

# diversity and inclusion



in the  
workplace.

2021 edition.

# foreword.

## We've all heard how diversity and inclusion results in better productivity and are increasingly being seen as areas of strategic importance for future success and innovation for organisations.

Studies also show employees are happier in a workplace where diversity and inclusion are central elements of the culture. This, in turn, leads to an increase in sales and improved profits.

For me, ensuring that all people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and bring their whole selves to work is an essential element of a successful organisation, both commercially and as a responsible and supportive employer. It's also the right thing to do.

The Covid-19 crisis has impacted every aspect of society over the last year. It's changed the way we all live and work. And as the research shows it is the most disadvantaged groups in our society that have been the worst hit. With nearly one third of lowest-earning employees in the UK having lost their job or been furloughed, compared to less than one in 10 top earners.

Organisations have a vital role to play in building society back better, to help tackle inequalities which have widened because of the pandemic, improving livelihoods, embracing diversity, nurturing talent, and leaving no one behind. It is important now more than ever to ensure diversity and inclusion doesn't fall off the agenda.

During these trying times, there are some key things to remember to ensure equality and diversity are embedded within every organisation. Employers must be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers or individuals to ensure safety. It is more important to consider whether any particular measures or adjustments are taken into account under the equalities legislation, for example, extra precautions around new mothers, expectant mothers, disabled workers and those impacted by long-Covid.

It's imperative that the particular circumstances of those with different protected characteristics are considered. Involving and communicating appropriately with workers whose protected characteristics have the potential to expose them to a different degree of risk is crucial.

As organisations start thinking about the eventual return to the workplace, there are opportunities to re-evaluate D&I goals, perhaps considering more robust human-centred objectives as the future of work is reimaged.

Educating the current generation on the benefits of diversity and inclusion however, is one of our biggest challenges. Our 2020 [Randstad Employer Brand Research](#) survey, conducted before the global pandemic outbreak, explored how the future workforce rate attractiveness of an employer. Research revealed that 28% of British Gen Zs (born after 1995) look for employers who offer diversity and inclusion; higher when compared to an older workforce.

Organisations of all sizes are reporting difficulty attracting and retaining the talent they need. A study by Korn Ferry on the Future of Work found that by 2030, in the UK alone, we can expect a talent deficit of three million workers. Finding ways to actively increase the pool of qualified candidates could help invigorate the job market and improve businesses' financial performance. To what extent could a more diverse and inclusive approach to recruitment and people management, close the gap on the skills shortage?

This report looks at diversity and inclusion in workplaces today. It looks at where organisations are excelling and considers practical ways the recruitment process can be made more inclusive.



Laura Todd, director of inclusion and wellbeing  
Randstad UK & Ireland

# general terms.

**Diversity** is about differences. Each one of us is different, and at Randstad we value and respect background, education, nationality, generation, age, working style, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, skills and any other characteristic, protected or not that makes us unique.

**Inclusion** is about getting the best out of these differences to achieve better outcomes. It is diversity in action. For Randstad, it is creating an environment where all of our people feel, and are, valued – where they are able to bring their different perspectives and whole selves to work, contributing their personal best in every encounter. In this way, each person can do their part to deliver better outcomes.

**Wellbeing** has a number of dimensions, including physical, mental and emotional health, satisfaction, purpose and feelings of happiness. It is not just about physical fitness or being active, it is also about positive mindset and personal resilience, strong connections, working well in a balanced way and financial stability.

**Culture** describes the ways of life, beliefs, values and attitudes which connect a group of people.

**Engagement** is a broad term, intended to cover the whole range of ways in which we interact with our employees, our clients and our communities, often forming some kind of communication relationship.

**Disadvantaged** refers to those put in an unfavourable position, hindered or harmed.

The 2010 Equality Act makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate against candidates based on a 'protected characteristic'. These characteristics include disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. The Act aims to tackle inequality, particularly when it comes to the employment or recruitment process.

# expanding the workplace

## conversation on D&I.

Even as the world adjusted to living under COVID-19, last year brought many other issues to the forefront of the labour market.

Social justice movements across the globe reminded everyone of the need for more diverse and inclusive workplace practices. The growing momentum behind the [Black Lives Matter](#) and #MeToo movements inevitably spurred a broader discussion around whether companies were doing enough to ensure a diverse work environment.

In the latest edition of [Randstad's Workmonitor](#), we asked participants across the globe about coping with the challenges of COVID-19, and how their employers are supporting them. Our research showed that overwhelmingly, most workers (80%) feel their company offers an inclusive environment.

The strongest evidence of this is through the training provided to employees, building a diverse workforce and creating elements of an inclusive environment, such as valuing the opinions of others within their group. Indeed, the deaths of several African Americans this year has reignited corporate efforts to enhance the effectiveness of their D&I initiatives to align with the broader social justice movement, according to [HR Executive](#).

When asked what are the most important initiatives their employers can undertake to be more inclusive, a little more than one-third say building a diverse workforce is key.

Almost 40% cite employee training as critical, and nearly as many point to nurturing elements of an inclusive environment. Measures such as partnering with non-profit organisations, advertising and employer messaging are seen as the least effective.

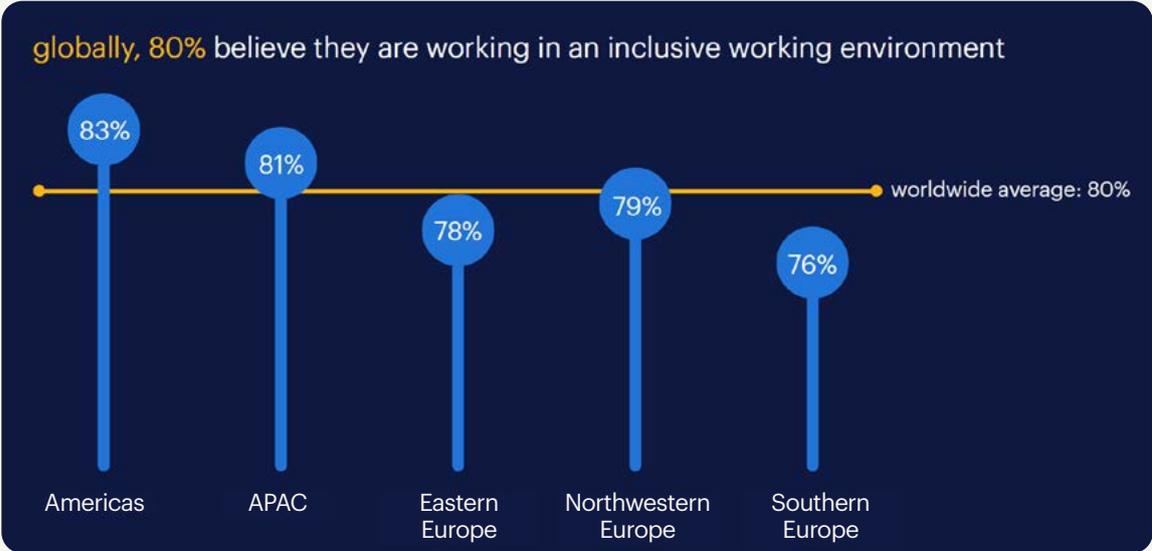


# top three most important aspects for companies to become more inclusive.

region	1 employee training	2 nurturing elements of inclusivity	3 building a diverse workforce
Americas	35%	37%	41%
APAC	33%	40%	40%
Eastern Europe	43%	36%	32%
Northwestern Europe	41%	34%	33%
Southern Europe	41%	34%	30%
Worldwide	38%	36%	35%

While the number of respondents who felt they work in an inclusive environment was the highest in the Americas (83% in the region compared with 80% worldwide), last year’s social justice movement has transcended geographically as demonstrations appeared across the globe, as the [BBC has chronicled](#).

With widespread media coverage of social unrest present in many countries across the world, inclusivity remains top of mind for many organisations and will likely be an important reminder that corporate D&I efforts must continue.



# 10 ways to increase



There are many benefits to a diverse workforce, and it is becoming clear that inclusion and promotion of staff from across all spectrums, all genders, generations, ethnicities, sexualities and disabilities will almost certainly see revenues go up.

Some of the advantages of a diverse workforce, as identified by The 2018 'Delivering through diversity' report by McKinsey and Company include:

- companies in the top 25% for ethnic diversity were 33% more likely to achieve a profit above the industry average
- more ethnically diverse boards were 43% more likely to outperform on profits
- those in the top 25% for gender diversity were 21% more likely to achieve a profit above the industry average

As an employer, there are many ways to increase diversity within your workplace from projects you can take on in your everyday work all the way to how people are hired into the company.

## D&I in the workplace.

Here's ten ways to increase diversity at work:

### Rewording job adverts and job descriptions.

This can remove unconscious bias as studies show that men are likely to apply for roles where they have less than 60% of the required skills, whereas women tend to only apply for roles where they have over 80% of the required skills.

### Advertising in minority publications.

There are a number of specialist publications in the UK and websites which are aimed at minority groups. This can be a good way to reach out to a wider previously unexplored potential pool of talent with employment opportunities.

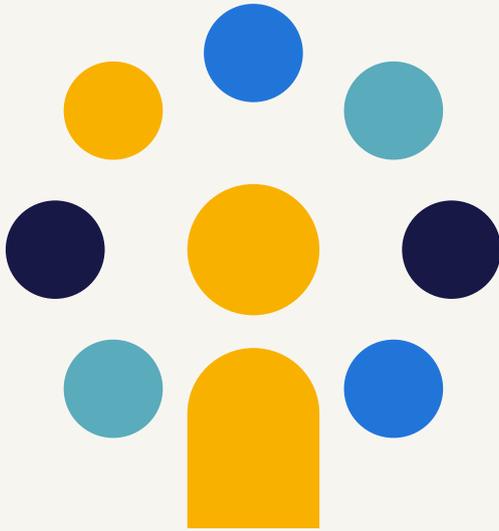
### Blind applications and a bigger graduate recruitment pool.

The introduction of 'blind' applications (e.g. no name, gender, age, education institution, disability etc) is an area that some corporate institutions are looking at. This reduces the risk of bias and creates an opportunity for objective decision making.

### Showcasing a diverse workforce on the company website and careers pages with case studies.

Case studies of the senior management team and/or recent graduates from diverse backgrounds can be useful. Universities UK research on closing the gap highlights that ethnic minority students are more likely to drop out of university as they don't feel they belong and it can be similar in the work environment. Creating a sense of belonging and 'people like me' as an inclusivity culture can be helpful and case studies go some way to achieve this. Showing different ages and genders can help.





### Health checking the culture of the organisation at a senior level.

Is there an overly macho or long hours culture that might disadvantage women or those with any disabilities for example? Are entertainment and staff events diverse and inclusive or do they all follow a certain theme? What is the company strategy and objectives and is this clearly outlined?

### Ensuring interview panels are diverse and minority groups are represented.

Interviewers need training and should ask the same questions of every candidate so their comfort level with some prospective employees, based on similarities in their backgrounds, doesn't bias the process. There are training schemes and programmes available and many companies specialise in training management to more effectively run interviews.

### Ensuring online assessments and access to interviews are fair and inclusive.

Working with support groups and charities such as the National Autistic Society and British Dyslexia Association to ensure hiring managers understand how to adapt interview and selection processes to ensure inclusion.

People with disabilities represent a vast market that is often overlooked and largely untapped. The assumption is that technology is different from the stairs. If a candidate attended an interview in a wheelchair and was required to walk upstairs, that would be unacceptable. In the same token, someone with a visual impairment or dyslexia shouldn't struggle with a website or online selection testing that for them is inaccessible.

### Job coaches.

Issues like sensitivity to noise or light, or difficulty coping with social interactions can be relatively simple to address. For example, providing a quiet office instead of an open-plan workspace to help avoid sensory overload for white-collar roles – but without the right knowledge and understanding, may be difficult procedures for HR to formalise internally as part of the recruitment process.

In-house 'job coaches', or someone hired on an adhoc basis, could help ensure workers with autism and those with other disabilities are comfortable with their workplace and are able to concentrate on their work. This could help ensure employees with different disabilities are supported not just during the recruitment stage but throughout their careers – and limit instances where talented individuals fall out of employment due to anxiety or stress.

### Raising awareness internally of the benefits of a diverse workforce through structured seminars and workshops.

The goal of diversity training through seminars or workshops is to make employees and managers better understand that even if there are differences amongst the team members that they are working with, a little adjustment in one's attitude can make for an extraordinary team. The key to any training is to make employees not only tolerant of the differences but to value those differences as a part of successful teams.

### Creation of employee forums, mentoring programmes and culture.

Celebrating festivals of all the different cultures is one way of creating awareness and acceptance. Some companies even create short courses or slide decks for employees who are travelling to other countries. This type of training can help employees to understand the culture of the country they are visiting.

Within the office environment, or through connected remote working, mentoring programmes can be established to help employees understand other cultures and challenges for minority groups. Employee forums and cultural societies in larger organisations can help promote different cultures and create a sense of acceptance and belonging.

# our guidance on how to create

## a fully inclusive workplace for all.

It's no secret that diversity leads to innovation, improved performance and economic benefits. These resources are guidance to help create a fully inclusive workplace for all.

### “diversity equals wealth”

Randstad is strongly committed to equality, inclusion and diversity. We believe this helps us build a more agile, productive and innovative workforce that reflects our candidate and client base, and the society in which we work.

 play the video

#### Diversity check list.

This checklist, based on our own diversity policy at Randstad, is to help you find out how diverse your team is. Can you check all the boxes? If you can't, this checklist is just meant to guide your thinking as you work on diversity.

- my organisation has a diversity and inclusion policy in place
- my organisation has a dedicated person/ task force with responsibility for diversity and inclusion within our teams
- my organisation has an LGBTQ+ and inclusion policy in place
- women on my team earn the same as men in the same roles
- our recruitment is accessible to all workers with disabilities
- our recruitment focuses on teams with people with the right skills to reinforce each other
- my team includes workers of all ages
- my organisation embraces the commitment to inclusion as a fundamental business strategy
- my team is a multicultural group of people

# inclusive leadership

## during times of crisis.

How can you advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace amid a global pandemic, remote working and periods of social unrest?



Click here to watch Randstad Sourceright's Diversity & Inclusion and Compliance Vice President, Floss Aggery as she talks about fostering inclusive organisation during times of crisis.

**“71% of professionals experience exclusion within the first six months of joining a company”**

Senior leadership commitment to creating a shared vision for a systemic change is vital. As the senior change agents for the business leaders must define how new behaviours will become a strategic advantage for the success of the organisation. For too many years, diversity and inclusion have been regarded as separate concerns. The reality is that it takes the top leadership to bridge the diversity gap.

A diverse workforce means your company benefits from a wide range of experiences, perspectives and insights. But to compete successfully for diverse talent, you must develop a coordinated, top-down approach.

Randstad's experience of driving workforce diversity helps you recruit and retain workers across age groups, religions, genders, sexual orientations and multi-cultural backgrounds.

### **Talent without boundaries.**

Having an inclusive approach to talent acquisition strategy generates a wide range of benefits such as:

- attracting the widest pool of candidates
- better utilisation of talent
- increased market share and competitive edge
- enhanced creativity and innovation based on a broader perspective of the world
- increased quality of team problem solving
- increased workforce productivity
- recognition for diversity, resulting in elevated company reputation
- strong employer branding as an employer of choice.

# how to attract the



Diversity and inclusion strategies and the roles they play are increasingly seen as key to achieving this. Diversity in the corporate boardroom continues to be the topic of many conversations, conference panels and studies.

Despite more companies today having diversity and inclusion strategies and training in place, not all companies are as active as they could be in their commitment to workplace diversity.

Many companies are taking steps to improve inclusivity. The Top 50+50 survey found that 96% of firms have a diversity or equality policy in place, yet when it came to having a dedicated diversity director, currently only 28% of firms have such an individual.

McKinsey and Company's [report](#) revealed that businesses with a good gender mix are 15% more likely to see financial returns above their national industry medians, while those in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to outperform the average.

# right skills and talent.

## Money matters.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) pay strategy (EHRC, 2017) identified significant economic benefits to decreasing pay gaps. It notes that closing the gender pay gap could add £600 million to the UK's gross domestic product (GDP); improving the employment rate and workplace progression for people from ethnic minorities could contribute £24 billion per year; and raising the participation of disabled people could reduce the annual £100 billion cost of people being out of work.

By the year 2025, 75% of the global workforce will be made up of millennials - which means this group will occupy the majority of leadership roles over the coming decades. They will be responsible for making important decisions that affect workplace cultures and people's lives. This group has a unique perspective on diversity. While older generations tend to view diversity through the lenses of race, demographics, equality and representation, millennials tend to see diversity as a meeting of varying experiences, different backgrounds and individual perspectives. They are much more likely to view the ideal workplace as a supportive environment that gives space to varying perspectives on a given issue.

The Deloitte Millennial [Survey](#) showed that 74% of these individuals believe their organisation is more innovative when it has a culture of inclusion. If businesses are looking to hire and sustain a millennial workforce, diversity must be a key part of the company culture.

# the gender balance.



## Women in the boardroom.

According to [LinkedIn data](#), companies with more women in the C-suite tend to have more women in their workforce overall. In fact, when there is a female executive in the C-suite, the average percentage of female employees is around 41%. Conversely, when a company does not have any senior female executives, on average, only 34% of its total workforce is made up of women.

The 30% Club, a campaign group designed to improve female representation in the boardroom, has also been encouraging firms to embrace quotas.

Since it launched in 2010, the female representation figure on UK Boards has increased to 28.4% from 12.5%. Targets combined with measures such as mentoring programmes and women's networks can help to create stronger pipelines of women too.

## what women want.

In a recent [LinkedIn Gender Insights Report](#), it showed behavioural data indicates that women apply to 20% fewer jobs than men.

 While both genders browse jobs similarly, they apply to them differently. [Research shows](#) that in order to apply for a job women feel they need to meet 100% of the criteria while men usually apply after meeting about 60%

 According to [McKinsey](#), companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians.

 Over in the United States, it is predicted that they will achieve gender balance on company boards by 2055 - but more diverse boards tend to perform better, as they're more likely to mirror the diverse makeup of their customers and corporate employees.

## three tips for attracting more female applicants.

- 1 Ensure the language in your posts is as gender-neutral as possible.

Getting the language and content right is an art shaped by science. Stereotypically masculine words or phrases can keep women from applying for jobs. Nouns like 'ninja', and 'rock star' may divert some women, just as adjectives like assertive, decisive, analytical, independent, and self-reliant can.

- 2 Reduce down to the absolute must-haves.

A study in the [Harvard Business Review](#) shows that women hold back on applying for jobs because they believe that candidates must meet all the job criteria. Does a candidate really need a certain skill or experience?

- 3 Provide flexible working arrangements.

Offering flexibility can engage a wider talent pool with more experience and diversity ([Forbes](#)). There has also been a sharp increase in men wanting to work flexibly. The choice to be flexible caters to various backgrounds and circumstances. This also reinforces the focus on results and not the hours. Our 2019 REBR data showed that women valued flexible working slightly more than men.

# minorities and priorities

Companies with more diverse staff demographics tend to be more productive, with McKinsey finding that companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have better financial returns than national industry medians.

Millennials from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are at greater risk of being in unstable employment than their white peers, according to the 'The Race Inequality in the Workforce' report from the Carnegie UK Trust.

The 2019 report stated ethnic minority millennials are 47% more likely to be on zero-hours contracts and also have a 10% greater chance of having a second job.

According to 2021 research carried out by [Green Park consultancy](#), there are fewer black people at the top of FTSE 100 firms, despite long-standing diversity targets. Research revealed that for the first time in six years, there are no black chairs, chief executives or finance chiefs.

Ethnic minority millennials are also 5% more likely to be doing shift work and are 4% less likely to have a permanent contract than white workers.

The results of the Boston Consulting Group's (BCG) report, *Why Your Diversity Strategy Needs to Be More Diverse*, found minority groups were far less likely to believe in their company's commitment to D&I. Just 46% and 39% of ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ respondents respectively reported they believed in their employer.

This clearly reinforces the point that ethnic minority staff occupy a far greater percentage of the lower paying roles.

Research carried by employment law specialists Slater and Gordon has found that when ethnic minority jobseekers used a 'western work name' on their CV, 28% felt they were offered more roles.

In addition, 27% claimed they landed more job interviews after altering their name.

# LGBTQ+ and inclusion.



## Results of the Boston Consulting Group's (BCG) report, Why Your Diversity Strategy Needs to Be More Diverse, found minority groups were far less likely to believe in their company's commitment to D&I.

According to the report, employees who do not believe their workplace is committed to diversity and inclusion (D&I) are three times more likely to leave than those who do.

Newcastle City Council was named the most inclusive employer in the UK by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) charity Stonewall in its 2020 rankings. The city council in the north east of England was the first local authority to come top of Stonewall's annual list since it launched the rankings 16 years ago.

A 2019 Randstad survey of over 1,900 jobseekers in the UK revealed that 60% were unsure if their employer has a transgender inclusion policy in place.

With a growing number of biological females seeking [transitioning gender treatment](#) in the UK, employers need to work harder to support transgender inclusion.

Samantha West, Commercial Director at Vinci Construction speaks about the importance of a diverse workforce, and her experience of coming out as a transgender female.

 play the video



### three strategies for better LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion

- 1 Younger staff will shift the dial on LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Global research presented by the Economist Intelligence Unit revealed that young employees were the ones likely to drive change in D&I. Nearly a third (27%) of more than 1,000 executives surveyed said young employees were the cohort most likely to guide company thinking on LGBTQ+ D&I. Just 16% said the C-suite was the most likely to support inclusion. The women and younger employees surveyed were significantly more likely to believe that LGBTQ+-friendly workplace policies and practices would deliver return on investment.

- 2 Small actions to make a real difference.

As part of the onboarding process, outline the support for LGBTQ+ staff that's on offer and ask new starters their preferred gender pronouns – as well as putting people at ease, it's a clear sign that your organisation is an inclusive and open workplace. Check your benefits: are they appropriate for LGBTQ+ employees and families? For example, does your health insurer cover same-sex couples?

- 3 Effective communication.

Communication is at the heart of having an LGBTQ+-friendly workplace. You need to find effective ways of communicating the firm's commitment to inclusiveness, and you also need to foster respectful communication among employees. You can achieve this by embedding a commitment to LGBTQ+ equality in your communications, for example newsletters and personal conversations. Find out what works and doesn't in terms of policies. Include examples and images that are inclusive. Also keep communication with other employees supportive of their views too.

# disabilities within the workplace.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has reported that 'disability has been made a top priority by UK employees over age and gender' as found in a 2019 workplace [study by Wildgoose](#). According to the Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS), 70% of discriminatory queries are to do with disability, and the survey says that this demonstrates clearly that 'employers are not doing enough to be inclusive to those with a disability'.

In April 2019 [research from charity Changing Faces](#) revealed that almost half of young job applicants with a disfigurement say that they were rejected because of how they looked. With 'severe disfigurement' considered a protected characteristic within the Equality Act's disability protections, this apparent discrimination is illegal.

Candidates who successfully proceeded to become employees have reported experiencing the same level of discrimination too. A quarter have been stared at during work, 19% have experienced negative comments, one in eight have found it difficult to make friends and 10% have been ignored by colleagues.

[Given that at least three million people with disabilities in the UK work, between 10% and 15% of staff at many employers will have a disability. UK equality legislation encompasses disability and the UK has extensive legislation and case law on discrimination against disabled people. Moreover, governments have expressed concern about the high level of unemployment among disabled people and pledged their commitment to improving their employment rates.](#)

Although many employers are convinced of the virtues of recruiting people with disabilities, and regulations have been introduced, actual practice often lags behind. In reality some of the gravest continuing problems involve people with "invisible" disabilities such as blindness, deafness, mental illnesses or learning disabilities. Employers may be slow to realise that their employees suffer some disabilities, particularly hidden ones.

Employees are more likely to become disabled during their working lives than to have a congenital condition. It is also at this point that organisations need to step up and accommodate their workers. Randstad's award-winning Returning to Work campaign featured the case of a business analyst who worked in financial services and suffered a heart attack and stroke. After months of rehabilitation, lots of hard work and a back to work programme, he returned to work in finance.

Some HR professionals and those with disabilities argue that modern online recruitment systems are making matters worse. Partially-sighted people and those with learning disabilities, dyslexia and autism often struggle to use some of the most popular online recruitment programmes. Some talented workers could be knocked out of the recruitment process who could have brought a lot of talent to companies because employers simply don't understand what an obstacle online recruitment is creating. Times are changing though.

Since Applicant Tracking Systems and online applications are used frequently in recruitment this can be a challenge for organisations who want a fair and open recruitment system. The use of these systems could be more of a consideration for some companies going forward.

In 2017 Lloyds Banking Group set a target of making requested changes to lights or other parts of employees' environment within 14 days to ensure disabled employees face minimum barriers to productivity. Such policy change reflects how the banking group and many other employers recognise needs that extend widely beyond staff who are the most clearly disabled.

For many people, a job search is fraught with anxiety — what to wear, what to say. But for candidates with neurological differences like autism or obsessive-compulsive disorder, difficulties like making eye contact, fidgeting or an unusual speech pattern can make the task even more challenging.



# unseen disabilities

## within the workplace.

### Mental health: the great depression.

A 2019 [report](#) from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the UK found that 595,000 workers suffered from work-related stress, depression, or anxiety in 2017/18 — and 239,000 of these were new cases reported that year alone. Unrealistic workload, lack of managerial support, changes at work, and bullying in the workplace were all significant contributors. And, in total, the mental-health crisis led to 15.4 million working days lost in the UK over the year.

Major depression is thought to be the second leading cause of disability worldwide. At the start of 2019 Prince William reinforced the link between jobs and mental health.

- [1 in 7](#) people experience mental health problems in the workplace (14.7%).
- [Women in full-time employment](#) are nearly twice as likely to have a common mental health problem as full-time employed men (19.8% vs 10.9%). And these illnesses can vary from depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders, to post-traumatic stress disorder.
- In September 2018 The Royal Foundation and charity, Heads Together, launched a [web](#) portal designed to help managers support staff struggling with their mental health.

In October 2020, a survey of nearly 250 [randstad.co.uk](#) visitors revealed that a quarter stated that their mental health was better working from home. Fast forward three months, this figure climbed to a third. 33% of respondents asked the same question in January 2021 admitted that their mental wellbeing is better working from home.

### Diabetes.

Diabetes affects around 3.9 million people in the UK and with type two diabetes, linked to lifestyle, on the rise in the UK then workplaces need to be aware of some of the challenges these workers might face.

More needs to be done to educate employers about their responsibilities to diabetic workers, as in a study it emerged that one in five people with diabetes have faced disciplinary action for missing work.

According to glucose monitoring system manufacturer Dexcom, diabetic employees often feel discriminated against at work with almost a third believing the condition has damaged their career.

One in six working people with diabetes have said that they feel they have been discriminated against by their employer because of their diabetes. For example, those with diabetes may need to eat at set times to stay on top of their blood sugar levels, having your lunch break swapped around every day on a rota could make this difficult. A reasonable adjustment could be for an employer to allow a worker to have their lunch break at the same time every day.

# neurodiversity in the workplace.

Nowadays an increasing number of companies are reaching out to include “neurodiverse” candidates who they say can offer unique talents.

Neurodiversity is a term used to describe the range of human brain function and behaviour.

Neurodivergence refers to conditions that aren't neurotypical, such as autism, Asperger's Syndrome, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Published research including a 2017 study reported in the Harvard Business Review, suggests that neurodiverse employees can be as much as 30% to 40% more productive than “neurotypical” workers when performing tasks such as data analysis, software testing, and compliance, provided that they are supported properly.

## Dyslexia.

Unless there are existing arrangements in place to address the issue of dyslexia in your workforce you could be missing out on a wealth of untapped potential and creativity. Since statistically about 10% of the workforce will suffer from some type and level of dyslexia even in milder forms.

There has long been a debate that dyslexia isn't a disability, it's an inability in an linear environment, but a great ability in a creative one.

## Strengths can include

- creativity
- imagination
- strategic thinking
- problem solving.

Those diagnosed with dyslexia may do well in interviews, but online application systems and testing (without extra time being offered; usually 25%) can be a challenge.



Tips to hiring and managing dyslexic workers can include:

- giving verbal as well as written instructions
- highlighting salient points in documents
- using voicemail as opposed to written memos
- post-it notes and highlighters can help dyslexic workers
- extra time might be needed to complete tasks
- getting someone else to take the minutes of meetings
- those with dyslexia do best when directions are one or two step based.



## help candidates to prepare

The CIPD [Neurodiversity at Work](#) report suggests that employers should give a neurodiverse candidate clear descriptions of how to get to the interview [or assessment] location (preferably with visual cues) and what to expect in the interview – including who they will meet, then length and format of the interview, and choose a suitable quiet space free from distractions.

Make sure that you clearly signal that your organisation welcomes neurodiverse individuals.

A statement to this effect on a job advert or company website can encourage applicants. Employers signed up to the government's Disability Confident campaign can display the logo to show their commitment in this area.



# autism in the workplace.

Among the estimated 8-10% of the population that is neurodiverse, many people remain undiagnosed. And some of these people, such as those with autism, often have unique abilities to see patterns, think creatively, and to focus more consistently on completing repetitive tasks.

The corporate world has started paying attention. Companies such as SAP, Microsoft, and Ford have started programmes specifically to recruit and train job applicants with autism to do everything from graphic design to data analysis.

From wording job adverts well to taking the stress out of candidate interviews and assessment, employers can do much to make their recruitment more comfortable for autistic workers.

While some large businesses such as JP Morgan have woken up to the value that employees with neurodivergent conditions such as autism can bring to their organisations, the overall employment statistics for this section of society remain woeful.

Only 16% of autistic adults are in full-time work and just under a third are in any kind of paid employment, according to the National Autistic Society.

The National Autistic Society provides workplace assessments to help identify any adaptations that could be made in an employment setting and advises on management techniques and ways to communicate effectively with employees on the autistic spectrum.

Although inclusion awareness is certainly growing, there is more that many organisations can do to attract people with neurodivergent conditions.

Research from the National Autistic Society shows that employers worry about getting support for an autistic employee wrong, with 60% saying they did not know where to go for support and advice about employing an autistic person. As many as 40% believe it costs more to employ an autistic person and 28% thought an employee on the autistic spectrum would be unlikely to be a team player.

There is also a lingering misconception that people with autism only want to work in technical or solitary roles. Another National Autistic Society survey highlighted that autistic people have varied career aspirations, with arts and creative industries about as popular as IT among respondents to the survey.

**ASPIeRATIONS** helps link employers with people who have Asperger's syndrome. The organisation has been set up to build a bridge between business and talented people within the Asperger's community and to create employment opportunities that have a lasting benefit for all.

They do this by recognising that there can be some distinct challenges that come with welcoming people with Asperger's Syndrome or high-functioning autism into the workplace. The organisation supports employers by using its expertise and experience to help organisations to overcome these challenges.

Working with someone on the autistic spectrum (including those with Asperger's Syndrome), can be an enriching experience for managers and colleagues alike, but it may also present some challenges.



Guidance for managers working with colleagues with autism:

- **Clarify job expectations.** Hiring managers may need to be more explicit about their expectations for an autistic member of staff. As well as the job description, you may need to explain the etiquette and unwritten rules of the workplace.
- **Provide training and monitoring.** Clear and structured training is invaluable. This can be provided informally on the job, by a manager, colleagues or a mentor, or through formal training programmes.
- **Ensure instructions are concise and specific.** Try to give neurodiverse employees clear instructions from the start about exactly how to carry out each task, from start to finish.
- **Ensure the work environment is well-structured.** Some autistic people value a more structured work environment. You can help by working with them to prioritise activities, organising tasks into a timetable and breaking larger tasks into small steps.
- **Regular one-to-one meetings.** As with any employee, line managers should have regular one-to-one meetings to discuss and review performance. For an autistic staff member, brief, frequent reviews may be better than longer sessions at less frequent intervals.
- **Provide reassurance in stressful situations.** Some people with autism can be quite meticulous, and can become anxious if their performance is not perfect. This means they may become very stressed in a situation such as an IT failure or issues with getting to work.
- **Support your staff member to prepare for changes.** Give information about changes to the workplace or tasks well in advance, ahead of others in the team if needed.
- **Ask about sensory distractions.** Autistic employees sometimes benefit from things like screens around their desk, headphones, or their desk being in a quieter part of an open plan workspace.

Auticon, an IT and compliance business, employs more than 100 IT consultants on the autistic spectrum in the UK, Germany and France, and is the first social enterprise to scale this model across Europe.



# social mobility in the workplace.

## A three hundred and sixty degree approach.

A view is emerging that to be truly committed to becoming a 'diverse organisation', employers must turn their attention to another factor - social mobility. Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals from one social strata, or 'class', to another. As with other aspects of diversity and inclusion, its business importance rests on the desire to encourage different thinking and promote new ideas. Combining individuals from different backgrounds is believed to influence work productivity and quality of output, which in turn is expected to improve a business.

## The UK's first-ever Social Mobility Employer Index.

The Index is a joint initiative between the Social Mobility Foundation and Social Mobility Commission, in partnership with the City of London Corporation.

It ranks Britain's employers for the first time on the actions they are taking to ensure they are open to accessing and progressing talent from all backgrounds and showcases progress towards improving social mobility in the workplace.

At the end of 2016 KPMG became the first UK business to publish comprehensive data on the socio-economic background of its workforce. This data provided an evidence base for change and is used by the company as a baseline to measure our future progress. Going public with this data will also ensure the firm is held to account on its social mobility work.

The top eight firms named in the 2020 social mobility employer index were:



PwC  
Grant Thornton  
KPMG  
Byan Cave Leighton Paisner  
Browne Jacobson  
The Ministry of Justice  
Herbert Smith Freehills LLP  
Severn Trent Water



## Top tips for implementing a social mobility strategy.

- 1 Covid-19 presents an opportunity for employers to diversify their attraction models. Going digital allows employers to extend the geographical and social boundaries of their talent pools.
- 2 Given the unpredictability around A-Level results during the Covid-19 pandemic – which has hit disadvantaged students the hardest – it is more important than before that employers look to accelerate action on blind and contextualised recruitment.
- 3 Implement a recruitment process that is rigorously tested for assessing potential, with criteria linked closely to in-work performance.
- 4 Investigate whether the culture of your organisation is welcoming to all social backgrounds by participating in the Index's employee survey or by conducting your own focus groups/study.
- 5 Assess whether your organisation has a 'class pay gap.'
- 6 Continue to prioritise and raise awareness of social mobility in your organisation and beyond.
- 7 Develop and implement a social mobility strategy and publicly advocate for change in your sector, with government and across civil society.

# age is just a number

## right?



According to Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development research, employees who work in age-diverse teams say they enjoy:

- improved knowledge-sharing
- better customer service
- a wider understanding of different perspectives
- enhanced problem-solving
- greater innovation

Ageism also appears to be a problem in the UK, with seven out of ten respondents to a CV-Library study saying this form of discrimination was common in their workplace.

Workers in their 50s were more than twice as likely to be made redundant than those in their 40s, according to analysis undertaken by the Office for National Statistics data for the Daily Telegraph.

The over-50s made up nearly 80% of employment growth over the years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2008, nearly eight million over-50s were employed. By the end of 2018, their number was close to 10.4million.

By 2025 there will be one million more people 50 and over and 300,000 fewer people 30 and under in the workplace. One in three of the working age population will be 50 or over.

### How can businesses cater for older workers?

Businesses can get ahead of their competitors by creating age-friendly workplaces where people of all ages are supported, valued and fulfilled. The good news is it takes just small changes to make this happen: early access to support for issues around health or caring; small, practical adjustments to the workplace; flexible working arrangements, managers that treat staff with empathy and an age-positive culture including at the point of hiring.

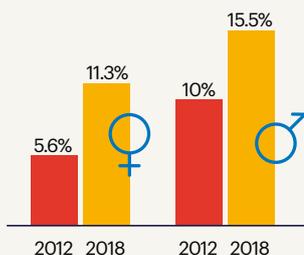
**Legal & General** has looked to change the way they work with regards to supporting older workers. One of the major changes has been in the way they deal with employees who are approaching their later years. With there now being no legal retirement age in the UK, Legal & General has replaced traditional “preparation for retirement workshops” with a flexible working policy to provide employees of all ages with the ability to work in line with their life and family commitments.

### Menopause in the workplace.

In August 2019 [The Guardian reported](#) that MPs were pushing for clear workplace policies to protect women going through the menopause, which exacts a hefty personal and professional toll on as many as one in four women.

A menopause policy should be as commonplace as maternity schemes in businesses and organisations, say the MPs, some of whom want legislation to force through the reforms.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) [Let's talk menopause](#) resource provides managers with tools on how to effectively support women going through the menopause at work.



Recent Office for National Statistics figures showed that the proportion of women retiring after they've hit their 70th birthday had gone up from just 5.6% in 2012 to 11.3% in 2018. Likewise, the number of men giving up work in their 70s had also gone up from 10% to 15.5%.

Two menopause-related tribunals have already been found in favour of the employee. It's highly likely there will be more to come. Menopause is covered under the Equality Act 2010, and can be on the grounds of sex, age or disability discrimination.



# what's next?

## upping the game, probably.

The [report](#) "Missing Pieces", published by Deloitte in January 2019, looked at the diversity of Fortune 100 and 500 boards. The percentage of women and minorities on corporate boards had increased in the past years, but what was even more interesting was that over 25% of the Fortune 500 companies then had more than 40% diversity on their boards (up from 13% in 2012).

"While the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted how businesses operate and has sped up the global trend of digitalisation, it has also allowed us to improve our technology, connectivity and mobility. If organisations want to successfully recover, they must ensure their workforce is prepared to meet emerging business demands, especially as the nature of work undergoes such a radical transformation. It's essential that public and private stakeholders collaborate to identify and provide opportunities for more individuals to effectively enter and stay in the labour market."

Randstad CEO, Jacques van den Broek



According to Indeed, people with disabilities constituted 15.9% of all new hires in Q2 of 2019, with total new hires up by a fifth compared to five years ago. Hiring of ethnic minorities had also climbed over the same period and accounting for 13.2% of new hires.

# flexible working.

Morgan McKinley's 2019 working hours and flexible working research revealed nine in 10 (91%) UK office workers worked beyond their weekly hours.

According to LinkedIn's Global Talent Trends 2019 report, a third (31%) of LinkedIn users say flexible work arrangements are a very important consideration when choosing a job. That's a third of candidates who might turn down an offer if your company doesn't offer flexibility.

Flexible working can also help those with OCD and other neurodiverse disabilities.

Randstad's 2020 [employer brand research](#) highlighted that the most attractive non-monetary benefits desired by employees are centred around flexibility, with flexible working hours and being able to work from home being two of the top three key drivers. Providing flexible working hours or time to de-stress when first entering the workplace can help build a supportive and comfortable working environment. You could consider allowing an employee to have their own desk and an agreement with other staff not to use that desk in their absence, where conditions may trigger anxiety and panic within shared work spaces.

A [recent study](#) carried out by Talk Talk discovered that 30% of managers reported that their teams have been more productive and 35% said they had been more collaborative. Talk Talk's CEO even went on to suggest that productivity levels are so high, that they can achieve a week's worth of work in four days.



While some employees see the added flexibility and lack of commute to be beneficial to their work life balance, evidence suggests that employers are in fact benefiting from remote working in terms of increased productivity. The potential problem with this however, is that organisations may not be accounting for the increasing hours people are working, as [58% of respondents](#) to our poll confessed to be doing.

Government organisations are quite accommodating when it comes to recognising the different circumstances of their employees. Flexible working hours are common – usually based around a core time of hours, or on a 'shift work' basis. Part-time jobs and job sharing are also more common.

The Australian arm of accountancy firm EY launched '[life leave](#)', which is self-funded, to travel, work part-time or simply just enjoy the time off in one of two blocks of time across a year.

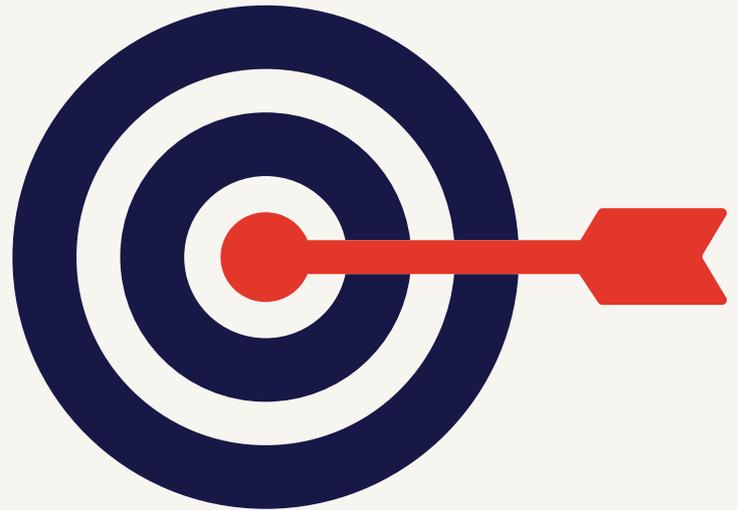
Other new incentives include term-time working and temporary part-time, which went into effect from April 1 2019.

Unilever has a range of market-leading, family-friendly and flexible working policies, which enable employees to balance their daily responsibilities.

These policies and practices include:

- Agile working, which gives employees the possibility to work remotely and flex their own hours, whilst ensuring business needs are met.
- Flexible working arrangements including, but not limited to, part-time and job share opportunities.

# how are organisations doing? successes so far.



In 2019 Randstad signed up to the disability inclusion campaign The Valuable 500.

Further membership and commitments include commitment to the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI), helping employee wellbeing and fulfillment working with Time to Change, being a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer and inclusion within DiversityInc's top 50 companies.

The Bank of England, British Airways, Tesco, M&S, Greggs, specsavers, Sainsburys, Accenture, Aviva and Google are just some of the companies that have announced their membership of The Valuable 500.

The campaign aims to ensure businesses globally recognise the value of the one billion people around the world living with a disability. They believe that building a global society that recognises the value of the one billion people living with a disability starts with business.

**Binc** was founded by social entrepreneur and activist Caroline Casey in 2015, with a mission to ignite a historic global movement for a new age of business inclusion. Binc is using a tried and tested formula that has worked in the past for gender, race and LGBTQ+ to leverage the exponential rise of The Diversity and Inclusion Agenda.

**Superdrug** worked across 2019 and 2020 to become a more diverse and inclusive workplace. They set up 'Everyone Matters' made up of six pillars – gender equality, LGBTQ+, ethnicity, wellbeing, social mobility (known as Access All Areas), and flexibility at work (called Make Work Work). These were formed from a combination of employee feedback, external research on what other organisations were doing with D&I, and discussions among the leadership team.

Each pillar is headed up by a director sponsor and they are involved in the steering groups and support the networks. The CEO creates podcasts to help inform and engage the workforce around D&I.

The groups put on events and campaigns and celebrate key dates to raise awareness of their pillar. Examples include a panel for International Men's Day with a mixture of colleagues and external influencers; a session for National Coming Out Day, where LGBTQ+ employees talked to a group of senior leaders about their experiences and what inclusion means to them 'Everyone Matters' has been received well by staff. Their latest employee survey engagement was at an excellent 82%.

**Aviva** won the The trailblazer award in the 2019 The Diversity in Finance Awards, as the judges said it has covered a huge range – from older workers, encouraging age diversity, professional returners, leadership programmes, gender diversity and for initiating equal parental leave, setting the bar for the sector.

In the 2019 The Diversity in Finance Awards, the diversity and inclusion initiative of the year award went to **Zurich**, for its inclusive behaviours pledge, encouraging the insurance industry to sign up to better behaviours.

With 44% female representation in the boardroom and a 40% female executive committee, in 2018 **Diageo** was named the leading FTSE 100 company for its representation of women on boards. It has also set a target for its global leadership team – a group of roles below board and executive level – to be 40% female by 2025.

**The Co-op** runs several employee networks in line with its D&I mission. Their Aspire group caters for colleagues passionate about personal development and gender equality, while Rise focuses on driving cultural awareness and ethnic sensitivity. The Respect network Works with LGBTQ+ colleagues, and the Youth initiative supports younger employees.

**Aon** has a Workability business resource group (BRG) which is formed from, and run by, colleague volunteers. Workability is open to all colleagues, but especially welcomes those with a disability and those caring for a disabled friend or relative. Aon also runs a Mental Health Group which also is a colleague led organisation which strives to drive awareness and support mental health issues both in and out of the workplace. These groups meeting regularly to raise awareness, advise on policy development, to improve recruitment and retention of people with disabilities and to provide support for employees who have a disability or are caring for relatives or friends with disabilities.

# areas to consider to increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

## Job adverts need to be clear and precise, and avoid jargon.

This can remove unconscious bias as studies show that men are likely to apply for roles where they have less than 60% of the required skills, whereas women tend to only apply for roles where they have over 80% of the required skills.

## Advertising in minority publications.

There are a number of specialist publications in the UK and websites which are aimed at minority groups. This can be a good way to reach out to different groups with employment opportunities.

## Rooney rule.

Use the Rooney rule to pave the way for more female board members. In order for boards to appoint more female CEOs, there first has to be more female board members to vote for them. The rule, instituted by the NFL requires teams to interview at least one minority candidate for an open head coach or general manager position. Major corporations like Microsoft, Costco, and most recently Amazon, use this type of process for board selection, pledging to consider at least one woman or minority candidate whenever there's a vacancy.

## Blind applications and a bigger graduate recruitment pool.

There are also small adjustments that can be made to the recruitment process which make a big difference to diversity. The socially mobile who are able to attend university are less likely to attend elite institutions, so removing university names from CVs will also help interviewers see the person in front of them rather than the reputation of his or her university.

When it comes to graduate recruitment, selection from a broader number of universities and social backgrounds need to be targeted. In recent years the 'Big4' professional services firms have changed their approach in recruiting graduates. Deloitte adopted contextualised academic data for its entry-level recruitment process in an attempt to understand the economic background and personal circumstances surrounding their candidates' academic achievements.

They realised that not all A-level grades were the same, depending on the quality of the school that those pupils attended. To prevent unconscious bias and to ensure job offers were made on the basis of present potential rather than past personal circumstance the firm's interviewers did not have access to details of an applicant's school or university.

Showcasing a diverse workforce on the company website and careers pages with case studies Case studies of the senior management team and/or recent graduates from diverse backgrounds can be useful. Reports highlight that ethnic minority students are more likely to drop out of university as they don't feel they belong and it can be similar in the work environment. Creating a sense of belonging and 'people like me' as an inclusive culture can be helpful and case studies go some way to achieve this.

## Ensuring online assessments and access to interviews are fair.

Working with support groups and charities such as the National Autistic Society and British Dyslexia Association to ensure hiring managers understand how to adapt interview and selection processes to ensure inclusion.

People with disabilities represent a vast market that is often overlooked and largely untapped. The assumption is that technology is different from stairs. If a candidate attended an interview in a wheelchair and was required to walk up stairs, that would be unacceptable. In the same token someone with a visual impairment or dyslexia shouldn't struggle with a website or online selection testing that for them is inaccessible.

Look at the makeup of your interview teams and panels. A diverse group of interviewers shows you're committed to different points of view and helps decrease unconscious bias. For example, the company Intel began requiring diverse interview panels and, within two years, the diversity of its new hires had skyrocketed. Make sure you have a diverse recruiting team as well.



### Introduction/extension of flexible working policies for all staff.

Before the pandemic, many organisations were already taking advantage of flexible work policies, initially pitched as an employee benefit. Demonstrating that you are flexible around accommodating your teams' needs and lifestyle will create a happier employee culture. And happier teams mean teams who are more likely to stay in their roles for longer.

### Job coaches.

Issues like a sensitivity to noise or light or difficulty coping with social interactions can be relatively simple to address – such as providing a quiet office instead of an open-plan workspace to help avoid sensory overload – but without the right knowledge and understanding, may be difficult procedures for HR to formalise internally as part of the recruitment process. In-house 'job coaches', or someone hired on an adhoc basis, could help ensure workers with autism and those with other disabilities are comfortable with their workplace and are able to concentrate on their work. This could help ensure employees with different disabilities are supported not just during the recruitment stage but throughout their careers – and limit instances where talented individuals fall out of employment due to anxiety or stress.

A 2019 report from Center for Talent Innovation CTI, a think tank focusing on the workplace and diversity, looked at corporate sponsorship programs. According to their research, over 70% of the interviewed sponsors chose protégés of their own race and gender. This "mini-me syndrome" obviously has an impact on the diversity of talent pipelines.

### Raising awareness internally of the benefits of a diverse workforce through structured seminars and workshops.

The goal of diversity training through seminars or workshops is to make employees and managers better understand that even if there are differences amongst the team members that they are working with, a little adjustment in one's attitude can make for an extraordinary team. The key to any training is to make employees not only tolerant of the differences, but to value those differences as a part of successful teams.

### Creation of employee forums, mentoring programmes and culture.

Celebrating festivals of all the different cultures is one way of creating awareness and acceptance. Some companies even create short courses or slide decks for employees who are travelling to other countries. These trainings can help employees to understand the culture of the country they are visiting.

Within the office environment mentoring programmes can be established to help employees understand other cultures and challenges for minority groups. Employee forums and cultural societies in larger organisations can help promote different cultures and create a sense of acceptance and belonging.

### Use AI tools to screen candidates.

There is a growing number of AI-driven predictive hiring tools, impervious to gender, race, and age, that can assess the soft skills and other aptitudes of candidates before they're invited in for an interview. Some of these platforms, like the one offered by Pymetrics, "learn" the skills and traits of your company's most successful performers and then screen candidates to find the ones that "look" like your top people.

### Ask about disabilities.

Asking if someone has a disability at application stage  
This has benefits which include -being able to provide support during the recruitment process,  
- increasing the representation of disabled people in the organisation  
- monitoring how many disabled people apply for jobs

It can also help if your business has signed up to the 'Disability Confident' scheme which commits to offer disabled people an interview if they meet the minimum criteria for the role.

### Publicise your values.

A good way to attract a diverse range of applicants is to state your commitment to fostering an inclusive and dynamic working environment. Backing this up with evidence to emphasise how your organisation promotes this kind of culture will make individuals feel more welcome and supported.

Detailing the diversity of a leadership team, highlighting role models within the company and sharing any measures taken to increase diversity can be advantageous.

# in conclusion.



Diversity is viewed as a core part of HR strategy – led by an understanding that diverse workforces breed better creativity and, ultimately, a better grasp of their customers. However for many employers today it is still seen as a tickbox exercise and there continues to be an oversight in how some application, assessment and interview processes can prove a hurdle to those with certain disabilities. As the world's leading staffing provider we are proud of the fact that we take strides in diversity and inclusion.

At Randstad, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing are embedded in our heritage, an integral part of how we do business. Our approach to inclusion and wellbeing, keeps that in mind. We are committed to creating a culture that encourages collaboration, where it's the norm to bring together diversity of thought, creativity and collective and individual employee experiences to help shape and inform our decision making and solutions.

How we value and respect our people, their diversity, experiences and uniqueness defines the culture of our organisation now and in the future. Bringing these elements together defines how successful we'll be in meeting the current and future needs of our clients, our candidates, our partners and our people.

Randstad has signed up to the Valuable 500, the Disability Confident scheme and global members of the ENEI. In terms of gender diversity. In November 2018 Staffing Industry Analysts (SIA) published their Global Power 150 – Women in Staffing list which included nine Randstad executives from around the globe. The publication recognises influential female leaders in the industry worldwide and provides a platform to celebrate many of the talented women shaping the world of work.

Laura Todd, director of inclusion and wellbeing  
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