

Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace

Foreword

Despite the majority of recent press attention focusing on gender parity, it's important to remember that gender is just one of many protective characteristics to be considered when developing a diverse and inclusive workforce.

A diverse and inclusive workforce should bring together an unbiased blend of staff from all walks of life, with representation across all spectrums including age, gender (including sex and reassignment), race, ability, faith, pregnant employees, new parents and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 provides the legal framework to advance equality and opportunity for all. Since being mandated, it has been widely observed that businesses have benefited financially from championing diversity and inclusivity.

However, there are many other benefits that can be realised by developing a diverse workforce. Particularly with regards to building a strong and compelling Employee Value Proposition (EVP) to attract and retain a dynamic, skilled and committed workforce.

Why?

When properly harnessed and engaged, a diverse workforce which combines a variety of experience, perspectives and abilities can generate a plethora of benefits such as higher levels of innovation, productivity and increased staff retention.

"Companies with mature diversity and inclusion programmes realise a 35% competitive advantage, nearly twice the innovation output and 67% improvement in candidate attraction"¹

A diverse and inclusive workforce has been proven to:

- Empower and engage staff within a safe working environment in which they feel comfortable and able to contribute to the wider business goals, bringing in their richness of skills and experience to bare
- Increase productivity levels due to willingness from staff to contribute and go above and beyond in response to the opportunities, rewards and recognition they receive
- Foster greater levels of innovation due to diversity of thought, leading to the potential for streamlined processes, new to firm and market products and services
- Be a better Magnet for Talent[®], helping to attract future staff that share the same drivers and aspirations
- Increase Employee Stickability[®] as staff are motivated to stay and continue to grow their skills within a business that supports diversity and inclusion

And yes...all of this also helps to contribute to a healthier bottom line!

How?

Whilst many employers recognise the importance of and the benefits generated by increasing diversity and inclusion within their workforces, it is reported that *"less than half have a programme in place to attract candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds"*²

So how can you approach diversity and inclusion?

- 1) We recommend that you start by doing your research to see what you should put in place as a minimum to ensure you comply with the law – the gov.uk guidance **3** on the equality act is a good reference point
- 2) Look at what diversity and inclusivity champions are doing for inspiration – for example, RBS **4** and Channel 4 **5** have both previously won 'Diverse Company' of the year at the National Diversity Awards **6**
- 3) Make use of existing tools and guidance out there i.e. APSCO's Best Practice Guide to Disability **7** and the Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative **8**
- 4) Review your wider, existing business policies and processes and see what you can do to refresh these so that you can engender greater opportunities for diversity and inclusion within your business.

In the next section we list some of the key elements which should also be considered when trying to embed diversity and inclusion into your workforce.

- **Accountability**

Lead from the top and make your C-Suite /Senior Executives responsible for delivering greater diversity and inclusion within your business. Diversity and inclusion initiatives will have a far higher chance of being embedded if senior staff are visibly seen to consistently promote and support them - McKinsey reports that *"In the United Kingdom, greater gender diversity on the senior-executive team corresponded to the highest performance uplift in our data set: for every 10 percent increase in gender diversity, EBIT rose by 3.5 percent"*⁹.

- **Your Wider Strategy**

Recognise the value that a diverse workforce and inclusive strategy can add to your business and plans by including specific mention of this within your future business strategy. Review your existing goals, policies and processes to ensure that they support and encourage diversity and inclusion, provide training to staff on how to embrace diversity and inclusivity.

- **Set Targets**

Distil your diversity and inclusion ambitions into hard and soft targets and monitor performance against these targets, holding leaders and those involved in recruiting and engaging your workforce accountable for meeting these targets. For example, you could say that by 2020, you'd like a 50:50 gender balance.

- **Talent Pools**

When developing job descriptions, adverts and recruiting, you could be more open minded with regards to the skillsets or experience required, so that the talent pool can be widened to attract and identify candidates beyond those whom have the 'traditional' background. You may also want to think about how you could add more flexibility into roles to widen out the pool of candidates who you attract i.e. could you offer part time hours, regular home-based days and other flexible working arrangements.

- **Recruitment Processes**

Think about how to remove unconscious bias from your recruitment process – i.e. you could provide Hiring Managers with blind CVs on the day of the interview so that unconscious bias cannot creep into the filtering process. You may want to say that for each role you recruit for, that you will aim to interview an equal balance of male and female candidates.

- **Staff Engagement**

It is key that existing staff are engaged to truly embed diversity and inclusion in the workforce. PWC have reported that "Less than half of European organisations (35%) provide training on embracing differences in the workplace and even fewer offer training on embedding inclusive behaviours into everyday job responsibilities (23%)"¹⁰

You could look at generating regular internal communications and training to reinforce the messaging. You could incentivise staff or teams for contributing to activities which support diversity and inclusivity. You could set up working groups or networks to foster wider collaboration, engagement and inclusivity across your business, ensuring

that there is fair representation from across your workforce.

- **Your Employee Value Proposition**
Your EVP is your businesses unique offering to employees in return for them bringing their capabilities, skills and experience to you. If developed, promoted and used effectively, your EVP should reflect the value you place on the diversity of your workforce and promote how good you are at championing inclusivity, therefore helping you to both attract and retain the best staff. Look at your EVP and check that it embodies your focus on diversity and inclusion so that the right messaging is portrayed both internally to existing staff and externally to future candidates.

How can we help?

The fact that we are a HR outsourcer, as well as a recruitment process outsourcer has real advantage to our clients in that our breadth across the entire employee lifecycle allows us to add significant value to our partnerships, providing insight and support across the entire people spectrum when it comes to creating and embedding diverse and inclusive workforces.

We are experts within the diversity and inclusion arena and have delivered a number of high profile programmes on behalf of clients, helping them to achieve their ambitions and targets.

If you're interested in finding out more about how we can help you with the strategic and operational aspects of your Recruitment and HR management i.e. with your people, we would love to hear from you.

Give us a call on 01295 811486 today or find out more about what we do and other ways to get in touch via our website: www.thecurvegroup.co.uk.

References

Established in 2004, we are the UK's largest privately-owned Recruitment and HR provider. We deliver agile, ethical and configurable people solutions across the entire Recruitment and HR spectrum. Our mission statement, or quest as we would say, is to create extraordinary people solutions that transform working lives.



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2. <https://www.robertwalters.co.uk/content/dam/robertwalters/country/united-kingdom/files/whitepapers/Diversity-In-Recruitment-Whitepaper-web.pdf>
3. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>
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