

The Jobbio Guide to_



Mastering Diversity_

How to Nurture an Inclusive Team

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REDEFINING DIVERSITY_

Defining and assessing
diversity in a modern team

WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

We hear a lot about the importance of championing diversity and inclusiveness and about having a diverse and collaborative team. But what does 'having a diverse team' actually mean? The inclusion of people from a variety of ethnicities, genders, sexualities, age groups, disabilities, religions and socio-economic backgrounds?

Yes, but it goes beyond that. In an era of increased globalisation, evolving family structures and highly developed tech, we are seeing a naturally more diverse work environment. People are working remotely, internationally and with a wider span of generations than ever before.

If diversity is moving towards the norm, is inclusion becoming the more prevalent issue? And if so, is this reflected at the highest levels of an organisation? The best indicator of a diverse, inclusive team is one where diversity of thought and experience is represented at all levels and employees are comfortable in their own skin. How is this judged?



THE BIGGEST DETERMINANT OF DIVERSITY ACCORDING TO_

_Entry Level Staff



_C-Level Executive



HOW TO ASSESS DIVERSITY_

In some cases we are so unaware of our unconscious bias that we can't accurately assess how diverse our team is or else we recognise the value of inclusion in theory but fail to apply it to our own situations. How can you tell if your Company is truly diverse?

Fully use HR_

If possible access data surrounding team make-up. While certain details won't be disclosed, such as a person's sexuality or religious beliefs, other information pertaining to education, ethnicity and gender can be helpful in determining diversity. Look at stats related to employee grievances, retention, pay increases and promotions.

Ask employees for candid feedback_

Don't underestimate the value of inside information. Find out how your team see themselves in terms of diversity. Ask them for a real assessment and make sure it's in a safe environment.

Employees will be more forthcoming if they are assured feedback will be confidential. Conduct anonymous surveys that ask for honesty regarding team culture, inclusion and hiring and promotion processes.

Bring in a third party_

Use a third party to appraise your Company and give an unbiased, outside perspective on hiring, team dynamics, decision making and rewards. You may uncover problems in areas you weren't even looking.

— Airbnb recently hired Laura W. Murphy, a former Director of the American Civil Liberties Union in Washington to investigate racial bias on their platform.

This followed the publication of a Harvard Study which indicated that people of colour found it more difficult to rent rooms through hosts on the site. They released the report discussing her findings and among them was a recommendation that diversity could be improved not just on the platform but in their workforce too.

HAVING THE HARD AND FAST NUMBERS CAN MAKE A PATTERN EASIER TO SEE AND HARDER TO DENY

Compare yourself_

Look at the teams of your competitors and see how you measure up in comparison. What's the industry benchmark? If you are lagging behind, ask why this might be the case. What is it that you are doing differently?

Evaluate your reward and incentive scheme_

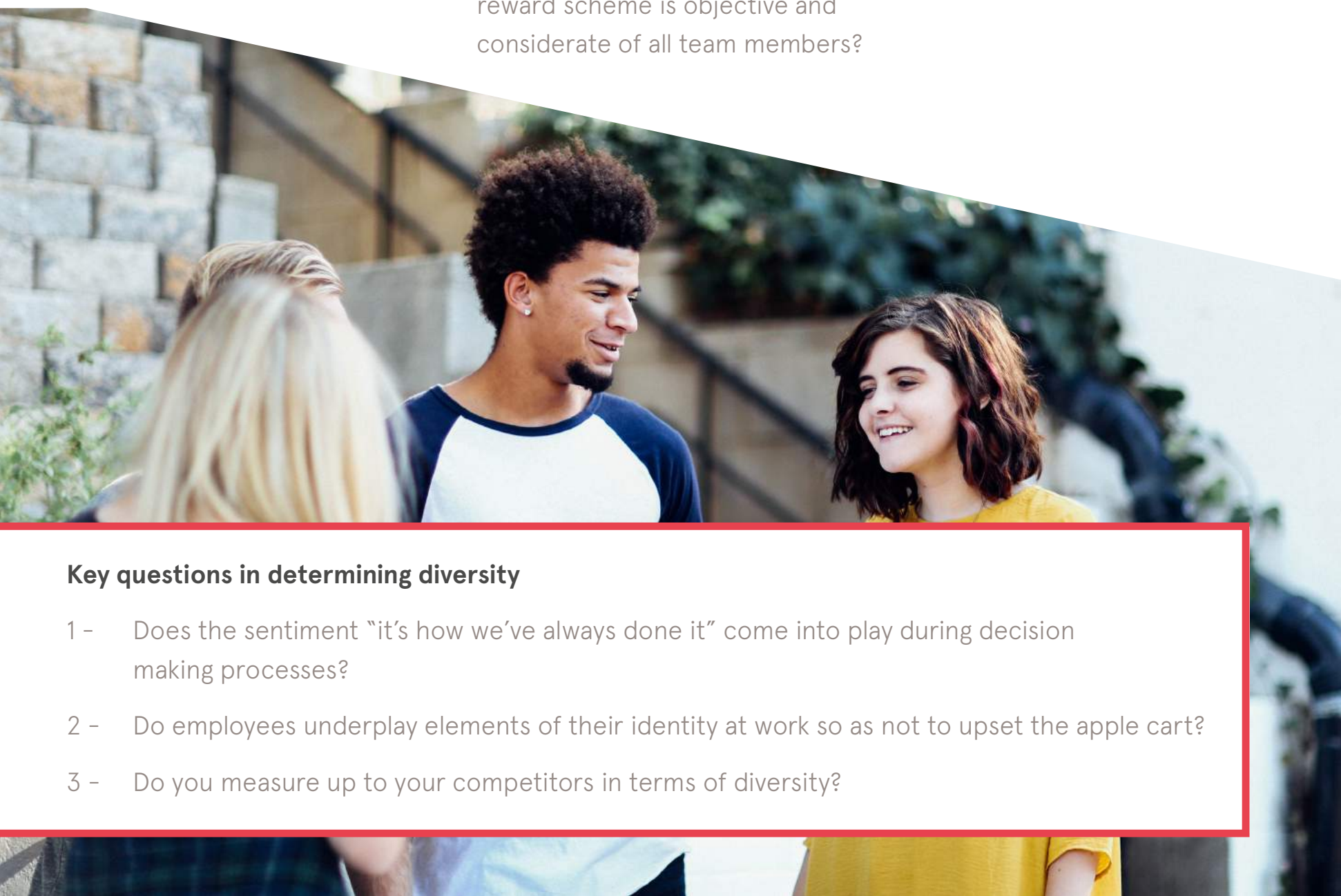
Who typically gets promoted in your team? What criteria are they assessed on? If you are considering a number of people for promotion, you need to give feedback to the unsuccessful candidates as to why they were not chosen for the position. This is a good way to evaluate the fairness of the process from both a managerial and employee perspective.

Similarly, ask yourself if your reward scheme is objective and considerate of all team members?

Do you offer equal opportunities for all your team to flourish? For example if you offer bonuses to employees who work extra hours, are you discriminating against single parents who can't stay in the office late? If an employee's pay is determined solely by their qualifications, does that discriminate against people from disadvantaged backgrounds who would not have had access to the same educational opportunities?

Key questions in determining diversity

- 1 - Does the sentiment "it's how we've always done it" come into play during decision making processes?
- 2 - Do employees underplay elements of their identity at work so as not to upset the apple cart?
- 3 - Do you measure up to your competitors in terms of diversity?



PROS AND CONS_

The benefits & challenges
of a diverse team

BENEFITS_

Having a diverse employee base is proven to increase efficiency and give Companies a competitive edge in a number of ways_



Strong dynamic_

Diversity is good for employees' personal development. They learn from the different backgrounds and skills of their counterparts, making them better communicators and more socially aware individuals. They are also better equipped to deal with changing conditions in the workplace.

Better connection with clients_

Diverse teams will be better able to identify and engage with wider client groups due to a heightened understanding of their backgrounds, attitudes and motivations. This also increases customer loyalty.

Less lawsuits_

Inclusivity means less discrimination, bullying and conflict which means less litigation.

Productive problem solving_

A varied team brings with it varied thought processes and perspectives. Instead of groupthink, where people conform and make decisions for the sake of harmony, you have analytical thought, harsher critique and a more thorough analysis of an issue. Less yes, more success!

Positive image_

A diverse team leads to an improved employer brand which helps attract the most innovative employees.

Boosted morale_

When employees are part of a team where they feel accepted and their individuality is nurtured, morale is better and relationships with coworkers are more cordial and productive. An inclusive, equal and positive environment also means Talent engage and participate more which leads to more creative output.

IN INDUSTRIES WHERE COMPETITION FOR TALENT IS FIERCE, **A STRONG EMPLOYER BRAND** CAN BE THE DIFFERENTIATING FACTOR FOR CANDIDATES

CHALLENGES_

A diverse workforce presents a number of challenges, particularly for managers, who will need to adapt their style to accommodate a more varied employee group. Their role is not just about leading, organising and motivating a team but vehemently promoting inclusiveness and combating prejudice and discrimination. Difficulties they may encounter_

Communication barriers_

To manage a mix of personalities, managers need to be able to identify what methods of communication will be most effective and adapt accordingly. For example, some

employees respond better to visual communication, some to oral. Some will communicate better as individuals, some in a team.

Tokenism_

Tokenism is where employers hire one or a few people from minority groups to give the appearance of a diverse work environment and is counter-productive in ensuring an inclusive team. Managers need to hire, promote and reward based on merit, not for the sake of cosmetic diversity.

Slower decision making_

Giving more people a voice will inevitably lead to more opposing views and a slower path to consensus. This is the cost of a more innovative team.

Culture clashes_

Cultural differences can lead to clashes in the workplace as employees have different motivations, values and goals. They can also have different definitions of professionalism and what it means to be a good employee or colleague.

In Asian culture, it can be seen as disrespectful for junior employees to ask questions of their manager as it jeopardises their authority, while in Western culture this would be seen

as being engaged and thorough. Similarly, while Gen Z might feel virtual meetings through FaceTime or Google Hangouts are most efficient, Gen X may feel a face-to-face meeting is more appropriate. While Gen Z might favour casual attire at work, Gen X might interpret this as a sign of sloppiness or unprofessionalism.

Divisions in the team_

People have a tendency to “stick to their own” or socialise with people they have the most in common with. When this happens, it can lead to divisions in the team. Managers need to motivate their team to collaborate across the board and not just with their own age group, sex or nationality.



MAKE IT HAPPEN_

How to ensure
diversity and
inclusion

Identifying diversity gaps in your organisation is only half the battle. Rebuilding and restructuring to ensure diversity is adopted and encouraged is a challenge in itself. So, what can you do to ensure you're creating and maintaining a truly diverse workplace?

Write inclusive job descriptions_

Strive to write job specs and descriptions that don't favour one group of people over another.

USE GENDER NEUTRAL LANGUAGE AND LIST QUALIFICATIONS AS PREFERRED NOT REQUIRED, UNLESS THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL

You can even reference your Company's commitment to an inclusive team to attract more diverse applicants.

Mentoring programmes_

Match mentors with mentees from different backgrounds and experiences to help stamp out prejudices and build real relationships. These relationships will force people to evaluate any perceptions or judgements they may have had about a particular group of people.

Technology_

In terms of diversity, consider using software which allows for "blind hiring" to ensure you are eliminating any unconscious bias. For inclusion, use psychometric tests to determine personality types. This way you'll be better placed to understand a person's behaviour. Are they expressive or reserved? Do they focus more on the long or short term? Are they familiar in tone or formal?



Sensitivity training_

Educate the team on how to act appropriately when faced with conflict or confusion. It's important for them to be aware of the differing backgrounds, beliefs and opinions of their colleagues.

Foster an environment that recognises differences and is respectful of them. For example, managers should take a zero tolerance approach to slang or derogatory language being used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Cast the net wider_

There can be a tendency for hiring managers to return to the same universities or groups where they may have sourced Talent previously. This can also happen with referral programmes, where employees endorse former classmates or colleagues with similar experience. Expand your hiring horizons by recruiting from underrepresented universities, colleges and community groups.

Open forum_

Facilitate open discussion in the workplace by creating an environment where people feel comfortable discussing issues and sharing views, even if they go against popular opinion.

Education_

Education partnerships and networking events allow Companies to build relationships with Talent in their formative years. This helps change perceptions of an industry and promote inclusiveness. Initiatives like SAGE, Science in Australia Gender Equity, aim to attract and retain more women and minorities to STEM industries.

Be accountable_

Put procedures in place to assess your hiring after a new employee is on board. Investigate whether or not interviewers have stayed true to the initial requirements advertised and if not, why not?

Recognise difference_

In an attempt to promote equality, we can sometimes ignore aspects of a person's make-up – their ethnicity, religion, sexuality, etc. because they simply don't make a difference to how we view them. While that's fine in theory, in reality it can be problematic.

For one, these elements play a large role in a person's identity so failure to recognise them undervalues a large part of who they are as individuals. It can also trivialise any negative experiences or discrimination a person may have endured because of their race, gender or sexuality. To be truly inclusive means acknowledging and celebrating differences, not underplaying them.



**A SENSE OF
BELONGING AND
INCLUSION DOESN'T
COME FROM FITTING
IN BUT FROM BEING
ACCEPTED**

BREAKING THE MOULD_

How minorities fit in a team
dominated by one demographic_
Q&A with Lu Li of
Blooming Founders

HOW DO YOU NURTURE AN INCLUSIVE TEAM IN AN INDUSTRY WITH A DOMINANT DEMOGRAPHIC?

A fish rots from its head down. Or in other words_ an inclusive team starts with inclusive leadership. It is C-level responsibility. So in case your leadership team lacks diversity (which they probably will), they must at least demonstrate inclusive leadership traits – or nothing will change. It is important that they are not just committed to inclusion because ‘that’s what you need to do these days’ or because HR demands it, but because they believe in the business case and (in an ideal scenario) because it aligns with their personal values and ethics system.

–
Driving inclusion ultimately means promoting fairness, no matter what nationality, skin colour, sexual orientation, age or background, and giving everyone the opportunity to achieve what they should be able to achieve. This is the fundamental belief I have in my work at Blooming Founders, which translates into the mission of “Providing female founders the same opportunities as male founders”.

It might sound trivial, but the reality is that there are more barriers for women in the startup ecosystem than there are for men. We see unconscious bias during fundraising and a lack of dedicated support systems in terms of network, spaces and content.

As a leader in this area, I need to make time and invest resources to address these topics and change the status quo. Equally, a leader within an organisation must invest resources to showcase that inclusion is a true business priority. He/she needs to build an aligned understanding of the business case and a shared aspiration of fairness. And they need to work with the team to see if there are any processes or structures in place that lead to unconscious bias, groupthink or expert overconfidence.

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For example, in a team of 9 dominant males, it can be tough for the only woman at the table to raise her voice, even when she is typically quite dominant herself. Her opinion can also be discounted by the men, leading her to feel unappreciated or even humiliated.

Nurturing an open mindset, a desire to understand other perspectives and a high tolerance for differences are all key to nurturing an inclusive team. Differences should be openly celebrated and communicated in a positive way.



HOW DO YOU ATTRACT AND RETAIN MINORITIES?

A place, where there aren't many people similar to yourself, can make you feel a little alien. In order to change such perception, there has to be initiatives that make you feel welcomed and accepted. For me, I use language and visuals. Blooming Founders has a flower icon and pink and purple colours in its logo to appeal to women. My events are titled "How She Did It" or "The Power Women Chat on Investing" to encourage more women to attend.

Initiatives targeted at a certain minority group such as recruiting events for "women in tech", typically work very well.

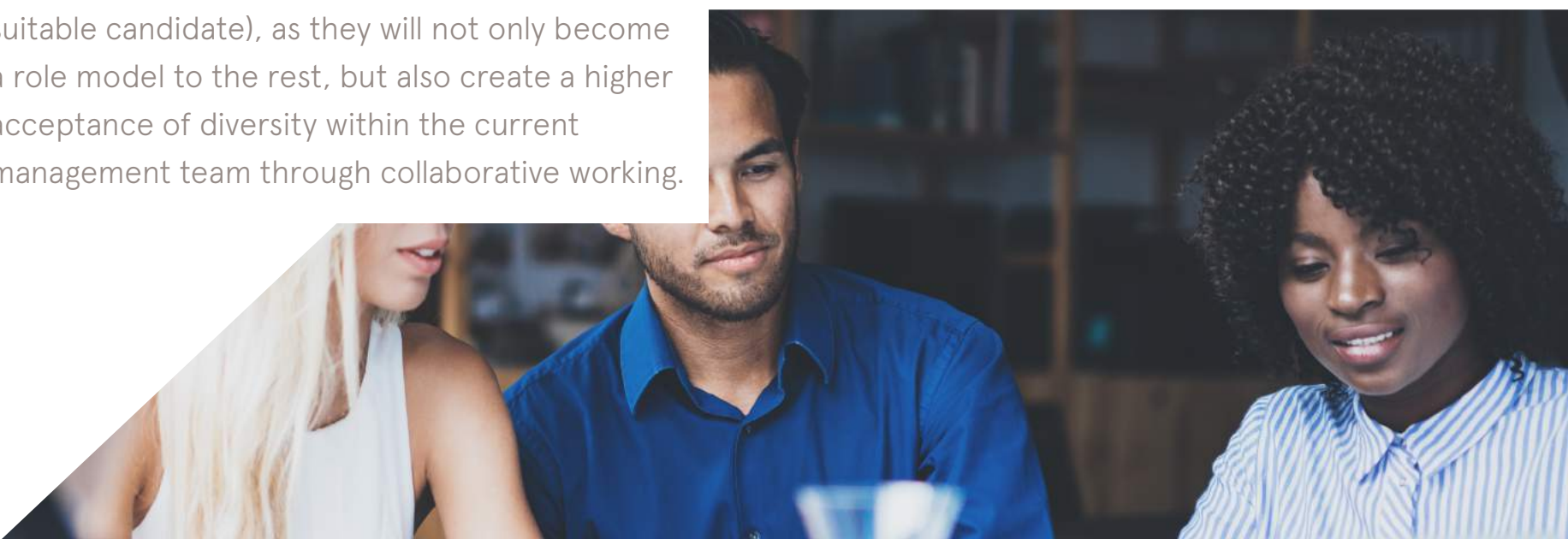
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Another good option is to produce and share more content about existing minority workers in a certain industry to create more aspirational role models and empower younger generations to consider wider career options.

—
You can also invest some effort to scout passive or open Talent from minority groups and encourage them to try the job.

Alternatively, you can implement blind recruiting in the candidate selection phase to eliminate any kind of bias, which is another interesting concept.

Once you have attracted them to your organisation, pay very close attention to how they integrate into the existing culture. If a new minority hire doesn't integrate smoothly, try to get feedback (in an empathetic, non-threatening way) and think about what you could do to improve the situation. Believe it or not, most minorities never get asked about their opinions, so if you do, then that alone will get you some bonus points – and invaluable employee insights too!

Include minority workers in executive positions (and invest some serious effort in finding a suitable candidate), as they will not only become a role model to the rest, but also create a higher acceptance of diversity within the current management team through collaborative working.



HOW DO YOU ENSURE MINORITIES ARE BEING GIVEN AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO BE AUTHENTIC RATHER THAN TRYING TO FIT WITH THE MAJORITY?

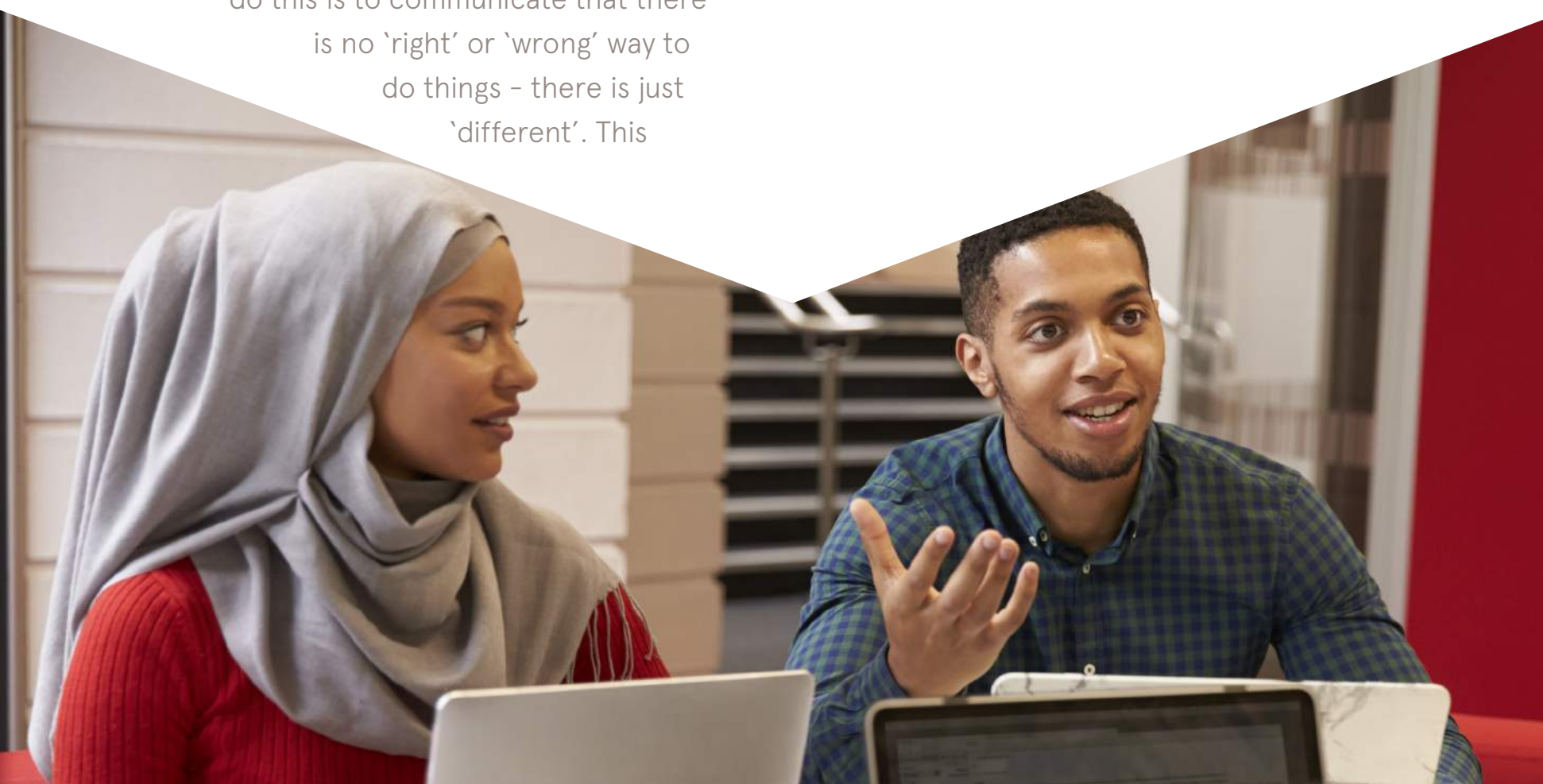
It's all about creating an environment where people feel safe to be themselves. For example, you should actively seek the perspectives of minorities in meetings. Give them a voice at the table. Don't allow yourself or anyone else to judge quickly when engaging with diverse team members.

—
You want to hear perspectives that you have never heard before.

Promote social accountability or a 'fairness-mindset' amongst managers. Empower everyone to make their own decisions and give them freedom to handle their own projects. A good way to do this is to communicate that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to do things – there is just 'different'. This

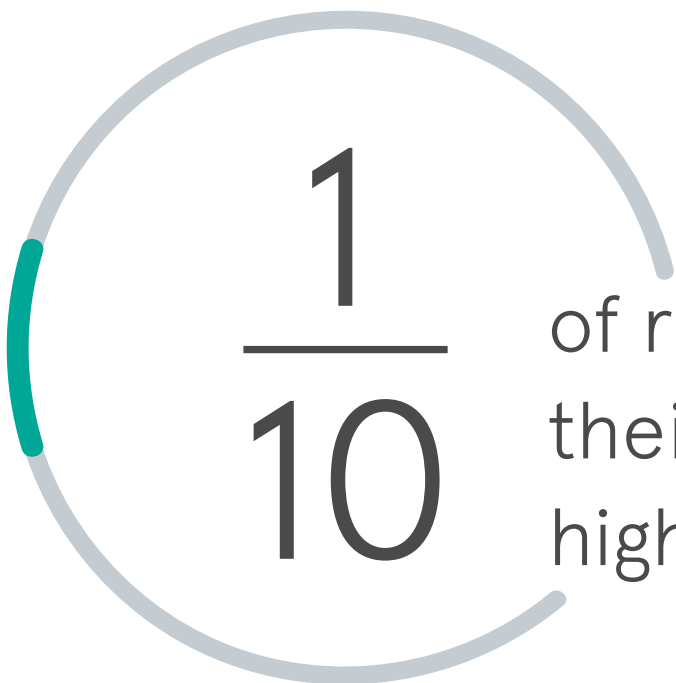
creates an open culture, where people are encouraged to speak up whenever they experience disrespect.

As Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook says: "True leadership stems from individuality that is honestly and sometimes imperfectly expressed. Leaders should strive for authenticity over perfection." So turn your leaders into diversity champions and empower them to address conflict or intolerance whenever it arises.





of respondents found their workplace to be below average in terms of diversity.



of respondents found their workplace to be highly diverse.



of 18–24 year olds say a diverse workplace is important to them.

Insider, Outsider, No-Sider_

How does diversity fit in
the generation gap?

In any large organisation you'll find a cross section of generations working side-by-side - this isn't a revelation by any means. But the summer of 2017 will officially mark the date that the first Gen Zs will graduate from college, adding yet another cohort to the mix. For the first time in a long time, three very distinct generations will come together as colleagues. Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z - innovating, strategizing, problem solving and building businesses together. The challenge for Companies is to ensure the seamless integration of this next wave of Talent, while not ostracising the older colleagues that sing from a very different hymn book.

Many presume the onset of Gen Z - the Centennials - will mark a revolution of sorts to Companies operative norms. Gen Z are often presumed to be exaggerated versions of their predecessors, the 'Millennials', so it's predicted the two will join forces to push the senior players (the 'Baby Boomers') forcibly into retirement, their workstyles seen as archaic and their opinions as outlandishly dated. But surprisingly, the opposite is more likely the case.

Why so? Cultural norms, social expectation and industrial and technical revolution have shaped all three generations, but Gen Zs are actually more aligned with Gen X than Gen Y. Here's a breakdown of the generational characteristics that differentiate and calibrate one group of workers from the next_



GEN X_

Survived economic hardship, war and a concept of work as 'servitude'. Education was a luxury, communication was primarily face-to-face and family relationships (marriage and children) began at a young age and were encouraged to be within their cultural 'norms'. Values of stability, structure and earning reward through dedication meant they developed long standing loyalties to single organisations, often staying in the same Company until retirement.

–

Conformist

Respectful of authority

Rule abiding

Belief that dedication and hard work result in long term rewards

Value stability

Struggle with change

GEN Y_

Grew up in a time of economic growth and revolution, being key players in the invention of the digital and technological age. This generation marked an increase in 'latchkey kids' with many being children of divorce.

Change has been the norm for this group, and their entrepreneurial spirit has been encouraged and nurtured resulting in an expectation of high achievement. Investment in third level education became 'the norm' and they began to rethink what it means to add value to a Company and to have work-life balance. They're prone to job hopping due to their desire for flexibility, freedom and informal flat structures. They form life partnerships slowly and don't commit to marriage or children until much later than Gen X.

–

Optimistic and confident

Self reliant and autonomous

Value freedom of speech and informality

Embrace change

Adverse to structure and control

GEN Z_

True digital natives, this generation see technology as 'par for the course' and expect rapid improvements in how things work. Adept at assimilating vast amounts of information quickly and across numerous channels simultaneously, they live predominantly online existences – be it when working or socialising.

Having watched their parents survive times of recession, they've also witnessed rapid global economic shift, climate change concerns and the threat of terror. They're regular globe trotters and value diversity in relationships and long term partners. This generation will see more interracial marriages, mixed race off-spring and openness around their sexual orientation.

–

True digital natives

Pragmatic and discerning

Value commitment and hard work

Global citizens who strive for the greater good

Adverse to process and procedure

SO, WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL QUAGMIRES WHEN MERGING THESE THREE GROUPS OF PEOPLE?

Well, values drive what we believe, how we process information and how we behave. Generally, we seek to develop relationships with people whose values mirror our own, making for harmonious and compatible partnerships. However, the nature of work environments mean we have to function effectively with a wide variety of people – only a small percentage of which will resonate with how we operate.

When people who share very different values have to work together, the risk of conflict is high which can lead to reduced productivity and morale. Up until the arrival of Gen Z, most workplaces have been dominated by a structure of hierarchical supervision (the ‘old school’ Boomers managing the ‘free spirited’ Millennials), which has brought plenty of challenges and pulled the concept of ‘culture’ to the forefront of management priorities. As Gen X move towards retirement the landscape will shift again, with Millennials taking the reigns in leading people who, although more technically advanced than them, resemble their old managers and may strive to operate to those ‘archaic’ norms.

**TO COMBAT DISHARMONY
IT'S IMPORTANT TO ADDRESS
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
THROUGH THE ENTIRE
LIFECYCLE OF
AN EMPLOYEE**

During the recruitment stage investigate newcomers attitudes to working with a cross section of generations and continuously 'up-skill' more seasoned employees on how to lead and motivate younger generations coming on board.

—
Debunk stereotypical myths wherever possible by educating all groups on the value each brings to the table and commit to conducting regular 360 reviews to assess how satisfied each cohort is.

Ask for employee feedback, being sure to implement any suggestions that could lead to improved communication. Engage in team building that utilises tools like MBTI and focuses on understanding how to work with different personality types and understand others perspectives. Most importantly, don't consider 'conflict' to be a dirty word. Instead, encourage all voices to be heard and mediate differences in opinion effectively and openly, as it's these differences that will bring the most constructive change and encourage an environment of inclusion and diversity.



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benefit from a crash course
in nurturing diversity?

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