



Rethinking **workplace diversity**

Harness the differences in your people to
make them successful



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Foreword:

Both authors would like to emphasise the importance of learning about diversity and inclusion from a range of different individuals and resources. Education and awareness are critical in learning about the perspectives and experiences of minority groups and the wider the audience you learn from, the greater the awareness you will build. Additionally, how diversity and inclusion work in your organisation will depend on the context, and methods which are successful for one organisation may not be effective for another. It is important that HR professionals, D&I professionals and business leaders are constantly reviewing their practices and either continuing where positive outcomes are being seen and pivoting or changing where they are not. The authors would also like to acknowledge the limitations of their own perspectives and invite feedback and discussion from all readers.



Introduction

Diversity is difference. Both visible and invisible; subjective and selective; socially constructed yet based on real experience; it has the power to instil both feelings of inclusion and of intimidation.

Workplace diversity can inspire feelings of belonging (O'Donovan, 2018), **increase profits** (McKinsey & Company, 2017), lead to more innovation (Nathan & Lee, 2013), drive better decisions (Levine et al., 2014) and make teams more productive (Neuman et al., 1999). **Conversely, it's been attributed with poorer performance** (Guillaume et al., 2017), poorer collaboration (Forbes, 2011) and the cause of **feelings of resentment** and mistrust within organisations (Galinsky et al., 2015). It's a hot topic in both HR and psychology literature and with more and more organisations embarking on diversity programmes, it's important to understand what it means, what it can bring to organisations and how to capitalise on the benefits whilst being aware of the inherent challenges. As opinion shifts from framing diversity as primarily a moral concern, this paper also aims to make the case for **alternative forms of diversity, such as personality,** and the impact they can have.



Key statistics

In 2019 there were **just 10 individuals from ethnic minorities in leadership positions across the entire FTSE 100** with only four of these having a Chief Executive title. This is equivalent to **7.4%** despite ethnic minority groups making up **14%** of the population (Green Park, 2019).

A Yale University study showed Scientists, who are trained to be objective, were more likely to **hire men**, rank them higher in competency and **pay them \$4,000 more per year than women** (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012).

Older women are more likely to be excluded from job interviews with older black women experiencing further difficulties. Those selected tend to be shortlisted for lower status jobs (Paraskevopoulou et al., 2019).

The case for **workplace diversity**

One reason workplace diversity is so important stems from a moral argument, namely that every individual should have the opportunity to be the best they can be. It's a convincing argument and employers are bought into this idea with **54% citing diversity as something that is crucial to ensuring they are doing business ethically** (Robert Walters, 2017) and indeed this sense of equality is assured by law (UK Equality Act, 2010). Even the introduction of workplace diversity policies alone have been shown to result in increased innovation and overall performance in comparison with organisations who do not have these policies in place (Hossain et al., 2019).

Gains from workplace diversity are not just moral. Top quartile companies for diversity were found to be more likely to financially outperform industry medians than bottom quartile companies for gender diversity (by 16%) and ethnic diversity (by 35%) (McKinsey & Company, 2017). **Organisations with female board representation outperformed those without by 26%** in share price performance (Credit Suisse, 2012). Academics have suggested financial benefits from diversity arise from varied approaches and perspectives leading to more ideas and innovation which in turn leads to better decision making, more complex thinking and ultimately being better equipped for unforeseen challenges (O'Donovan, 2018).

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Diversity shapes how we view situations, as cognitive functioning and attitudes vary with demographics.

There's a strong case to be made for the advantages of the variety of perspectives and approaches that diversity brings. Diversity shapes how we view situations, as cognitive functioning and attitudes vary with demographics. Workplace diversity brings different perspectives on how to approach tasks. **Diverse senior management teams are more likely to focus on innovation** (Talke et al., 2011) and have been found to be more likely to introduce product innovations than homogenous ones (Nathan & Lee, 2013). Additionally, **having women in decision making positions results in improved governance and social responsibility**, and women just being present across teams is associated with better occupational wellbeing across genders (Fine et al., 2020).





Diverse teams also have the potential to be more productive and make better decisions. When team members approach tasks differently, task-related conflicts are more frequent. Effective handling of these conflicts results in better consideration of all aspects of the task and subsequently better solutions. In a research study, **ethnic diversity in teams was found to lead to an increase in scrutiny and ultimately better decision making and performance on a market pricing task** (Levine et al., 2014). Another study found diverse juries deliberate more perspectives more accurately than homogenous ones (Sommers, 2006).

There are also more practical concerns to creating a diverse workforce. Demographics of both the general and working population of the UK have shifted and pushes for diversity are needed in order to attract staff with unique skills. For staff joining the workforce, 80% stated potential employer's diversity and inclusion policy was an important factor in whether or not they chose to join a company (PwC, 2015b). However, a policy alone isn't enough, and research has shown that **companies who promote diversity and inclusion but do not provide evidence of a diverse and inclusive workplace are viewed more negatively by minority groups** (Wilton et al., 2020).

One piece of research across 10 cities in the US discovered that **ethnic minorities were 30% less likely to apply for a role at a company with an equal opportunities statement** due to concerns around being tokenised and felt they would have a negative experience and this finding was particularly prominent in majority white cities (Leibbrandt & List, 2018). Demographic shifts are an important consideration with clients as well as employees. Robert Walters (2017) reported that two thirds of employers believed a diverse workforce was needed to better serve their diverse customer base.

51% of employers believe diversity helps introduce staff with unique skills into the workforce

(Robert Walters, 2017)

77% of CEOs claimed their D&I strategy has had a direct positive effect on customer satisfaction

(PwC, 2015a)

Most research and industry literature has placed the matter of diversity as rooted solely in readily-detected demographics (Jackson et al., 2003) and how they related to positive or negative work outcomes (Guillaume et al., 2017). Diversity is broader than this though. Diversity encompasses any attribute that can lead a person to perceive another as different from themselves.

Personality diversity has long been proposed to have an impact on the effectiveness of teams. As early as the 1950s, research found groups with heterogeneity of personality were better at solving problems (Hoffman, 1959). These ideas are again starting to gain traction and research attention. Teams that displayed diversity in terms of extraversion have been found to have better social cohesion (Barrick et al., 1998). Another study found diversity in terms of adjustment and extraversion led to better team performance (Neuman et al., 1999). A similar study found that **diversity in terms of intelligence was correlated with better communication and less conflict** (Bagshaw, 2004). It's likely that when there are noticeable differences between people, they assume roles within the group dynamic more naturally and so teams become more cohesive and more productive.

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Diversity encompasses any attribute that can lead a person to perceive another as different from themselves.



85% of CEOs whose organisations have a D&I strategy say it has enhanced business performance

(PwC, 2015a)

85% of senior executives globally agreed that diversity is so important as different perspectives drive innovation

(Forbes, 2011)



Studies have also looked to investigate the interplay between demographics and personality and how this impacts workplace diversity. Flynn et al. (2001) suggested that the **effects of diversity on teams were moderated by personality traits**. Demographically dissimilar people were perceived more favourably if they were more extraverted and showed higher capacity for self-monitoring. This in turn led to greater social integration and performance. This makes sense, as being both gregarious and emotionally intelligent would allow a person to quickly get others to warm to them. Curiosity has also been found to positively moderate team performance in diverse teams (Homan et al., 2008). Again, this seems logical as highly curious people are more likely to appreciate novel perspectives and entertain them.

Demographic Diversity vs Personality Diversity

Complementary fit: Hiring for similar traits to maintain 'culture fit'. Teams need to have enough in common in terms of personality and ways of thinking, to get along. However, this works irrespective of demographic background and marks the difference between demographic diversity and personality diversity.

Supplementary fit: Hiring for divergent traits to bring new perspectives. This is where creativity, innovation and new ideas are likely to flourish. As different perspectives are being drawn upon, possible problems or other directions to take are more likely to be considered.

Key statistics

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in the UK reported that since 2010 the **number of individuals from ethnic minority groups aged between 15 and 24 who are unemployed has increased by 49%** compared to a 2% decrease for those from ethnic majority groups (EHRC, 2016, Aug 19).

At the end of 2020, **just 3.5% of leaders in the FTSE 100 were from ethnic minorities**, down from 7% in 2019, and 8% in 2018 (Green Park, 2021).

In the UK, **the rate at which female leaders are being appointed** in the FTSE 100 means it would take **50 years for females to be equally represented** (Green Park, 2019).

Challenges to **workplace diversity**

Despite the apparent advantages of creating a diverse workforce, the reality is less clear cut. Firstly, it's not always an easy thing to achieve. **Despite 85% of employers citing diversity as important, only 46% have programmes in place** to attract diverse talent and 45% felt their recruitment tools were ineffective at doing so (Robert Walters, 2017). It can be difficult for businesses to know where to focus their efforts when there are many different business areas to consider.



Organisations who have presence in multiple locations worldwide also have the challenge of understanding the context of specific locations. What diversity and inclusion means for a UK based office compared to one in China would be completely different and it can be challenging to get it right for all locations.

Other business obstacles that have been reported include a lack of consensus over who is responsible for supporting and organising diversity initiatives and programmes that have been put in place are not always executed well or not connected to business drivers. Even when the momentum has been generated in the business and structures are in place to support diversity efforts, the path to a productive, diverse workforce isn't always straight forward.

Biases exist in recruitment and progression processes. Job postings that unintentionally use language stereotypically ascribed to men, are less appealing to women. This isn't because they feel like they can't do the job, but that they feel the organisation is not right for them (Gaucher et al., 2011). Throughout the recruitment process too, there's a large body of evidence demonstrating that unconscious bias disadvantages some groups (e.g. Uhlmann & Cohen, 2005).

Agreeableness diversity in teams → worse social cohesion and more conflict

(Barsade et al., 1998)

45% of employers feel their recruitment tools are ineffective at attracting diverse talent

(PwC, 2015a)

There are also potential issues when diversity exists within the business. Groups aren't always successful at harnessing the potential advantages of diversity. Just putting diversity in place, without proactively managing conflict arising from differences in perspectives, will not bring benefits. It's been suggested that the extent to which diversity can benefit a group is dependent on how salient differences are, how well the group handles bias and how well the group can capitalise on the variety of perspectives (Guillaume et al., 2017).

Morin (2015) found that approximately a third to a half of individuals from minority groups show preference for the 'culturally valued group'. This is alarming due to the fact if organisations do hire diverse talent in management or leadership positions, they could be prone to continuing the biased recruitment and development processes. There's also a part to play for the type of organisation. By reviewing recent studies, Guillaume et al. (2017) found that **diversity only improved performance of organisations that were pursuing growth or innovation**. For those with low growth or low innovation strategies, diversity was actually related to worse performance.

Another matter involves how diversity strategies are posed to majority groups. **Diversity can be viewed as a source of resentment and mistrust and this can lead to resistance which hinders progress**. Majority groups have been shown to have lower workplace engagement in more diverse groups (Tsui et al., 1992). To give an example of this, the BBC recently suffered a significant backlash following a job post exclusively for black, Asian, and minority ethnic candidates (HR Grapevine, 2017). Having said this, there is evidence to suggest that these negative consequences associated with diversity in the workplace are more likely to be perceived, rather than real (Ahmed, 2019). Majority groups need to feel they won't be disadvantaged by efforts to increase diversity.

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Groups aren't always successful at harnessing the potential advantages of diversity.



41% of employers feel diversity can lead to challenges with collaboration

(Robert Walters, 2017)

The focus of diversity and inclusion programmes is often narrow, with companies developing interventions aimed only at more salient demographic diversity such as gender and ethnicity. We'd suggest attention also needs to be placed on personality composition of teams. This in itself isn't clear cut. Even when personality was first discussed, evidence was mixed (Haythorn, 1968). **More recently, personality diversity has been found to negatively impact team social integration** (Harrison et al., 2002). This suggests that with personality too, it might be the case that homogeneity is easier, but not more productive.

54% of employers say diversity is crucial to ensure that they are doing business ethically

(Robert Walters, 2017)



Looking at specific personality traits, diversity doesn't always benefit teams.

Conscientiousness diversity in teams has been found to correlate with poorer performance (Barrick et al., 1998). Highly conscientious people are perhaps less productive if they perceive people are not putting in as much effort, and less conscientious people may get complacent if they feel others will pitch in. Diversity in agreeableness (steadiness) within teams has been shown to be related to worse workload sharing and conflict (Barrick et al., 1998). Again, if some team members are much more assertive whilst others submit to pressure, resentment may come from perceptions of injustice. **There's also some evidence for emotional diversity negatively impacting team performance** where team members vary greatly in well-being (Barsade et al., 2000). There may be difficulty in perspective sharing if there's a large divergence in how optimistic and positively group members see work situations.

The psychology of bias

Academics have long tried to understand why workplace outcomes for different groups are not equal. In 1957, Becker proposed the theory of taste discrimination to explain **racial pay inequality** in the US, assuming certain employers were willing to financially disadvantage themselves to avoid contact with black people. He theorised that, in a competitive marketplace, it would only take some employers not to be biased for wage gaps to eventually disappear. In reality, improvements in wage gaps tend to occur alongside sizable political shifts, after which they stagnate (Darity and Mason, 1998).



A further theory, **statistical discrimination** (Aigner & Cain, 1977), held that the root of inequality was stereotyping rather than prejudice, suggesting that employers use stereotypes to increase the perceived accuracy of people evaluation where known information was incomplete.

Both of these theories assume that differing outcomes for different groups happen due to conscious discrimination on the part of employers. **Implicit discrimination** (Bertrand, Chugh, & Mullainathan, 2005) **suggests that employers may be unconsciously biased against particular groups**. The theory was based on developments in wider social psychological literature, for example Devine (1989) who demonstrated that both high- and low-prejudice people are equally aware of negative stereotypes of groups and that low-prejudice people try to inhibit the automatic negative stereotypes when they are aware of them. However, in ambiguous situations, such as when considering unknown candidates for a job, these stereotypes are equally activated by both high- and low-prejudice people.



One approach to understanding why these stereotypes are equally detrimental for the decision making of people who are and aren't prejudiced is based on a theory that we have two ways of thinking (see Kahneman, 2011). **System 1 thinking is fast, unconscious and automatic.** If asked the answer to $2 + 2$, most people would use system 1 thinking. It accounts for the vast majority of our day-to-day thinking but is prone to error and bias.



System 2 thinking is conscious, deliberate and time-consuming. Most people would answer 45×37 using system 2 thinking. It is reserved for more complex decision making and is more reliable. However, even when using system 2 thinking, we can still be influenced by our system 1 quick evaluations. When considering which candidates to process to the next stage of a recruitment process, for example, pervasive negative stereotypes about particular groups will have led to quick assumptions about people belonging to those groups, and these will influence our more reliable system 2 decisions.

Diversity in well-being
in teams → worse team
performance

(Barsade et al., 2000)



Consider this example: would you rather win £900 or have a 90% chance of winning £1000? Think about why you have chosen your answer. Secondly, would you rather lose £900 or have a 90% chance of losing £1000? Again, think about your reasons. Most people when given these two situations would rather win £900 but would rather have a 90% chance of losing £1000. Rationale offered often goes along the lines of a guaranteed win of £900 and perhaps risking for the chance of not losing any money at all. Mathematically though, in each scenario the options are equivalent; the only thing that changes is the word “win” or “lose”; and so there is no rational reason for people’s decisions to change. This is known as **loss aversion bias**. Our system 1 thinking tends to be **irrationally biased to framing loss as more significant than potential gain**, which our system 2 thinking then rationalises (Kahneman, Knetsch & Thaler, 1991).

There are many other types of biases that are relevant in the workplace. **In-group bias** (1979) states that we are more favourable to people who we share a group identity with. Group identity can reflect ethnicity, gender, class, age, amongst numerous other factors. Given that majority groups are overly well-represented in those making recruitment and promotion decisions, in-group bias serves to maintain disadvantages faced by minority groups in the workplace.

Confirmation bias (see Nickerson, 1998) is a phenomenon whereby we pay more attention to information that supports our opinions whilst overlooking evidence that refutes them. This is especially relevant when we consider the impact that unsupported negative stereotypes have on our opinions. We may make erroneous system 1 evaluations of a candidate's competency based on stereotypes and then later ignore opportunities to correct the error whilst focusing on any evidence to support it.



Finally, it is important to note that **we are all susceptible to these biases** in thinking, and that we cannot train them out of our system 1 thought processes. It's important to be mindful of the impact the biases in all of us have and seek to make processes more objective and unbiased, knowing that we cannot be.

In the UK, for every **10%** increase in gender diversity in exec team, EBIT rose by **3.5%**, Despite this, there's an average of **only 12% females in exec teams**

(McKinsey & Company, 2017)

How to cultivate a diverse workplace

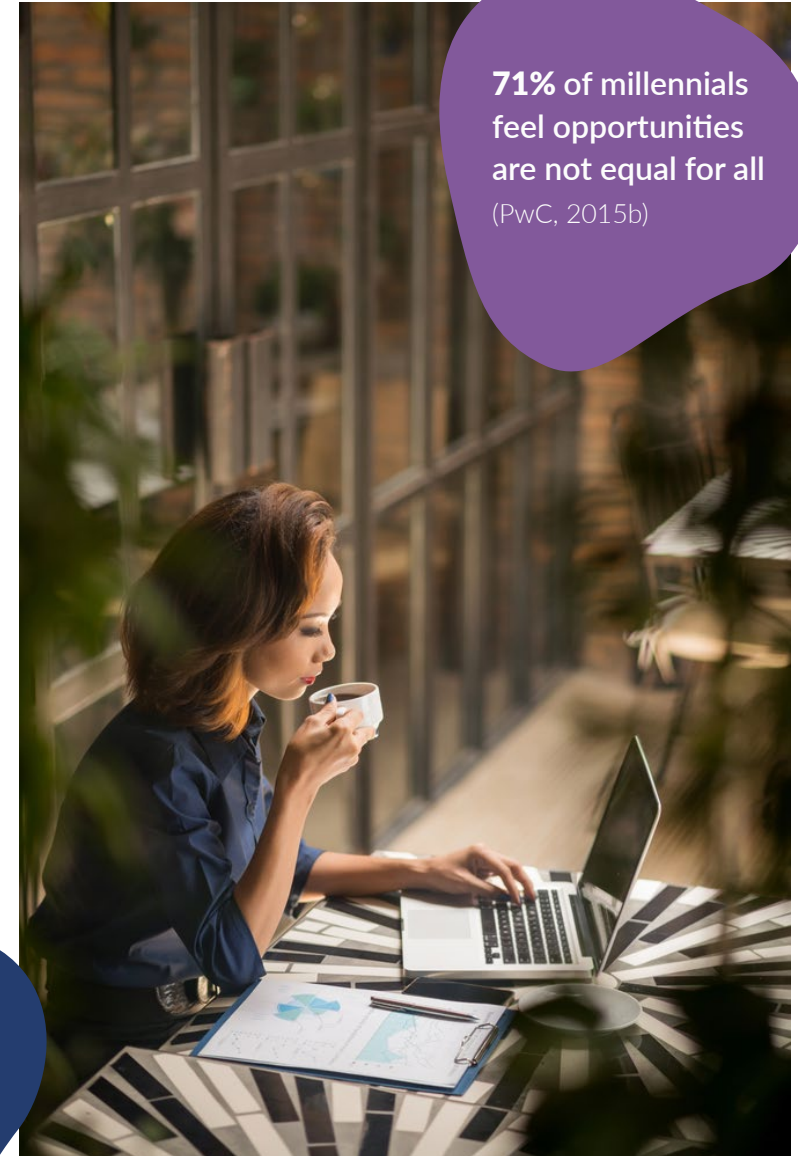
There are many practical changes organisations can make to cultivate a diverse and inclusive workplace, however they require commitment and long term investment. It's difficult to provide best practice recommendations because all organisations are different, and because of this, what works well for one, may not be an effective approach for another. Instead, we focus on strategies that any organisation can consider, all of which are ultimately aimed at reducing opportunity for unconscious biases to creep into people decisions.

A change which can create an impact straight away is **ensuring job postings are accurate**. Job postings should only contain the necessary qualifications and skills and avoid language which could dissuade minority groups from applying. There are proofing tools which have been developed to help HR departments remove gender biased language from these job descriptions (for example see Matfield, 2014).

Where the job postings are being advertised is also important to consider, are the career sites being used accessible and do they attract candidates from diverse backgrounds? At the point of assessing CVs, a range of stakeholders should be involved and **removing identifiable information about a candidate** including name, location or where they went to school, can help to avoid bias arising at this stage. Blind CV screening has become a popular method to remove a candidate's identifiable information and research promotes the effectiveness of this method (Joseph, 2016; Rinne, 2019). When African American and Asian candidates 'whiten' their CV, they were found to receive up to 50% more invitations to interview (Gerdeman, 2017).

45% of employers don't measure workplace diversity
(Robert Walters, 2017)

71% of millennials feel opportunities are not equal for all
(PwC, 2015b)



Equally qualified ethnic minorities have to submit **50% more applications** to be invited to interview compared to ethnic majorities and additional research found white sounding names receive **50% more call backs than** African-American sounding names (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004: Zschirnt & Reudin, 2016). Removing identifiable information can help to ensure individuals from diverse groups are being selected during the screening stage.



Additionally, selection and promotion panels need to be diverse themselves to reduce bias in decision making and each individual should have the opportunity to score the candidate independently before discussing as a group.

Transparency is key. Criteria related to promotions and pay rises should be established in advance. Creating accountability through taking these steps has been found to reduce the gender and ethnic minority pay gap (Castilla, 2015). Transparency in these processes has been positively linked with higher productivity, innovation and reduced staff turnover (Armstrong et al., 2010).

When reviewing your diversity and inclusion practices, a great way to take an objective viewpoint is through the use of an external auditing company. These auditors use a number of different strategies including collecting data and holding employee interviews to evaluate processes. This type of audit allows HR departments and business leaders to understand their strengths which they can then build upon and the areas which require improvement. Using an external auditing company promotes an **objective process free from bias** or pre-conceived ideas or opinions.

Although a consistent and clear message should be communicated across all office locations, the strategies and local practices need to have some flexibility to suit the context.

**Conscientiousness
diversity in teams
→ worse performance**

(Barsade et al., 1998)



Opportunities should be taken to train and educate the workforce. In a review of academic works looking at maximising the benefits of diversity, Galinsky et al. (2015) found that promoting diversity led to a reduction in bias and better intergroup interactions. Positive beliefs about diversity have also been found to positively impact whether **diversity leads to greater social integration and innovation** (Guillaume et al., 2017). PwC found educating their workforce led to staff feeling greater inclusivity where differences were valued and respected (PwC, 2016).

One of the ways this can be achieved is through **promoting creative abrasion**. This is the process by which two **seemingly contradictory ideas are fused into one**, not by compromising and reducing elements, but by taking the best of each to make something novel (Barrick et al., 1998). Team sessions focused on understanding the motivators of individuals as well as their unique strengths can help teams capitalise on the inherent advantages of diversity. Where team heterogeneity is limited at present, steps should be taken to increase exposure to other perspectives, through guest speakers, cross-team collaboration and networking.

When creating diversity programmes, **efforts must not be seen to exclude majority groups**. When the advantages of diversity to majority as well as minority staff are highlighted, interventions are less likely to be viewed with resentment. On the other hand, the positive effects of diversity will be undermined if groups perceive dissimilar others as a threat. One way to achieve this is to frame programmes as all-inclusive, explicitly including majority groups. Jansen et al. (2015) found such approaches were significantly better supported by majority groups than approaches that did not reference their groups. Interventions that encourage minority group perspective taking have also been found to help majority groups to integrate others' perspectives with their own and ultimately lead to better performance and decision making (Galinsky et al., 2008).

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Majority groups need to feel they won't be disadvantaged by efforts to increase diversity.

Sharing of perceptions leads to greater social integration and fosters the positive effects of diversity. It's also important to quantifiably measure workplace engagements of all groups at demographic levels, and ensure there are no unintended negative outcomes of diversity efforts. Another way of achieving this is to create reward structures that place value on team rather than individual goals. Strong team reward structures should positively impact team collaboration.

All diversity interventions should be robustly assessed. On finding female staff were leaving, PwC assumed this was due to a lack of support for mothers so put steps in place to better support them. After more in-depth analysis of the data, they found it was actually younger women leaving who were being replaced by more experienced men (PwC, 2015a).

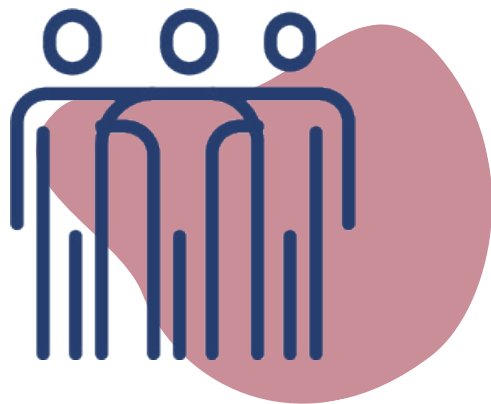
Diversity within an organisation can't be too narrowly focused. It's possible to feel included in some respects whilst feeling excluded in others, so efforts focusing on one or two demographics will not be as successful as more comprehensive approaches. Personality also needs to be taken into account when nurturing diverse teams.



41% of senior execs feel failure to connect diversity issues to business drivers is an issue
(Forbes, 2011)

Most academic rationale for the impacts of demographic diversity assume that demographic differences are associated with differences in underlying attributes (Jackson et al., 2003), so interventions are more likely to succeed when they consciously assess these attributes. Flynn et al. (2001) found that personality moderated positive effects of diversity. Personality and behavioural motivators need to be measured and taken into account when building teams. This can be bolstered with facilitated team sessions.

It is critical that organisations are not just focussing on the attracting diverse talent piece but are working towards ensuring diverse talent feels welcome and included in the business once they become an employee.



How effective is Unconscious Bias Training?

At the end of 2020, it was announced that unconscious bias training was to be scrapped for civil servants, due to no evidence it changes attitudes or helps to improve diversity and inclusion in the workplace. So, how effective is unconscious bias training really? Questions have been raised about the effectiveness of unconscious bias training for a number of years with findings showing that training to remove bias provides no long term benefits (Noon, 2018).

As unconscious biases are formed automatically, it is incredibly difficult to change them and are unlikely to ever change. A way to consider unconscious bias training is as an educational experience to improve the awareness of how objective decisions can be made, rather than attempting to change existing biases which is ultimately unlikely to work. When training sessions like this are introduced, it is important they are not used in isolation or made mandatory for all employees or managers but should be promoted to all employees to get involved. It can be tempting to make these sessions mandatory due to the importance of every employee understanding the impact of unconscious bias and making objective decisions, however a more effective approach would be to make the training optional and encourage participation. If leaders within the business are seen advocating and participating in these sessions then others within the business are more likely to also get involved. Those who are already interested are likely to attend, and then they can help to promote and educate others in the business about the importance of this awareness training and the benefits it provides through a snowball effect.

Promoting diversity through recruitment

Client case study: Harvey Nash

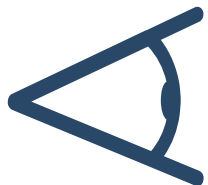
Harvey Nash are a global recruitment company that values the importance of diversity. In 2016, they partnered with Thomas International to evaluate whether there was any evidence of adverse impact in their robust recruitment process. Over 12 months, Thomas tracked hundreds of applicants for positions at Harvey Nash, monitoring demographic diversity, behavioural preferences and the eventual outcome of applications. Harvey Nash know that diversity is more than just demographics, and recruit with diversity in behavioural preferences, motivators and personality in mind.

Statistical analysis looked at the chance of each demographic group progressing and dropping out at each stage, using impact ratios, statistical tests and practical tests. No evidence was found that any group was being adversely impacted in the recruitment process, though we were able to make recommendations to make processes even better. Following the outcomes of the study, Harvey Nash were successful in becoming the **first recruitment company to achieve the National Equality Standard**, one of the UK's most rigorous and prestigious accreditations for diversity and inclusion.

Thomas International's Behaviour assessment (PPA) was not shown to adversely impact any group. Looking at gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality and disability, no group was any more or less likely to have any profile. By using this tool, Harvey Nash were able to **reduce unconscious bias in the recruitment process**. It also allowed them to see which profiles were rarer and so could support behavioural diversity in the workplace as well as looking at which profiles were ultimately more or less successful.



What is Thomas doing to promote **Diversity and Inclusion?**



At Thomas, we're lucky to have a range of psychometric assessments readily available to us to use for both employee selection and development. All candidates in the recruitment process are invited to complete the assessments and we almost have a Thomas language which stems from the assessment results, which all employees across the business can relate to.

We also have a team of Business Psychologists who continuously review and conduct research in the D&I space, ensuring psychometric assessments are a fair comparison tool for different groups of people. In 2020, a large group of individuals volunteered to form our D&I steering group, consisting of employees around the business with smaller subgroups focussing on specific areas. All employees at Thomas were and still are welcome to join and contribute. The work we're doing on D&I is a continuous and business critical journey which is promoted at all levels of the organisation.

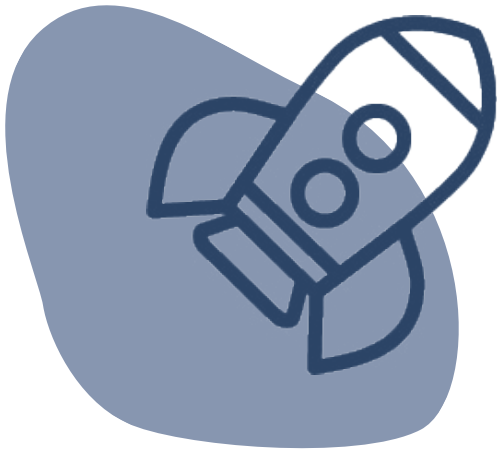
Making Thomas a Great Place to Work is one of our core objectives and our approach to diversity and inclusion is a fundamental component to succeeding at it.



Conclusion

Workplace diversity is far **more than just a moral issue**. Organisations have the opportunity to harness the difference in people to help them become more successful, more innovative, more skilled and better able to cater to their diverse clients' needs. However, **putting steps in place to build a diverse workforce is not enough**. Conflict arising from different perspectives and resistance from majority groups has the potential to hamper the effectiveness of diversity programmes. In addition to this, **the omission of personality diversity from the discourse is a great oversight**, especially considering widely held assumptions that gains from demographic diversity are caused by differences in underlying traits.

Only with these factors taken into considerations can organisations fully benefit from diverse and inclusive workforces.



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