Our Commitment

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Axios
Our mission is to create a better world within our company than the world around us— a company that is just, fair, transparent, diverse, equitable and inclusive for all people and that is held accountable for these stated values.

We believe that:

- Diversity, equity and inclusion are the pillars upon which a sustainable, respectable, successful, and worthy company is built.
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion are business and moral imperatives.
- Every employee must embrace these values in order for us to succeed and must adhere to the processes that support them.
- These ideals will crumble without sustainable and maintained structures in place.
- DEI underlies all parts of Axios, from the hiring process to developing accessible technologies to fostering DEI values in our editorial department.
- HR and DEI are inextricably linked — every single part of the employee experience is designed through the lens of DEI.
We believe in diversity: Unique identities, life experiences, differing perspectives, and nuanced opinions inform the debate needed for both innovation and success. Diversity is the spark of creative thought while uniformity is its death.

Diversity is the fruit of an effective hiring process. Developing a diverse workforce is the direct result of prioritizing, investing and building a hiring team with a meticulously designed process to mitigate bias and ensure fairness. It requires work upfront to build a robust pool of candidates for every role each time. It is not about lowering standards or changing qualifications, as decisions are based on each candidate’s merit.

A lack of diversity is not a pipeline problem. This common excuse tends to be a crutch for underinvesting in a qualified hiring team and not doing the hard work. With support from our hiring partners and ample resources, time and collaboration, we believe we can produce a diverse pipeline of candidates for any role.

We believe in equity: Equal pay, opportunity and treatment stem from our fair and transparent system that aims to support, grow, reward, and advance all employees.

Data and analytics are key to understanding our company’s current status and setting goals.

- We designed our own Demographics and Inclusion survey because we couldn’t find one that was truly inclusive. We run this annually, analyze the results, and share and publish our demographics.

- We review and analyze our performance management outcomes to ensure all employees are being compensated fairly and have equitable access to opportunities and advancement.

Adhering to standard processes in hiring, onboarding, development, and offboarding ensures equity across the organization and the employee experience.
We believe in inclusion: All voices are welcomed in company conversations and all identities are respected and accepted. We use strengths-based assessments and User Guides to help individuals better understand one another and we mandate ongoing educational training for managers and leaders. Inclusion is at the core of all design — both for our products and the employee journey.

Psychological safety is a fundamental building block in any great company culture. We work to establish and protect psychological safety in several ways.

- **Transparency:** Leaders solicit and answer anonymous, often complicated or sensitive questions, without censorship, at our weekly staff meetings, department team meetings and company-wide retreats. We believe giving people the option of anonymity creates safety.
- **Candor:** We live this. We address questions head on, in real-time, with unapologetic candor. We admit our mistakes and we crave feedback.
- **Ongoing support:** In addition to the support an employee should receive from their manager, the People Ops team checks in with all new employees at the 30, 60 and 90-day mark to ensure our employees are being properly supported.
- **Mistakes:** Everyone learns from mistakes. We work to use these moments as opportunities to figure out what could be improved going forward, instead of assigning blame.

We encourage employee resource groups (ERGs) to create safe spaces for colleagues to build a community around a shared identity. Our ERGs offer employees...

- A sense of community and belonging.
- Professional development.
- Another avenue to strengthen relationships.
- A collective voice around a shared interest or concern that helps promote a more inclusive and respectful workforce.

We support Allyship. An ally uses their power to support and protect people who are marginalized or targeted for who they are and how they look. Allyship means educating oneself about the struggle and experiences of others, and doing one's part in resetting our social contract to one of justice and equality for all.

- We organize monthly programming for employees to help broaden their perspectives and foster allyship.
How it works

Transition
Support
Reward
Integrate
Develop
Attract
Attract

How we find talented candidates & how they find us

We proactively source candidates from and promote our jobs on myriad job boards to ensure we are reaching a broad audience that includes underrepresented communities. (an effective recruiting process does not rely on referral networks).

We attend annual conferences and career fairs that support our DEI initiatives.

We host events with partnership organizations to establish real bonds with underrepresented communities.

How we manage bias throughout the hiring process

We use standardized interview guides to ensure the interview team is asking the same well-defined, performance-based questions.

We use standardized rubrics that help interviewers assess their conversations post-interview.

We don’t allow interviewers to see other interviewer’s feedback until they first submit their own, in order to mitigate conformity bias. We also ask that people not share information with the interview team on candidates they refer.

We use “interview tests” to best assess abilities, not personalities.

Our hiring team counsels the interview committee to ensure we’re being thoughtful in our decision-making approach.

We ensure hiring managers make final decisions from a diverse group of qualified candidates.
How we determine compensation

We look to the following factors when validating compensation for each job:

- Internal compensation ranges (ensuring parity between similar jobs)
- External market data (both paid and free specialized sources)
  - Current market value for your skillset
- Current regional job market (cost of living is taken into account)
- Years of applicable work experience and total work experience
- Candidate’s compensation expectations

In an effort to combat perpetual and systemic pay inequality, we do not ask candidates for their current or historic compensation. We work with candidates to understand their compensation expectations and then validate that request with our robust internal and external data sources for that particular role.

How we use equity

We believe in ownership for all. All employees receive equity as part of their offer and we do not lower pay based on that offer. Equity is distributed in tiers, much like PTO, and the amount you are offered depends on your position.
Integrate

How we onboard

Onboarding leaves a lasting impression — the onboarding process starts the moment a candidate becomes a new hire and continues well after their first week.

Pre-boarding: We developed a pre-boarding program to help our team engage with our new hires before their first day. Helping the new hire begin the company integration process early and calm anxiety due to ambiguity around the first day.

Onboarding

- **First day & week:** A new hire’s first day/week is dedicated to company mission & values, relationship-building, job training, orientation to company tools and systems, logistics, IT, and team time. These sessions are updated frequently to ensure the new hires are receiving the most up-to-date information.

- **First month:** Every new hire participates in a monthly orientation - providing them with a deep dive on all things Axios. New hires get time with our founders, meet leaders across the organization, learn about our different business lines, values, standards and company history.

- **Ongoing:** We use Donut bot in Slack to help new hires track and manage the tasks and pace the content and guidance they’ll need throughout their first 100 days.

- **30/60/90:** We measure the success of our onboarding programs through the use of 30/60/90 day surveys of the manager and the new hire. This also helps us see who needs additional support.
How we ensure inclusion

User guides: Each employee completes a user guide within their first three months at Axios to help educate others on their style and preferences. This exercise helps new teammates integrate into their team quicker and adapt to their new environment.

Gallup Strengths: We are a Gallup StrengthsFinder-based organization. We believe that each individual has a unique set of strengths and prioritizing those strengths will help an individual tap their greatest potential. These strengths assessments serve as the basis for training and supports the relationship between the manager and their direct reports.

Allie bot administers our bi-annual Demographics and Inclusion survey. We use this tool as a safe and anonymous way for our employees to report non-inclusive behavior.

- Our custom demographic survey data includes the following: age, race/ethnicity, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, pronouns, veteran status, disability, caregiver status, educational attainment — including first generation status, religious affiliation, immigration status, and language proficiency.

- Our inclusion survey explores the areas of belonging, equity, and safety as it relates to inclusion in the workplace.
Develop

How we help our people grow

We use competency maps with growth tracks for each department and each function. We created these maps as a tool for both managers and individuals to use when discussing an individual’s growth. They both outline the five core competencies for all Axios employees and the function-specific competencies that help individuals understand their specific growth track.

How we assess performance

Every employee goes through a consistent process of goal-setting, assessment, and reward to ensure fairness, equity, and transparency. Our performance evaluation process runs bi-annually.

How we support ongoing education

Axios offers training on a variety of topics year-round. We have held trainings on: microaggressions, bystander intervention & allyship, etc.

Stay Smart is our monthly learning program that gives our staff the chance to learn about new topics and also get to know each other.

Axios invests massively in manager training to ensure managers can understand, support and help their employees grow and develop.

How we develop leaders

Our Emerging Leaders Program is designed to accelerate top talent and prepare them for what is ahead by exposing them to Axios’ business operations, the challenges and decision making process of executives, and develop a personal leadership philosophy that reflects their values.
Promotions & Merit Increases

A promotion is defined as a move from one position in the company to another with a significant increase in responsibility and impact to the company. Promoted employees will gain more responsibility, a different title and more compensation.

- Promotions are determined by three main things:
  - Growth in their job’s core competencies (skill)
  - Performance against goals
  - Embodiment of employee values

All employees being considered for a promotion must be considered on both the merits of their performance (both qualitative and quantitative) and their adherence to our cultural values.

A merit increase is a monetary, performance-based increase in compensation that employees may earn once a year. Merit increases are between 1%–5% of an employee’s base salary and are ultimately approved by HR and finance.

Awards

We have two quarterly awards to recognize extraordinary employee performance:

- **Be like Mike**: Axions nominate and recognize colleagues who go above and beyond in their generous and humble service.
- **Quarterly MVP**: Nominated by executive team
- **Topline Award**: Recognizes a team member who demonstrates exemplary contributions to our revenue by consistently exceeding goals, providing high-touch client service, and embodying company values.
- **Quarterly MVP**: Nominated and voted on by founders.
Support

How we invest in DEI

Axios has a top-notch professional People Ops team.

On budget reflects our commitment with a large annual amount set aside for DEI efforts (ERG budgets; recruiting conferences; DEI training; job boards for hiring; veteran fellowships; and our Emerging Leaders Program).

DEI programming: Across a quarter we host key events, including...

- Continuing the conversation with an external speaker and educators.
- Continuing the conversation via interal interviews with Axios colleagues.
- Quarterly ERG group meetings.
- Annual ERG sponsored company learning sessions.

Pandemic support: We created a family fund to support those disproportionately affected by COVID; built robust programming to promote good health; instituted new benefits and created varied programming to enhance engagement for all Axions to stay connected.

Floating religious/cultural days off: We evolved our three “religious holidays” benefit to be more inclusive. We now support employees applying these days in recognition of whatever religious OR cultural days they wish to celebrate.
Transition

How we offboard: How an employee leaves an organization should reflect an organization’s values. We work hard to keep all parties updated, organized and aligned so that communication and transitions from Axios are smooth and respectful for all.

How you become a manager: Management is a big responsibility at Axios. To ensure each of our new managers understands what is expected of them, we created a new manager guide that helps explain the Axios Management Principles, the tenets of a good manager, and the manager mindset. We also fold our new manager into our existing training that includes individual coaching sessions.

How you step into a new role: When an employee moves into a new role we work hard to make sure it’s a smooth transition. This includes mapping out what happens with their current responsibilities and ensuring clarity around their future responsibilities.
What we can do better
Increased transparency into our executive recruiting process. We do not share demographic data gathered during the hiring process, instead we:

- Established an ERG committee to meet with finalists for executive roles.
- Share more information for other positions (time to hire, total applicants, etc.)

Parental support through pandemic. We’re working hard to understand the nuanced experience of our parents throughout the pandemic so that we can offer as much creative support as possible.

What we need from you

Assume positive intent. We all have different life experiences and communication styles. When someone makes a mistake, be thoughtful, be kind and offer your support or perspective. We want to create a safe space to make mistakes and learn from them.

Keep speaking up and speaking out. Each Axion is expected to join our collective commitment to our DEI goals.

Help us maintain hiring standards. Hiring managers should take extra steps to ensure our DEI values are followed.

- We ask you to challenge your notion of what you need in a role — be honest about what skills can be taught and what you need on day one. Be open-minded to the possibility that what you think you need might be different from what you actually need.
- We all have implicit biases that may get in the way with how we think, hire and manage. Help us spot check for bias throughout the interview process, and the People team will do the same. Being a hiring manager is a huge responsibility — how you manage and who you hire sets a precedent among your team and future leaders.
- Protect the candidate experience by preparing for the interviews
What we need from you
Keep speaking up and speaking out
Each Axion is expected to join our collective commitment to our DEI goals to realize success.

Assume positive intent
Remember we all have different life experiences and communication styles.

Hiring managers should take extra steps to ensure our DEI values are followed
We ask you to challenge your notion of what you need in a role — be honest about what skills can be taught and what you need on day one. Be open-minded to the possibility that what you think you need might be different from what you need.

We all have implicit biases that may get in the way with how we think, hire and manage. Please reach out to the People Team if you have questions on any part of DEI and Axios’ commitment to hire and retain good people from different backgrounds. Being a manager is a huge responsibility — how you manage and who you hire sets a precedent among your team and future leaders.

Interviewers should prepare for the interviews by having a strong understanding of the role and what questions you’ll ask all candidates. Be as objective as possible in your assessment, which should be documented as quickly as possible into Greenhouse.

Help promote and share open roles in your network so we can broaden our accessibility and the audience it reaches.