

# Five Ways To Build Global Support For Diversity And Inclusion

The diversity and inclusion (D&I) debate has long raged in the HR arena. It's fair to say that professionals across the board recognise the need to create a culture that is conducive to D&I, yet there is still a lack of hard evidence to demonstrate that real progress has been made. For example, according to a recent report by Bloomberg News, only 17% of directorships in the UK at FTSE 100 companies are held by women and, on average, females are paid up to £5000 less per year than their male counterparts.

Clearly there is still plenty of room for improvement. But, what is the solution? With the aim of moving this issue forward, Cielo recently held a roundtable event to assess the future of D&I and what industry leaders are doing to foster change. The event saw senior HRDs from global organisations share insights on how to address the issue.

What became very evident at the event was that very few businesses are as far along on the D&I agenda as many would perhaps hope to be. When considering where they felt their company was in the transition model outlined by workplace diversity consultant, More2Gain, none of those in attendance positioned themselves right at the top of the scale. In the five stages laid out in this model – which categorises organisations from 'Asleep' to 'Alive' – many leaders felt they were in the 'Awake' stage, whereby leadership teams recognised the business benefits of a D&I culture, but strategies to deliver one were yet to be fully integrated across the business.

So how can HR professionals move their organisation along this model to the top end of the spectrum? According to the delegates, there is a five-step approach which will really help progression:

- **Create Diversity “Nudges”** - Encourage managers to include a specific target group in recruitment strategies through tailored talent-pipelining – for example, female-specific segments. Further, consider urging front-line managers to include at least one member of a target group on each hiring shortlist. This approach of regularly exposing hiring

managers to target candidates can be highly educational and improve D&I

- **Segment Employee Needs** - Learn what your employees and target groups really want from you as an employer. Once you truly know your work population, you can then develop flexible and agile strategies that best suit each employee's needs
- **Be Flexible** - According to a survey conducted by diversity consultancy, Capability Jane, both female and male professionals seek flexibility with regard to work schedules and benefits. Flexibility can include working part-time, remotely or simply having more control over daily work schedules
- **Be Authentic** - Creating a diverse workforce and inclusive culture demands an employer value proposition that is authentic and accountable, and promoted via the right channels. Communicating it effectively will call for partnerships with marketing and/or communications departments
- **Consider the Metrics** - Use accessible data in a more imaginative way to build and prove the business case for D&I. Only by measuring, evaluating and communicating the true value of diversity and inclusion strategies can you build the organisation-wide support necessary to incite change.

As one attendee explained, as soon as you think you have one area of D&I under some sort of control, you find another issue to wrestle with, so it's perhaps no wonder that there is still so much room for improvement. Take for example, the fact that the world's top business schools have spent the past two decades developing diversity courses for their MBA programmes, with the ultimate aim of creating a new generation of D&I driven business leaders. However, as Désirée van Gorp of Nyenrode Business University in the Netherlands asks: have they merely assembled a group that, despite its range of ethnicities, nationalities and genders, is far from diverse beneath the surface? This issue of 'authentic' diversity may be the next big

challenge that HR will need to address.

As argued by a number of delegates, though, true diversity and inclusion requires a change of thought, behaviour and attitude. The opportunities for competitive advantage are endless, and going from “Asleep” to “Alive” begins with that first small step.



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