INSPIRE INCLUSION

A Comprehensive Guide to Inclusive Recruitment

SEARCH

Contents

Introduction

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) is more than a policy or paragraph at the end of a job advert. It should be woven into the fabric of your culture and recruitment.

ED&I is a broad spectrum. There are seven types of diversity you need to understand as an employer – gender, race and culture, LGTBQ+, faith and religion, age, disability and neurodiversity, and socio-economical; each type of diversity has its own considerations.

This guide is the first of a series focusing on ED&I in recruitment. Join us as we explore how to improve your inclusive hiring process by looking through the lens of gender.

Whilst the figures have been slowly decreasing, the gender pay gap is an ever-present issue. As it stands, the gender pay gap is 68.4% closed globally, with no country having achieved full gender parity.

The World Economic Forum estimates that at the current rate of progress, it will take 131 years to reach full parity worldwide. Europe has the highest level of parity at 76.3%, with North America a close second at 75%. The UK currently ranks 15th in the world on the gender pay gap scale.

There is work to be done globally to close the gap. However, there are positive steps you can take in your business to create parity and reduce bias.

'Inspire Inclusion - A Comprehensive Guide to Inclusive Recruitment' aims to empower you and your organisation with the knowledge and tools needed to create a recruitment process that has ED&I at its core.

We hope to offer insight into strategies, best practices, case studies, systems and software you can implement to help you attract, assess and retain a diverse talent pool and foster an inclusive workplace culture and hiring journey.

Sources

Understanding Bias in Recruitment

A staggering 96% of recruiters believe unconscious bias is a problem in the recruitment process. Implicit bias reinforces stereotypes about certain people, groups and demographics. When inherent biases or ingrained stereotypes influence our recruitment decisions, we can overlook fantastic candidates who will excel in or develop the role – and bring different perspectives to the business.

Gender bias is still prevalent in the workplace. The statistics speak for themselves.
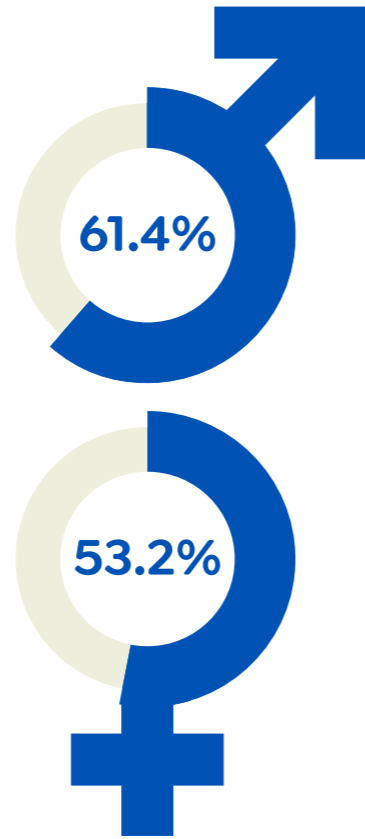
Women are **30% less likely to be called for a job interview** than men with the same characteristics
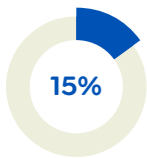
15% of HR decision-makers believe men are better suited to senior management jobs than women

19% of HR decision-makers would be reluctant to hire women they thought might start a family

61.4%

53.2%

15%

Males (61.4%) are more likely to be employed than females (53.2%) in England and Wales

"To address unconscious bias, make it conscious. Remove the unconscious element. Employers shouldn't seek reflections of themselves in candidates based on age, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, or other factors. Focus solely on candidates' skills when building teams."

CHRIS PRITCHARD, MANAGING DIRECTOR – HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE, SEARCH

UNDERSTAND YOUR BIASES

By admitting that unconscious bias exists and challenging our own personal biases, we can work towards reducing it in our company culture and hiring process.

Awareness of and tackling biases against certain groups and demographics, such as gender, race, disability and age bias, will go a long way to helping you create an inclusive workspace. However, many cognitive biases could also be rooted in your hiring process that you may not be aware of. They can affect your recruitment team's decisions when picking candidates to interview and, ultimately, who to hire. We break down six of the most common biases that can occur during recruitment.

Bias	What is it?	How do you tackle it?
Affinity Bias	This is where we favour people we feel we have an affinity with. This could be similar interests and hobbies, backgrounds or experiences.	Avoid picking a candidate solely on the basis that they have something in common with you, or that they're someone who you 'see yourself in'.
Conformity Bias	Instead of using our own judgment, conformity bias is where we agree with the majority. Louder, more influential voices may sway the group, and a herd mentality means great candidates could be rejected.	Standardise your interview with scoring criteria to give each candidate a fair chance. Rate their answers on the same scale and use the data to determine who the best candidate is.
Conformation Bias	This can happen when we look for or give greater emphasis to factors that confirm our beliefs or experiences.	Accept Blind CVs or applications and introduce pre-employment assessments to analyse candidates' skills. Create diverse interview panels. Standardise interview questions and ask each candidate the same questions in the same order, using a scoring matrix.
The Contrast Effect	When we review application after application or conduct interview after interview, it can be all too easy to judge one candidate against a previous one. Similarly, if a role is being advertised because someone has left the business, we may compare new candidates to their predecessors.	Space interviews out, so you're not speaking to candidates back-to-back. Create wider selection panels, so it is not the same person or people deciding which applicants to interview. Use scoring criteria and conduct second interviews with different, diverse panels. If a role is being advertised because someone has left the business, don't look to replace a 'carbon copy' of the previous employee.
The Halo Effect	Some people have that one thing that draws us to them or makes us see them in a good light – it could be where they previously worked, the university they graduated from or industry awards they've won. However, if we only focus on one quality, we can ignore other factors.	Judge candidates on their skills. Understand some applicants may be more privileged. Have diverse interview panels to assess each candidate fairly and effectively.
The Horn Effect	The reverse of the Halo Effect, the Horn Effect is when we focus on one negative trait or attribute (or something we perceive to be negative). It can cloud our judgment and cause us to write someone off as an unsuitable candidate.	Don't make assumptions about candidates. Have diverse interview and selection panels. Use scoring criteria for interviews.

ACCEPT BLIND CVS

Work with a recruiter or have your HR team remove identifiable indicators from candidates' CVs or applications to reduce bias. This includes but is not limited to their name, gender, age, race, nationality and marital status. Having blind CVs allows you to evaluate individuals based on merit alone.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING

If you're serious about ED&I, put anyone who influences or is involved in your hiring process through unconscious bias training, including leaders, managers, hiring managers, HR staff and marketing teams.

It is a worthwhile investment for everyone in your organisation to have unconscious bias training, so ED&I is threaded through your entire company from the top to the bottom. Training can often count towards employees' CPD for the year.

Sources

"Unconscious bias training helps to expose employees to their implicit biases. It's particularly helpful in raising awareness of the mental shortcuts we may take unknowingly, which often lead to snap judgements. Training can adjust our thinking patterns, ultimately eliminating discriminatory behaviour."

HOLLY HARWOOD, TALENT AND ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, SEARCH

Crafting Inclusive Job Descriptions

A job advert may be the first time a job seeker comes across your brand. As a looking glass into your business, job descriptions should give candidates a sense of not only the duties integral to the role but also your company's culture and values.

Software company Textio found gender-neutral ads are filled 14 times quicker than descriptions with masculine or feminine coded words.

Before you write your next job advert, evaluate your previous descriptions. Analyse them to see where they can be more inclusive. Our practical tips give you some key ways to get started.

INCLUDE AN ED&I STATEMENT

A lack of ED&I statement or language in job descriptions and applications can be a deal breaker for many job seekers. One survey found two thirds (66%) of UK workers consider employers who accept and include employees from all backgrounds to be an important factor when searching for a new job.

The survey also revealed that women (74%) place more significance on ED&I in the workplace than men (58%). With almost a quarter of women saying they've experienced gender bias at work, compared to 8% of men.

The tone of your ED&I statement is also important. LinkedIn found that two-thirds of candidates surveyed preferred a statement written in a more empathetic tone.

ASSESS PRONOUNS AND JOB TITLES

Take note of pronouns in job descriptions. Avoid using he/him or she/her when talking about your ideal candidate, and instead, use they/them to encourage all genders to apply.

Ensure job titles are also gender-neutral to avoid unconscious bias and the implication that the role is designed for candidates of a specific gender.

For example:

- Instead of Chairman and Chairwoman, use Chairperson
- Avoid advertising for a Barman and Barmaid; advertise for a Bartender
- Rather than saying Salesman and Saleswoman say Sales Executive

USE GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

Gender bias in descriptions goes beyond pronouns and job titles. Total Jobs analysed 77k UK job adverts back in 2017 and found that they contained six gender-coded words on average. In addition, recent research shows only 4% of FTSE 100 companies use gender-neutral language in job ads.

While it may not be intentional, using gender-coded language could reinforce stereotypes that certain jobs are for a particular gender. This could actively dissuade a more diverse range of applicants from applying. The result is that you're more likely to attract candidates from similar talent pools, which could lead to homogeneous teams.

Using gender-coded words can further gender pay parity. When we look at leadership roles, using masculine words can enforce the glass ceiling. However, McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org say there isn't a glass ceiling but a "broken rung" for women on the path to leadership. For nine years in a row, they found that the "biggest hurdle" for women is stepping into a management role in the first place. Total Jobs found that job ads for director roles had a 55% male bias compared to a 32% female bias, whereas assistant roles had a 58% female bias versus a 28% male bias.

It's therefore key when you're writing job adverts that you are consciously aware of words which hold weight to a particular gender.

Gender-coded words

Some of the most common masculine and feminine gender-coded words include:

Male	Female
• Lead	• Support
• Analyse	• Care
• Superior	• Committed
• Competitive	• Dependable
• World-class	• Responsible
• Active	• Honest
• Confident	• Loyal
• Challenge	• Patient
• Driven	• Compassion
• Decisive	• Warm

IMPLEMENT TOOLS AND SOFTWARE

Being aware of gendered language is the first step to eliminating unconscious bias. The next step is to analyse your job descriptions and remove gendered language. Job description software company Ongig lists 170 examples of gender-neutral adjectives that can be used in adverts.

There are a range of free tools based on the Kat Matfield Gender Decoder, which analyse job descriptions to identify gender-coded language.

There has been a rise in software companies providing AI solutions to help you write more inclusive job adverts. One of the most popular systems on the market is Textio Loop, which optimises your job posts, sourcing mail, social posts and brand content so you appeal to a broader and more diverse audience. Another tool is Ongig, which flags gender-coded words in job adverts in real-time and provides alternatives.

superior

honest

confident

loyal

competitive

support

Case study

Australian software company Atlassian was hiring 10% of women into technical roles. The business used Textio to analyse job its advert copy. Over two years, the business saw an 80% increase in the number of women hired into technical positions globally.

Sources

Attracting a Diverse Talent Pool

Attracting a varied talent pool is the cornerstone of inclusive recruitment. Companies that harness and celebrate diverse talent are proactive. Don't sit around expecting that diverse candidates will automatically apply just because you have an ED&I statement in your job adverts.

DIVERSIFY YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Social media is a great way to reach a wider audience and showcase your company culture and commitment to ED&I. Share company insight, thought leadership and success stories from a diverse range of employees rather than the same individuals all the time. Post behind-the-scenes content from the day-to-day running of your business, showing your people, and highlighting L&D opportunities for all staff.

Encourage people throughout your business, from leadership and managers to juniors and apprentices, to develop their online personal brands where they highlight what matters to them and your business.

When you're setting up paid social ads, don't assume that you always know exactly who will be interested in the role. Target a wide range of demographics to attract a diverse talent pool.

PARTNER WITH ED&I ORGANISATIONS

Collaborate with charities, non-profits, and local community organisations that support people from diverse or marginalised groups. Work with them to hold career fairs and events and provide practical advice on writing CVs and job applications, interview tips and what qualifications and skills are needed for roles in your industry. Advertise your latest vacancies through your ED&I partners to encourage people to apply for roles with your company.

Companies with an inclusive workforce are 35% more productive

Diverse teams make better decisions 87% of the time

Organisations in the top quartile for gender diversity are 25% more likely to financially outperform competitors

Employers posting about diversity saw a 26% rise in the number of applications from women

EXPAND YOUR EVENT ROSTER

If you attend the exact same career fairs or events each year, you'll attract candidates within the same talent pool from the same backgrounds. Seek out events in new and unexplored avenues. Attend diverse business, industry and entrepreneur events. Visit inclusive networking meetings.

TARGET NICHE JOB MARKETS

Similar to going to a handful of events, if you always use certain job markets to attract talent, you'll be swimming in the same pool. Find niche job boards, markets and channels to attract a more diverse range of employees. Think outside the norm. Where do people from different demographics and backgrounds spend their time online and offline? Work with a recruitment agency and ED&I partners to tap into these niche areas.

HAVE A DIVERSE REFERRAL SYSTEM

Introducing a referral system can be a great way to bring new talent into your business. Empower your staff to think outside their usual network and refer people from different backgrounds.

Pinterest challenged its team to refer 10x more candidates from ethnic backgrounds and twice as many women. The social media service saw a 24% increase in the number of women referred to the business and a 55x increase in the percentage of candidates from ethnic minorities.

UNDERSTAND WHAT MATTERS

You can get yourself in front of a more diverse range of candidates, but if they don't see themselves working for your company then it is futile.

How your company culture comes across speaks volumes. A study by Harvard Business Review found women were less engaged when companies talked about a "work hard, play hard culture" with social events centred around heavy drinking and late-night working in the office.

People want to feel seen, heard and valued at work. By understanding what matters to different demographics, you'll attract and retain diverse talent.

Sources

Inclusive Interview Techniques

To create a more inclusive interview experience, don't go in with a preconceived notion of how you think it will go. Refrain from comparing the candidate in front of you to the previous one in your head. View and treat each interviewee individually and fairly.

Remember, they're assessing your panel and business to see if it is somewhere they want to work just as much as you're evaluating whether they will be a good fit for the role. A lack of diversity or understanding of inclusive workforces may damage your reputation among candidates and could result in them pulling out of the hiring process or rejecting a role.

HAVE DIVERSE INTERVIEW PANELS

When you're selecting a panel, look at the individuals within your business who could bring different perspectives to interviews. Think beyond the traditional people you usually select, such as HR or hiring managers.

Conduct a survey and canvas which employees would like to be involved in interviews. Put them through interview and ED&I training, so they feel confident when interviewing candidates.

Go a step further and create an ED&I working group or committee. Bring together people from different backgrounds with different experiences, who are passionate and committed to advancing and promoting your ED&I strategies.

You could also bring in external ED&I consultants to sit in on your interviews or conduct an audit of your selection and interview process. While this will be an expense, if you make ED&I a priority, it will yield results and make it worth the investment.

TRAIN ALL INTERVIEWERS

Your interviewers are spokespeople for your business and, therefore, need to be well versed in your company culture, values and ED&I policies. They should be trained how to interview diverse talent, answer diversity and inclusion from interviewees and spot unconscious bias (not just their own, but other interviewers).

USE AN INTERVIEW MATRIX

With an unstructured approach, interviewers will likely have a lengthy discussion afterwards about who they think is the best candidate. This is when bias and vested interests could affect who is ultimately hired. Conformity bias could especially be a factor here. If more outspoken interviewers have strong opinions, others may not want to go against the grain and agree to keep the peace.

Implementing structured interviews creates a level playing field for all applicants. Ask candidates the same questions in the same order. Record their answers using uniform scoring criteria. Use the scoring data to determine your ideal candidate instead of making decisions based on interviewers' thoughts and feelings.

FOCUS ON SKILLS

When you're interviewing candidates, assess each and every one's ability to do the job they're applying for against the responsibilities of that role. By identifying and focusing on the skills each applicant has, it can eliminate any biases we may have.

In addition to interviewing them, candidates could complete the same skills task or assessment to measure their capabilities fairly. Three quarters (74%) of candidates want the opportunity to display their skills, experience and knowledge during the recruitment process.

Sources

"Your hiring managers are a representation of your business and should understand your company's values and culture. When they understand your company at its core, they will be better equipped to make recruitment decisions that align with your culture and articulate your ethos to candidates."

HOLLY HARWOOD, TALENT AND ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, SEARCH

Evaluating and Improving the Candidate Experience

While a job description or application may be the first time a candidate encounters your business, it won't be the only way they engage with your brand. Seven out of ten (70%) of job seekers research a company before they even apply for a role. This includes reading your website, visiting your social media accounts and reading candidate and employee reviews.

Globally, almost two thirds of candidates (62%) would reject a job offer from a company that didn't support a diverse workforce.

ASSESS ALL TOUCHPOINTS

The candidate experience goes beyond the job application or interview. Any interaction or contact point they have with you as a company can impact their experience. A positive experience makes candidates 38% more likely to accept a job offer, whilst seven out of 10 job seekers vow never to work with a company due to a bad candidate experience.

Think about all the avenues where applicants could interact or have a touchpoint with your business. This includes:

- Communication (emails, phone calls, video calls etc.)
- Application packs and job descriptions
- Marketing, advertising and social media
- Forms and documents
- Websites and careers pages

Put yourself in a candidate's shoes. Go through the steps they need to take to apply for a role with your company (sending a CV, completing an application pack, filling out forms). Then, walk through the avenues where they may research your company (your website, social media, review sites). Anything you find, a candidate might find. Assess whether everything reflects your ED&I policy and if it gives job seekers a good experience or impression of your brand overall.

REVIEW YOUR COMPANY CULTURE

What culture are you cultivating? You may think you are presenting one ethos, but candidates may have a different perception.

Harvard Business Review conducted a study that found women were less engaged with companies where women weren't well represented within a culture. Women's engagement decreased where presentation slides featured predominately men in active roles or women in seductive poses.

They were also disengaged where gender stereotypes were reinforced in information sessions. For example, when men led the sessions while women were in solely in supportive roles, such as welcoming people or handing out merchandise.

Compare your company culture and values to your recruitment and marketing materials to see if they truly align. Empower your marketing team or invest in external marketing support to develop an inclusive brand.

ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Nearly four out of five (78%) job seekers say they've never been asked for feedback about their experience as a candidate. Don't shy away from asking applicants and interviewees what they think. They may highlight something you were unaware of. Actively asking for feedback shows job seekers that you're open to change and you value their thoughts and experience.

Sources

70%
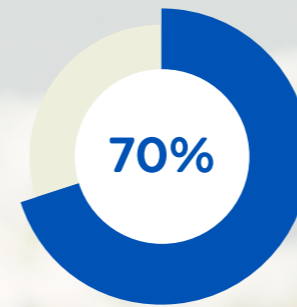
Seven out of ten job seekers research a company before they even apply for a role

62%
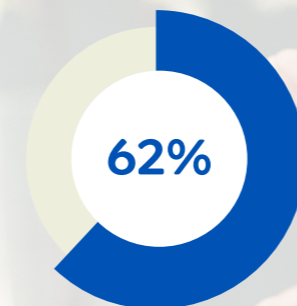
Almost two thirds of candidates would reject a job offer from a company that didn't support a diverse workforce

Retaining Diverse Talent

Inclusive recruitment goes beyond candidate attraction and interviews. It is about creating environments where people can bring their best and authentic selves to work.

Statistics show people want to feel like they are part of something. They want to work somewhere where their values are aligned.
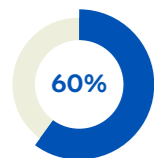
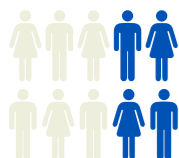A third of UK workers don't see their workplace as a community
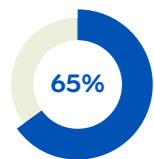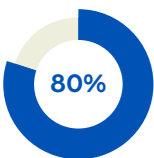
65% of UK employees want to feel a sense of belonging at work

Three in five UK employees wouldn't work for a company that doesn't share their values

60% of employees want business leaders to speak up on diversity issues

Just four in ten UK workers believe their employer values ED&I

80% of workers want to work for a company that cares about ED&I

AUDIT YOUR PAY PARITY

Women are still fighting for equal pay. The gender pay gap in the UK is at 7.7% for full-time workers and 14.3% for all workers. A study of nearly 33k workers in 17 countries, found that 76% of people would consider leaving their employer and looking for a new job if they discovered the company had a gender pay gap or no ED&I policy. It should be noted that the gender pay gap is not the only wage gap problem, there are also ethnicity, disability, age and LQBTQ+ pay gaps.

Conduct an audit of all your people to see if you have pay parity within your organisation. Key markers to incorporate in your audit include:

- Job titles
- Gender and gender identity
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Education
- Contracted hours
- Hours worked
- Overtime
- Bonuses
- Any other remuneration

Once you have the data, you can adjust the salaries of those affected.

Case study

Networking firm Cisco introduced pay parity to ensure employees across the globe are paid fairly. In 2019, the business found a 1% pay disparity among its people and adjusted salaries to close that gap. The firm continues to use analytics to regularly review factors influencing employee compensation, including new hire offers and individual rewards.

INCLUSIVE POLICIES AND BENEFITS

Assess your policies and benefits. Are they truly inclusive? Do all your staff have the exact same benefits?

PWC's Women in Work Index 2023 found almost three quarters of private sector organisations offered enhanced maternity leave in 2022. However, under two thirds of organisations provided enhanced paternity leave. The report also found that many employers don't offer enhanced shared parental leave but do offer enhanced maternity leave. PWC notes that it is often "too costly for families" to take shared parental leave, as the mother would not receive full income if she shared her leave entitlement.

In countries where equal paid parental leave has been implemented, PWC states, "These policies have led to increased uptake rates of leave for fathers, and participation rates in the workforce for women."

In Sweden and Iceland, for example, 90% of fathers took their parental leave. PWC reports that only a third of fathers take paternity leave in the UK.

Case study

Zurich UK introduced Life Stage policies for staff to support its people at different points in their lives. This includes 16 weeks' full pay for birth parents and primary adoptive parents (on top of the statutory 52 weeks), 16 weeks of full pay for second parents, a policy to support miscarriage, an IVF policy, and a menopause policy. The insurer also rolled out menopause training for 700 managers to support employees impacted by menopause.

EQUAL L&D OPPORTUNITIES

To create a fair and inclusive workplace, everyone should have access to the same learning and development (L&D) opportunities. Ask yourself:

- Is L&D part my ED&I policy?
- Can employees access the same training and development?
- Is everyone in the business actively encouraged to invest time in L&D?
- Do all senior leaders and management have the opportunity to access leadership training?
- Does a cross-section of the workforce have the opportunity to attend industry events, or is it the same people every year?
- Do training modules/courses/workshops represent an inclusive workforce?
- Do a diverse range of staff deliver training?

INTRODUCE MENTORING PROGRAMMES

Mentorship programmes are a great way to give your people a chance to learn from a more experienced member of staff. They can be part of your ED&I initiatives.

Matthew Reeves, CEO of mentorship platform Together, writes for Forbes; "Traditionally viewed as a way to promote employee skill development and knowledge transfer, mentoring programs can also foster a more inclusive workplace by connecting employees from underrepresented groups to leaders."

Experts have found that women and minority groups are often less likely to actively look for a mentor but will take up mentoring programmes when provided. A Harvard Business Review article observes, "While white men tend to find mentors on their own, women and minorities more often need help from formal programs. One reason, as Georgetown's business school dean David Thomas discovered in his research on mentoring, is that white male executives don't feel comfortable reaching out informally to young women and minority men. Yet they are eager to mentor assigned protégés, and women and minorities are often first to sign up for mentors."

INCLUDE YOUR PEOPLE

Don't leave your employees in the dark. Share your ED&I policies with them. Use internal communication channels and hold meetings to tell them where you've identified issues and how you're working to address them.

Bring your people into the conversation. Conduct employee surveys to find out what they want to see at work. Create an ED&I committee where workers from diverse backgrounds can come together and be actively involved in creating your ED&I strategies. Provide avenues where they can share their voice and promote their work as part of the committee to their colleagues.

Sources

Future Trends and Commitments

The amount employers spent on ED&I efforts was estimated at nearly £6 billion in 2020. It is projected to double to over £12 billion by 2026.

We explore seven trends that are expected to come to the forefront of ED&I-centric hiring practices and workplaces. Staying ahead of emerging trends helps you to look forward. Understanding how and where you can look to implement them into your strategies means you're making an ongoing commitment to foster an inclusive and diverse workforce.

GENDER AND GENDER IDENTITY

There will be more focus on gender equality and employees expressing their gender identity. As Chief Diversity & Social Impact Officer at Survey Monkey, Antoine Andrews, writes for Forbes: "The dialogue around diversity and gender identity is broad and expanding, and it will continue to change throughout 2023 and beyond. The words and labels that we use to define ourselves matter, which is why it's vital that organizations understand how to engage with them. Leaders must keep a steady pulse on how their workforce talks about gender diversity."

ERADICATING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

We spoke about understanding unconscious bias in Chapter 1. There will be more of a focus on the unconscious biases that exist in society and workplaces, as well as biases that we hold personally.

Details of how you're working towards eradicating it in your business will increasingly be something that candidates look for in job descriptions, your company website and career pages. Be transparent about how you're working to eradicate stereotypes and unconscious bias.

It will also be equally important for anyone managing a team to have been through unconscious bias training, as it is for those conducting interviews.

FLEXIBLE WORKING IS THE NORM

Flexible working is something that UK workers want. Research from CIPD revealed that 71% of workers view a flexible working pattern as an important factor when thinking about a new job.

The new Flexible Working Bill will soon give employees in England, Scotland and Wales the right to request flexible working on day one of a new job. The number of requests someone can make in twelve months will increase from one under the current legislation to two under the new bill. Therefore, applications from workers are likely to rise.

Don't just consider flexible working as simply remote or hybrid working. While these work for some, they won't work for every employee or business. To have an inclusive workplace, be open to a variety of flexible working patterns including flexitime, compressed hours, job shares and part-time work.

Most part-time employees in the UK are women (38%), compared to 14% of men. Consider requests from employees to reduce their hours and advertise that all jobs can be part-time.

Case study

Zurich UK advertises that all of its jobs can be part-time or a job share. The insurance company's website says, "All new vacancies are available on a part-time, job-share or full-time basis because we know the best person for the job isn't always available full-time."
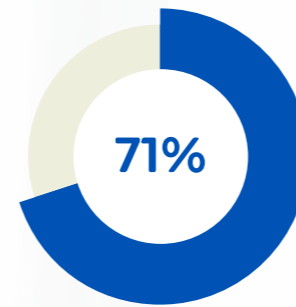
71%

71% of workers view a flexible working pattern as an important factor when thinking about a new job

APPOINTING ED&I PROFESSIONALS

More businesses will invest in ED&I-focused roles and teams, appointing external professionals and conducting diversity and inclusion audits.

Don't wait for your industry or competitors to start the trend. Conduct an audit now to assess the state of play for your firm. If you're a small business, you can do this internally. For larger companies, you could bring in external consultants or businesses to carry out an ED&I audit of your business.

Whether you're conducting an internal audit or hiring an external firm or consultant, once you have the feedback and data, make an actionable plan to address the areas that have been flagged.

AI FOR ELIMINATING BIAS

The language we use holds weight. It is especially important for performance reviews. Feedback can actively engage or disengage employees. It is also a place where unconscious bias can set in.

There is software on the market to help managers avoid bias in performance reviews. One tool is Textio Lift, which uses generative AI to interrupt and remove bias in appraisals, so your managers and leaders provide employees with actional and fair feedback. You can also delve into the data to see where bias exists in your business, including specific departments and employee demographics.

AI will likely be used to eliminate bias across company documentation, communications, and marketing, including employee onboarding documents, internal comms and training materials.

REPRESENT A MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

The UK working population is changing. Five generations are currently employed – Traditionalists (also known as The Silent Generation), Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Gen Z. Each generation has different values and approaches to job hunting and work. Generation Alpha is set to come into the workforce in the next few years, and they are predicted to be the most diverse generation yet.

Businesses will need to understand the different generations, including their beliefs and motivators to celebrate, retain and get the most from a multigenerational workforce. Coaching platform BetterUp explores the five generations' values, ideal work environment and work style – plus how you can retain each group.

LinkedIn's 2020 Global Talent Trends report found that 89% of professionals believe a multigenerational workforce is a positive. However, as an employer, you need to be aware of where intergenerational conflicts may arise. LinkedIn found people felt conflicts may happen because of management style (69%), work-life balance expectations (68%) and communication style (63%).

Sources

Conclusion

The most important takeaway is that embedding ED&I into the culture of your business and your recruitment process is a continuous journey.

In the same way you reassess your business goals, marketing strategy and financial outlook, evaluate your ED&I policies and strategies regularly.

Be honest about where your business is currently. Don't sugarcoat it. You can't foster an inclusive workforce if you're working with incorrect information or are failing to address issues at the root cause.

While we have looked through the lens of gender in this comprehensive guide, many of the points we have discussed are centred around helping you create a diverse and inclusive recruitment process as a whole.

We hope this guide gives you a solid foundation for building a company culture that both understands and fosters ED&I from every angle.

"Inclusion isn't about isolating any one piece and focusing on that. It is an actual cultural shift. ED&I needs to become part of the DNA of an organisation."

JULIE CALISIR, MANAGING DIRECTOR – BUSINESS SUPPORT AND CALL & CONTACT CENTRE, SEARCH

About Search

Search is a multi-discipline recruitment agency, covering over 15 specialisms across the UK.

With over 35 years of recruitment experience and 17 offices nationwide, we are one of the UK's leading recruitment agencies.

Our promise is to forge strong partnerships based on quality, value and trust, to keep our candidates, clients and colleagues moving forward together.

As an employer, we are unwavering in our commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace where diversity is celebrated, and everyone feels valued and respected. View our ED&I policy.

GET IN TOUCH

For support with your inclusive hiring needs, please complete our form.

One of our specialist recruitment consultants in your area will be in touch to work with you to create a bespoke hiring strategy.

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