

# ARE YOU AN INCLUSIVE CHANGEMAKER?

## How Diversity and Inclusion Can Accelerate Your Business



**D**iversity is the word on countless executives' lips. As today's organisations increasingly operate on a global scale, they know it is crucial that they reflect the diversity of the markets in which they operate. Diverse teams are vital to effectively connect with – and engage – consumers around the world.

As Stephan Surber, Global Head of the Financial Services Practice explains, the path is not easy to follow – but it is one of the keys for success. “With the best of intentions but without an inclusive environment, diversity becomes unsustainable within a business. The responsibility is on leaders to embed effective inclusive cultures that attract, retain and engage top talent at all levels,” he says.

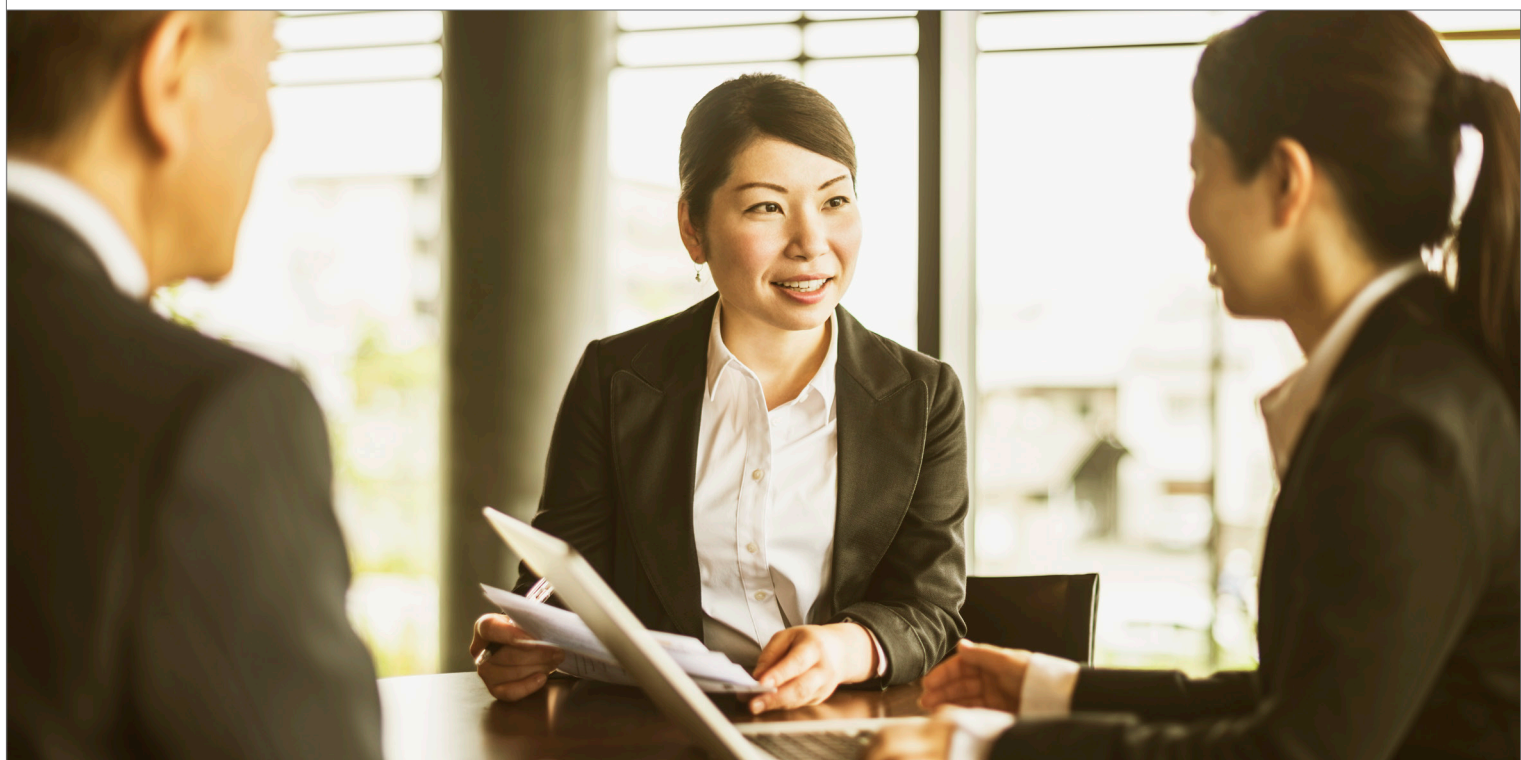
### RECRUITING A DYNAMIC, DIVERSE WORKFORCE

How does diversity and inclusion impact recruitment? “When it comes to attracting diverse talent, a recruiter’s role is to understand and mirror a company’s values throughout the

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entire hiring process, and to find the executives that exemplify them – and can drive them forward,” explains Jiri Gazda, Partner Central and Eastern Europe.

Why? Because top candidates value a show-don’t-tell approach to diversity and inclusion. Establishing clear role models can be highly effective. And embracing a diverse workforce – made up of individuals and groups of different genders, ethnicities, beliefs, cultures, ages and language skills – offers exponential benefits to organisations.

“Being open is vital. We often encourage leaders to widen their scope in terms of the potential candidates they look at to include diversity of age, location, educational background and so on, and to adapt practices and processes that both attract and retain the best candidates from the most diverse pool of talent,” Gazda continues.

### DIVING INTO DIVERSITY (HEAD FIRST)

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The equation should be simple: greater diversity equals greater capacity to attract and retain talent, a competitive edge coming through differing viewpoints, stronger productivity – and a better bottom line. However, managing a high-performing and diverse workforce requires daily commitment from the senior team.

According to PageGroup research on Inclusion in the UK Workplace, 61% of workers have experienced feelings of exclusion within the workplace, most commonly office cliques (30%), or have witnessed bullying or discrimination (21%). To ensure sustainability, diversity

must be aligned with inclusion and a sense of belonging.

According to Sheri Hughes, Diversity & Inclusion Director UK, it's never too early to start thinking outside the box. "It starts right at the beginning. You need to think about: where you're advertising; the language you're using; the experience that the candidate will have when they apply. Whether you speak over the phone or face to face... there are many ways of demonstrating signs of inclusion," she explains.

## BECOME AN INCLUSIVE CHANGEMAKER

Empathy is at the heart of a successful Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) policy. Like many aspects of company culture, empathy can be managed and measured.

According to Dan Robertson, Director at Vercida Consulting, the ingredients of high performance are "alignment between diversity and inclusion and a central core of psychological safety." And when this alchemy is achieved, organisations start to fly.

Vercida Consulting has identified six key traits of inclusive leaders:

1. **INSPIRE:** articulate the business performance benefits of diverse and inclusive teams
2. **INTEGRITY:** explain their weaknesses and strengths and build team trust
3. **INSIGHT:** understand their biases to learn about the experiences of team members
4. **INQUISITIVE:** pay attention to the patterns of behaviours within their teams
5. **INDIVIDUATE:** encourage connectivity and belonging through team events
6. **INVEST:** invest in team members through sponsorship and fair work allocation

These six points can help to shape an effective D&I policy that squares up to the challenges of a globalised workforce and potentially transforms employee satisfaction, cohesion and performance.

## LEADING BY EXAMPLE

An inclusive company culture allows each individual, regardless of background, to use their potential in the workplace and enable colleagues to do the same. Leaders must

create and implement an evolving company-wide D&I policy – even if this means moving mountains.

According to Page Executive's 2018/9 Inclusion in the UK Workplace study, 42% of UK workers feel that their company prioritises diversity and inclusion enough. How could this figure be higher? Surber explains that, "A truly inclusive organisation is prepared to ask tough questions and make changes. Inclusion must be fostered, cultivated and integrated into company culture from the executives down so the company follows," he says.

Our research also reveals that only 34% of C-level execs say their company has a D&I policy – and know what it is. So, what skills do senior leaders need to become inclusive leaders? They make inclusivity a blueprint in all dimensions of company life.

"If, as an organisation, you care about D&I, you should mirror that in every single supplier relationship – whether it's your recruitment supplier or energy provider. If it matters to you, it should matter to every partner you work with," explains Hughes.



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## CHALLENGE YOUR PERCEPTIONS

Page Executive strives to challenge clients' ideas of what talent looks like. According to Deloitte, in companies with a female CEO, 29% of board roles are filled by women, suggesting that focussing on diversity and inclusion at the top tier can facilitate change at all levels.





Achieving gender parity has also become a hot topic in the financial services sector. As Surber illustrates, “We recently placed a number of diverse profiles from non-financial services backgrounds into different banking groups.

“While these professionals need different support compared to someone that has banking knowledge, they reciprocate the trust by bringing a different voice, perspective and insight,” he concludes.

And as Gazda explains, all companies can follow the path to greater diversity, there simply needs to be the impetus to do so. “Page itself is a company that went through an enormous process of change. It supports flexible and dynamic working, focusses on gender equality and encourages international moves between companies.

“I am really proud to form a part of this company. We understand the topics of D&I because we are living it,” says Gazda.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Without an inclusive environment, diversity becomes unsustainable. Leaders are responsible for embedding effective inclusive cultures that attract, retain and engage top talent.

- ▶ Create and implement a D&I policy that covers all processes and practices and encompasses all employees and partners
- ▶ Aspire to fulfil the Six Traits of Inclusive Leadership
- ▶ Ask – don’t guess – team members’ motivations and needs
- ▶ Factor flexibility, empathy and inspiration into the recruitment process