ABOUT THE COMPANY

Surge Media has become a leading provider of Marketing and Communication solutions for companies and organizations throughout Atlantic Canada. With a growing team of 70 employees spread across three Atlantic provinces, (Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and New Brunswick) it is more important than ever to create an employment equity communications tool. Their mission is not just to satisfy their customers, their intention is to amaze those they do business with.

The company falls within a matrix structure; there's a dual chain of command on different client projects and the company is able to take on new projects without adding to the structure. Within each of the three offices there is a:

- Vice President
- Client Directors (2)
- Creative Director
- Associate Creative Director
- Graphic Designers (2)
- Copy Writer (2)
- Media Director
- Media Coordinator
- Digital Marketing Manager
- Digital Marketing Coordinator
- Project Manager
- Account Coordinator
- Technical Director
- Web Developers (3)

Aside from these employees, there are the following:

- President
- Chief Financial Officer
- Human Resources Director
- Human Resources Generalists (2)
- Payroll Supervisor
- Administrative Assistant
- Accounting (4)
- IT Manager
- IT Support Staff

In the next several years, the company plans to expand in to Quebec and Ontario, with this tool in place, it will be much more straightforward to integrate employees and ensure there's a clear understanding on employment equity. To align with their mission and remain competitive, instilling employment equity is a major step in the right direction. Although there are less than 100 employees and Surge is not a federally regulated company, Surge Media believes in equal opportunities for all and chooses to be a non-legislated Federal Contractor.

The Employment Equity Policy has been set in place and we are now moving forward with a company-wide workshop. The Human Resources department is currently based on the Halifax office, therefore a representative from the department will travel to each of the three locations to conduct the workshop to introduce employment equity and why it is important. The workshop should take roughly 30 to 40 minutes to complete.

Employment Equity
Workshop

October 15, 2018

Agenda

1. What is Employment Equity
2. Importance of Employment Equity
3. Target Groups
4. Types of Discrimination
5. Equity Committee
    1. Their Responsibilities
6. Goals of Employment Equity
7. Future Communication

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Exercise:

Face Value

○ Each person will get a playing card and a piece of tape

○ Without looking at your card, stick it to your forehead

○ Without using verbal cues, treat each other based on the value of the card. (I.e. if a person has a high value card, you may want to bow or if a person has a low value card, you might want to snub them)

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Before we begin, we'd like to take everyone through an exercise. You will each receive a playing card, please don't look at it, keep them face down. You will each get a piece of tape to stick the card to your head. Without using verbal cues, treat each other based on the value of the card. (I.e. if a person has a high value card, you may want to bow or if a person has a low value card, you might want to snub them)

Let the group mingle for 3 to 5 minutes (for a large group, you might to add a few extra minutes). After a few minutes of mingling, have the participants form groups based on what they think the value of their card. High cards on one side, low cards on the other and middle cards in the middle. Once each group is formed, participants may look at their cards.
***NOTES**: For smaller groups, you may have to choose the cards rather than hand out cards at random. Be sure that there is a good mix of high, low and middle cards. Include at least one ace.*

Exercise
Re-group

- How did you know if you were a high card? Low card? Middle Card?
- How did you treat high cards? Low cards? Middle cards?
- Who decided which cards are more valuable than others?
- How about Aces, are they high cards or low cards? How were they treated?
- How does this activity relate to how we communicate in everyday life? How do we treat people that we do not know how to value?

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Allow a few minutes to go around the room and have employees answer the above questions.

Give the employees a chance to try to describe what they think Employment Equity is

In it's simplest terms, employment equity involves embracing diversity and inclusion in the workplace for all types of persons. Because Employment Equity is related to the workplace, this includes different functions from recruitment, to selection, promotions, and transfers to name a few.

Employment Equity can be achieved in a number of ways:
- It's important to treat everyone fairly despite your differences. That might also mean treating them equally by accommodating their differences.
- Eliminating barriers to allows equal opportunities for all employees
- Hiring/promoting/etc. based on skills/abilities/knowledge related to the job rather than on discriminatory actions
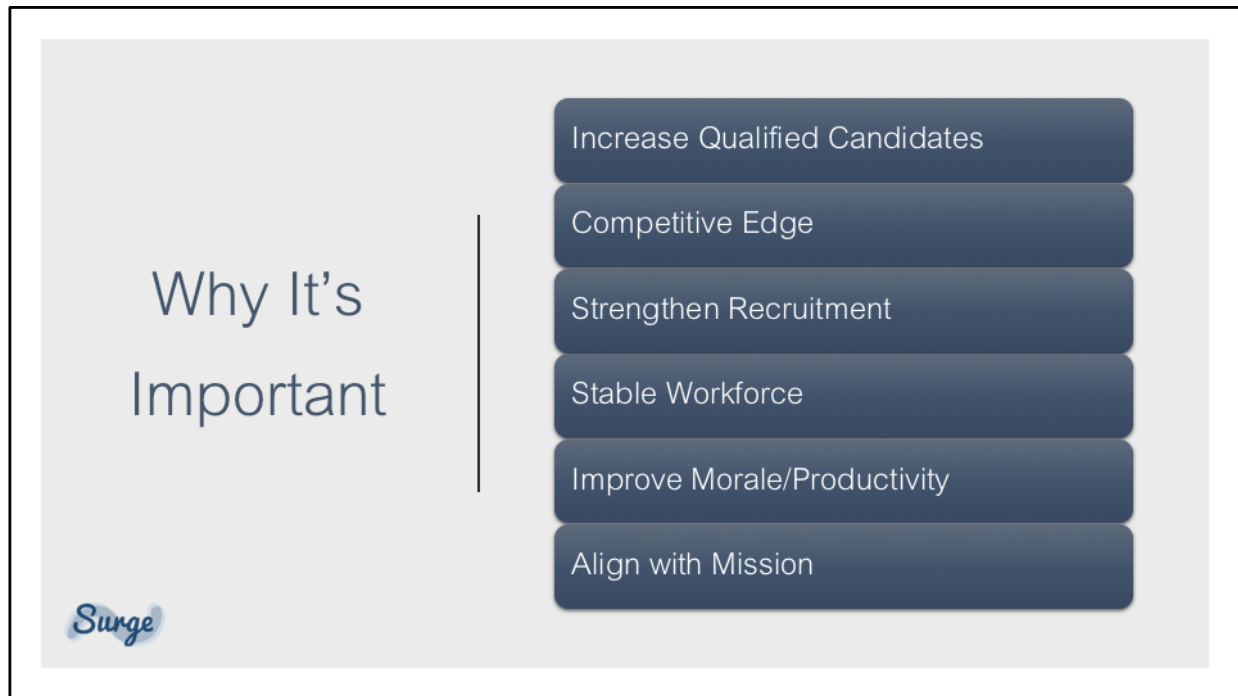
There are many myths and realities related to Employment Equity and what that means for current employees and future job applicants:

- EE does not mean you treat everyone equally, it means you treat everyone with fairness. Everyone is different in some way, so you can't place everyone in to the same mold and expect them to feel that they're being treated equally
- EE does not result in reverse-discrimination, it means everyone has equal opportunities. It's about eliminating barriers for those with differences and focusing on a persons knowledge, skills and abilities rather than their differences (race, age, marital status, etc.)
- EE is not about quotas, its about setting goals that are flexible and reasonable that align with the company's goals and planning. Quotas are prohibited under the EE Act
- EE is not about hiring unqualified people who are a part of a target group just for the sake of hiring them to meet a goal. Its about providing people with equal opportunities by eliminating discriminatory practices in recruitment and selection.

Why It's Important

- Increase Qualified Candidates
- Competitive Edge
- Strengthen Recruitment
- Stable Workforce
- Improve Morale/Productivity
- Align with Mission

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There are a number of reasons why employment equity is important for Surge, and for our employees:

- 2/3 of the Canadian population are made up of target groups and those groups have a tremendous amount of qualified candidates
- Having so many qualified candidates will give us the ability to continue to grow and have a competitive edge in our field. As well, diversity and equity is more important than ever, many companies only work with other companies that have an employment equity commitment
- We will be able to strengthen recruitment and hiring methods by eliminating any barriers that target groups may face
- We will have a more stable workforce because employees will be more committed, creating less turnover
- By eliminating barriers and discriminatory practices, morale and productivity will improve overall
- Our mission is to satisfy our customers and those we do business with. By implementing employment equity we are strengthening ourselves as a company by priding ourselves as a diverse and equal employer
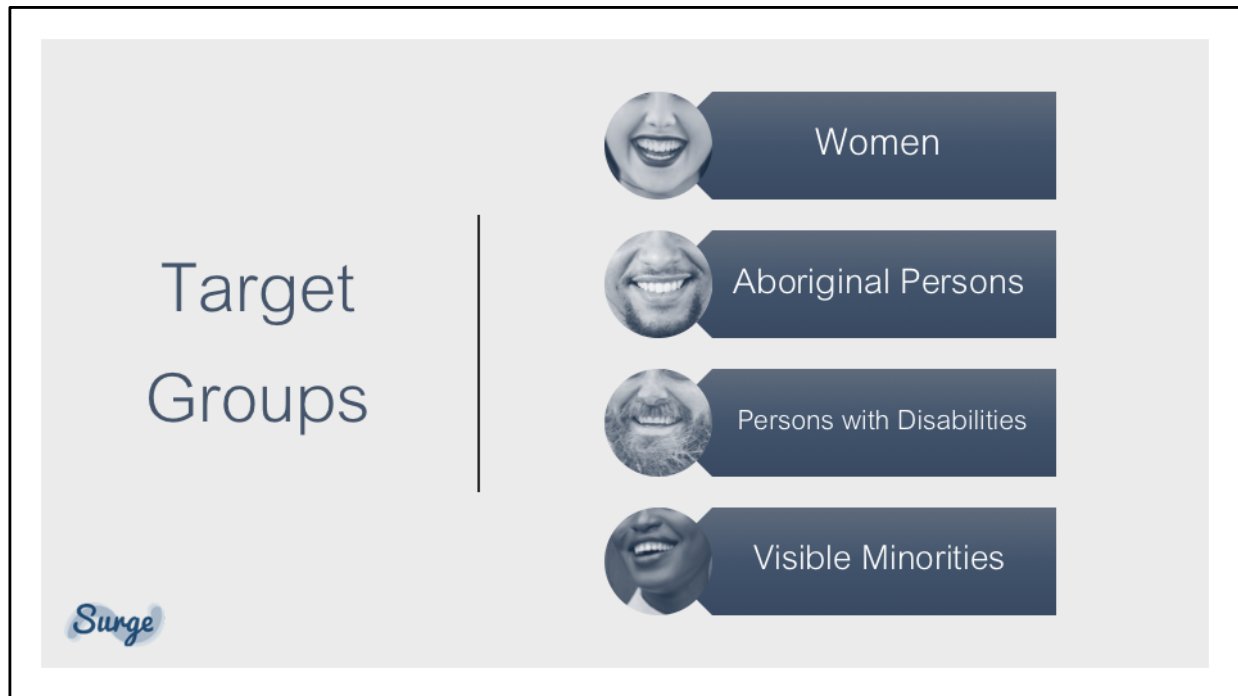
You may be asking, "what are target groups?".
Target groups include 4 categories of persons who have a more difficult time feeling acknowledged and equal in the workplace:
- Women
- Aboriginal Persons
- Persons with disabilities (both mental and physical)
- Visible Minorities
    - This category includes those that are non-Caucasian in race and non-white in colour
        - Anyone with a different national or ethnic origin or someone with a varying ancestry to the majority
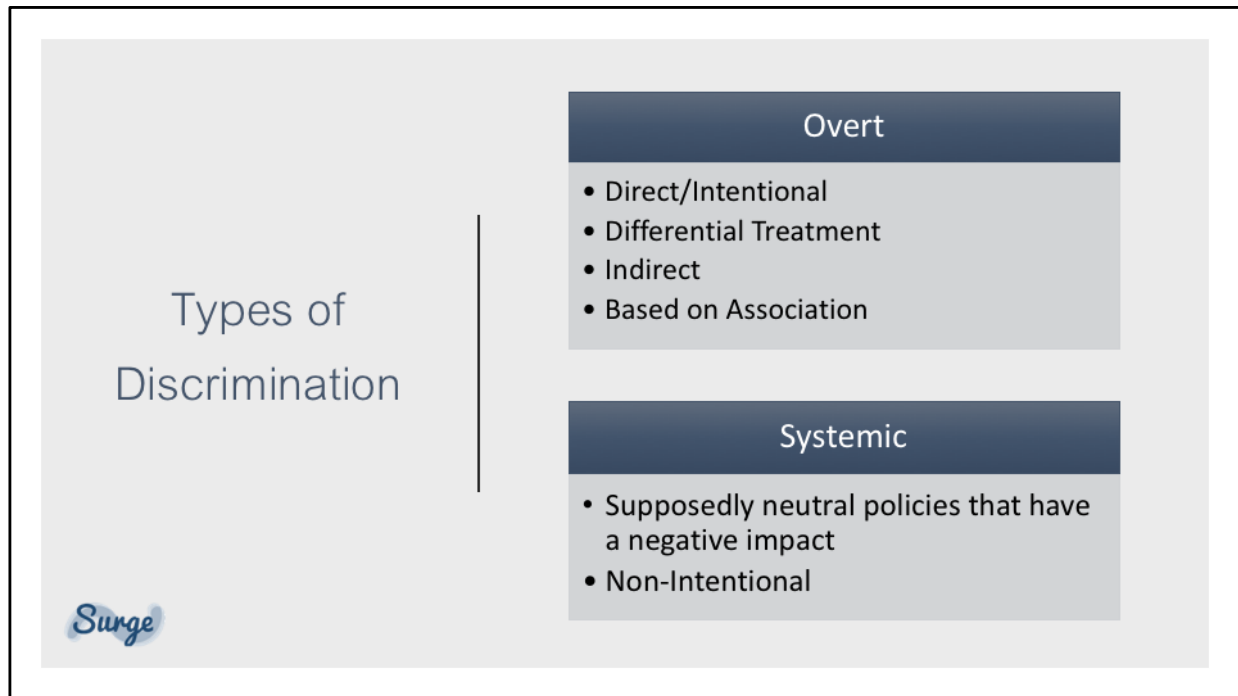
As mentioned, Employment Equity involves removing barriers and discriminatory practices in the workplace. And whether we know it or not, we may be creating a negative impact on target groups either overtly or systemically.

Overt
- Direct/Intentional
    - "We don't hire very many female Web Developers"
- Differential Treatment
    - Making a certain target group take different testing than others
- Indirect
    - When someone else is asking to discriminate on their behalf
        - Asking to hire someone based on their gender or race
- Based on Association
    - Not hiring someone because they participated in a Women's Day Parade or #MeToo movement

Systemic
- Can be more difficult to notice/identify
- Continuously giving lower wages to women than to men, to other races/ethnicities

than to Caucasian
- Agreeing to a customer/client/suppliers preferences that result in discriminatory placement/assignment
- If the only method of employment is through referrals
- Limited accessibility in the workplace
- Excessive credentials

*Ask if the group can think of examples for each type*

To successfully incorporate employment equity in the company, we need to assign a committee who will have this responsibility.

To ensure we're getting the opinions, feedback and discussion from all levels and locations we will be electing two representative from the Human Resources department, we will require an ambassador from each location who may/may not be a part of a target group, and a representative who is a part of senior management from each location who may/may not be a part of a target group. One of the senior managers, Harbara Fog was elected as the Employment Equity Coordinator and will report directly to the President.

By volunteering/electing rather than appointing, this helps us to ensure that those who are a part of the committee are interested individuals and are persons that their colleagues know and trust to represent them.

If we feel that we need more representatives from target groups, we will look in to bringing in outside members not only to represent that group but to have an un-bias and neutral party from outside of the company.
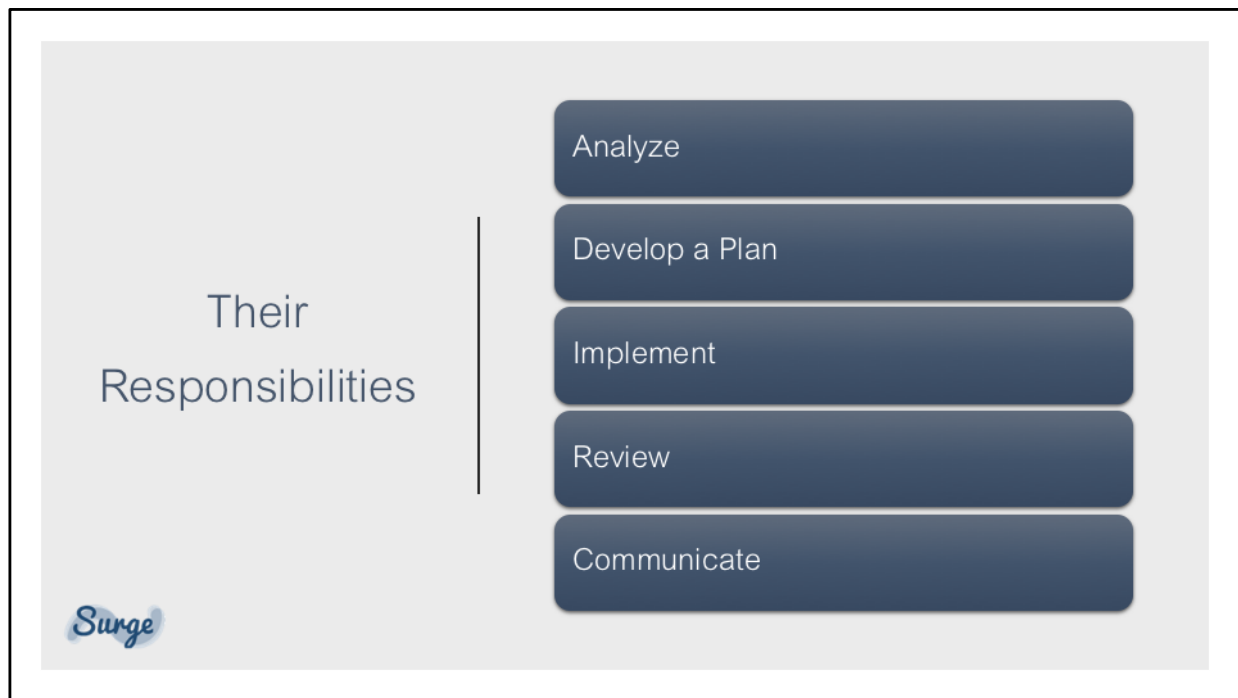
The Equity Committee will have 5 key responsibilities:

Analyze
- They will continuously analyze internal and external data to ensure all employees are being treated and represented fairly.
- This may involve them conducting a job analysis, performance management, compensation review, recruitment and selection processes, etc.

Develop a Plan
- The committee will work together to set flexible and reasonable goals for the short, mid and long term.
- These goals will NOT be quotas that we need to meet, it will be more simply making the workplace more accessible or increasing target group representation based on our census metropolitan areas over the long term
- They will create strategies that may involve eliminating or modifying policies and procedures.
- They will create and take your input on creative and corrective special programming (this could be eliminating barriers, adding flex time, etc.)
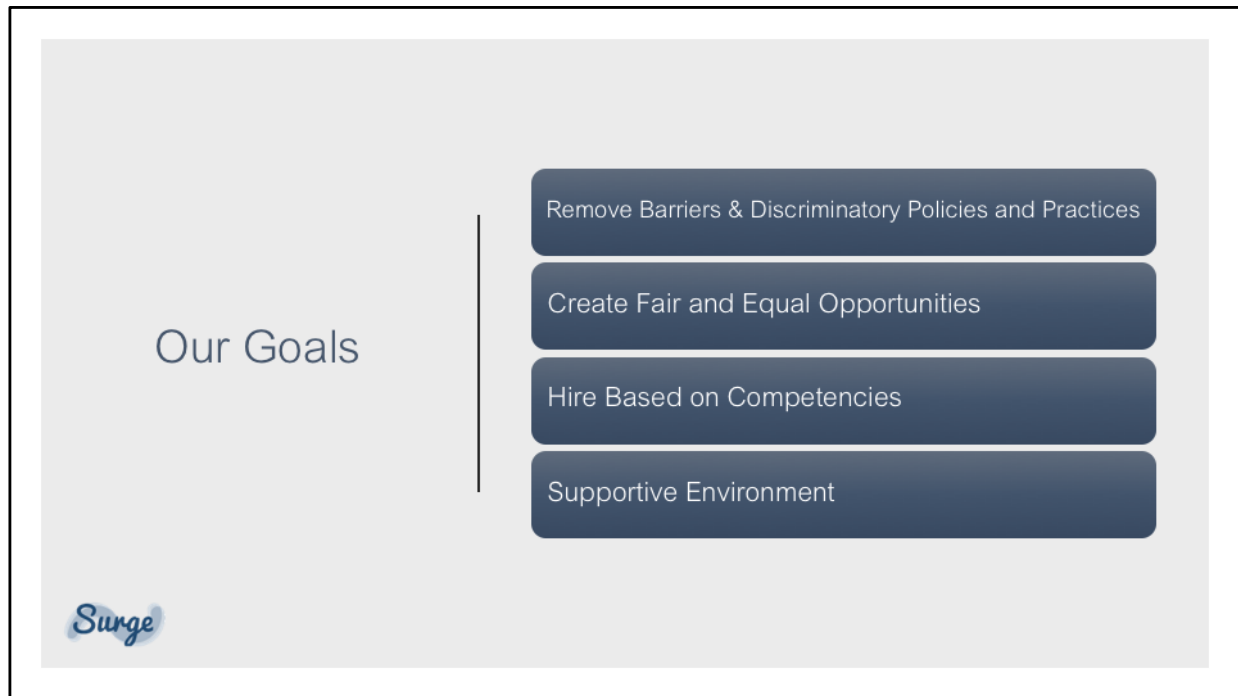
Implement

- They will implement the plan by making the goals and strategies a reality

Review
- The committee will monitor, review and revise all policies and procedures on an annual basis (or as needed) to ensure we are current and up to date and do not have any systemic discrimination in the workplace.
- This may involve interviewing managers, target group members, etc.

Communicate
- When these steps are taking place, the committee will be sure to communicate and report changes/results to all employees so that they are well versed

Without our employees, we wouldn't be where we are today and won't be able to continue in to the future. That's why we've set some goals.
Overall, our goals with implementing employment equity in to the company involve
- Removing barriers and any discriminatory policies and practices that are limiting/impacting employees
- Create fair and equal opportunities by compensating, promoting, and recruiting
- Hire solely based on a job applicants knowledge, skills and abilities rather than their associations, recommendations and any discriminatory factors
- Create a supportive environment so all employees feel safe and welcome

To guarantee that everyone at Surge is always up to date and in the know, we will have a number of ways for everyone to stay connected:

Communication
- Managers have been trained on how to approach and communicate with their employees to create an open and welcoming flow of communication should they have any questions or concerns

Materials
- We will be creating brochures and placing them in all break rooms should anyone want to review the information presented today, along with copies of the Employment Equity policy

Online
- Because we know employees are busy and on the go, all information (brochure and policy) will also be available on the company intranet to be easily accessible when you're on the go

By Email
- Should there be any changes, updates or events, we will be sending out emails to

notify all employees

Questionnaire
- To gauge how we're doing as a company, following this workshop, we will be distributing a Self-Identification Questionnaire for all employees to complete. This will be kept completely confidential to only the Employment Equity Coordinator and anyone on the Committee who has the permissions to review. This is not mandatory, it is completely voluntary, however it will help us to address accommodation needs, track and determine the representation in our workforce of target groups. It will help us to align with our mission of satisfying those we do business with.

We want to thank everyone for participating in our first Employment Equity workshop. We look forward to the changes to come. If you're interested in being an ambassador for the Equity Committee, please let one of use know our reach out to Harbara Fog. If you'd like to think about it, our contact information is available on the company intranet.
We'll now open the floor to any questions you may have

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