

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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CALL TO ACTION

Don't try to 'solve' diversity, celebrate it

Diversity isn't a problem that needs to be solved. It's something that should be celebrated, which can add richness, insight and perspective to every business

Nichi Hodgson

The concept of diversity and inclusion (D&I) has been around for decades, yet big and small businesses alike are still struggling with it, despite the business case for a diverse workforce never being clearer.

More diverse workplaces attract a greater range of employees, lead to greater staff motivation and produce more innovative solutions to problems. And when it comes to the bottom line, a 2018 report from McKinsey found that diversity correlates with better financial performance. The most racially and ethnically diverse companies were 35 per cent more likely to have higher-than-average returns, while gender diverse companies were 15 per cent more likely.

So why are so many businesses still struggling with D&I and instead suffering "diversity fatigue"?

Gina Batye, world-renowned LGBT+ inclusion, psychological safety and intersectionality consultant, and trainer for multinational corporations and the media, says too many organisations treat diversity in the workplace training as a tick-box exercise. And the training they opt for often doesn't reach the right people.

"Most of the training I deliver is for senior leaders. Even though they understand the importance of the training and see the benefits first hand, it often tends to stop at that level. There isn't the commitment or budget to drive the knowledge and skills down to the managers and employees. There is often a blockade when it comes to training the managers, the ones on the ground that really need the training," she says.

For Batye, the companies that do it best commit to rolling out regular training in areas such as diversity, intersectionality and psychological safety. "They view the training as an essential part of their year-long offering to all staff, not just the senior leadership team as a one-off session. They are prepared to commit funding to the company-wide rollout of the training."

Instead, the businesses faring the least well and end up suffering from diversity fatigue are those that pick generic training,

often delivered by well-known charities. "While these courses are great for an introduction, they shouldn't be the only training businesses receive. In fact, I believe industry standards are set too low," says Batye.

What's clear is that in a bid to keep on top of the conceptual aspects of diversity in the workplace, companies can often miss the

“
Just because 40 per cent of your workforce is female doesn't mean they are comfortable in your organisation

practical elements of operation which are key to supporting it.

Rachel Carrell, chief executive of award-winning childcare startup Koru Kids, has a background in corporate management consulting and has seen first-hand how important flexibility is when it comes to building a diverse team, something particularly relevant to the childcare industry.

"One example is remote working. Even though we don't have many fully remote workers, we've invested in acoustic insulation and equipment to support remote working, so when parents and anyone else who need to work from home, they can still be full participants in our team. We run all our team meetings 'remote friendly', using technology like Zoom calls and shared Google docs, and it makes a massive difference, both to job satisfaction and staff retention," she says.

For businesses that struggle to get to grips with diversity, the resultant diversity fatigue can be paralysing. It's a problem that Cey-

lan Boyce of the Academy of Female Entrepreneurs says needs to be tackled culturally, beyond the boardroom.

"Firstly, we need to stop talking about policies and rules. As business owners, or managers, it is your job to build a fantastic team and diverse teams perform better in terms of financial outcomes and meeting goals. Secondly, we need diverse graduate schemes and training programmes to provide opportunities for students to help reach businesses and vice versa," says Boyce.

All agree there is not one single business that stands out for doing brilliantly at all aspects of diversity in the workplace. That said, Specsavers won the diverse company award at the National Diversity Awards last year. Talking to them about what they have managed to cement, director of reward and policy Tim Fevyer says it's about leaving no one in the business behind.

"We've introduced a programme of activity ranging from running unconscious bias awareness sessions for people through to reviewing our processes to help ensure they're bias free," he says.

The most important part of this programme is the establishment of local action groups in each of Specsavers' four main offices. "These groups give people from right across our business the chance to get involved in building local D&I initiatives; things that can help make a real difference," says Fevyer.

Asif Sadiq, head of diversity, inclusion and belonging at Telegraph Media Group, says a major issue is businesses are good at grasping one aspect of diversity in the workplace, such as age, gender, disability, race or sexual orientation, but cannot deliver well across the board.

"Most organisations don't look at D&I through an intersectional lens. So they might consider how many women they have on board, but not how many black women, or how many LGBTQI women who are black," says Sadiq.

Knowing what it feels like to work in a diverse organisation isn't fully understood.



He says: "Just because 40 per cent of your workforce is female doesn't mean they are comfortable in your organisation. Of course, you need to look at diversity, but what you also need to look at is belonging."

Belonging is much more difficult to measure than simply the ethnic, racial or gender diversity of the workforce, which is why so many businesses neglect to do it. But for Sadiq, it's vital when it comes to retention and employee engagement.

"If an organisation turns around and says we have 'X' per cent of leaders who are 'Y', if we are not retaining them and letting them feel they can be themselves, that is an issue. One of the questions we often ask is, 'If a comparable job was to come up, would you be interested in it?' If people are answering 'yes', then that is obviously a problem of belonging," says Sadiq.

Fevyer from Specsavers agrees that it runs deeper than simply being a "good for now" work environment. "Having diversity is a really positive thing, it adds richness and insight and perspective. However, inclusivity – making sure everyone is genuinely included whoever they are and whatever their make-up or background – is critical," he concludes.

BUILDING THE RIGHT CULTURE

Percentage of UK professionals who believe the following would have a positive impact on the retention of a diverse workforce



Hays 2019

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World challenges | Oxford answers

A great business mind can

Light a fire

Chair a meeting

Foresee a trend

Enchant an audience

Champion diversity

Turn a profit

Weather a storm

Raise a glass

Spot a threat

Raise a child

Level a playing field

Build an inclusive culture

The more you understand of the world, the better you can answer its challenges

<https://oxsbs.link/diversity>

SOCIAL MOBILITY

Why we need to prioritise social mobility

Why is social mobility often the last thing people think about when it comes to diversity and inclusion?

Rob Harkavy

Greg Dyke, former head of the BBC, once famously referred to the corporation as “hideously white” and over the past two decades the label of “pale, male and stale” has been regularly applied to UK institutions and businesses.

Fortunately, many in the corporate world have taken significant proactive steps to redress the balance and yet the thorny issue of social mobility has, in regard to diversity and inclusion (D&I), been something of a poor relation, often overlooked and disregarded.

In 2019, the Social Mobility Commission reported that, over the past five years, social mobility in the UK had virtually stagnated and may have regressed, putting the UK's progress behind only the United States and Italy as the worst in the developed world.

But while the situation may seem bleak, some progress is being made. Organisations dedicated to improving opportunities for those from disadvantaged backgrounds are beginning to make a difference and to engage successfully with business to help create a diverse workforce in an inclusive workplace based on diverse talent rather than privilege.

One such organisation is Making the Leap, a London-based organisation dedicated to improving the life chances of socio-economically disadvantaged working-class young people.

Founder and chief executive Tunde Banjoko highlights factors which may have overlooked. He points out that unlike sex, physical disability, religion, sexual orientation, ethnic diversity and marital status, social background is not a protected characteristic, resulting in there being no obligation on business to tackle a problem which is difficult to measure.

Banjoko maintains that socio-economic background is the most important characteristic to look at when assessing the likelihood of an individual's future success and, while acknowledging there remains much to be done, is quick to congratulate those businesses that are now beginning to gather socio-economic data among their workforce.

No business wants to limit its talent pool and many are now starting to realise that positive policies surrounding recruitment and employee engagement in respect of background increase their chances of recruiting and maintaining the brightest and best.

Brixton Finishing School is an organisation set up to drive diversity and social mobility by offering free training for young people keen to work in the creative industries. Founder Ally Owen believes the structure of society presents its own specific challenges.

Owen points out that British society has historically been structured to benefit certain “in” groups of people and to disadvantage others. These others, which Owen refers to as the “out” groups, include those excluded by race, gender, accent, physical ability, neurodiversity and, of course, class.

She continues: “Class is a huge factor in limiting talented individuals from breaking through to ‘elite industries’. We tell ourselves that education is the key to social mobility and advancement. This is partly a myth and one that protects our system from change to a more inclusive structure.”

Owen references work by Dr Sam Friedman at the London School of Economics, which shows that those at Russell Group universities from a privileged background who achieve a second-class degree are much



Brixton Finishing School students Trae, Freena, Craig and Ellie at the School of Communication Arts

more likely to end up in elite professions than contemporaries from less privileged beginnings who went to the same university and bagged a first.

“Dr Friedman's point is a depressing indictment of what our labour market is rewarding which, by the nature of this anomaly, is not the same as what our education system

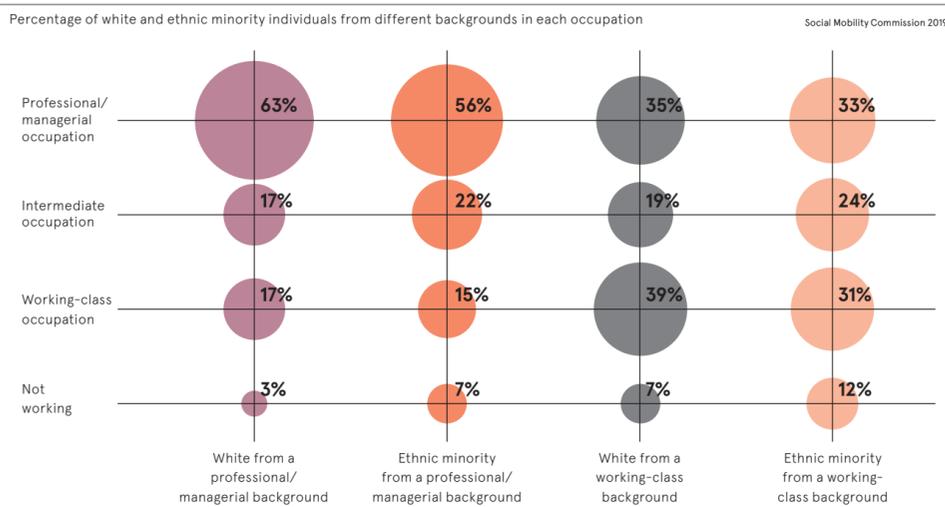
is rewarding. This 'busts' some of the myths around how education can be a ticket to social mobility,” she says.

“An individual from a group looking for social mobility can succeed and outpace those from a privileged background by jumping through all the academic achievement hoops we set them and win acco-

lades only to be dismissed from the race at labour-market entry. This creates pools of highly qualified underutilised talent from a range of ‘out’ groups.”

Affinity bias is one of the causes of this anomaly; having a more favourable opinion of someone like us is common. In hiring, this often means referring or selecting a candi-

OCCUPATION CATEGORIES OF UK POPULATION, BY BACKGROUND



date who shares our same race or gender, or who went to the same school, speaks the same language or reminds us of our younger selves. As the majority type within elite professions is white, public-school educated, and in senior positions male, this leads to a systemic favouring of this “in-group” type.

Another myth is that young people from certain backgrounds lack aspiration. This myth protects the structures that favour “in” groups from change by placing responsibility for the social mobility barriers on those who are trying to progress rather than those who have the power to change the systemic issues that keep them from doing so.

Owen says: “It's privilege gaslighting. If you aren't part of the group that is in charge, you can't change things. It is not a level playing field. It does not matter how hard you work or how talented you are, if you are from a less privileged background, your race to success will be longer, harder and more likely to fail.”

There is, however, room for optimism. Organisations like the Brixton Finishing School and Making the Leap are achieving measurable success, while recruitment companies specialising in social mobility, such as Rare Recruitment, are making real inroads into the highest echelons of the corporate world, boasting top law firms and corporate services companies among their clients.

Unconscious bias, that most insidious of prejudices, is being acknowledged and addressed, and an increasing number of D&I

“It's privilege gaslighting. If you aren't part of the group that is in charge, you can't change things. It is not a level playing field”

mission statements are conceding much more needs to be done to spread opportunity more widely.

Similarly, switched-on corporates with a commitment to diversity have the opportunity to be rewarded for creating an inclusive culture and improving social mobility within their organisations. The roll call of winners at the UK Social Mobility Awards includes leading employers from both the private and public sectors, while the long-established European Diversity Awards added a Social Mobility Initiative of the Year award in 2017, attracting entrants from across the continent.

While doling out gongs at a black-tie event may not speak directly to the disadvantaged, it does at least send the message that social mobility matters. ●

Commercial feature

Women flying high in engineering

Breaking down stereotypes is elevating for diversity and inclusion at work, and can help women achieve in male-dominated roles

Diversity and inclusion are increasingly important for any company to grow and evolve with society, attract a broad pool of talent and improve its competitiveness.

Leonardo, an aerospace technology company, is no exception. The company has been adapting its approach to the issue over the years. Leonardo hired a head of diversity and inclusion in 2018 to tackle everything from wellbeing at work to making sure the firm raises its number of women employees from 17 to more than 30 per cent across the UK business by 2025.

A big part of Leonardo's programme relates to recruitment, tapping into a diverse range of backgrounds and education, and allowing people to enter the workforce in non-traditional ways. This includes Leonardo's modern apprentice scheme.

Jordanne Currie, who is now a STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) ambassador for the company, decided to skip university and enter the apprenticeship scheme in August 2015 after hearing about it from a family member. She rotated into a different department every three months, from mechanical engineering to quality and testing, and currently works on the surveillance radar for the Norwegian Coast Guard's AW101 all-weather search and rescue helicopter.

“I have a personal development plan that takes me to an engineering management role within five years, when I'll be 27,” says Currie, from the company's Edinburgh office. “I am also fortunate enough to be studying engineering with management at university one day a week. I may have started my degree later than some of my friends, but when I graduate I'll already have a job and seven years of work experience under my belt.”

Leonardo pledges that women should make up at least 30 per cent of candidates sourced and shortlisted, as well as between 30 to 50 per cent when it comes to succession

plans and promotion. The company is also setting up a bursary scheme, which aims for at least half the student intake to be women; this apprenticeship programme is dependent on candidates' exam results.

The 2019 research carried out by Leonardo, which included engaging with more than 1,000 UK staff and a cross-sector working group, has not only helped the company understand the barriers to a more inclusive workplace and diverse workforce, but also to change the language used to attract new candidates.

“I have a personal development plan that takes me to an engineering management role within five years, when I'll be 27”

The concept of what is inherently “male” and “female” comes with changing attitudes. Erin Mansell joined the firm in 2000, building gear boxes as an apprentice, and now manages the production line for the British Armed Forces' AW159 Wildcat helicopters in Yeovil.

“From a young age, I was very practical with my hands, helping my dad on his wood-turning lathe. I was into non-traditional or supposed ‘male’ toys such as Scalextric. I loved LEGO and Meccano and still do,” she says. “I still get a real buzz when I see the

Wildcat flying overhead and pointing the helicopter out to my children: my seven-year-old daughter can determine which helicopter is which now.”

As any company knows, diversity cannot be achieved overnight, especially for one of the largest defence contractors in the world with almost 200 sites worldwide. But Leonardo has come some way.

When Fiona Clark, operational electronic warfare capability lead, came to Leonardo as a graduate in the 1980s with a maths degree, she was one of two women in a class of 80. In the 1990s, the company introduced what she describes as a “fantastic” work-life balance policy, allowing her and her male colleagues to work part time and take care of their children.

“After university I had an interview at a bank. It went well, but they said, ‘We won't offer you the job as in five years you'll have left to have babies, so we won't invest in you’. I'd love to go back to them now and say, ‘Look, I've been at Leonardo for 35 years.’”

Based in Luton, she runs internal courses for new and established staff at Leonardo, and appreciates the different points of view diversity of staff brings. She also does outreach in schools to demonstrate that engineering is not, as she calls it, “male, pale and stale”.

“When you go into schools and speak to 13 year olds, they often think engineering is fixing washing machines in overalls with dirty fingernails and they don't see the exciting creativity of our industry. That is an outside perception we are trying to change.”

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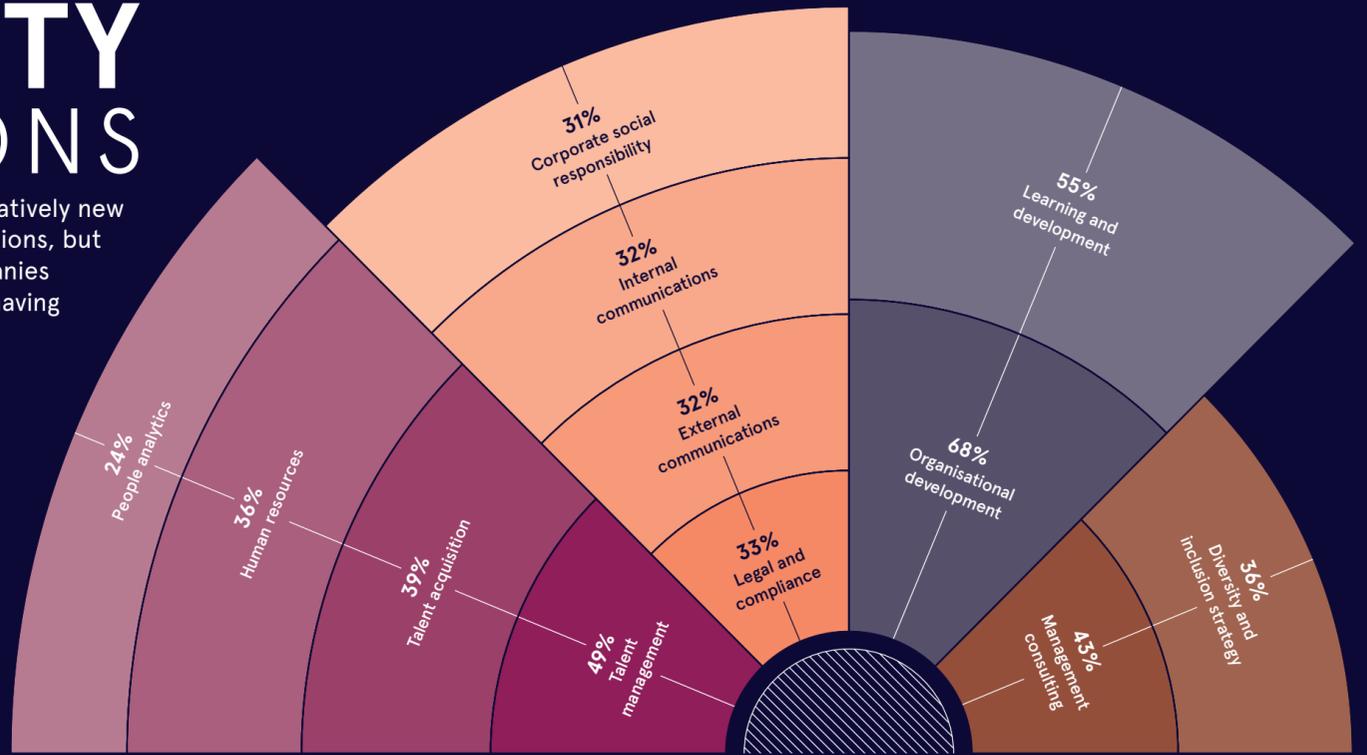
DIVERSITY CHAMPIONS

The chief diversity officer role is a relatively new position among mainstream organisations, but one that is increasingly vital as companies understand the business benefits of having a diverse workforce

HOW CDOs SPEND THEIR TIME

Percentage of CDOs across the S&P 500 who have the following roles/responsibilities

- **WORKFORCE/HR:** Embedding D&I strategy into talent management
- **D&I/STRATEGY:** Setting and executing D&I strategy
- **L&D/ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Embedding D&I strategy into the organisation
- **OTHER FUNCTIONAL:** Focusing on external relationships and corporate social responsibility

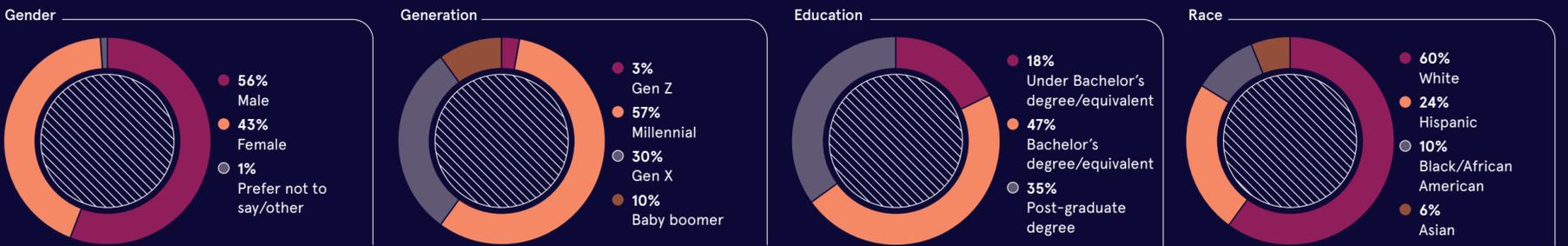


Russell Reynolds Associates 2019

DEMOGRAPHICS OF CDOs

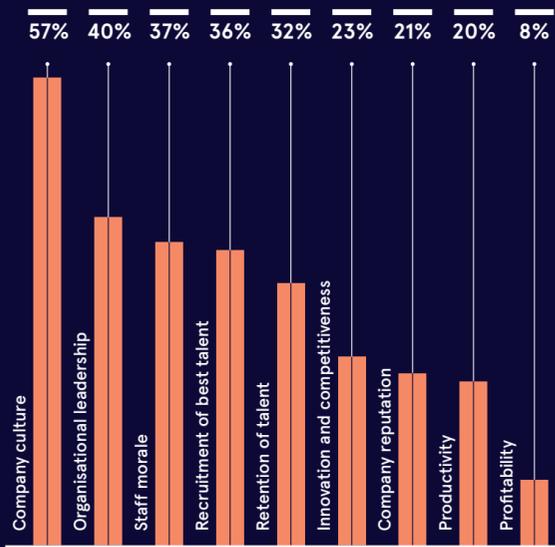
Survey of more than 500 senior-level professionals responsible for D&I in the United States

Weber Shandwick/United Minds 2019



TOP BENEFITS OF D&I INITIATIVES

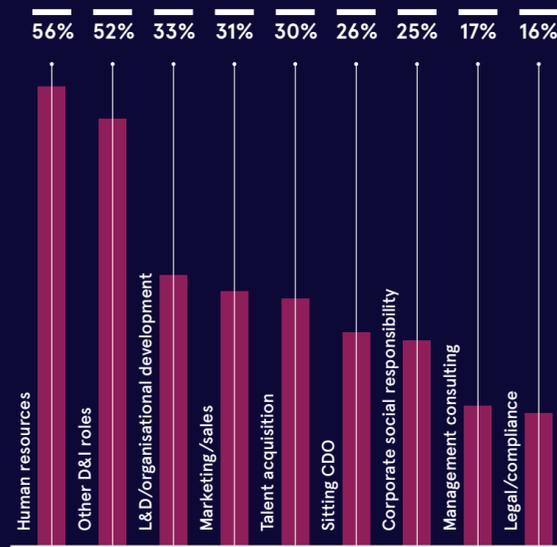
Survey of UK professionals about where their employer's D&I practices could have the most positive impact



Hays 2019

WHERE CDOs COME FROM

Previous roles of CDOs across the S&P 500



Russell Reynolds Associates 2019

74% of CDOs are hired from within the same company

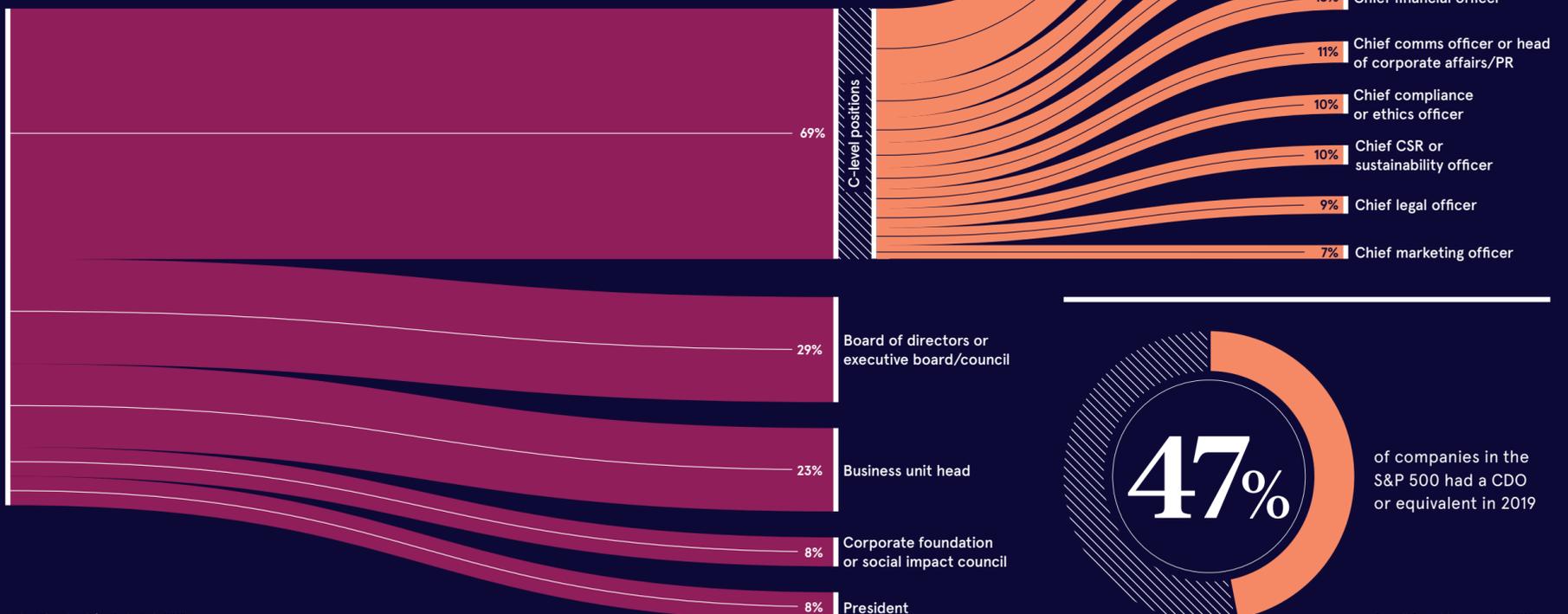
12.5 average number of times a year the CDO interacts directly with the CEO

9.6 average number of times a year the CDO interacts directly with the board

Weber Shandwick/United Minds 2019

WHO CDOs REPORT TO

Title of person CDO reports to directly in US organisations



47% of companies in the S&P 500 had a CDO or equivalent in 2019

Weber Shandwick/United Minds 2019

Russell Reynolds Associates 2019



Gender equality with men as allies

To achieve rightful recognition at work, women must seek the co-operation of male leaders who value their contribution says Johanna Beresford, founder and chief executive of In Diverse Company

To illustrate a point, it's often reported there are more men named Dave than women heading up FTSE 100 companies. This highlights that despite work so far to encourage greater gender diversity, be it through pay gap reporting legislation, sector-specific charters, voluntary pledges to reach certain targets and investment in numerous equality programmes, there's still some significant way to go.

Last autumn Deloitte found UK boards were still just 22.7 per cent female, barely rising from 20.3 per cent in 2017, while globally, women hold fewer than 17 per cent of boardroom seats. In the UK, the FTSE 100 has just six female chief executives. For women of colour, progress is even worse: just a single non-white woman heads a Fortune 500 business – that's 0.2 per cent – while all 25 female executive directors working for FTSE 100 companies are white.

Clearly, solving diversity is not a simple process, as it's not simply a business issue. The cultural issues that are embedded deep in our society are stubborn to shift, from the way we raise our children or the toys they're subtly encouraged to play with. Even the way media treats women – strong women are “feisty” rather than “decisive” – is part of the problem. But what can a business truly do to play its part?

As someone who is passionate about women reaching the top and passionate about women being offered much more, for they often have overcome great hurdles and just by doing this they have great fortitude but also humility, I am also passionate that this is certainly not purely a women's issue.

Gender diversity must be seen as an issue involving men too. We will only solve this problem and begin to gain speed in doing so when it comes from a position of unity with men supporting women, women supporting other women, but also women supporting men too.

Few, if any, men state looking after family as a reason to step down, whereas the recent female boss of PepsiCo, Indra Nooyi, did just this in 2018. But why not? Most of the male chief executives I have worked with feel the same struggles as women do. Showing support, even vulnerability, is

1 number of non-white female leaders of companies in the Fortune 500

Deloitte

17% of boards globally were female in 2019

Deloitte

not a purely female trait, but we have been conditioned to expect male and female leaders to act in a certain way.

Talking about having men as allies can be seen as patronising; that women need men to support career advancement. But in the main, most see it in the vein it's intended: the role men can have in championing, promoting and extolling the virtues women have. It's my view that having male allies matters tremendously. After all, “male” roles are themselves changing, particularly in relation to childcare, and it's surely common sense organisations can only truly transform when men also understand and are conscious of the blockages that often stand in the way of women.

But there's one important step-change I think needs to happen to encourage more male allies and it's not a change men necessarily have to make. It's us women that need to take stock too.

It is fantastic that a huge number of female diversity and networking groups have been created as a safe place for women to share, encourage and be heard. Invaluable though they are in raising and discussing gender matters and in sharing common experiences, we need

to be careful we don't cross a fine line. In doing this, many women have made it difficult for men to be the allies they need. By creating movements that have been more about creating radical change, we have simply closed the door to men.

If men continue not to be invited, aren't we in danger of creating similar environments to the old boys' clubs, which were the reason many of these groups were set up in the first place? And where else can men go to begin to understand some of the challenges that women face? When we criticise lack of male allies, perhaps we should be asking what are the barriers preventing them?

It's my experience that actually men are much more empathetic and understanding, and more gender aware, than they are often given credit for. More often than not, they want to find ways of showing support for their female peers. Most do, after all, have wives, girlfriends and sisters.

What I am suggesting though is male leaders at the top take responsibility to be the driving force behind increasing the numbers of women in leadership roles. Particularly those who are white, privileged and may tend to be called Dave.

They need to be bold about making pronouncements about wanting to hit certain gender targets or having diverse boards and representation at all levels.

Gender diversity must be seen as an issue involving men too

But most importantly, they should be inquisitive; they should be looking to understand the issues and challenges that all women face. They must be completely authentic about being an ally and really live the role.

What I am also suggesting is women don't make it harder for men than it might already be. I speak to a lot of men who are sometimes deterred from putting their head above the parapet because women demand they have all the answers.

Actually, men don't need them. They just need to be allowed to the party. They need to be able to feel comfortable merely to ask questions, raise issues and be able to put across their perspectives. This is even more important when it comes to talking about an even harder topic within this debate: women of colour. I often hear from men that they feel the world has become so politically correct now they are afraid to use the word black.

We can't let fear put male allies off. They are a good thing. They are needed. So, let's encourage more men. Let's encourage men to be the rightful allies in organisations that we all, not just women, need. But let's also give the many men who want to get involved a chance. Change requires everyone to be on the same page, men and women.

For more info please visit www.indiversecompany.com or contact info@indiversecompany.com

Point of view

Justin Onuekwusi, fund manager at Legal & General Investment Management and ambassador of the Diversity Project, a cross-company initiative championing a more inclusive culture, questions whether men are doing enough to force gender equality at work.

“Change is happening, but it is at a glacial pace,” he says. “Are men doing enough to drive change? The answer is emphatically negative.”

“Some C-suite executives are starting to understand the importance of change, but to be sustainable companies, they need to create a steady pipeline of talent.”

“Businesses need to adopt more inclusive cultures, retrain managers

to limit biases, change language in job specs, and have less disparity between maternity and paternity leave, thus lessening the burden of childcare on women. Men have a role in driving this change.

“As leaders we can remove these barriers, but we also know that men are fearful of asking for parental leave or flexibility thinking it will affect their career. However, we have seen some positive change when men take parental leave or manage elderly care and flexible working. Together every small change will bring big results and that's why I also love this year's International Women's Day campaign theme #EachforEqual.”

EQUAL PAY

Closing the ethnicity pay gap

Large pay disparities still exist between different ethnicities in the UK, so has voluntary pay reporting actually made a tangible difference?



Suchandrika Chakrabarti

The pressure is on for businesses to take ethnicity pay gap reporting seriously.

“Diversity and pay equality is a rising-tide risk,” says Ken Charman, chief executive of uFlexReward. “We're already seeing an increase in pay-related discrimination claims. Organisations with ethnicity pay gaps will need to be prepared for queries from employees as numbers start to be disclosed.”

According to the CBI, UK GDP could be boosted by £24 billion a year by simply bridging the ethnicity pay gap, and those organisations with the most ethnically and culturally diverse executive teams are 33 per cent more likely to outperform their peers on profitability.

However, 2019 government figures show the overall picture on race discrimination and pay is a complex one. Some 77 per cent of white people were in employment last year, compared with 65 per cent of people from all other ethnic groups combined, but wages vary among all ethnic groups.

Data-driven ethnicity pay gap reporting is essential in understanding the different experiences of individual ethnic groups beyond anecdotal data. Indeed, employees from the Chinese ethnic group earned 31 per cent more than white British workers in 2018, according to the Office for National Statistics, while those from Bangladeshi backgrounds earned 20 per cent less than white employees.

Voluntary reporting is still in its infancy, so changing the status quo will take time. “Only a minority of businesses have actually volunteered to report this information so far,” says Boma Adoki, associate at com-

£24bn

estimated boost to UK GDP by bridging the ethnicity pay gap

CBI 2020

95%

of large companies surveyed by PwC have not analysed their ethnicity pay gap

75%

do not have sufficient data to analyse their ethnicity pay gap

PwC 2019

mercial law firm Stevens & Bolton. “The available data is therefore limited and so any conclusions whether the sands are shifting when it comes to equal pay among ethnicities would be premature.”

Since late-2018, just under 250 companies have made their commitment to ethnicity pay gap reporting clear, by signing up to the Business In The Community *Race at Work Charter*. “They have 233 signatories,” says Ruth Thomas, co-founder and principal con-

sultant at CURO Compensation. “It is still a very small number of employers and, according to a PwC survey last year, involving 80 significant UK employers, 95 per cent of them weren't doing anything; 75 per cent of them didn't have the data to do anything.”

Coming up with the data can seem like a huge undertaking for a small business. “Many firms put off ethnicity pay gap reporting due to the anticipated complexities of collecting data, and the concerns around the quality and extent of this data,” says Charman, whose company uFlexReward is funded by Unilever and helped develop the system designed to provide pay equity data to Unilever's remuneration committee. “Every company has the data. What they mean is they face technical problems providing it.”

The challenges in accessing and analysing the numbers calls for extra resources, which larger companies are more likely to have. “The likes of Bupa, ITN and Citigroup, as well as each of the big four accountancy firms, have committed to reporting. Hopefully these big players will lead by example,” says Adoki. “We must publish, and in turn analyse, the numbers to be able to fully understand where the issues lie.”

The good news is that the more companies of all sizes that commit to ethnicity pay gap reporting, the better our understanding of the action plans needed. “It is currently difficult to draw year-on-year comparisons due to varying disclosure rates of available data,” adds Adoki. “In time, we need more and more businesses to participate with reporting and therefore increase the availability of data. It should then be possible to determine whether the reporting system is actually enacting change.”

Charman points to technological solutions to help with data collection. He says: “A lite version of the reporting software developed by uFlexReward is now available for organisations to easily collate the necessary data for reporting from an anonymised employee demographics file extracted from their human resources information system.”

Thomas at CURO Compensation adds: “There are some actions that can have a relatively fast turnaround, particularly in recruitment. Blind CVs in terms of name and educational establishment, balanced shortlists and recruitment panels make for impact you can see in a short time.”

The Mayor of London's Greater London Authority *Ethnicity Pay Gap Action Plan*, published in January 2019, suggests establishment of a black, Asian and minority ethnic staff network, unconscious bias training, and directorate-level diversity and inclusion action plans.

The multiplicity of action plan items reflects the complexity of factors that lead to the ethnicity pay gap and the necessity of tackling them. As Adoki says: “From a commercial perspective, publishing the numbers also speaks to the transparency of a business. For employees, job seekers, shareholders, and customers and clients alike, transparency is a key concern. By publishing the numbers, businesses can indicate they are open to scrutiny on their structures and potential barriers to opportunity.”

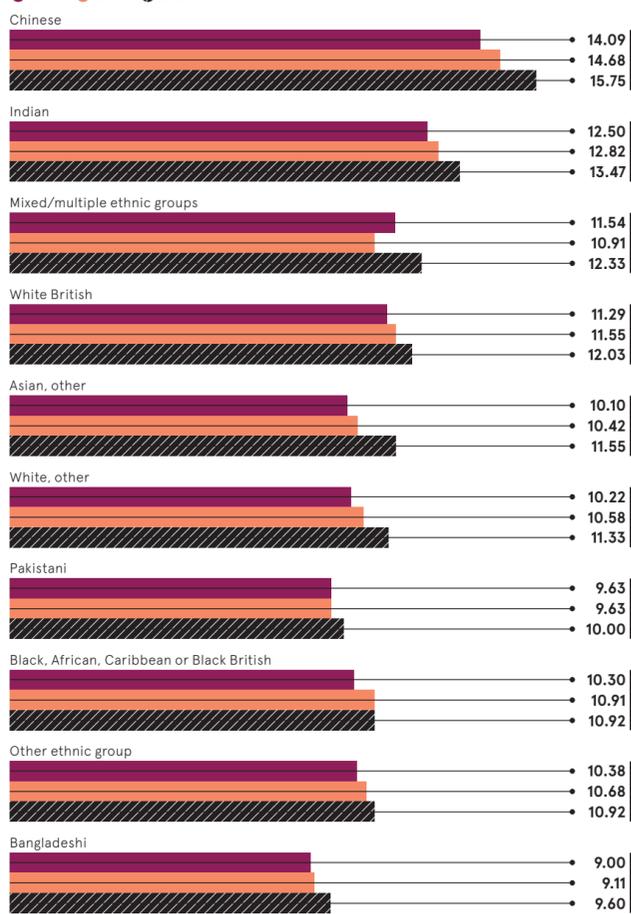
Charman agrees: “There is no value in putting off ethnicity pay gap reporting. Starting now with the necessary planning and access to data could reduce the risk of regulatory or legal implications further down the line. Ethnicity pay reporting and any further future reporting requirements are fundamental steps in the journey to improve workplace equality.”

After the gender pay gap and the ethnicity pay gap, companies will be forced to scrutinise the treatment of other marginalised demographics. To pave the way for the most positive outcomes, for employees and organisations alike, it's surely best to get used to ethnicity pay gap reporting now, ahead of it becoming mandatory. ●

HOURLY EARNINGS IN THE UK, BY ETHNICITY

Median gross hourly earnings, including overtime, for all employees aged 16 and over (£)

● 2016 ● 2017 ● 2018



Office for National Statistics 2019

NEURODIVERSITY

Five ways to embrace neurodiverse workers

Many employers are seeking to hire and retain the estimated 15 per cent of the UK working population classed as neurodivergent and whose “different wiring” may offer valuable new insights



Virginia Matthews

Recruitment

Building neurodiversity in the workplace requires closer attention to job adverts that can unintentionally deter some candidates from even applying. Autistic job seekers, for example, whose notable analytical or reasoning skills are in high demand, tend to shy away from a need for “teamworking” abilities, while dyslexics may fear they lack “communication skills”.

By focusing on must-have qualities, rather than those that are nice to have, hirers will help widen the candidate pool to include neurodiverse talent, according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

Organisations such as Microsoft and Auticon are already using sample work

trials and cognitive testing to tease out aptitude, while others are ditching intimidating assessment days in favour of practical portfolios of previous work.

For those recruiters who still demand lengthy interviews, telephone or video chats may be more effective than adversarial panels where unwillingness to make eye contact may be highlighted.

By making plain a commitment to diversity and inclusion in all recruitment branding, employers will begin to encourage more non-traditional job seekers to disclose a diagnosis before interview. In return, it is incumbent on organisations to deformatise the interview process, hold down the hirer numbers, allow for extra thinking time and focus more on ability than social skills.

Awareness

Buddying schemes, in-house autism training for all agency staff, together with quiet and creative work zones, have proved invaluable in integrating and developing a neurodivergent member of staff at marketing agency Red Brick Road, says executive creative director Matt Davis.

“Making sure people have an understanding of how autistic people may communicate differently has been vital,” he says, along with a buddying scheme, personalised coaching and tailored training.

Despite the superior cognitive and problem-solving skills of many neurodivergent people, their inability to do small talk or politics, or to push themselves forward in meetings, can leave

them languishing in the junior ranks of an organisation, says the DMA, which recommends new career development strategies for employers looking to boost neurodiversity.

If a staff member appears unwilling or unsuited to line management, for example, it’s important to offer an alternative, perhaps advanced technical skills, and to ensure salaries are equal.

While confusing a neurodevelopmental condition such as autism with a mental ill-health disorder is endemic, neurodivergent staff are statistically more likely to suffer mental ill-health episodes than their neurotypical colleagues. According to the CIPD, employers should consider establishing routine career breaks as well as regular home-working procedures.

Understanding

An important step in integrating neurodiversity into an inclusive culture is to listen and learn, says Steve Ingram, senior consultant at Arup. “As a neurodivergent individual myself, what has impressed me most is the business’s quest to not just acknowledge the condition, but to really understand it, enabling individuals to maximise their full potential and really add value to their work,” he says.

Whether it’s reducing the number and length of mandatory meetings or broadening a firm’s social calendar beyond loud office parties, the overwhelmingly neurotypical business world needs to adapt to stem the waste of neurodivergent talent.

“Organisations are in a soul-searching, compliance mood at this stage, but what we need is to work towards systemising inclusion on every level,” says Doyle at Genius Within.

While it may be all too easy to cluster all neurodivergent people under one umbrella, “the assumption that every autistic person is brilliant at coding, for example, is simply another stereotype”, says Red Brick Road’s Davis. “In our case, having a neurodivergent employee has brought people together, lessened the office politics and increased our understanding and acceptance of each other, as well as our overall kindness. These have proved very big wins for all of us.”

Structure

A structured work environment with shared timetables, calendars and to-do lists are becoming routine for organisations looking to promote neurodiversity in the workplace, according to the Direct Marketing Association (DMA) *Autism Employer Guide*. It advises managers to use visual reminders to help combat lack of personal organisation and recommends big projects are broken down into smaller chunks, with clear deadlines attached.

Multiple tasks with open-ended deadlines may be perplexing for people on the autistic spectrum, for example, and unless a clear priority list is agreed, may dilute their often heightened-concentration skills.

Clear, unambiguous wording in all staff communications is a must and given that many neurodivergent people are visual communicators, emails may be better than verbal instructions. As well as boasting above-average focus and attention to detail, people on the spectrum can be perfectionists who will resist taking breaks unless it is clearly suggested by a line manager.

Direct and constructive feedback on a one-to-one basis will be important in developing their talents further, as will recognising the need that most autistic people have for routine. By warning them in advance of any significant changes to their routine, a build-up of anxiety can be averted.

Environment

Noise-cancelling headphones, fluid workspaces with dedicated quiet rooms and subdued office lighting can mitigate the impact of sensory overload on the neurodivergent people you doubtless already employ and, in the view of design and architecture consultancy HOK, may reduce anxiety among neurotypicals too.

Giving colleagues a choice of where they sit, together with providing work points in low-traffic areas are proven wins, as is opting for a design comprised of soothing light blues and greens in favour of overwhelming neon. While some autistic employees will prefer a quieter workspace with light-up telephones, people with attention defi-

cit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may welcome a games room where they can release excess energy in safety.

“As someone with ADHD, I get my best work done on train journeys while others prefer a still and quiet environment,” says Nancy Doyle, founder of the neurodiversity careers consultancy Genius Within. “Hot-desking is a nightmare for people who have sensory overwhelm and rely on routine.”

The same applies to those who find learning new layouts a stretch and need familiarity, not fear over where they are going to sit the next day. Doyle also believes the freedom to personalise lighting, acoustics and level of interaction with colleagues boosts happiness and productivity for all staff. ●

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Designing for diversity

Workplace design should be inclusive and fit for a diverse workforce to get the best out of everyone, not just neurotypicals

Some topics are becoming more mainstream for businesses within diversity and inclusion, and neurodiversity is one of them. An increasing number of employers realise that employees with neurodiversities, from dyslexia and dyspraxia to autism and obsessive compulsive disorder, bring tangible benefits to a company’s culture as well as its performance. “The way we work with clients has evolved recently,” explains Rob Goulder, managing director of commercial interior design company ThirdWay Interiors. “We decided not just to accommodate for neurodiversity, but to celebrate it instead, making the workplace a comfortable and calmer home for everyone.”

“Inclusive workplace design can help change the dynamic”

Research published by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service shows more than 15 per cent of the UK population are classed as neurodiverse, yet only one in ten human resources professionals are focusing on neurodiversity within their organisations.

One simple and cost-efficient way to attract a more diverse workforce is to think about the workplace design. In other words, the traditional, noisy office with strip lighting and complicated floor layouts no longer cuts it if employers want to recruit top talent.

“Whether it’s offering more quiet spaces or flexible working, we realised these are things

that everyone wants, including neurotypical employees,” says Amanda Irwin, director at ThirdWay Workplace. “Through proactive recruiting practices and considered design, companies can help get these candidates in the door, rather than only thinking about neurodiversity once they’re in.”

Neurodiversity has become an increasing focus for ThirdWay, thanks to client feedback and new building standards from the International Well Building Institute™ and fitwel®. Within this framework for improving health and human experience through design, the concept of “mind” specifically addresses mental and neurological disorders of the individuals within an office space, whose conditions can be aggravated by environmental characteristics, such as noise, crowding and even material choices.

ThirdWay’s leadership team insists that simple office changes can make a big difference and benefit all employees, such as considering the colour palette more carefully – yellow has been reported as a sensory-loaded colour, for example – or adding a ceiling raft of padding to minimise noise, or providing an active zone so people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder can release energy between tasks.

Another important area to focus on is the layout. A clear way-finding strategy enables employees to move easily between, say, the reception and the lift or walk from the canteen to a meeting room, aided by careful use of colours and clear signage.

“Navigation is one of the biggest issues and we have to work hard on that, as it touches on all types of neurodiversity from dyslexia to autism. Way-finding is key in creating an environment that is equal for everyone who uses the space,” says Goulder.

Many changes can be integrated into the office design, rather than be added on at a later date at extra expense. In fact, 59 per cent of modifications do not need to cost employers at all, according to research published by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

The benefits of attracting neurodiverse candidates are massive. JPMorgan Chase discovered that autistic employees who worked for three to six months in its mortgage banking technology group were as capable as those employees who normally needed three years to train, and they were 50 per cent more productive. This is hardly surprising when research shows that neurodiverse people typically show higher levels of literacy, numeracy and creativity.

However, people with autism remain a major untapped resource; the National Autistic Society says just 16 per cent of autistic people are in full-time paid employment. And while not everyone with autism might want to work or be suitable for certain work, inclusive workplace design can help change the dynamic.

But this is only the first step in attracting and retaining neurodiverse employees. ThirdWay has also taken measures internally, carrying out research, conducting a survey of its staff and clients, promoting awareness, and re-assessing its recruitment practices and office design.

This commitment is reflected externally too. When it comes to working with clients, the team want to ensure their changes are long term and sustainable.

“We like to think about creating a platform for clients to build on in the future and adapt everything they do to this new environment,” says Goulder. “We look at their ability to modify and grow in the future, but still have those foundations in place, so they don’t forget about the principles the original design is based on.”

For more information please visit diversity.thirdway.com





employees are far more likely to have staff who stay productive, loyal and engaged.

Andrew-Rae Pyper, a transgender man at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, says: "The team I have been surrounded by have been my rock-solid foundation and have showed grace, compassion and patience as I entered the most terrifying part of my transition."

Those embarking in the early stages of being open to their employer and colleagues can often feel a huge level of anxiety. Like Shelley Jane, a trans woman and the global chief financial officer for an oil and gas company, who found it difficult to share her identity for the fear of rejection and potential impact on her employability within the organisation.

"I had given my HR team 12 months' notice so they could support me while I also adjusted," she says. Like many others, she sought support through her private healthcare for hormone replacement therapy. "I was consciously taking my work colleagues on a journey with me," she says.

Human resources can be a great place to help people understand the spectrum of gender diversity and gender identities, including those who are non-binary, gender fluid or gender queer, not only trans women and men.

But not every trans person wants or needs to transition. Many like Marie, a people development professional, says she hasn't yet come out to her employers and is still building her professional allies in the LGBTQ+ community.

As she says: "That is the biggest challenge. Wherever I work, most employers today have very good policies on transitioning." Marie's aim is to be accepted as gender fluid when she decides she is ready to share.

Looking forward, Andi Maratos, chief executive of trans-identity charity Chrysalis, feels the world is changing. Andi, who identifies as non-binary, says: "Coming out at work was always one of our members' biggest worries, but over the last few years I have spoken to so many people who found acceptance and understanding there."

"It is certainly much easier to be out and trans at work now than it was. But trans colleagues do still experience conflict, discrimination and bullying. Organisations still need to make their culture inclusive."

It's the sheer variety of people's experiences that companies should remember. Part of developing a trans-inclusive workplace needs to involve the implementation of anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies that include gender identity, allowing people to feel safe enough to gender transition.

A number of people in smaller organisations, who prefer not to be identified, tell of some horrific examples of when they had received direct abuse from colleagues and customers, and their employer did nothing to support or help them. They were driven to leave for their own safety and mental health as they weren't strong enough to stand and fight.

WORKPLACE STRUGGLES FOR TRANS EMPLOYEES

Survey of trans workers in the UK

51%
Have hidden or disguised the fact that they are LGBT at work because they were afraid of discrimination

34%
Have been excluded by colleagues

21%
Wouldn't report transphobic bullying in the workplace

18%
Don't feel able to wear work attire representing their gender expression

15%
Are still not addressed with their correct name and pronouns at work

12%
Have been physically attacked by colleagues or customers

Stonewall 2018

Developing staff networks to support LGBTQ+ people together with effective ally programmes, having people share their lived experience, their identity and their pronouns through storytelling, can also be very effective. Simple things like gender-neutral facilities can make a huge difference.

By proactively putting in place a culture where someone's gender transition is a positive experience, and not an "OMG" moment, can be one of the most basic and effective ways to build a trans-inclusive workplace. ●

IDENTITY

Building a trans-inclusive workplace

Employers often know they need to do more to support transgender people in work environments, but don't know where to start

Joanne Lockwood

We often think the world has moved on and become a more open and tolerant place where people who are less typical can thrive. But it hasn't.

Incidents of hate crime are on the rise, while society is becoming more divided on some pretty fundamental issues, leaving people feeling vulnerable and unsupported. And so it is critically important, more than ever, to ensure transgender inclusion in the workplace is near the top of every organisation's agenda.

Since the UK government launched a review of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and put trans rights out to public scrutiny, there has been a whole debate even on the right of transgender people to exist, and their

ability to go about business unhindered and be accepted into society and the workplace.

It is well known that transgender rights vary around the world and many trans people feel they need to remain hidden for fear of imprisonment, corporal or even capital punishment. Rhetoric in the United States has peeled back trans rights and protections under the law, so that in many places anti-discrimination laws will no longer protect trans people.

With all this heightened attention, and guidance to schools and other educational establishments being confused, it is no wonder many businesses are unsure about how to approach building a workplace that is inclusive of trans workers.

But if you ask trans employees their thoughts, they will tell how businesses could be doing better. Sophie, a trans woman and programme manager in the telecoms industry, says: "Transitioning in an unsupportive environment can easily lead to you feeling like an imposter." This feeling of not being good enough or having to prove yourself is a common narrative among many who share their experiences.

"In the right company and with the right support, you feel able to bring your whole self to work," she adds.

It's hard enough worrying about being judged without the added burden of your gender identity also being called into question. And organisations with genuine trans-inclusive workplaces are able to ensure their people are allowed to thrive, which is often a testament to their human resources team and transition-at-work guidelines.

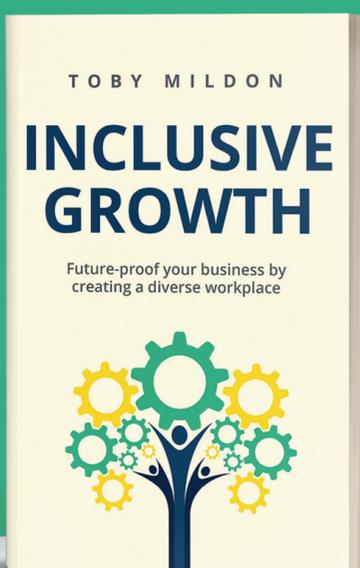
Chris Cole, a trans woman working as a corporate account manager in the automotive industry, says the prospect of transitioning at work was "pretty scary, but two years later I had been completely welcomed by both colleagues and customers. It was the best thing I have ever done at work."

Companies also shouldn't underestimate the impact transitioning can have on a person's mental health at such a traumatic time, and those organisations who put supportive measures in place to assist

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BIAS

Can you change your unconscious biases?

Getting managers and employees to question their own implicit biases is harder than it sounds

Marina Gerner

Unconscious bias training has become the go-to diversity training for large companies. Almost 20 per cent of US companies offer the training, according to one estimate, and they spend \$8 billion on such initiatives.

However, despite the hype around unconscious bias training, an increasing amount of evidence shows that it doesn't actually change behaviour. In the worst case, it can even backfire.

In unconscious bias training, participants go through scenarios, situations or tests to expose their biases, whether that's towards people of another ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. But focusing on negative biases can also inadvertently reinforce them.

As Dr Alexandra Kalev, associate professor of sociology and anthropology at Tel Aviv University, says: "Efforts to get people to suppress stereotypes can actually reinforce them, making them more accessible."

Together with Dr Frank Dobbin, sociology professor at Harvard University, she analysed three decades' worth of data and interviews with executives at more than 800 US companies. They found that people resent being sent on compulsory diversity courses. "Force-feeding anti-bias breeds bias," she says.

Another problem with unconscious bias training is that it can be seen as a quick fix. Companies might see it "as a sticking plaster that lets them off the hook", says Hannah Burd, principal adviser at the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT). "They might think, 'we put everyone through unconscious bias training and now the inequalities we see are not because of the decisions we make; it's just life or it's just society'."

Is it actually possible to change unconscious biases? In various experiments, Dr Calvin Lai, assistant professor of psychological and brain sciences at Washington University in St Louis, has shown "it's very

difficult to change implicit biases for more than just a day or so".

Lai says changing implicit bias is like trying to change someone's attitude towards chocolate or crisps and that's very difficult. "But diversity training is more along the lines of teaching people how to diet or regulate their bad habits effectively, and that's still feasible potentially," he says.

When it comes to unconscious bias training, there is no standard curriculum, Lai notes. This means some forms may be better than others. It doesn't help to frame diversity training as "don't be a bad apple". "It's more about: this is a problem all of us have to grapple with," he says.

There are limited occasions where unconscious bias training could work, says BIT's Burd. For example, "when you have a group of very senior people in an organisation who've never come across the concept of unconscious bias before and they could have a light bulb moment", she says. This, in turn, could motivate them to reconsider their workplace processes.

Efforts to get people to suppress stereotypes can actually reinforce them, making them more accessible

Sneha Khilay, diversity and inclusion specialist and leadership coach at IOEighty, was asked by a headteacher to provide unconscious bias training for teachers at her school. Khilay asked the teachers to provide the names of strong children and most provided boys' names. She asked them to name helpful children and most provided girls' names. As a result, the headteacher became aware "that something needs to shift", says Khilay.

The session turned into an ongoing conversation. Now, the teachers have become more mindful not to label children as trou-

What works?

Mentoring

Research shows that while white men tend to find mentors on their own, women and minorities tend to need help through formal programmes. Mentors can help their mentees achieve the breakthroughs they need to develop and advance.

Skill-based assessment

When recruiting new staff, it's worth asking candidates to perform tasks they would typically be expected to fulfil in their role, rather than purely relying on interviews. These tasks should be standardised and scored to ensure fairness.

Shared parental leave

The gender pay gap tends to widen once women have children. This could be reduced if couples shared childcare more equally. For this to happen, more companies need to offer enhanced shared parental pay, and inform and encourage their employees to take it.

Encouraging flexibility

More jobs should be advertised as having flexible options, including part-time and remote work, or compressed hours, according to the Behavioural Insights Team. And if more men are encouraged to work in these ways, flexibility would no longer be seen as a female benefit.

blemakers, for example. Khilay says: "They ask themselves, 'What are the biases at play that we have, not you have, but we have. And how can we manage that?' It's something they talk about rather than pointing at each other, which would be creating a blame-and-shame culture."

She emphasises that after the training, there needs to be some form of structure introduced. "Because if you don't do the follow-up, you might as well not bother," she says.

Echoing this point, Kalev says the context of diversity training matters. "Diversity training can only be effective when it is part of a larger organisational effort," she says.

One reason for why it is not enough to make people aware of their biases is that "often inequality is so deeply entrenched in the organisation that it is not enough that each individual decision-maker will try to control their biases", says Kalev.

After all, inequality can come in at different stages in employees' careers, from the way job descriptions are worded to a lack of transparency around promotions.

Internal research should determine the causes of inequality, says Kalev. "Is it a lack of diversity in the pipeline? Problematic work-life balance? A culture of harassment and exclusion?" she asks.

Strategies that have been shown to work are somewhat "unsexy", says Burd. It's asking job candidates the same questions, for example. "Then you're looking less at who is this person in front of me? And rather at what is it they can do?" she says.

"It's about avoiding unstructured questions like 'Where did you go to university? Oh, me too. We're so similar'. That's not a measure of how good somebody is for a job. And it means we hire in the same image rather than having diversity," says Burd.

In the end, it comes down to making structures and procedures more inclusive. Anticipate bias and as Burd says: "Design it out of the process, rather than trying to design it out of humans." What's clear is it's no longer good enough to do nothing. ●



Why women in the workplace create healthier companies

Pat Wadors, chief talent officer at ServiceNow, calls for an inclusive corporate culture of "belonging" for women in business

Early in my career, I ran human resources for a large engineering and product organisation. I was the only woman on that team. I also happened to be a new mom.

When I returned to the team after my maternity leave, I had to figure out how to balance my role as a leader with my mum status, including how to find time for all the things that come after giving birth. Hint: several of them were too uncomfortable to talk about at the office. Like racing home if my baby got sick. Or leaving a little early to take him to the doctor.

I had always had a heart for people. But it was during this time that I realised even more how new perspectives, different points of view and more voices speaking their unique ideas would build healthier companies.

Diversity of thought and perspective makes us all smarter. That's one of the reasons why women in the workplace, at all levels, are critical for companies to be better versions of themselves.

For instance, because the majority of working women have broader care-giving responsibilities than working men, evidenced by McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org, women tend to think with more empathy and compassion.

At work, this shows up in how women influence the ways companies treat leaves of absence, returning to work and healthcare coverage. This need to support family, to support life, causes women to speak up and ask for support.

Throughout my career, I've seen women, because of their different skills and experiences, push companies in ways that hadn't been previously considered, which helps create healthier environments for everyone.

As women advance in their careers, they also have a more equitable ability to pull other women up around them. These

women create differentiated opportunities for learning and coaching. They bring a creative mindset to the table that often doesn't involve networking over a game of golf or beers.

By helping other women better navigate their careers, women leaders expose more women to new opportunities that might have otherwise stayed hidden. Again, a benefit to everyone.

None of this is meant to elevate women's experiences or points of view over those of men. Rather, it's to make the point that the more skills and perspectives companies bring together, the more they can offer equal care and make sure all employees have the resources they need.

Culture of belonging and magic of authenticity

Women at work, especially women of colour, have a hard time feeling like they fit in if they're what's called "onlys", a concept coined by McKinsey and LeanIn.org. When a woman is the only one in a company, she's not going to feel like her voice matters. She won't push as hard, she's not going to participate in the jokes and, ultimately, the company she works for will lose the magic she would otherwise bring.

To help on this front, I believe in creating a culture of "belonging" at work, where employees know they're not alone and they have people around them who care, where they can be their authentic selves without fear and with the understanding that their voices will receive respect.

At its core, a culture of belonging offers true psychological safety to talk about and feel supported even when personal life bleeds into work life. As we all know, work-life "integration" is more realistic than work-life "balance".

Without that psychological safety, women with children, for example, will often mask who they really are at work to avoid anyone thinking they can't juggle everything or they are not as committed to their role. Masking can be an even bigger challenge for single women, who have different priorities and activities during and after work, which unfortunately tend not to hold the same weight as those related to childcare.

But just as working mums have pushed their companies for better benefits, the single-woman perspective has also evolved what companies offer. When I was at LinkedIn, for example, we created the Perk Up programme of flexible benefits that employees could apply to other activities outside childcare. It told everyone: "My life matters equally". It let all employees trust that they could choose to be their full selves without judgment about their capabilities.

As an HR leader, I care about the whole person. I care about their families, their experiences, their quality of life. This shapes who employees are and how they find their voices at work. It makes companies healthier and better for everyone.

Here's my advice, no matter what phase of life you're in: set clear boundaries and be confident in them. It's OK for you to pursue your quality of life transparently. Find a culture where you feel like you can belong. Be you.

Women in the workplace, at all levels, are critical for companies to be better versions of themselves

Share personal stories on your belonging moment. That will educate others and can help reduce micro-aggressions in the workplace, which in turn will reduce the strain on mental health at work.

In return, you'll be braver and bolder with your lifestyle and activities, and experience more joy. Your perspectives will help create cultures where everyone has the ability to be themselves and have the champions they need in the workplace. Your voice will help the team get smarter as they debate rich differing opinions. In the end, you will not only transform your career and perhaps your company, but by leading your life this way, you can help transform the world.

This article is also published on Thrive Global.

For more information please visit www.servicenow.com



Pat Wadors, chief talent officer at ServiceNow



CULTURE

Combating hyper-masculinity in the workplace

While it's easy to identify toxic masculinity, doing something about it in the workplace can be a daunting challenge for business leaders

Oliver Pickup

If Harvey Weinstein is the deformed poster boy for toxic masculinity in the workplace, then his guilty verdict handed down for sexual assault and rape is truly symbolic.

Admittedly the actions of the disgraced film mogul, whose penchant for bullying, degradation and depravity turbo-changed the #MeToo movement in October 2017, rank at the most heinous end of toxic masculinity in the workplace. But the majority of us have experienced the humiliating impact of machismo in the office, directly or otherwise.

In the last two-and-a-half years, though, from when the American mogul's despicable behaviour was outed publicly, the working environment has improved, generally.

"Since the #MeToo campaign, businesses have had to demonstrate zero tolerance of the most extreme forms," says employment lawyer Florence Brocklesby, founder of Bellevue Law.

Martin Raymond, co-founder of strategic foresight consultancy The Future Laboratory, goes further. "Post #MeToo, the mainstream perception of masculinity is under scrutiny," he says. "Businesses now have a role to play in redefining what masculinity needs to become, by revolting against outdated cues associated with gender."

"In the workplace, traditionally 'male' traits such as confidence, competitiveness and rational thinking have long positioned men as frontrunners. But expectations of the future workforce are rapidly changing and emotional intelligence will be one of the most crucial skills for men to exhibit at work in the decade ahead."

Recent statistics indicate toxic masculinity in the workplace remains rife, however. The *Kantar Inclusion Index*, which was published last September and surveyed almost 20,000 people in 14 countries operating in



“Businesses now have a role to play in redefining what masculinity needs to become, by revolting against outdated cues associated with gender

24 different industries, found that more than a quarter of women (27 per cent) feel they don't belong in their workplace.

This desire for an alternative to the conventional workplace has driven the trend for niche, all-women offices. AllBright, for example, offers a growing cluster of female-only networking spaces, in the UK and abroad. Co-founder Anna Jones says: "We believe sisterhood works. By making the playing fields level between men and women, we will not only improve the way we do business, but everything we do in life."

Business coach Jo Emerson argues that it's not just men who toxify the workplace.

"I have seen women displaying domineering, aggressive, dismissive and aggressively competitive behaviours just as much as I have seen in men," she says. "The root of any toxic behaviour is fear."

Emerson recommends a four-point plan to root out workplace toxicity: raising awareness, led from the top; undertaking an audit of workplace behaviour; agreeing on a plan of action; and, crucially, regular reviews.

Transforming the working environment is critical because "traditional office models are broken", according to Jan Mikulin. "They are fuelled by the institutionalised expression of outdated, two-dimensional

masculinity: a nauseous mix of power plays, politics and distorted gender roles," says the business and communications strategy consultant, currently writing a book on toxic masculinity in the workplace. "It's the zero-sum, dog-eat-dog paradigm. Being enveloped in such tense energy is bad for people's health, creativity and productivity."

Indeed, Deloitte's *Mental health and employers* report, launched in January, calculates that poor mental health costs UK employers up to £45 billion a year. Alarmingly, that figure represents a 16 per cent (£6 billion) rise from 2016. The study also notes that for every £1 spent on mental health, it returns an average of £5.

"The rise in awareness connected with toxic, hyper-masculine workplaces and the associated costs, both financial and social, is seeing a shift in behaviours and practices," says Mikulin.

"Investment in mindfulness programmes, mental health first aiders, flexible and remote working, all have positive impacts on employee wellbeing. While currently limited to a few workplaces, giving the employers a competitive advantage, they will soon become the norm."

Many industries are playing catch-up. As Jack Norman, co-founder of Milk for Tea, a social enterprise that focuses on combating toxic masculinity in the workplace, points out: "Men still carry the majority of power in almost every industry around the world. In finance, 83 per cent of Financial Conduct Authority-approved individuals are men, 77 per cent of people in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) roles are male. And PwC states that women hold just 5 per cent of leadership positions in the technology industry."

The lowest reported industry percentage of female employees in the UK is construction at 12.5 per cent. And given that in 2018 the charity Lighthouse Club's research revealed that, on average, two construction workers take their lives in Britain every day, it highlights the problems of a male-dominated workplace, if left unchecked.

"Toxic machismo plays its part in that shocking statistic," says Adam Christopher, co-founder and director of Active Training Team (ATT), which uses immersive and experiential programmes to reshape behaviour. "An environment full of bravado, banter and one-upmanship stops people speaking up about unsafe practices because they don't want to be a 'grass'. Saying 'just man up' is an example of belittling behaviour that stops people talking."

ATT's workshops empower individuals, break down systemic barriers and encourage

people to start caring. Christopher continues: "We believe that how people feel informs their actions. We aim to make people aware that regardless of rank or role, if they accept responsibility for their behaviour, and the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others, then they are leaders, whether they're a 16-year-old apprentice or a long-in-the-tooth veteran approaching retirement."

As Weinstein begins his long sentence behind bars on Rikers Island, it's high time for all organisations to revamp and detoxify their workplaces, and that individuals are enabled to become responsible leaders, regardless of gender. ●

Steps to detoxifying the workplace: the four 'As'

1. Awareness of the issue
This has to come from the top. "If company bosses display any of these toxic behaviours or are unwilling to confront them, it is going to be very difficult to create change throughout the rest of the organisation," says business coach Jo Emerson.

2. Audit
"Conduct an audit, either digitally or face to face, covering as much of the company as possible to understand what is going on and create a safe space to initiate conversations," recommends Cate Murden, founder of PUSH, a leading wellbeing and performance business consultancy.

3. Action (and accountability)
"From here," says Emerson, "leaders need to decide how this will be handled and crucially stick to it. Communicate the new expected behaviours to the entire organisation through emails, posters, on the intranet and so on. Train everyone on what is acceptable and what is not."

4. Assessment
"None of this guarantees a culture of trust, where suggestions are welcome and whistleblowers can be protected, but it certainly helps," says John Hackston, head of thought leadership at The Myers-Briggs Company. That's why regular reviews of behaviour and practices are essential, as is frequent communication about how the programme is working.

MEN AT WORK

Survey of over 1,600 people who identify as men about their ideas of masculinity and workplace culture

FiveThirtyEight/WNYC 2018

53% said it was very or somewhat important that others see them as masculine or manly

23% said one of the advantages of being a man in the workplace is that they are taken more seriously

8% said men are explicitly praised more often than women

60% said society puts pressure on men in a way that is unhealthy or bad



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