How to engage your team & leaders in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Introduction

Welcome to the Bristol Inclusion Hackathon Toolkit, designed to empower businesses in Bristol to engage effectively in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

This toolkit is structured to address the specific needs and challenges of Bristol businesses, providing actionable guidance and practical examples to foster a culture of inclusion and equity within organisations.

A diverse, equitable, and inclusive work culture brings a multitude of benefits to an organisation.

By integrating diverse perspectives and ideas, it enhances innovation and creativity, leading to higher performing teams.

Additionally, it fosters greater employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention, creating a more harmonious and productive work environment. Access to a wider talent pool with varied skills and experiences leads to improved problem-solving and decision-making.

Further, diverse teams are better equipped to understand and serve a diverse customer base, leading to deeper market insights. Finally, fostering an inclusive culture enhances the company's reputation and appeal to potential employees, partners, and customers, contributing to sustained success and growth.

It's important not to just focus on race and gender, but also include socio-economic elements, disability, neurodiversity, plus intergenerational workplaces, with the widest range of generations in history. We should also reference the other guidance and try not to duplicate their areas of focus.

This toolkit is crafted with a range of signposting and guidance around engaging your teams and leaders in DEI.

- Definition and importance of DEI in the workplace, including an intersectional approach

- Benefits of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work culture

- Overview of the toolkit's purpose and structure

- Importance of business values and employee value proposition (EVP) considering DEI, led by example from leaders.

Leading by Example

We explore the importance of demonstrating a visible commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within an organisation. This includes integrating DEI into the organisation's strategy, actions, and communication.

Additionally, it involves setting clear goals and expectations for DEI efforts and behaviours including promotion of an inclusive leadership style that values diverse perspectives, therefore fostering a truly inclusive and equitable work environment.

- Demonstrating visible commitment to DEI through company strategy, actions and communication
- Setting clear goals and expectations for DEI efforts and behaviours
- Promoting an inclusive leadership style that values diverse perspectives

ACTIONS

- Clearly communicate your commitment to DEI through company-wide messages and town halls
- Participate in DEI training and education programs alongside employees
- Actively seek out and amplify diverse voices and perspectives in decision-making processes
- Hold yourself and other leaders accountable for promoting inclusive behaviours
- Ensuring that policy and process supports the company vision, particularly in promotion and development of employees
- Being an ally and active bystander, calling out and addressing exclusion and poor behaviour.

Recruit, Retain and Deliver Inclusively and Equitably with Diverse Teams

WHY?

Implementing inclusive hiring, talent management practices, and DEI training isn't just the right thing to do ethically—it's also good for business. It leads to stronger teams, happier employees, fewer legal problems, and better connections with customers.

Fair Opportunities, Happier Employees.

By implementing fair hiring and promotion practices, businesses ensure that everyone has a fair shot at getting hired and promoted based on their skills and abilities, not just who they know or where they come from. This creates a level playing field for all employees.

Happier Employees, Stronger Business Performance.

When people feel they have been treated fairly and have equal growth opportunities, they're happier and more motivated, boosting productivity and morale.

Diverse Teams, Better Business Results & Customer Outcomes.

Businesses serve diverse customer bases and needs. When companies have diverse teams with people from different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, they tend to come up with more creative ideas and solutions. This leads to better business decisions, innovations, products and services that cater to a broader audience.

Avoid Legal Issues.

Fair treatment of employees and customers, plus more considered products and services, help avoid legal troubles and safeguards the company's reputation from discrimination complaints.

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HOW?

Inclusive Workforce Planning and Hiring

- See Be Applied's resources to debias workforce planning and hiring: www. beapplied.com/blog, as well as our Bristol Inclusion Hackathon Toolkit on Recruitment

- Promote recruitment on job boards focused on hiring from under-represented backgrounds, as well as from schools and colleges through (paid!) internships and apprenticeships

- Review and revise job descriptions and hiring practices to eliminate biased language and requirements, for example using gender-decoder.katmatfield.com

- Implement blind resume reviews, structured interview questions and standardised scoring

Talent Management, Mentorship and Development

- Provide mentorship, sponsorship, and development opportunities specifically targeted at underrepresented groups to support their career growth

- Incentivise team members to upskill in DEI by including it in performance reviews

- Regularly review pay equity to ensure fair compensation and equitable opportunities for all employees (not just who shouts loudest)

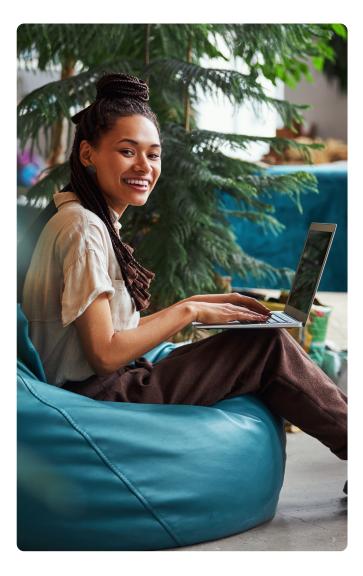### Comprehensive DEI Training and Education

- Provide mandatory DEI training for all employees, supplemented with more in-depth sessions for leaders, to enhance awareness and understanding

- Cover topics such as unconscious bias, microaggressions, intersectionality, allyship and inclusive communication to promote a more inclusive work environment

- Empower leaders to champion DEI initiatives as integral components of the organisation's culture and strategic direction - and hold them to account in performance reviews.

Building an Inclusive Culture, through Action, Allyship and Communication

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

An inclusive culture is foundational for an organisation to truly reap the benefits of diversity. By implementing a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and microaggressions, leaders set clear boundaries and expectations.

However, it's also critical to create psychologically safe spaces for employees to openly discuss their experiences. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) provide this forum while also promoting awareness and a sense of belonging.

ACTIONS:

- Implement zero-tolerance for discrimination and microaggressions

- Ensure comprehensive policies are in place and properly socialised

- Provide training to identify and address microaggressions

- Create safe spaces for open dialogue about experiences

- Facilitate regular forums for open and honest discussion

- Encourage vulnerability and story-sharing to build empathy

- Support and promote employee resource and affinity groups

- Allocate budgets and executive sponsors for ERGs

- Collaborate with ERGs on DEI initiatives and education

- Celebrate cultural milestones of your diverse workforce

- Recognize ethnic and religious holidays

- Spotlight employee backgrounds through sharing stories

Building an Inclusive Culture, through Action, Allyship and Communication

ACTIONS:

- Foster empathetic engagement and authentic conversations
- Encourage active listening to build mutual understanding
- Use apps and AI call recording (eg Fathom) that highlight if someone is monologuing
- Have courageous conversations to bridge divides
- Encourage curiosity to deeply understand experiences
- Create forums for open questioning and story-sharing
- Avoid assumptions, keep learning about lived experiences
- Challenge biased behaviours misaligned with values
- Speak up against microaggressions and discrimination
- Model inclusive language and respectful interactions
- Establish mentorship programs and community outreach
- Pair underrepresented talent with mentors and sponsors
- Support communities through volunteering and philanthropy

THE POWER OF ALLYSHIP

While an inclusive culture promotes psychological safety, true equity requires allies who advocate alongside underrepresented groups.

Allies amplify marginalised voices, engage in authentic dialogue to understand experiences, and speak up against misaligned behaviours.

Mentorship and community programs extend allyship efforts.

Building an Inclusive Culture, through Action, Allyship and Communication

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Even the best intentions fall flat without clear, consistent communication and accountability.

Leaders must ensure DEI is not just a philosophy, but backed by transparent practices and data. Celebrating inclusive behaviours reinforces the cultural shift.

ACTIONS:

- Ensure employees know what's happening and have a voice

- Provide regular DEI updates through various channels

- Gather continuous feedback through surveys and forums

- Make values visible and model positive behaviors daily

- Display DEI values prominently through branding and visuals

- Recognize employees exemplifying inclusive behaviors

- Provide clear processes for addressing concerns

- Establish confidential reporting mechanisms

- Outline paths for investigation and recourse

- Collect data, measure progress, and report on DEI metrics

- Track representation, retention, promotion rates

- Be transparent about areas of success and opportunities

Measurement and Accountability

When striving to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work culture, it is important to measure and collect in-depth workplace demographic data.

The secret to mastering the tightrope walk of measuring diversity, equity, and inclusion lies in identifying the most impactful DEI metrics for your organisation to focus on. Below are a few DEI KPIs (key performance indicators) to consider for your organisation:

- The diversity of the applicant pool
- The diversity of the hiring panel and interviewers
- Demographic data
- Diversity and inclusion surveys to collect employee feedback
- Employee turnover and retention by demographic
- Employee advancement into leadership by demographic
- Job satisfaction and engagement
- **Accessibility questions such as:**
  - Do all employees have a comfortable place to use the bathroom?
  - Do you offer adequate parental leave (not just maternity leave), paid period leave, paid mental health days and space for breastfeeding mothers?
  - Do you have screen readers and other equipment for employees with disabilities?
  - Do you recognise all types of cultural holidays?
- Leadership team demographic data

By regularly collecting and analysing this data you can measure how well your business is doing in DEI.

This can help inform strategy decisions to help improve DEI and you can measure if the strategy is effective.

You can also report on DEI publicly and within the company, celebrating wins and acknowledging when improvements can be made.

ACTIONS

- Develop a EDI strategy and framework with specific goals, initiatives, and key performance indicators (KPIs) as well as expected employee behaviours linked to values
- Regularly collect and analyze data on workforce demographics, pay equity, and employee engagement
- Establish clear consequences for leaders and managers who fail to uphold DEI standards
- Publicly report on your organization's DEI progress and achievements
- Report internally on your organisations DEI strategy, demographic, DEI initiatives and progress against goals and KPI's

Resources and Call to Action

DIRECTORY OF LOCAL BRISTOL ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES RELATED TO DEI

[Self Agency](#) - Neurodiversity consultants

[EDP](#) - Mental health and safeguarding training

[Babassa](#)

[Bristol Women In Business Charter](#)

[Womens Tech Hub](#)

[Bristol Women in Property](#)

[Bristol Property Inclusion Charter](#)

[Womens Work Lab](#)

[Bristol Disability Forum](#)

[Bristol Muslim Employment Charter](#)

[Bristol Equality Charter](#)

[Bristol Womens Voice](#)

[Bristol Commissions](#)

INTRODUCING THE SUBJECT OF BUSINESS IN EARLY EDUCATION

[2B Enterprising](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGAGING EXTERNAL DEI CONSULTANTS OR EXPERTS

[The Workwell Collective](#)

CALL TO ACTION FOR LEADERS TO PRIORITIZE DEI IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

Framework for DEI could be built, with key pillars, one of which covers employee value proposition (EVP) and leadership commitment, and how DEI is measured, reported and managed, KPIs etc. This framework could also include the 'one pager' we discussed, for example expected behaviours and accountability, what does good equity, inclusion and belonging look like for individuals, managers and leaders, and how should they demonstrate these values.

Creators

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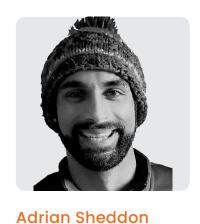**Darren Ifill**

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