



Inclusive Organisations

How inclusion leads to strategic success

tap'd
SOLUTIONS

Introduction

Diversity and Inclusion. That “and” has a lot to answer for! Two separate and important concepts that have been thrust together with the innocent “and” for business and organisations to deal with for many years. Yet, has the “and” been holding us back from moving forward with getting to grips with the real underlying barriers to achieving inclusion for our people?

For many organisations, diversity reporting was the driver and door opener to start paying attention to the issues surrounding a lack of awareness and action regarding less represented communities. Many organisations have a legal responsibility now to report on protected characteristics. With evolving political movements, such as Black Lives Matter, stakeholders are now more interested in this area. But this reporting focuses largely on diversity, rather than inclusion. Moreover, publishing and communicating about a more diverse workforce without including the inclusion aspect can cause more harm than good. What can happen as a result is that you have a more diverse community in your workforce who are incredibly disengaged and disenfranchised.

In addition, organisations are microcosms of society. They have a responsibility to create an environment that connects the world of work and the needs of society.

Work and non-work are no longer separate. This has been the case for years but the recent pandemic has really focused our attention on the cross-over. The pressures of home-working, as well as having to go into work, have exposed challenges that have shown cracks in our inclusion strategies, with disadvantaged groups more likely to feel the pressure than others. Furthermore, organisations, when they have strong inclusive practices, can impact on society for the better, having a role for innovation that can scale and positively influence the wider community.

A growing plethora of evidence shows that having a high performance, inclusive culture can support organisational goals and financial results through increased commitment from its people. Focusing on diversity has benefits of spreading your attraction and recruitment more widely but it is listening, understanding and acting on the multitude of barriers to inclusion which will activate a sustainable inclusive organisation, bringing strategic success and making a really significant difference to your employer value proposition.

This report delves into the common traps and issues that organisations can find themselves in and suggests focus areas to aid the journey of inclusion maturity, no matter where your starting point is.

Authors:



Anthony Ryland
CEO
Tap'd Solutions



Jo Drury
Senior Inclusion Consultant
Tap'd Solutions

The importance of inclusion


For many senior leaders in organisations, the reason that diversity and inclusion is important is that there is a legal responsibility to report on aspects of diversity in line with the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent updates in employment legislation. There is an expectation that they should give it some attention in their role, and that if they fail to do so, they risk potential financial penalties and/or damage to the organisation's brand. Unfortunately, this is more common than we would like to think. The issue is that this is a focus on diversity and not inclusion, and it is reactive, not proactive in its approach.

McKinsey's research report in May 2020 entitled "Diversity wins: How inclusion matters" (McKinsey, 2020) demonstrates that those organisations who focus successfully on diversity and inclusion saw performance outstripping others by 25% for gender diversity in the Exec and 36% for ethnic diversity in the Exec. And this differential is widening over time, rather than narrowing. However, when looking at sentiment, underlying issues start to show. While overall sentiment on diversity was 52% positive and 31% negative, sentiment on inclusion was markedly worse, at only 29% positive and 61% negative. In other words, organisations are focusing more on getting the diverse mix of its people right but the cultures within organisations are not keeping pace. Unless inclusion is enhanced in organisations, the lived experience of their diverse colleagues will continue to be problematic, likely causing disillusionment within diverse communities and higher workforce turnover. This, in itself, can cause more harm than good as it erodes trust, the bedrock of successful inclusion. Remember that diversity can be an accident, inclusion is not.

Inclusion activities work better once there is a realisation that there is no quick fix. There is no one-size-fits-all solution as each organisation has complex variables in its cultural context, with differing levels of challenge in the multiple layers that make or break inclusion, along with their historic culture that exists inside and outside the organisation. The good news is, that if the right questions are asked and the right listening approach is applied at the right time, then a specific set of activities can be created to effectively produce results, as long as there is sufficient buy in from all the stakeholders in the relationship. Beware of any consultant who says they can resolve your inclusion issues with ad-hoc, off-the-shelf solutions!

However, research has shown that organisations who undertake the following activities tend to show better organisational performance - gaining access to real feedback from their people, maintaining an awareness of what is going on outside the organisation, learning inclusive good practices, creating plans that cascade and involve everyone, defining roles and responsibilities, knowing their business case for inclusion, understanding the motivations of behaviour from all involved, creating sustainable networks and having an unbiased way to interpret the data. This last point of interpreting the data is most likely where an organisation will fail. Gathering both quantitative and qualitative, reliable data within your own organisation and understanding the relationships between them right from the outset gives a higher degree of success, rather than relying too heavily on generic best practice activity.

Before we get to how you can strategise your inclusion activities, let us look at the main barriers to achieving inclusion and the impact this has.



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THE BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVE PROGRESS

The first challenge is the perception and mindset that many of us have, leading us to categorise others. Too often, individuals and the media promote a dichotomy of two mindsets around inclusion, especially those who are typically more represented or not classed as diverse. The narrative goes that there are two types of people: the “bigoted nay-sayer” and those who are “woke”. If we react by using this categorised narrative, we immediately discount a wide variety of views and instil “sheep-dip” interventions like generic unconscious bias training, sometimes even making it mandatory, and miss the opportunity to see there are a wide variety of views on this spectrum and potentially a mine of misinformed good intention we can tap into to support our activities.


Resistance can come in many forms and guises, some based on real experiences and some on myths. Resistance can come both from more represented populations and from diverse communities.

For diverse communities, often the resistance is founded in a series of events that have led to a lack of trust. Particularly if you have made attempts in the past that have not made the impact you hoped for. I’m sure we’ve all been promised something only to feel that it doesn’t happen or the product of it is very underwhelming. This feeling of being let down didn’t start when they joined your organisation and were let down by you. It’s about understanding the lived experience that went before by people who have experienced less privilege in life. The significance of this is that you believe more readily that you are going to be let down, that things will be less accessible to you, that other people are paying lip-service to inclusion activities because they want to look good, rather than caring about me, what I bring to the table and the importance having my basic needs met so I can thrive in a working environment. Sometimes the resistance from diverse communities can be like “Yeah, great, I’ll believe it when I see it”. I’m not going to disclose information where I don’t have to because I’ve been here before. If I’ve not been listened to up until now, I’ve been

struggling and you’ve not noticed, why are you doing this now? What’s different this time? What’s your actual agenda? It’s more about you looking good than me feeling good.

This view is reinforced by the very real existence and experience of microaggressions; “indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group” (OED definition). This can range from someone assuming you are a PA in a meeting rather than an executive because of your gender, or thinking that you are in reception for an interview because you look young, to the recent news report in East London (BBC News, 2020) of black lawyers being stopped by security because they were assumed to be defendants. Microaggressions have the effect of building mistrust and contributing to the marginalisation of diverse communities over lifetimes, becoming perceived as a background norm of behaviour from those with more privileged backgrounds. Building trust through prolonged focus on inclusion and “walking the talk” is the only way to erode these perceptions.

Resistance from more represented groups can potentially be even more of a challenge. Firstly, looking past the dichotomy of bigots and woke people, realising there is a spectrum of views to understand is important. What is driving this resistance? Quite often resistance in more represented groups comes from a lack of insight and the appropriate time and space to understand the impact of not living in the “majority”. When words like “privilege” are used, there can be an underlying defence mechanism driving avoidance of tough conversations through the lens of “shame” (and even being able to retreat into ‘safe avoidance’, is itself a manifestation privilege that’s not afforded to many). A realisation that what you classed as a “normal life” has actually been indirectly (or even directly) repressing others’ opportunities can result in a painful feeling when facing up to this which is easier to avoid, particularly when combined with a lack of understanding of what you can do about it. And this is why the spectrum, not the dichotomy, is really important to consider. If we address the symptoms of these causes rather than understanding the causes themselves then there is no long-term solution we can put in place; any resulting inclusion activity would just be a tick box exercise. The line of thinking that says you have privilege because of luck is dangerously broad; it is not so simple as that.



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THE “TWO MYTHS”

Another aspect of resistance from more represented groups emanates from two “myths” that propagate resistance to effective change and these need to be overcome to get traction within the more represented communities: we call them the Meritocracy Myth and the Scarcity Myth.


The Meritocracy Myth: The idea of meritocracy is often adopted by leadership as a way to demonstrate a level playing field of inclusion within their organisation. The myth that meritocracy within the organisation will overcome imbalances of diversity within senior roles and create inclusion is a very simplistic view and needs to be dispelled. Everyone has different journeys in their lives. A lot of the challenges for people with diverse characteristics have been with them or imposed on them since childhood. Their entire route to this point in time, with regard to practical accessibility to opportunity, has been different from those commencing their life journeys from a more privileged position. To achieve academically at the same level has been harder. To find visible role models to aspire to be like has been harder. To identify with and work towards the roles in society that are seen as “successful” has been harder. Therefore, organisations setting entry “barriers” about minimum traditional academic qualifications or levels of experience in blue chip organisations will more often discount those who are from diverse communities. If you are born into a more privileged position you are statistically more likely to hold more senior roles with higher remuneration in your life. If you then consider how this continual struggle shapes the views of underrepresented groups, and the perception that they might not have the opportunity to reach their potential, then they

may consciously or subconsciously deselect themselves from trying to overcome these seemingly unscalable hurdles.


A great example of work on the meritocracy paradox has been undertaken by Professor Emilio Castilla of MIT (Castillo, E.J., 2016). One of his studies included 400 MBA students with management experience who took on the role of a senior manager in a hypothetical organisation looking at making recommendations around groups of employees. The study was primarily focused on gender bias. Managers who had to make decisions on merit-based values (compared to control groups) were more likely to display bias against minority groups, in this case women. So, if our organisational performance systems are based on meritocratic values, then bias is still highly likely to be hard-wired into the decisions we make for talent identification.

Therefore, whether you have pure meritocracy within your organisation or not, the external influences within society mean that meritocracy does not create equality of opportunity for everyone. It follows then that it is the organisation’s responsibility to go beyond meritocracy and seek out the entry routes to organisations for the less represented groups. Are your job requirements a barrier for some who didn’t have equal academic opportunity? Does your attraction and recruitment approach penetrate all areas of society? Does your internal talent identification go beyond the obvious?

The Scarcity Myth: This second myth is based around those who are more represented and who resist real approaches



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to inclusion and related campaigns with the internal thought, “what’s in it for me?”, or moreover “what’s going to be taken away from me?”. This is the scarcity myth. The idea or concept that in order for the playing field to be truly level, the only way this can happen is if I have to give something up. There may be some truth in that. There are also many things to be gained for everyone, on balance, through equality and equity. The belief that there is a finite “pie” here to be sliced up is the real myth. It has been shown over history that attempts to increase equality between all in a community results in an overall wealthier and more wholesome society. In the UK, Victorian philanthropists investing in clean water and sewage raised the standard of living for all, eradicating many diseases. The introduction of the NHS after a war improved the health of all. The recent call of the World Health Organisation to distribute vaccines evenly around the world to more efficiently remove global travel restrictions. Wherever we concentrate on not giving up part of the “pie”, rather than looking at the concept of growing a “bigger pie” together, we will not succeed with inclusion and the benefits that come with it.


This brings us to the concept of Equity. Equity is more than equality: it is about understanding the journey. There are four stages to the journey. As mentioned in the introduction, diversity can be an accident but this is often where organisations start their journey through targets for representation. Then you need to think about inclusion. How can we make these diverse communities feel more included? That’s the complex and hard to measure thing. Many organisations take a long time to achieve true inclusion and understand the ongoing nature of remaining inclusive. The third stage is Equality. This is where you get to an acceptable level of the opportunities for everyone in the organisation being more on an equal ground. Equity, if you do the first three well, is more organically likely to occur. And the reason why it is important to look at equity is because it’s just as important to look at this as it is to look at the direct commercial piece. It is because equity is where people feel that they have a share in the business – their piece of the “pie”. It’s not just about equal opportunity, it’s about equal investment in them, providing them with an emotional stake in the business. If we achieve the feeling of equity in

the business, with as many people as possible, we will get more “discretionary effort”, which is the foundation of what separates great organisations from good organisations. Forbes highlight a number of areas to look at when achieving equity, including learning and development opportunities, opportunities for growth, success and promotion (Forbes, 2019).

THE DRIVE TO BECOME MORE INCLUSIVE ORGANISATIONS

As we have seen, there are a number of barriers to overcome. But what can we consider when thinking about building the energy and motivation in the organisation to create a more inclusive culture? Well firstly, remember there is no quick fix. Resist the temptation to go for the mandatory, one-size-fits-all solutions. A meta-analysis of 426 studies of unconscious bias training by a Harvard professor in 2018 showed there was minimal impact of mandatory unconscious bias training (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018). What’s more concerning is it showed that, even though participants were learning about how they “should” behave, the improving results were because participants were learning how to “gain” the test and answer the right way, and then didn’t subsequently change their behaviour back at work. This shows that inclusion development is a long-term strategy and more than undergoing mandatory training. So, what can we do?

We need to engage with those in more represented communities. We can’t just rely on diverse communities doing the emotional labour. Our strategies need to be as multifaceted as possible. Identifying the part that more represented communities play in inclusion culture change is important for the inertia needed for inclusion gains. Focus on the spectrum of views between “bigot and woke”. A number of employees from more represented groups want to support inclusive activities but feel helpless. Understanding their motivations to support can produce options. For some, introducing ally programmes is a great way to start here. Others may want to be able to link in with networks to learn more. Allies (when given the right tools and guidance) are a great resource to help others in the majority become



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more educated, be able to reckon with uncomfortableness and able to spread learning in a safe manner for others. Listen to a recent Tap'd podcast on Allies for more insight at tapdsolutions.com/podcast-engaging-with-allies/.

We need to create space for and encourage acceptance of this uncomfortableness. It is crucial to generate understanding within more represented groups while not fuelling shame, using the understanding of privilege in context to help level-up the playing field from their own positions. Especially for senior leadership, how they can use their positions to influence the playing field through awareness of themselves versus others. Becoming sponsors of change and role models of behaviour, calling out poor behaviours, that more represented groups can imitate, creating positive call-out practices rather than a hostile blame culture.

At the same time, we need to understand the complexity of inclusion. The many facets of difference that overlap, known as intersectionality, means we cannot take a simplistic approach. The formation of network communities is a great way of channelling efforts for education and support. However, these networks need to align and work together. People are built up of many nuanced characteristics and therefore may feel affinity to several networks. Too much separation between networks can potentially create exclusivity, rather than inclusivity.

An important element for building inclusive organisations is to ensure time has been taken to research and design the infrastructure that is needed to ensure long-term progress is made. Planning for ongoing cultural change, building the infrastructure for that change and ensuring it entwines with the processes of “business as usual” cannot be understated. This can contain methods of frequent feedback to be built into future strategies and processes to appropriately respond to unexpected events. An example of this is the recent events that have progressed the Black Lives Matter movement. Some organisations reacted with hastily communicated messages of short-term actions that came across as reactive, insincere and fad-like. Other organisations who have a strategy for inclusion were able to build these communications on top of work they had done before

through building trust with their communities. Activities were seen as an extension of something that was existing, rather than something that looked panicked and unconnected.

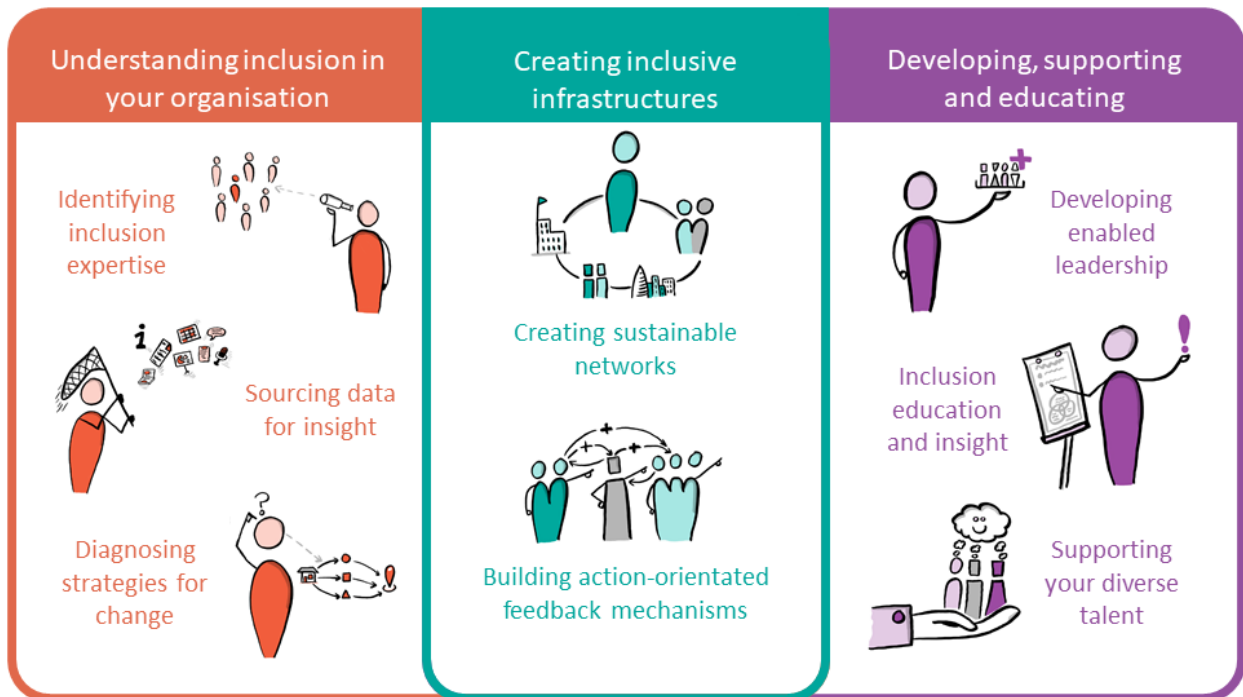
We need to ensure that our inclusive infrastructure defines the roles and responsibilities within the organisation. By this, I do not mean it is the role solely of the D&I manager as much as it is to say “inclusion is everyone’s responsibility”. Within the organisation there are roles for senior leaders as sponsors, roles for network leaders and different network members, roles for allies, roles of committees, roles to capture and process feedback, roles for ensuring alignment with all organisational development processes, and so on. This ecosystem of inclusion must be extensive but also must align with the current rhythm of the organisation to be successful, reverting us back to the critical role of infrastructure.

Finally, a goal to be kept in sight at all times is sustainability. All inclusion activities must build upon each other and be successful in the eyes of employees. Activities must be overt and transparent with time taken to explain the “why” as much as the “how”. We have seen earlier that diverse communities have often had their level of trust eroded by great words not being congruent with great deeds. Leaders can help or hinder sustainability. Leaders acting as role models and line managers following the guidance through their own education and not allowing undermining activities such as “cutting corners just this once” and “yes, I know that’s the procedure but, on this occasion, . . .”.

The importance of inclusive organisations cannot be underestimated. We are undergoing world changing events at the moment. Historically, as these challenging times subside, there have been opportunities for cultural gains and innovation that will make society better than it was before. As leaders of organisations, we have a duty to our people and the wider communities they are part of to seek out positive advancements in the way we do things. Our people want more inclusivity. Over the coming pages we will outline a model of inclusive practices that organisations should utilise to affect these changes.

Our Inclusive Organisation Model

Based on our research, expertise and knowledge of building inclusive organisations we have developed the Tap'd Inclusive Organisation Model.



The aim of this framework is to outline what organisations need to consider when setting out on transformational projects to enhance inclusion within their organisation. It is designed to be practical and to be applied into organisations of varying “inclusion maturity”. The framework flows from left to right through data collection and diagnosis to creating sustainable structures and ways to upskill, educate and support your people. Each area can also be dipped in and out of to allow focus on a certain topic.

We provide an overview of this model on the next few pages. Further information is also available on our website at tapdsolutions.com.

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An overview of our Inclusive Organisation Model

UNDERSTANDING INCLUSION IN YOUR ORGANISATION

The first area of the Inclusive Organisation model is arguably the most critical of the three. Without a proper understanding of the inclusion issues being felt by individuals in the organisation, then any subsequent diagnosis and activity that takes place will be misaligned, leading to less positive impact, lost opportunity for building trust and therefore, erosion of trust within diverse communities. The key activities here are identifying the most appropriate inclusion expertise, sourcing the right depth and type of data to be able to generate insight and to be able to diagnose root causes and build the necessary strategies for change.

When identifying inclusion expertise, there are a number of factors to be taken into account. Firstly, do you have the expertise internally to be able to understand the complexities of quantitative and qualitative data gathering and exploration? For many organisations the answer to this question is “no”. They have an idea of what needs to be done but will need to go externally for support. Depending on internal expertise, you may be looking for a “trusted partner” to help you through the cycle of the inclusion project or it might be a more “transactional provider” for elements of it. Remember to beware of providers who come with ready-to-go solutions that might not be what you need for your organisation. An ideal partner should be able to understand your organisation, balancing the ability to unpick enough information around inclusion without overkill and in harmony with your internal processes. Try to find an external partner who is adept at collecting the right data as well as providing diagnosis expertise. Finally, keep in mind your internal succession plans for transference of inclusion knowledge. Trusted partners will readily help you grow through developing those who may head up network groups or take over data insight roles internally over time.

When sourcing data internally and externally to gain insight into your inclusion challenges and opportunities, there are a number of things to consider. Be clear in what you want to measure. You can start small and grow this function over time but remember that just because some things are easier to measure, it doesn't make them useful.

Diversity measures are fairly easy to obtain but what does this really tell you without qualitative data around perception of inclusion to provide context around the metrics? A good practice is always to under-promise and over-deliver when asking for feedback data. This builds trust. Do not be surprised if the response rate from your people starts at the low end of the scale. Remember, from earlier in this report, much has happened before in people's lives that might build resistance to opening up to you. Try to find out some of these reasons and dispel the myths. A great data sourcing strategy is for the long-term. How will you ensure you don't simply get a snapshot in time, just like the old traditional engagement survey that is pretty obsolete data by the time you have processed it?

Once you have your data you will need to diagnose your strategies for change. Being able to do this without bringing your own assumptions in as part of the data translation is a key skill. How are you aligning your quantitative and qualitative data to gain insight? What technologies might you need to bring in and how reliable are these? Think about the timelines that you are working with. Are there quick wins you can achieve? If so, will these quick wins help or hinder your long-term inclusion strategy? Beware - more can be lost with a hasty quick-win rather than a more measured approach. Seek external guidance on likely pitfalls you may encounter and trends for success. Ensure your plans for communication are well thought through. There may be chance for mis-interpretation due to the emotive nature of inclusion and cultural change. Create ways and mechanisms to frequently consult and gather feedback about the changes you are making (see next section on infrastructure). The planning of communication in a clear, cyclical, open and transparent way is as important as the creation of strategies themselves. Lost momentum (and even setbacks) due to poor communication is hard to regain. Make sure you have goals defined to stay on track for success and ensure stakeholders are kept informed. Many good project management skills come in handy here but emphasis cannot be placed enough on the impact of good communication about the 'why', the 'how' and, often missed, the 'what if' for contingency, from the start.



Creating sustainable networks should be a goal for all inclusion strategies.

CREATING INCLUSIVE INFRASTRUCTURES

The second area of the Inclusive Organisations Model is focused on infrastructure. Often overlooked by those who want to see immediate results, creating infrastructure around your inclusion practices that entwine with the day-to-day operation of the organisation reaps benefits in the long-term as managers and leaders find it easier to adopt to the new inclusive activities as part of their roles. Infrastructures also mean creating community networks that channel and focus energy and create ways to elicit quality feedback to further refine your future inclusion activities with involvement from those really key stakeholders – your diverse communities.

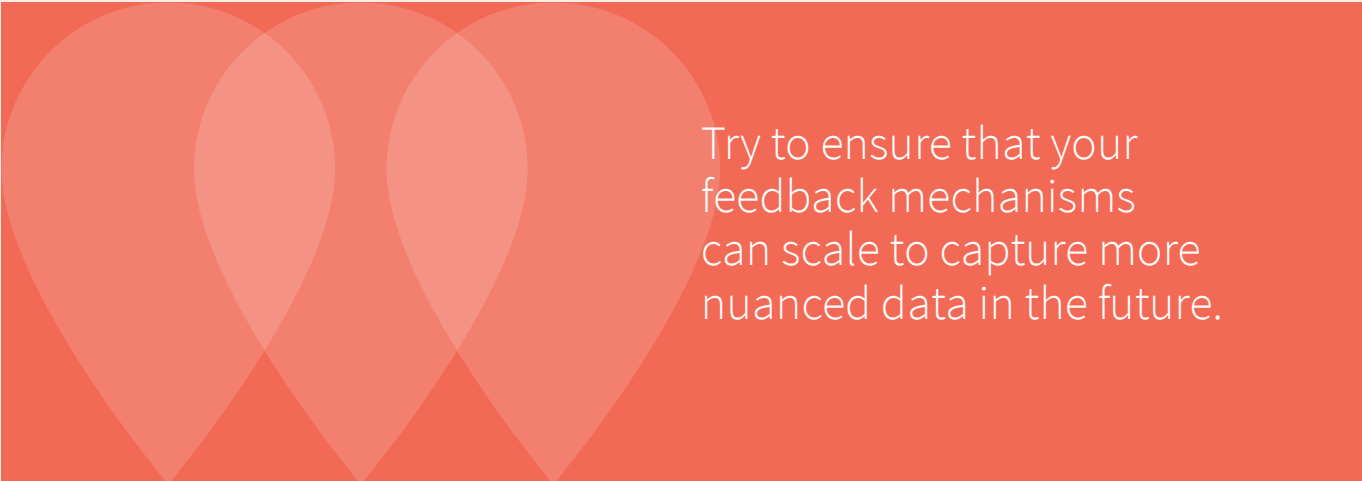
Creating sustainable networks should be a goal for all inclusion strategies. Often there are some sort of affinity groups in place for the more obvious characteristics, such as gender or race. A goal should be to help affinity groups evolve into strategic networks through support and education, enabling strategic involvement. PwC found that while almost a third (31%) of business leaders believe their organisations leverage affinity groups strategically, only (18%) of employees agree, the internal customers of those groups (PwC, 2020). Remember that often network contributors also have ‘day jobs’. How can you support both them and their line managers? How will you support core active members differently to more supportive members? Networks have a stronger voice and platform when sponsored by senior leadership. Engaging with senior leaders to create buy in should be an early goal. Try to grow multiple networks concurrently. Remember the concept of intersectionality.

Why should certain networks be developed before others? Collaboration between networks will lead to cohesive, successful outputs. Do not forget that positive energy from some of those more represented communities can be channelled as support through ally initiatives. How can you support your allies as well?

Developing networks is a great way to generate action-orientated feedback. Building open and honest feedback routes takes time. The people you most want to hear from might not feel able to open up and be vulnerable initially. Building that level of trust can take time. Look at ways you can develop your data capture to understand community-specific trends, with more scope than a rigid lens limited only to protected characteristics. When starting out, try to ensure that your feedback mechanisms can scale to capture more nuanced data in the future. Make sure you maintain your transparent narrative by being open and honest about why you want to collect this, often personal, data and how you plan to use it. Be aware of GDPR parameters to ensure you know where you CAN ask for data as well as where you can't. You might be surprised to learn more about the types of data that can be sourced in the right way for legitimate aims such as increasing inclusion.

DEVELOPING SUPPORTING AND EDUCATING

The third and final area of the Inclusive Organisations model is focused on the people themselves. It's about how the organisation can enable its people to be aware of the benefits of inclusion, the challenges to overcome and



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how they can assist in the achievement of being part of an inclusive organisation. This can be done through three key activities: the developing of leadership teams to feel enabled, educating people about inclusion to obtain both individual and collective insight, and identifying and supporting access to various routes for the organisation's diverse talent.

Developing enabled leadership is about going beyond intellectual buy-in. It is helping them understand the complexities of inclusion. Managers and leaders often excel because of their ability to use rational logic as a "fix-it" mechanism, particularly considering the typical demographic of senior leadership teams and the access they've had to the necessary resources to get things done quickly. It is helping these same leaders understand there is no quick fix, it is an ongoing investment in a consistent approach. Senior leaders need to "pay forward" their own learning and understanding to middle managers. Like most strategic activities, it is the middle managers that make-or-break change and transformation. (Unfortunately, it is the middle managers who often get the least attention!). Senior sponsors need to "walk the talk" to move beyond theoretical understanding to meaningful demonstrations of buy in. Perceptions of them (and working towards those perceptions aligning with intentions), visibility, role modelling what "appropriate curiosity" looks like, and refraining from using arbitrary buzz-phrases shows that the organisation champions the inclusion cause. This is not natural for all leaders so think about how you can develop them. Break down barriers between top level leadership and frontline employees to enable accessible relationships. Reverse mentoring and network involvement are useful initial activities.

Delivering inclusion education and fostering insight is a key activity for dispelling myths, such as the Scarcity Myth. The concept of "competition" is built into us from school age, such as through streaming classes and grades for exams. Inclusion is the antithesis of competition and not to be mistaken for 'unattainable idealism' or underestimated in the benefits it can bring for all. Educating people about the organisation's thriving culture where everyone is succeeding can support inclusive action. It not simply a case of "don't be an arsehole to others"; it's about collective success.

Different populations will require varied routes to learning. Identify the hopes and fears of different groups and address them as closely as you can. What is the specific insight each group is missing and how can you close that gap? Helping people understand what "appropriate curiosity" is (rather than simply saying nothing so as to reduce risk and shame) and what it looks like helps build bridges across a lack of knowledge. A lack of curiosity stifles inclusion. Unless you encourage confidence in how to ask the right questions for the right reasons, inclusive understanding grows very slowly and worse, is at risk of instead being out-paced by the growing counterproductive assumptions. Activities across organisational boundaries can also help learning about inclusion.

Supporting your diverse talent is an important aspect of inclusive organisations. Go back to your data and insight but go beyond the obvious. Look at the talent route for your diverse communities and try to identify barriers within these routes. What is holding them back? Be careful not to assume an individual characteristic is representative of a whole community, ensure you have various data sources. Don't focus solely on the obvious, e.g. women in leadership. Look at the overall approach, for other communities and your intersectional colleagues (an example of the latter could be support for black women in leadership or neurodiverse women in leadership). Identify outdated systems of belief in your talent processes. Are there any areas that rely solely on meritocracy that have no balance or relative governance? Make sure all your diverse talent routes are clear, visible and readily accessible. Connect with role models who have progressed through the talent levels who are available to mentor and bring in diverse facilitators to support targeted talent workshops and coaching activities. Lastly, don't be afraid to look externally to other organisations or charities for diverse role model support if needed.

Practical tips

We hope this report on Inclusive Organisations has got you thinking about what you can do within your own organisation. We're often asked for tips on where to start - here are a few thoughts. For more ideas, get in touch for a chat.

- 1** Think deeply about getting the right support and guidance – find a provider who will fulfil your short-term and long-term needs (end-to-end). Getting this right will pay real dividends in the long run.
- 2** Channel effort into being able to articulate what you are trying to achieve with your inclusion project. Communicate the relationship between your inclusion goals and current diversity activity.
- 3** Get your data sourcing right. Invest in gathering and interpreting your cyclical data (from planning to evaluation) - continually gather both qualitative and quantitative information and seek to understand the narrative. This doesn't have to be a “blue chip” provider. Your external support should be able to offer guidance here.
- 4** Map out and start developing your infrastructure, defining roles and responsibilities to sustain success.
- 5** Ensure you have created provisions to embed inclusive change through awareness, education and development initiatives.

Our Inclusive Organisations Diagnostic

We support organisations understand their inclusion maturity using many methods.

Our Inclusive Organisations Diagnostic allows us to access data and insight quickly to help you understand your current status within the organisation. It is underpinned by our research into inclusion and our Inclusive Organisations Framework. This forms part of the initial data we can use to help you diagnose your first inclusion strategies.

Contact us for more information



Conclusions

This report looks at the benefits and challenges of attempting to develop your own Inclusive Organisation.

It looked at the reasons why this is necessary, the likely potential barriers to overcome, some of the key drivers and motivators you can tap into and the importance of sustainability. We then introduced our Inclusive Organisations model as a framework that organisations can use as a foundation for building their inclusion strategies.

Inclusion is a financial, commercial, ethical and social necessity for organisations. The positive benefit is visible internally through a healthy, high-performing culture and accessible opportunities for all.

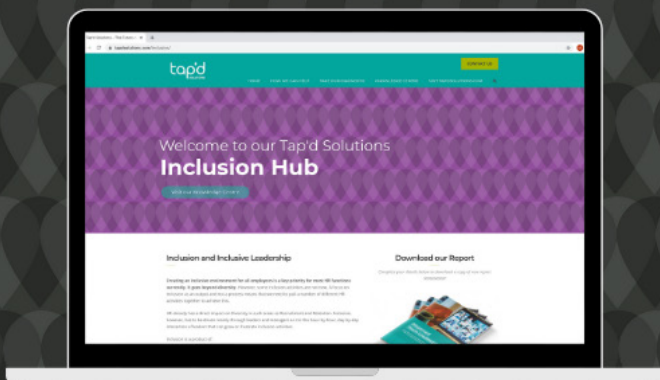
It also demonstrates to your suppliers and customers that your organisation's brand is about more than bottom line profit/output and that you support the wider community and ecosystem you are part of. If we can truly enable underrepresented communities, we can all win.

Becoming an Inclusive Organisation is a massive undertaking but wherever you are on your timeline, planning for the future is achievable with adequate insight, commitment and support. Success is about changing your ways of working and your approach, viewing it as an ongoing, positive challenge. Remember to "start with the blend in mind".

All inclusion activities only stick in your culture if the inclusion plans they're derived from blend with your broader Organisational Development plans and processes, such as attraction, selection, reward, development and talent.

And finally, never stop listening. There is always a wealth of internal and external resources available to refine and inform your activity.

Further information about building Inclusive Organisations is available. Contact us at Tap'd Solutions for information on the expertise and guidance we can provide, data diagnostic tools, OD practices, and education and development support.



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Key references and further reading

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