PRACTICAL STEPS TO ACHIEVE D&I IN-HOUSE

PRACTICAL STEP #5: Promoting Work-Life Integration, Flexibility and Wellbeing

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 In-House Working Group expands on Practical Step 5 which states:

"Promote work-life integration, flexibility and wellbeing. Advocate flexible working and provide technological support for mobility, disabilities and flexible working. Encourage people to bring their full self to work and permit flexibility in personal style and appearance. Consider committing to the Mindful Business Charter.

FLEXIBLE AND HYBRID WORKING

Distinguish between:
- Contracted flexible working e.g. employment contract states 4 days a week, or shorter working hours
- Agile working practices e.g. informal recognition that output is more relevant as a performance metric than input (i.e. hours worked).

Hybrid working practices (such as partial working from home) can encourage diversity and inclusion by making it easier to accommodate employees (such as those with family/other commitments, mobility issues, etc.), moving away from the rigidity and presenteeism of the traditional workplace.

However this must be balanced with the needs of the business, encouraging collaboration, and ensuring equity of opportunity for all employees.

Not all employees thrive working at home (or have suitable conditions in which to work). Be aware that remote working can be isolating for some and can lead to an "always on" culture of work, so different teams may need different approaches when agreeing ways of working.

WORKING PRACTICES

Consider a **Charter** setting out:

- How the team will work,
- Identifying core times set aside for meetings/collaboration,
- How remote workers will be supervised
- How the team will stay engaged,
- How to meet business requirements while allowing flexibility.

INDIVIDUAL ADJUSTMENTS

- Work with employees on an individual basis to manage adjustments needed to reflect physical and/or mental disability and/or needs based on neurodiversity.
- Work with HR and Occupational Health as needed from an expertise basis.
- Consider committing to the Mindful Business Charter: https://www.mindfulbusinesscharter.com/

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PRACTICAL STEP #2: TEN TOP TIPS TO BE AN ACCOUNTABLE INCLUSIVE LEADER

HOW TO MAKE MEETINGS INCLUSIVE

In a hybrid working context, think about making meetings inclusive:

- ✓ Check in advance if any attendees need particular support, make adjustments and brief the Chair
- ✓ Plan regular breaks in the agenda
- ✓ Consider using transcription services or recording for those who may struggle to follow in real-time
- ✓ Even though our intention may not be to cause offense, think about what you are saying – are you using language in an inclusive way? Gendered language? Ableist language?
- ✓ Be aware of accessibility requirements in relation to in-person meetings and signpost facilities at the beginning of the meeting
- ✓ Train presenters on how to create accessible content
- ✓ Be mindful of different time-zones when planning global meetings
- ✓ Is your meeting first thing in the morning or last thing in the day? At the same time each week? Over lunch?
- ✓ If a regular meeting, perhaps flex the time to accommodate as many people as possible.
- ✓ Be mindful of any religious observances e.g. is it a lunch meeting with Muslim colleagues when they're observing Ramadan.
- ✓ Consider using the Chat function to enable a full inclusive discussion
- ✓ When presenting, read out small text on slides
- ✓ Consider roundtables to ensure everyone's voice is heard
- ✓ If a regular meeting, consider rotating who chairs the meeting to allow multiple voices to be heard
- ✓ If it is a meeting where you have not met the participants before, encourage the use of pronouns where appropriate.

LEADERSHIP: BELONGING AND INCLUSIVITY

- Lead from the top. Be visibly trustful of employees' positive intent to deliver outcomes. The influence and impact a leader has on their team and the organisation more broadly is to be recognised and fostered, from communications (e.g. emails and presentation) to behaviours (e.g. what content you are promoting in the team and what events you consider important to attend). Leaders are to be mindful of the important position and opportunity they have to create positive change, particularly in relation to belonging and inclusivity.
- Model behaviours with everyday interactions, behaviours and accountability to drive belonging and exclusivity. Recognise that belonging is linked to identity and sharing common beliefs whilst valuing difference. The concept of belonging/inclusivity can vary based on cultural nuances.
- Be aware of unconscious biases. Use tools such as the Harvard Implicit Association Tests to build awareness and prompt discussion: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Here are some external resources which you might find valuable to reference:

- Tips for post-lockdown inclusivity - IP Inclusive
- Reasonable adjustments in organisations – best practice for disability inclusion | The Law Society
- The Power of Belonging, Coqual 2021
- Fostering a Culture of Belonging in the Hybrid Workplace | Harvard Business Review
- What Does It Take to Build a Culture of Belonging? | Harvard Business Review
- Missing Your People: Why Belonging Is So Important And How To Create It |Forbes
- "Belonging: The Key to Transforming and Maintaining Diversity, Inclusion and Equality at Work" by Sue Unerman