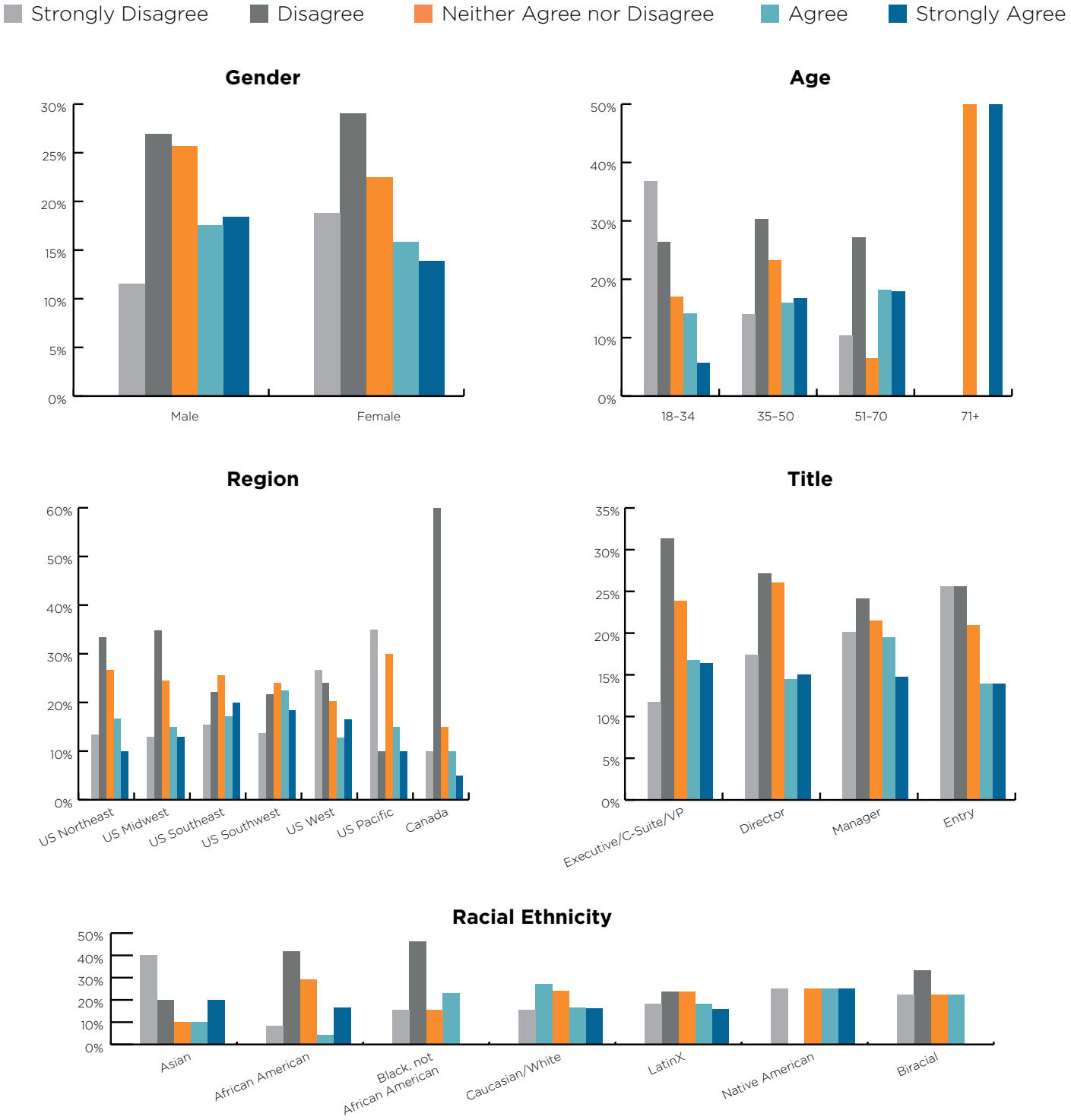


Racial Ethnicity



UNDERSTANDING EDI WITHIN DESTINATION ORGANIZATIONS

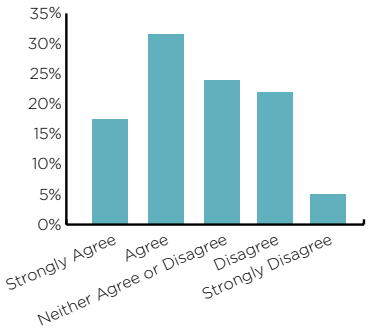
Our destination organization has provided training programs that promote understanding and mitigation of unconscious bias.



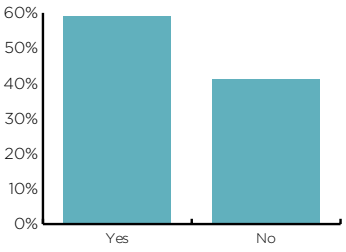
GOVERNANCE & POLICY

In 2019, Destinations International launched its first study to benchmark the diversity of our destination member organizations to advance our conversations on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion by examining demographics of board leadership, executive leadership and some general policies.

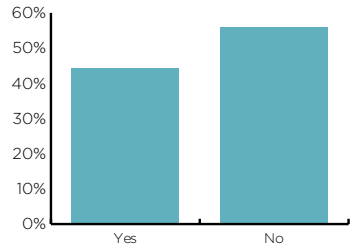
Your Board of Directors/Governing body accurately represents the destination you promote in regards to diversity.



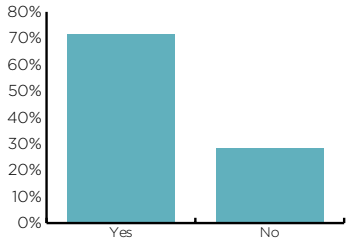
Do you have a staff member who sells the destination to diverse market segments?



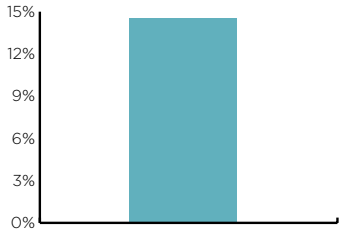
Do you have a staff member whose responsibilities include connecting with the community in regards to diversity initiatives?



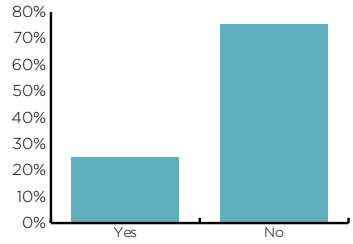
Is diversity a component of your marketing and/or promotions plan?



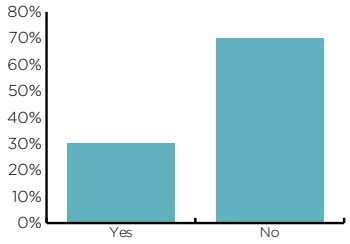
What percentage of your marketing/ promotions budget is focused on diversity?



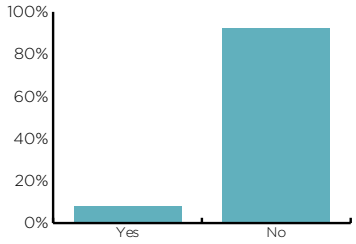
Is diversity a criteria for vendor selection for your organization?



Does your organization budget or grant money towards diversity initiatives in your community?



Does a percentage of your tourism funds have to be allocated for diversity initiatives?



Opportunity:

In a recent study by SearchWide Global, the leading executive search firm in the travel and tourism space, it was found that destination organization boards were typically dominated by males over 56 years of age, and 65% of destination organization CEOs were dissatisfied with the ethnic diversity on their boards. In collaboration with SearchWide Global and DMOproz, Destinations International issued a white paper on a step-by-step approach for destination organizations to implement board diversity. Additionally, there is a critical need and opportunity for more destination organizations to establish supplier diversity requirements or programs, ultimately contributing to the idea of cultivating diverse perspectives to help execute business strategies.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

WE HAVE WORK TO DO.

The intention of this report was to lay a foundation and gather baseline data from our members to establish a starting point on behalf of the destination marketing and management industry. Our findings have identified that there is a need and desire for destination organizations to take full advantage of the opportunity to drive growth in diverse leadership representation at the executive and board levels, the need to be deliberate in cultivating a diverse and inclusive talent pipeline, and understanding the business case for diversity to drive innovative thought and financial opportunity to help our destination organizations prosper and maintain relevance.

In 2021, Destinations International will implement an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy to take the following actions on the opportunities suggested in this report:

- **Establish an actionable CEO pledge for destination organizations** to solidify their commitment to implement EDI best practices to strengthen leadership accountability and advance opportunities for diverse talent into executive, management and board roles.
- **Develop and offer opportunities for deeper learning** of self-awareness training and EDI educational programming.
- **Set industry best practices and standards** to help develop and cultivate diverse candidates for leadership roles within destination organizations by providing access to resources and career-advancing opportunities.
- **Continue to identify, benchmark and track metrics** to annually measure progress and growth within destination organizations to establish industry standards and promote accountability for EDI best practices and initiatives.
- **Develop and launch an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit** to support and provide Destinations International members with the resources and guidance to implement EDI strategies within their respective destinations.

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