

Inclusive workplace: The do's and don'ts

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What It Is?

An organization is a complex place with diverse kinds of personalities. People with different abilities are found in organisations and so are people with different disabilities.

Think of a place where all these people feel the same. That is in terms of being valued and being part of the organisation's short and long term plans. Therefore an inclusive workplace can be defined formally as:

A work environment that makes every employee feel valued while also acknowledging their differences and how these differences contribute to the organization's culture and business outcomes.

Our differences can vary from gender, rank, qualifications, abilities e.t.c. An inclusive workplace will make every person despite how great or least they are feel their value at work. While this can be the general idea of a workplace, the real inclusivity varies widely from one workplace to another. The real meaning of an inclusive workplace can only be defined according to the scopes of a particular workplace.

Though this may be the true case for many, an inclusive workplace is easier said than created. Even though everyone agrees that an inclusive workplace is a good and necessary idea, according to a *Gallup* report on work inclusion:

- Only 55% of all the people agree that their workplace has some form of inclusion and diversity
- 45 % of U.S. workers experienced some form of discrimination or harassment in the past 12 months
- 90% of people who say they're not treated with respect also experienced discrimination or harassment at work

An organization looking to truly emphasize inclusion should create a culture that embraces unique ideas, perspectives, experiences and people.

Traits Of An Inclusive Workplace

1. *Participatory role in decisions*

- In an inclusive workplace, everyone is allowed an opportunity to voice out their contributions and concerns without fear of punishment, bullying or criticism.

2. *Sense of belonging*

- An inclusive workplace will give every employee at different levels a sense of being part of the organisation and its long term future.

3. *Uniqueness value*

- Just how a sense of belonging and a sense of value are needed for each employee, a sense of uniqueness is of essence too as this gives an employee confidence.

4. *Cooperative Workplace*

- Any inclusive workplace involves much cooperation.

5. *Learning and Development*

- Any inclusive workplace has room for learning and development mainly due to participation and cooperation in almost all things for everyone.

6. *Sense of value*

- Being allowed to voice out your contributions and concerns as well as being allowed to

participate gives one a sense of value.

7. Access to resources

- An inclusive environment allows you access to resources with minimum restrictions.

8. Right Positioning

- An inclusive workplace has strategic alignment. Everyone has an understanding of their role and perform with excellence and confidence.

Why An Inclusive Workplace

Inclusion allows for diversity in your workplace and this, in turn, produces results like:

According to a publication by WorkLogic HR;

- Companies that are more diverse than average had 19% higher innovation revenues in 2018.
- In that same year, 43% of companies with diverse boards achieved higher profits.
- Ethnically diverse companies are 35% more likely to achieve above-average financial returns.
- Diverse teams are 87% better at decision-making.

Setting It Up

According to Gallup, three things are fundamental to setting up an inclusive workplace.

1. Employees are treated with respect.
2. Employees are valued for their strengths.
3. Leaders do what is right.

These form a basis of what can initiate and maintain an inclusive environment.

Steps that are key to starting up an inclusive workplace practice in your organisation:

1. Practice inclusive leadership

- That is, be welcoming and be a free-to-talk-to leader. Let everyone feel welcome and involve everyone in your decisions. Let each individual have a say before passing out any decision.

2. Invest in inclusion training

- This is best for you and all other leaders under you. This will allow each and everyone to understand the importance of practising inclusive leadership

3. Use inclusive language

- In any leadership case, communication is key. Communicate in a way that everyone can understand. Follow up after meetings and training to get feedback on how employees are feeling in the organisation. This allows cooperation and strengthens an inclusive culture through good results.

4. Invite everyone to meetings

- The best way to make any men is to make them sit at the same table with great men. Let every employee attend planning meetings and allow them time to contribute.

5. Implement strong anti-discrimination policies

- By all means necessary, guard your employees against discriminatory bullying through policies that are always enforced. That is you walk the talk in this aspect religiously.

6. Empower your employee

- Empower your employees to make their decisions and allow them access to necessary resources

Wrapping it up

An inclusive workplace is a necessary environment in all aspects. All its practices are a recipe for more productivity. Inclusion at the workplace makes the environment smarter, welcoming and more successful. If employees are to feel any attached to their organisation and more engaged in their jobs, inclusion is to be the pioneer. It is therefore important to start implementing necessary steps to create an inclusive culture in your organisation.

*“When we listen and celebrate what is both common and different, we become wiser, more inclusive, and better as an organization.” — **Pat Wadors***

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<https://thehumancapitalhub.com/articles/inclusive-workplace-the-dos-and-donts>