IMPROVING INCLUSION

Improving inclusion

The purpose of this resource is to help you develop a clear action plan for improving this area.

Each resource follows a common structure:
- What we mean by this area
- Why it matters
- What good looks like
- Common traps to avoid
- Possible first steps
- Links to additional resources (where applicable).

What we mean by inclusive

Feeling valued, listened to, and accepted for the unique contribution you bring to the organisation regardless of background and level. Leaders create space and an inclusive environment for everyone to be able to fully contribute without risk or repercussion.

Why it matters:
- Being an inclusive organisation and individual creates trust, belonging and increases productivity.
- More inclusive organisational decision making and outcomes.
- Retention and development of existing talent.

An inclusive organisation values everyone, treats them with respect , and welcomes a diverse range of inputs and opinions. This means everyone feels listened to – on general issues facing the organisation – and on safeguarding concerns as well. If people feel included, they are more likely to trust and use the systems you have to safeguard them. And if those systems are built with input from a diverse range of people, they are more likely to work for everyone.

What good looks like:

Read the following description, and make notes on where you most want to improve inclusion in your organisation:

1. You have **frequent and meaningful conversations** with people at all levels about what really matters to them.
2. There are various tools and approaches you use that **measure inclusion**, and you report on and communicate these results within the organisation.
3. There are **inclusion themed questions** as part of your regular Employee Engagement surveying. You are open and transparent in communications as to why you're conducting the survey, what you will be doing with the information, as well as making it feel safe for people to be as honest as possible in their answers.
4. You **monitor the retention of people and provide exit interviews** or questionnaires for people leaving the organisation, making sure that you understand the

reasons why people choose to stay at the organisation and also why they leave. This allows you to know what you are doing well and what could be done better.

5. **Organisational leaders speak openly about inclusion** and consistently demonstrate inclusive behaviours.
6. Leaders are given the **training and support** they need in order to increase and enhance their inclusive leadership skills.
7. You consciously **ask people to input on strategic decisions** – decisions are not made about people but with people.
8. **Inclusion is embedded in all your processes** - from onboarding to making sure your communication is accessible to everyone.
9. You make sure **people feel valued** and that the work they do is acknowledged and recognised.
10. You **actively listen to everyone at all levels** and make sure people who are marginalised feel psychologically safe to speak up without fear or risk of repercussion.
11. You **champion and advocate for authentic inclusion** at every opportunity both internally and externally.

Common traps to avoid

Again, read through these traps, noting which you recognise a need to work on.

- Stop and start without any follow through – an **inconsistency of approach.**
- **Rewarding non-inclusive behaviours.**
- **Listening but not following through** on the action/s identified.
- **Not celebrating organisational achievements in inclusion** and not celebrating/acknowledging cultural events that are important to colleagues.
- **Not communicating internal efforts externally**.
- **Thinking education and awareness training is a "one and done"** process and not continually learning and building capability in this area.
- Leadership **not openly speaking** about and communicating the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Only taking a grassroots upwards strategy** for inclusion and ignoring the need for strategic leadership.
- Believing inclusion is **solely a Human Resources issue**.

Possible actions to improve inclusion in your culture

1. **Have a DE&I strategy.** The strategy should;
   a) Set clear targets and measure progress against them. For many organisations, doing this successfully requires improving the capture, storage, and protection of data.
   b) Use the data to help identify gaps.
   c) Set expectations around the behaviours you need to see.
   d) Ensure Senior Leaders know the role and part they play within the strategy; and can hold themselves to account in delivering the outcomes.

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2. **Education and resources** – Providing leaders and people at all levels with continuous education to upskill and offering accessible resources i.e inclusive leadership, bias, psychology safety training sessions.

3. Put processes in place that **capture people's views and opinions**, such as an Employee Engagement survey.

4. **Hiring people who will bring something new to the culture rather than fit the existing culture**. For example, instead of asking "are they a good cultural fit?" ask "how can they enrich our existing team culture?"

5. **Share your aim to increase inclusion** and ask people what they're like to see as a result. Decide what could make the greatest impact and pick a maximum of two or three initiatives to focus on.

6. **Make sure communication is inclusive and accessible.** Identify and reduce wording bias (exclusionary terms surrounding gender, age, and culture) that may be deterring for people. There are many apps you can use, such as [Textio](#), Gender Decoder etc.

7. **Questions to ask Senior Leaders**:
   a) What does inclusion mean to you?
   b) How do you think we can improve inclusion?
   c) What training have you had around this area and what made the training successful?
   d) How can you continue to learn and make sure that we are fostering a more inclusive workplace now and in the future?
   e) How can you personally champion inclusion?

Additional Resources – insights from some of the world's leaders in this space

- Management Futures DE&I resource Library:
  https://www.managementfutures.co.uk/blog-categories/de-i-resource-library
- Understanding inclusive leadership and the 6 signature traits that underpin inclusion:
  https://hbr.org/2020/03/the-key-to-inclusive-leadership
- 10 Tips for Active Listening: https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/wellbeing/how-to-talk-about-health-problems/active-listening
- Diverse leadership in sport: The barriers, the solutions, the business case:
  https://sustainabilityreport.com/2020/06/18/diverse-leadership-in-sport-the-barriers-the-solutions-the-business-case/
- Recognition – people feeling appreciated:
- https://hbr.org/2020/01/the-little-things-that-make-employees-feel-appreciated
- Workplace Inclusion - Dare to Lead with Brené Brown - Brené with Aiko Bethea on Inclusivity at Work: The Heart of Hard Conversations
  Listen to Part 1
  Listen to Part 2

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- Increasing Psychological safety so people can speak up and share: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SQaGdmAG8o
- Workplace Equity: The "E" in DEI and Why It Matters: https://www.gallup.com/workplace/401573/workplace-equity-dei-why-matters.aspx#:~:text=advantage%20over%20another.-,Gallup%20defines%20equity%20as%20fair%20treatment%2C%20access%20and%20advancement%20for,fairness%20in%20daily%20work%20experiences and https://diversity-inclusion-speakers.com/news/general-news/why-you-should-invest-in-workplace-equity/

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