

PRACTICAL STEPS TO ACHIEVE D&I IN-HOUSE

PRACTICAL STEP #4 DIVERSE TALENT RETENTION: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE & PROGRESSION: ENSURING EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY

BACKGROUND

In the [Framework Materials](#) our In-House Sub Group identified 10 Practical Steps to achieve D&I In-House. This material, which has been developed by a Sprint Team drawn from the Sub Group expands on Practical Step 4 which states:

Integrate D&I in your talent programmes, retention measures and decisions about advancement. Create a culture where employees are encouraged to and feel accepted and valued when taking developmental positions outside their current area (e.g. expertise, geography) and ensure internal job postings are always published. Create a sponsorship programme for diverse talent. Promote a mentorship and/or reverse-mentoring programme

The Practical Steps are drafted on the basis that the business seeking to implement them has already embraced the business case for D&I. If your organisation is not yet at this stage of its journey then we would recommend that you first refer to the business case materials on the GCD&I website www.gcdandi.com

DIVERSE TALENT RETENTION: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

1. Practical Step #3 discusses the importance of ensuring that your company presents itself externally as a diverse organisation to facilitate recruitment of diverse candidates. It is equally important to consider how to manage this internally: so that diverse employees can “see themselves” in the organisation. Although beware tokenism and take care that employees chosen to reflect diversity don’t feel used.
2. Set the tone from the top in encouraging listening and speaking up, ensuring leaders actively seek views and participation from all perspectives. Ensure all voices are heard: encourage practices that ensure each person is given an equal voice around the table
3. Use mentoring to create a space where diverse talent can be heard and discuss challenges outside the line management relationship, allowing the mentee to set the agenda and together identifying goals and priorities for the mentee to work towards. Mentoring can take different forms, including:
 - Relationships with external mentors
 - Internal colleagues making themselves available to mentor other individuals within the organisation – both within the same function and cross-functionally
 - Sponsorship, where a more senior person looks to guide individuals particularly from underrepresented minority groups, seek out opportunities or advocate on their behalf. It is important that this is implemented in a consistent and transparent manner to ensure fairness, with a deliberate focus on D&I. Examples could be putting people on projects, working groups, etc. that help raise their profile in the organisation

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- Reverse mentoring programmes¹ where more junior individuals from diverse groups mentor senior individuals on topics like company culture, leadership and building connection to diverse group and minorities. Reverse Mentoring helps senior leaders understand the mentor's perspective, fosters retention of diverse talent and drives culture change and for both to learn and ask questions in a safe space
4. Use team meetings to discuss D&I and ask team members what it means to them. Talk openly in the company about challenges and progress in the D&I agenda, to make sure employees know that action is being taken.
 5. Raise awareness of micro-inequities² which are subtle, often unconscious messages through facial expressions, gesture or tone and choice of words which devalue or discourage individuals. Those may feel excluded and lead to disengagement, such as talking over people at meetings or appearing more interested in some people's views than others. Encourage behaviour of micro-affirmation such as recognize individuals for their comments, ask for opinions, give credit for ideas or use positive body language.
 6. Consider the tone set by leaders through their own working practices. For example, managers who habitually send emails in evenings and weekends may be unaware of the expectations they create in terms of what it takes to be successful in the organisation. Demonstrate that it is acceptable to take time away from work, and that other priorities in life such as mental wellbeing or caring for a family are equally important.
 7. Consider whether the workplace and its infrastructure and technology are supportive of the needs of a diverse workforce. For example, are there appropriate wheelchair access, privilege parking facilities for pregnant women and people with disabilities, mothers' room, or multi-faith prayer rooms and whether communication tools/applications have closed captions to assist hearing-impaired people.

PROGRESSION: ENSURING EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY

1. Ensure relevant actions captured in Practical Step #3 (e.g., short-listing, blind hiring, diverse selection panels) are reflected in internal hiring and talent development decisions.
2. Review the talent pool with a D&I lens to identify high potential individuals. Agree actions to support their development and raise their profile, so that they are well positioned to take opportunities that arise.

¹ <https://hbr.org/2019/10/why-reverse-mentoring-works-and-how-to-do-it-right>

² <https://www.maryville.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Microinequities-in-the-Workplace-compressed.pdf>

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3. Ensure transparency around internal roles and development opportunities to ensure diverse talent have the opportunity to apply. Review role description in order to eliminate bias.
4. Encourage flexible working models where possible (e.g. part-time, flexible hours, home-working) to allow diverse talent to perform at the same level as their counterparts and balance between work and personal or cultural commitments – but take care to ensure that management is fully bought in and that a lack of visibility doesn't affect career progression.
5. Consider offering leadership programmes to both leaders and diverse talent such as:
 - Inclusive Leadership programmes: a programme that helps leaders to optimize business performance by creating an inclusive environment that enables better decision making, harnessing the unique perspectives of a diverse team
 - Programmes that focus on career development planning: a program designed to accelerate your next move by going on an exploratory journey to achieve your full potential personally and professionally by knowing who you are, what you want, and how to get there
 - Specially curated learning pathways such as:
 - Advancing you*: Hosted in LinkedIn Learning, aimed at early careers female talent to explore who you are, own your career and unleash your potential to progress and accelerate your career; or
 - Flip the script*: Empathy in the workplace (offered by Catalyst): Empathy is a critical future-of-work skill that fosters connection and is linked to enhanced morale and team collaboration; anyone can build this skill with practice, motivation, and intention to get it right. However, misunderstandings are common about what empathy is, what it isn't, and how to improve it. Researchers show that efforts to build empathy can backfire if done without considering how power dynamics, culture, and our own biases can stifle our ability to truly understand others' perspectives. Practice building your empathy skills in three ways—cognitively (head/thinking), emotionally (heart/feeling), and behaviourally (action/doing)—to form stronger bonds with team members, learn from others' experiences, and foster an inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive.
6. Create employee networks: employee networks are voluntary groups of employees who come together in support of common goals and interests aligned with the Company's business strategy and objectives. They operate in alignment with the company's core values, code of conduct, Diversity and Inclusion vision, and company policies and on the principles of inclusion, open dialogue, and constructive contribution. They are not antagonistic or adversarial. They are typically organised around particular constituencies such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture, generations, experience levels (i.e., new graduates and experienced hires), people with disabilities and sexual orientation (in countries where law permits).
7. Work with HR to monitor for diversity skews in population, performance ranking and promotions. Review the data regularly; consider setting diversity KPIs for job grades and measure these.