

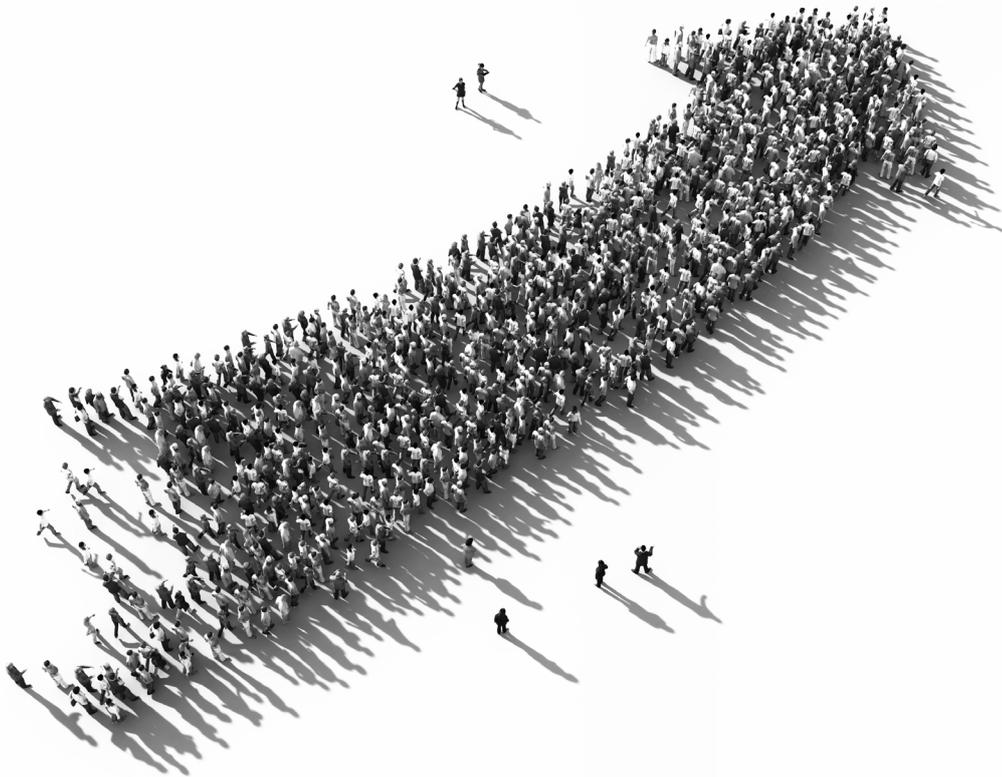


The Prince's
Responsible
Business Network



INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

From pioneer to mainstream





The Prince's
Responsible
Business Network



About This Document

This document was originally published in 2011, hence it uses our old branding. Despite its age, the document contains relevant and useful information. However, some specific links, case studies and statistics may be out of date.

**BUSINESS
IN THE
COMMUNITY**

Opportunity Now

**Inclusive Leadership –
from Pioneer to Mainstream**
Maximising the Potential of your People

in partnership with

S H A P I R O





This research was conducted and analysed by Dr Gillian Shapiro.

The report was written by Dr Gillian Shapiro, of Shapiro Consulting Ltd, and Helen Wells and Rachael Saunders of Opportunity Now

BAE SYSTEMS

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Foreword

Opportunity Now knows that a diverse workforce is a vital source of creativity, innovation and talent. Ensuring all employees are motivated and engaged is a clear commercial imperative.



Great leadership is at the heart of great business and great organisations. It is also at the heart of creating cultures which are not only diverse, but cultures which leverage that difference for competitive advantage.

Inclusive leadership is a leadership style which embraces, encourages and taps into the creativity and ideas which come about in non homogeneous groups.

Leadership is the key to transforming organisational culture, through creating organisations in which women can thrive and reach their potential. Truly inclusive leaders are not as widespread as we might like. The greatest inclusive leaders have developed through osmosis not design – they build their ability to make the most of the diverse talent in their organisation through experience, almost by accident. This is why we have described them as pioneer leaders. They are breaking new ground, learning through example and experience and not via organisational design. This research sets out what an inclusive leader actually is, how you can identify one in your business, and how to systematically increase the number of these pioneer leaders in your organisation. I am confident that members of Opportunity Now will find it extremely useful, and hope

that you make the most of the practical and pragmatic recommendations on how to achieve change within your business. We must make this shift, inclusive leadership cannot be about pioneers, it is a leadership style that must run through our organisations.

Opportunity Now has been championing the business benefits of diversity for twenty years. We believe that systemically encouraging inclusive leadership will deliver the organisational and cultural change that is needed for all individuals to be able to thrive and succeed.

Opportunity Now and Shapiro Consulting are very grateful to BAE Systems, KPMG, Nomura and Marsh & McLennan Companies for their generous support of this research, and for the practical back up and invaluable input and ideas which made this piece of work possible.

Alison Platt, Divisional Managing Director, Europe and North America, Bupa and Chair of Opportunity Now

About Opportunity Now



Opportunity Now empowers employers to accelerate change for women in the workplace. We work with our membership of employers, from private, public and education sectors to offer tailored, practical and pragmatic advice on workplace issues.

Opportunity Now is an initiative of Business in the Community, a charity that stands for responsible business.

Founded in 1991, the original aim of Opportunity Now was to maximise the potential of female employees and improve their recruitment and retention prior to the start of the new millennium. 20 years on the need for the work of Opportunity Now is just as strong.

The campaign pillars of focus for 2011 – 2012 are:

- **Balanced Boards**
- **Flexible Working**
- **Equal Pay**

www.bitcdiversity.org.uk

Snapshot

Inclusive leadership – addressing the business issues of the decade

The business landscape is changing rapidly. The development of the knowledge economy is seeing flatter, less hierarchical structures in organisations. Increased agility is the response to emerging markets, economic downturn and the cultural change inspired by social media and new ways of networking. Organisations across the private, public and third sectors require leaders with diversity of thought coming from diverse backgrounds that can foster innovation, maximise employee engagement and make the most of the potential of their people.

Inclusive leaders – increasing employee engagement

Our research demonstrates that inclusive leaders make a real difference in performance and engagement. 84% of respondents to our survey told us that their inclusive leader made them feel more motivated. 83% said that their inclusive leader had increased their loyalty to their team, leader and organisation. 81% reported that their inclusive leader improved their performance and productivity. 81% of respondents reported that their inclusive leader motivated them to go the extra mile above and beyond their day to day role.

Demographic change

56.6% of first degrees are obtained by women. More than 10% of the UK workforce is from an ethnic minority background¹. 6% of first class honour degrees are gained by students known to have a disability².

Despite the increasing diversity of the workforce overall, women and BAME people continue to be under-represented in leadership and key decision-making roles.

Only 12.5% of FTSE 100 directorships are held by women³. Only 6.8% of all management positions are held by BAME people. Public administration, education and health account for almost 80% of all ethnic minority workers in management positions⁴.

The business imperative for inclusive leadership



1 Race for Opportunity, 2010.

2 Employers Forum on Disability, 2010, www.efd.org.uk

3 The Female FTSE Board Report 2010 [Report] / auth. Vinnecombe, Sealy and Dolor Graham and. - [s.l.] : Cranfield University School of Management, 2010.

4 Race for Opportunity, 2009

Inclusive leadership – breaking barriers

We know that diversity in decision makers is good for business⁵. We need a leadership approach that supports the building of diverse leadership pipelines for companies.

Our research told us that inclusive leaders can make a real impact in tackling the challenges that women and others can face in progressing at work. This includes:

- Making them feel more valued
- Increasing their self confidence and self belief
- Enabling them to be more authentic in the way they operate at work
- Creating career promoting opportunities

What makes a great inclusive leader?

Through our research we have defined the knowledge and skills, behaviours and actions that define a great inclusive leader.

There are three core qualities of an inclusive leader:

- **Adaptable** – they are highly aware of diversity amongst the people they work with and manage. They are comfortable with using different and flexible approaches to work organisation to get the best results and the most from their team. They are skilled at adapting their style to complement others, shifting cultural perspective in authentic ways.

- **Skilled in building a diverse talent pipeline in an organisation** – they understand their own role and responsibilities in seeking out and supporting the development of the best talent from a range of backgrounds and play an active part in this process. They are key to ensuring that the business has the range of diverse talent needed.

- **Innovative** – they understand the value of small, incremental innovations that can improve quality, productivity, customer satisfaction and save costs; as well as larger innovations which can help lead to new products & markets. They are skilled at creating a working environment that fosters innovation – where employees feel safe, valued and empowered to innovate.

Expanding on the qualities, our research has found 24 characteristics – knowledge, skills, behaviours and actions that define a great inclusive leader, as summarised in the table opposite.

Where we are now – pioneer leaders

Inclusive leaders are vital in building engagement, improving employee performance and developing a diverse leadership equipped to meet the business challenges of the decade.

Despite their importance, inclusive leaders are not yet widespread in organisations. This is because many organisations have not yet taken the formal actions required to develop inclusive leadership.

The inclusive leaders that do exist within organisations today are pioneers. They have forged their own path, developing an understanding of the importance of leveraging the benefits of diversity, and understanding how to do it. They have developed these capabilities through osmosis, not design. The inclusive leaders we spoke to developed their skills through personal and organisational experience, and sometimes through being supported by organisational systems and processes that reinforced the value of inclusion.

How widespread is inclusive leadership?

66% of our survey respondents reported that, in their experience, less than half of the managers and leaders in their organisation are great inclusive leaders. Those inclusive leaders that do exist do not yet have the skills needed to make the most of their diverse workforce. Whilst the inclusive leaders described by survey respondents had many general people focused skills and behaviours, such as being approachable, trustworthy, honest and encouraging innovation, fewer had the skills and behaviours most relevant to diversity. Challenging non-inclusive behaviour in others, being aware of and able to minimise their own stereotypes or assumptions or understanding how diversity can add value to the team or business – all of these were more rare. There is a long way to go if truly inclusive leaders are to move from pioneers to the mainstream.

⁵ The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women's Representation on Boards (2004-2008), Nancy Carter and Harvey Wagner, March 2011; A Business Case for Women, McKinsey 2010

24 Characteristics of great inclusive leaders

Knowledge & Skills	Behaviours	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating diverse teams • Flexing your style to match others • Providing tailored coaching and mentoring • Creating two-way communications across boundaries • Cognisant of your own assumptions and stereotypes & skilled at minimising their impact • Skilled at leveraging the personal motivators and drivers of others to maximise performance • Role modeling inclusive leadership • Building safe environments that empowers creativity, innovation & problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being trusting of others, trustworthy and honest • Being approachable • Demonstrating a genuine interest in and respect of differences in others • Being open about your own strengths and weaknesses • Being non-hierarchical • Supporting others in reaching their career goals • Being authentic & consistent • Being resilient in constructively challenging behaviours & processes that do not support inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know people in your team personally • Helping people in your team understand the bigger organisational picture • Seeking out, coaching and mentoring high potential diverse talent • Helping others in your team to recognise and focus on their strengths • Providing sponsorship to others • Influencing others on the business impact of inclusion and diversity • Asking for feedback on the impact of your behaviour, style and approach • Focusing on work output and quality & promoting flexibility in work organisation

Closing the inclusive leadership gap

It is clear that if we continue to rely on the “viral” spread of inclusive leadership alone, we will not develop the volume of inclusive leaders required to meet future business challenges. Our research has found the three actions that our survey respondents believed would have the greatest impact in creating more inclusive leaders were:

- Create more role models at all levels of the organisation with inclusive competence to encourage others to emulate them
- Build more opportunities within development programmes for managers and leaders to build inclusive behaviours and skills
- Make it essential to demonstrate inclusive skills and behaviours when recruiting and promoting leaders.

How to mainstream inclusive leadership

From pioneer to mainstream

The shift that will move inclusive leaders from rare pioneers to the mainstream requires a whole system approach. It requires inclusion to be positioned centre stage on the leadership agenda and not approached as an issue that is additional or parallel to the core leadership development strategy.

The move from pioneer to mainstream needs organisations to consider the extent to which the skills, knowledge, behaviours and actions of inclusive leadership are reflected in their leadership framework, leadership development programmes and talent management and reward strategies. Inclusive leadership should be central to the recruitment, retention and development of leaders and managers.

We recommend organisations follow our framework that will enable them to:

- Identify their current inclusive leadership capabilities
- Move inclusive leaders from pioneers to mainstream
- Assess the effectiveness of their inclusive leadership capabilities in helping to address core business challenges

Different organisations will have different starting points as they begin this work – our five step model can be flexible, and is not intended to be prescriptive.

Five step framework for mainstreaming inclusion as a core leadership capability



Step 1: Build a sponsorship and change agent group

To achieve whole system change, all key change agents need to be involved. This helps to gain widespread buy-in for a change right from the start and spread responsibility and accountability for achieving positive results across key players.

The change agents that are key to involve in mainstreaming inclusive leadership will vary between organisations, but are likely to include:

- Senior leaders and decision makers
- Known inclusive leaders
- Talent management / Leadership development practitioners, HR practitioners responsible for recruitment, promotion and reward processes
- Emerging leaders from groups who are currently under-represented in leadership
- Inclusion & Diversity practitioners

Step 2: Define the strategic imperative for inclusive leadership

Clear organisational commitment and a well understood business case are vital if your work on inclusive leadership is to be successful. Define where inclusive leadership fits within your organisational goals, and how it will help deliver corporate priorities.

Once defined, it is important that the rationale for developing and mainstreaming inclusive leadership is communicated across the organisation and in particular with those who will be involved with the change taking place.

Step 3: Identify your organisation's inclusive leadership gap

This research found that inclusive leadership is not yet widespread across organisations and that even good inclusive leaders often have further development needs particularly in relation to specific diversity issues. Your strategic imperative will inform where you particularly need to develop great inclusive leaders.

Identifying your inclusive leadership gap: Self-assessment questions

We have developed ten questions that every leader in your organisation can ask themselves. If they cannot answer the questions or answer no to three or more of the questions, it is likely that they would benefit from developing their inclusive leadership capabilities. The collective score of your leaders to these questions will also help to establish your base-line inclusive leadership capability.

10 inclusive leadership self-assessment questions

1. Do you sponsor someone with high potential who is from a group currently under-represented in leadership to support them in realising their career aspirations?

2. Do you ask those you manage or lead for feedback on the impact of your style and approach in supporting them to perform well and/or progress their careers?
3. Do you know the different values and drivers that motivate those you manage or lead and do you leverage these to help improve performance?
4. Do you challenge others if their behaviour or actions do not support inclusion and diversity?
5. Are you aware of the stereotypes, assumptions and judgements you make about different groups (unconscious bias) and what you can do to minimise the potential negative impact of these?
6. Do you involve and encourage those you manage or lead to identify problems early on, come up with solutions and improvement ideas?
7. Does your team reflect diversity in its demographic make-up, background and perspectives and do you leverage this to avoid group-think?
8. Are you clear how inclusion and diversity can help you meet your own and the wider organisation's business goals?
9. Do you help those you manage or lead understand the bigger organisational and strategic picture and their role within this?
10. Do you mentor others, including women and people from minority backgrounds and check that your approach meets their specific needs?

Step 4: Equip leaders to become great inclusive leaders

There are four aspects to consider when equipping leaders to become great inclusive leaders and to ensure that inclusive leadership runs through the DNA of your organisational processes.

In order for inclusive leadership capabilities to become embedded in your organisation and for this to be sustainable, it is important to **check, challenge** and where needed, **change** elements in each of the above four areas associated with leadership development.

Step 5: Assess the outcomes of mainstreaming inclusive leadership

It is important that the progress of the organisation's work on building inclusive leadership is regularly measured and monitored. In the experience of Opportunity Now, senior buy in and accountability is crucial to achieving real and sustainable change.

Step 4: Equip leaders to become great inclusive leaders



This new research into inclusive leadership started from the knowledge that making the most of a diverse workforce is not just the right thing to do, it is a commercial imperative.

Inclusive leaders bring clear benefits to organisations, though facilitating innovation, making the most of diverse talent and, through their own adaptability, getting the best results for their organisation. Inclusive leaders are leaders who are equipped to create a work environment where women and others can thrive, and where strong talent pipelines deliver diversity of representation at the top. An inclusive leader can be a line manager, a senior person in an organisation, a CEO, company chair, or a powerful role model whose impact is greater than their notional status.

Our research included a review of existing research, reports and articles, focus groups, interviews with senior leaders and a wide ranging survey. Based on this, we have set out what an inclusive leader actually is, giving companies the tools to assess what inclusive leaders they currently have, and therefore establish a base line for building more.

Throughout the report we use real quotes from real people to highlight the issues and impact of inclusive leadership.

This research shows that inclusive leaders are currently pioneer leaders, developing their skills and knowledge through experience and personal learning. It is more through osmosis, rather than by organisational design, that leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to make the most of a diverse workforce are currently being developed in British business. We need a step change – inclusive leadership can no longer be about rare pioneers. Rather it is a leadership style which should be actively mainstreamed through the breadth and depth of organisational cultures.

We have developed clear recommendations and actions for employers who want to make use of the business benefits of inclusive leadership. We are calling on employers to build inclusion into the mainstream processes they use to develop their leaders of the future. This is an issue for a whole company, not a minority diversity initiative. We hope that our recommendations will be taken up by all those employers who are committed to making the most of the talent, skills, potential for innovation and creativity of all of their people.

Throughout the report we use real quotes from real people to highlight the issues and impact of inclusive leadership.

Inclusive leadership – why does it matter?

People as the route to growth and success

The business landscape is changing rapidly. In “Leadership for Change, Aligning Organisations for the Future⁶” we set out that context. With the development of the knowledge economy seeing flatter, less hierarchical structures in organisations, the need for increased agility to respond to emerging markets and the cultural changes inspired by social media and new ways of networking, organisations are developing new forms of leadership. These challenges, added to the slow growth and austerity in public spending that are the continuing consequences of the economic crisis require an innovative business response. Organisations across the private, public and third sectors require leaders that can foster innovation, understand local customers and work in partnership across boundaries. This demands an approach to leadership that is people focused and based on inclusion, engagement and collaboration.

Many businesses already recognise that investment in inclusion delivers a marked improvement on the bottom line, partly through enhanced employee engagement which delivers profit. We know that where people are treated fairly at work they are more engaged, and more productive.

Inclusive leaders increase employee engagement

The UK is lagging behind other countries in achieving employee engagement, placed 11 in terms of overall employee engagement out of 17 countries. This was behind India at the top and the US in 6th place⁷. We know that engagement and collaboration are vital – many businesses are struggling to attain and retain the levels of talent that they need. Successful engagement strategies take account of an individual’s identity⁸.

Our research demonstrates that inclusive leaders make a real difference in performance and engagement.

In our survey, over 80% of employees who had experienced an inclusive leader reported that this leader successfully increased their motivation, loyalty and performance and made them more likely to go the extra mile (Table 1):

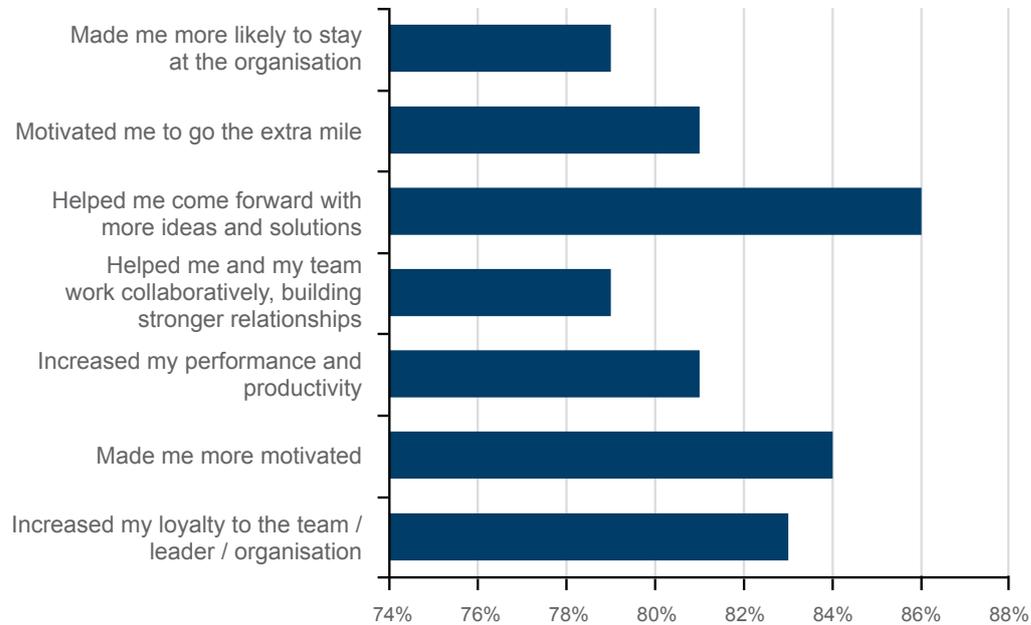
- 84% of respondents reported that an inclusive leader made them feel more motivated
- 83% of respondents reported that an inclusive leader increased their loyalty to their team, leader and organisation
- 81% reported that an inclusive leader improved their performance and productivity
- 81% of respondents reported that an inclusive leader motivated them to go the extra mile above and beyond their day-to-day role.

6 Leadership for Change: Aligning organisations for the future, Norma Jarboe, Opportunity Now, 2009;

7 ORC International, 2010.

8 Engagement, The Continuing Story. Robinson D, Hooker H, Hayday S, Institute for Employment Studies, 2007

Table 1: Improvements achieved by employees as a result of inclusive leadership



The improvements delivered through inclusive leadership are reported to be achieved for both women and men and for employees from a range of different groups. (see Table 2) For example:

- Inclusive leadership made 76% of BAME employees, 77% of male employees, 83% of female employees, 84% of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees, and 86% of disabled employees motivated to go the extra mile
- Inclusive leadership improved the productivity of 76% of BAME employees, 79% of male employees, 80% of lesbian, gay and bisexual employees, 83% of female employees and 86% of disabled employees.

'I was more motivated – I didn't mind working longer and harder in the office. She shared information and helped me raise my profile – to build me up – it improved the quality of my work. I had all the necessary information – not on a need to know basis.' (female)

*'He made me feel committed, accountable and motivated – I didn't feel I **had** to perform – I **wanted** to.'* (male)

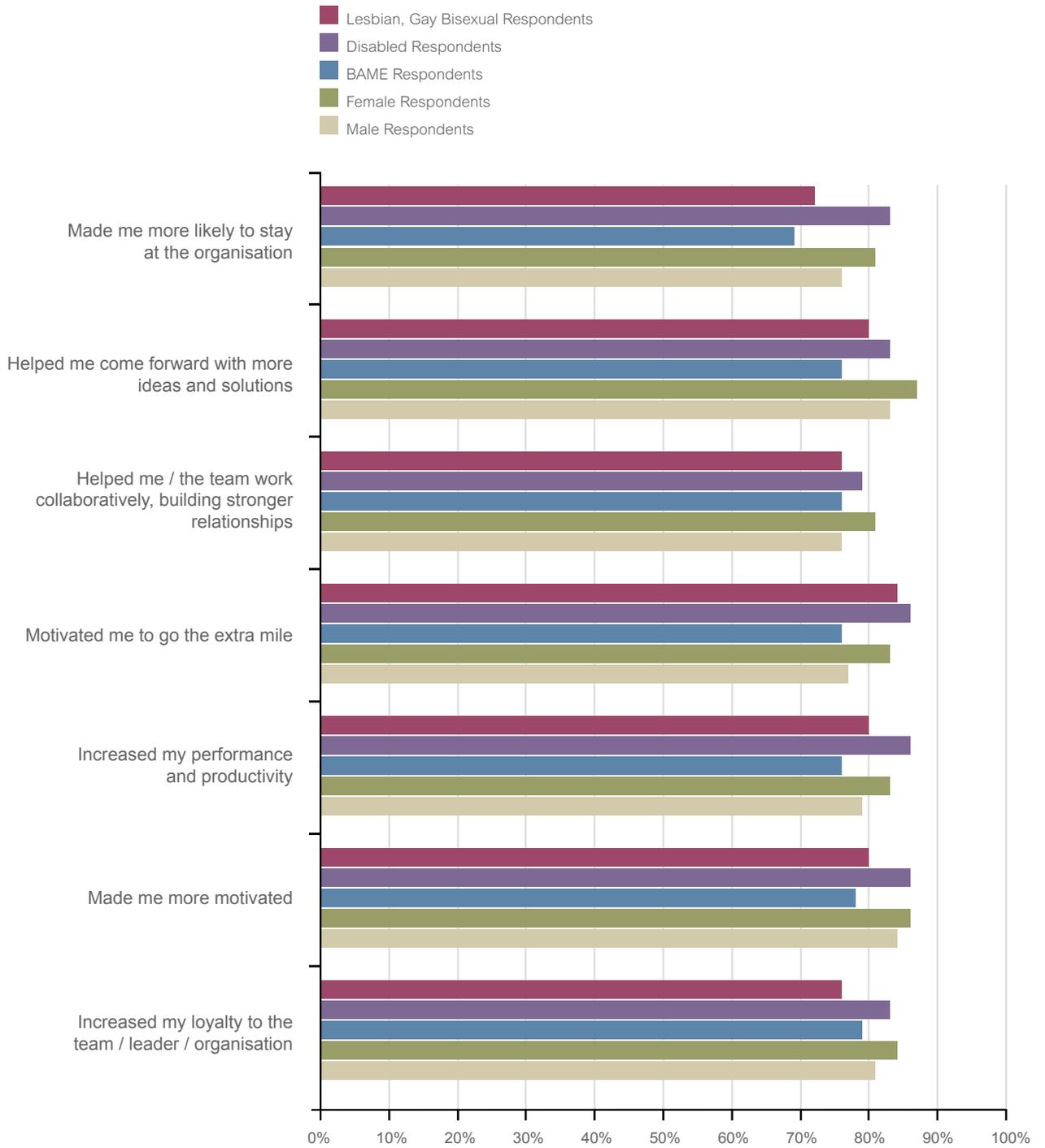
'As a team we became very high performing – our results were good. He galvanised a team of very different people – different working styles, different nationalities.' (female)

'Everyone was engaged, present – there was true collaboration – a buzz, excitement. We felt positively involved in what we were doing. It wasn't an easy time – there were redundancies – but we felt very positive about the organisation. We had an energy we wouldn't normally have. It felt great to get up in the morning. It broke down barriers, helped us build better relationships with senior managers outside the team. We had more influence. We knew where we were going as a team. He allowed people to voice opinions – it wasn't always easy – but he allowed us to raise problems and work our way through them.' (female)

Our research therefore shows the positive impact of leaders with the skills and behaviours to manage and lead inclusively on productivity, performance and engagement. At a time when the diversity of the labour market is increasing and more organisations are looking for growth opportunities in emerging markets, such skills and behaviours are critical.

However, it should also be noted that the extent to which a positive impact was reported by the survey respondents was not uniform across the diverse groups. Whilst inclusive leaders are already making a positive impact on performance in organisations amongst some groups of diverse employees, more needs to be done if the full potential of a workforce is to be realised.

Table 2: Impact of inclusive leadership on the motivation and performance of diverse employees

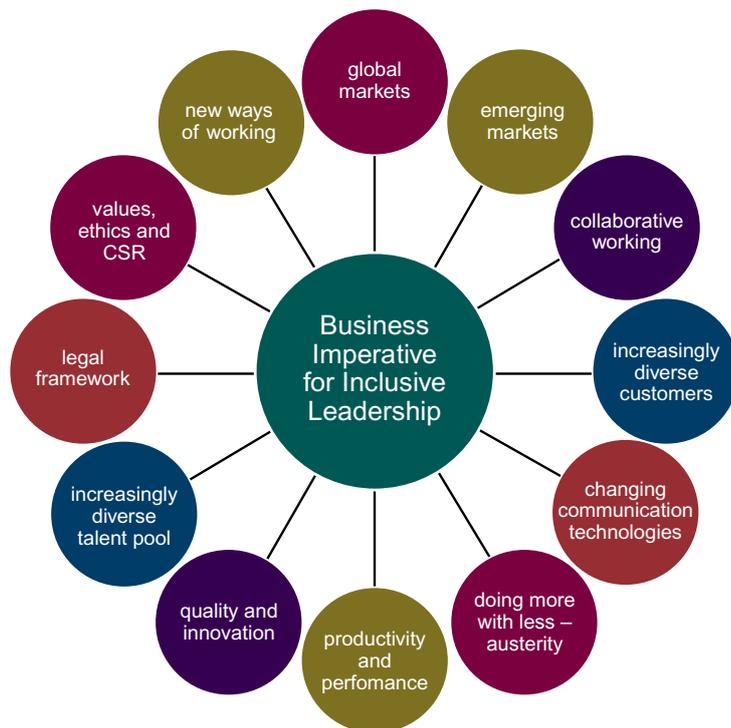


Inclusion – addressing the leadership issues of the decade

Inclusion is a concept that has currency not only within the equality and diversity field but also in mainstream leadership thinking. Twenty-first century challenges – economic downturn, fast changing global and emerging markets, closer collaboration between public and private sectors all demonstrate the need for a leadership approach that

is engaging, facilitative and inspiring. Diversity of thought coming from diversity of background and experience is increasingly heralded as critical to meeting current and future workplace challenges. A leadership that can make the most of this diversity is needed. The diagram below sets out a number of contemporary business challenges which inclusive leadership can help organisations to address. In this section we will expand on those most relevant to Opportunity Now.

The business imperative for inclusive leadership



Demographic change

- 56.6% of first degrees are obtained by women
- 46.7% of the UK labour force is female⁹
- 12.8 million of the working age population are parents with dependent children¹⁰
- 6% of first class honour degrees are gained by students known to have a disability¹¹
- It is estimated that 1.7 million of the UK workforce is lesbian, gay or bisexual¹²
- More than 10% of the UK workforce is from an ethnic minority background and over 20% of the emerging workforce (children in primary and secondary education are from an ethnic minority background)¹³

Despite the increasing diversity of the workforce overall, women and BAME people continue to be under-represented in leadership and key decision-making roles:

- Only 12.5% of FTSE 100 directorships are held by women – an increase of less than 1% since 2008¹⁴
- In the public sector women now hold 33.3% of public appointments
- Only 6.8% of all management positions are held by BAME people
- Public administration, education and health account for almost 80% of all ethnic minority workers in management positions¹⁵

Diverse leadership is good for business

There is clear evidence that diversity in decision making is good for business¹⁶.

Research by Eversheds LLP of the 250 top companies in Europe, the US and Asia Pacific shows that companies with more female directors performed better during the financial crisis¹⁷.

As companies rely more on emerging markets for growth and the diversity of UK customers increases, pressures to consider how greater diversity in management and leadership can be achieved to reflect that in the wider workforce and customer base also gains currency.

Breaking Barriers

Opportunity Now's recent research: "What Holds Women Back? Women and Men's Perceptions of the Barriers to Women's Progression" presents a depressingly familiar set of barriers. BAME women are significantly more likely to recognise almost all of the barriers to women's progression – facing a double glazed glass ceiling¹⁸.

Amongst the top ten barriers cited by women, several specifically relate to the **behaviours** they experience from colleagues, managers and leaders that exclude them from being able to fully realise their potential:

- Women being seen as less committed to work because they often have family commitments
- Stereotyping and preconceptions of women's roles and abilities
- Stereotyping and preconceptions of women's aspirations for promotion
- Lack of mentoring
- Women are not given the same opportunities as men to work in high risk/high reward areas
- Women are excluded from informal networks of communication and influence
- Failure of line managers to see women's advancement as their responsibility

The importance of behaviours and cultures which encourage and enable women and BAME employees to reach their potential in the workplace is not new. Yet these barriers persist. What then can inclusion in leadership offer in creating a more collaborative and engaged organisation with a diverse leadership?

9 Office National Statistics, Labour Force Survey, 2010.

10 Office National Statistics, Social Trends, 2007.

11 Employers Forum on Disability, 2010, www.efd.org.uk

12 Stonewall, 2010.

13 Race for Opportunity, 2010.

14 The Female FTSE Board Report 2010 [Report] / auth. Vinnecombe, Sealy and Dolor Graham and. - [s.l.] : Cranfield University School of Management, 2010.

Our research shows that not only are inclusive leaders succeeding in increasing the motivation, engagement and performance of all employees but that they are also making a positive impact in addressing the barriers many women and BAME employees experience in realising their potential, including:

- Making them feel more valued
- Increasing their self-confidence and self-belief
- Enabling them to be authentic in the way they operate at work
- Creating career promoting opportunities

'Before this happened and he gave me this support I felt I wasn't being recognised for what I'm contributing to the firm. I'm not an outgoing person – I don't go to people and I often get overlooked. I'm too shy to promote myself. The best months of the year have been the last two months since his sponsorship because I feel valued and more motivated. I got called in to two top guys – before I was always overlooked – they'd never spoken to me before. He knew about all the stuff I'd been doing – my sponsor had filled them in.' (female)

'In the long term, he (the inclusive leader) helped me realise what I was good at and focus on my strengths.' (female)

'My boss really challenged me on my career plans. We discussed what happens if I want to start a family – I was always taught not to bring it up... We talked openly about them and how I could fit my personal life with my career aspirations. He taught me to ask for what I want – increased my self-belief and my confidence. The family thing came up because I was being asked about overseas assignments and I was giving bland responses and avoiding things. He said ' I want to support you – I understand it's important.' He didn't dismiss me – he encouraged me. I'm now openly gay with my managers – it's taken time – I'm trying to be more so. People know you're hiding something – it's easier to be out.' (female)

15 Race for Opportunity, 2009

16 The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women's Representation on Boards (2004-2008), Nancy Carter and Harvey Wagner, March 2011; A Business Case for Women, McKinsey - https://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/A_business_case_for_women_2192

17 The Eversheds Board Report, March 2011.

18 What Holds Women Back? Women and men's perceptions of the barriers to women's progression, Opportunity Now, 2010

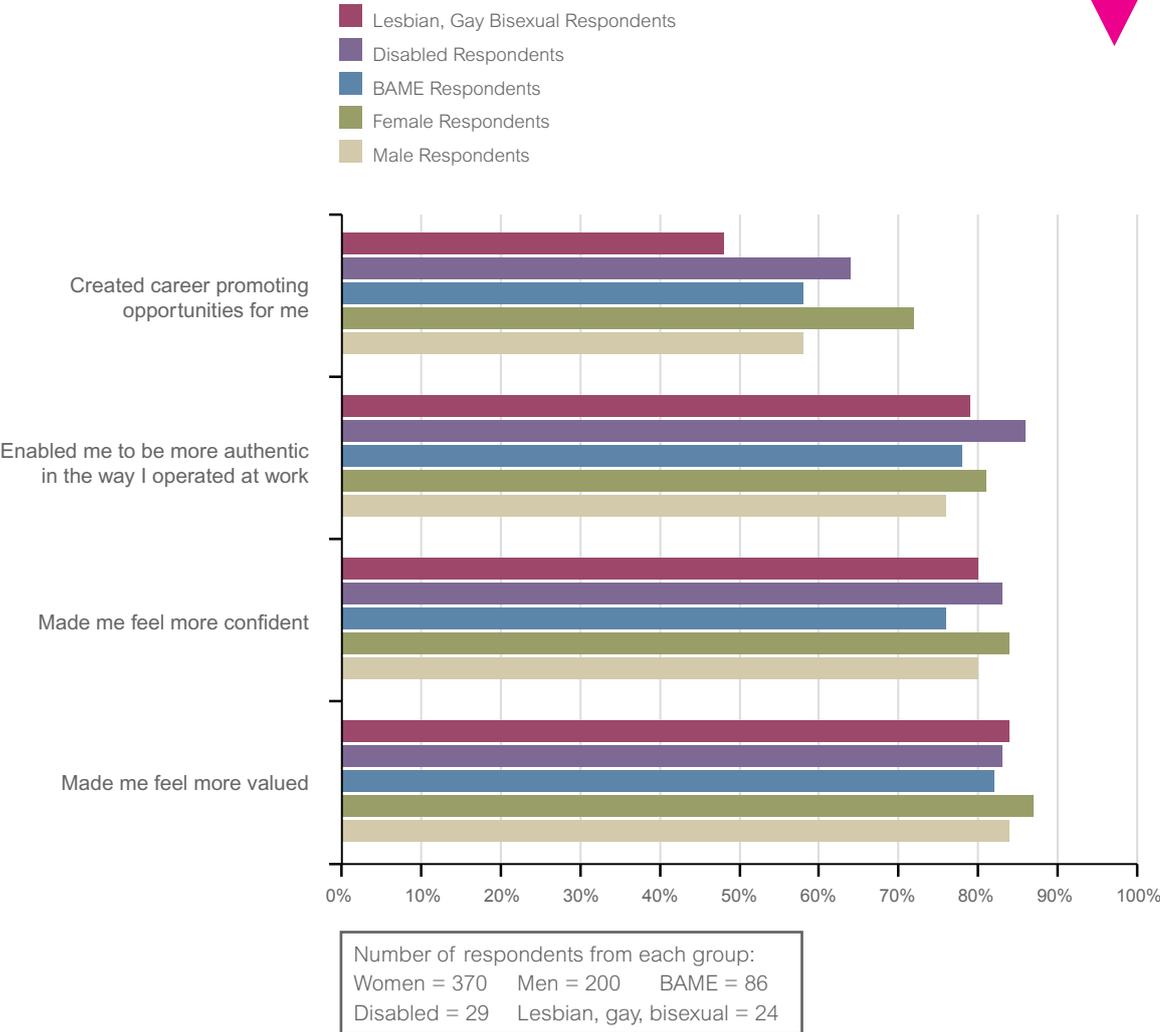
The impact that inclusive leadership has on women and minority groups in terms of confidence, feeling more valued and enabling them to be more authentic at work is illustrated in Table 3. It shows that inclusive leadership can make a positive impact in making employees feel more valued – a critical foundation for achieving engagement:

- 80% or more of all employees report that their inclusive leader made them feel more valued.

Table 3 also shows that women currently benefit the most from inclusive leaders in terms of creating opportunities: 72% of women report that their inclusive leader created career promoting opportunities for them compared to only 48% of lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents, 58% of BAME and 58% of male respondents and 64% of disabled respondents who reported this.

'When I joined, I'd been here only 8 weeks – my manager moved on. He (the inclusive leader) offered me the job – it was a big promotion. He was honest, open, happy to face issues – it's what women like – say what you think. You know where you stood. My hesitation was that I worked Fridays from home – I didn't want to give it up – when I finished at 5pm I was home. He said – don't be ridiculous – you can carry on doing that – take the job – we know you work really hard. If I hadn't had that honest open relationship I might have said no.' (female)

Table 3: Impact of inclusive leadership in developing diverse talent



What is a great inclusive leader?

Often managers and leaders will state their commitment to inclusion, diversity, engagement and innovation – but ask – what do you want me to do that is different?

This research asked employees to describe the actions, behaviours and skills of leaders that were, to them, important in defining great inclusive leaders.

We have found three core qualities:

- **Adaptable** – they are highly aware of diversity amongst the people they work with and manage. They regard this as a strength and opportunity but are also aware that different people have different drivers, needs and aspirations. They build strong relationships in order to understand these and respond to them by flexing their own style. They are capable of shifting cultural perspective and changing behaviour in culturally appropriate and authentic ways. They are comfortable with using different and flexible approaches to work organisation to get the best results and the most from their team.

- **Skilled in building a diverse talent pipeline in an organisation** – they understand their own role and responsibilities in seeking out and supporting the development of the best talent from a range of backgrounds and play an active part in this process. They are aware of how diverse talent can add value to their own team and the whole organisation and are skilled in identifying and providing practical support and sponsorship tailored to the individual's needs. They are key to ensuring that the business has the range of diverse talent needed.

- **Innovative** – they understand the value of small, incremental innovations that can improve quality, productivity, customer satisfaction and save costs; as well as larger innovations which can help lead to new products & markets. They are skilled at creating a working environment that fosters innovation – where employees feel safe, valued and empowered to innovate. They recognise the different approaches and factors that motivate diverse employees to go the extra mile.

We expand on these three core qualities, to describe 24 characteristics including the knowledge, skills, behaviours and actions required to create an inclusive work environment that helps to deliver engagement, performance and a diverse leadership.

Knowledge and skills of a great inclusive leader

The top 8 knowledge and skills that define great inclusive leaders are:

1. Understanding how a diverse team can add value to your business and being skilled in creating diverse teams that complement your own strengths and weaknesses
2. Understanding your impact on others and being able to flex your style to complement others

3. Coaching and mentoring others in a way which meets their specific and potentially different needs
4. Being skilled at forming effective two-way communications that can span hierarchical, geographical and other boundaries
5. Being cognisant of your own assumptions and stereotypes about others, particularly those who are different from you and from minority groups and being skilled at minimising the impact of these in your leadership role
6. Understanding the specific background and experiences of others (particularly those who are different from you or from minority groups), their motivators and drivers, strengths and weaknesses, & being skilled in leveraging those to maximise performance
7. Understanding your responsibilities as a role model of inclusive leadership being skilled in using this to build an inclusive, engaged and collaborative workplace
8. Creating a safe environment where individuals, whether from a majority or minority group are empowered to come forward with ideas, innovations and solutions

'My whole team don't fit the mould. When I built the team – what I inherited was very male dominated – so I set out to look for different people. I targeted non-Russell group universities that had good reputations for subjects I needed. I put the CVs aside in the interviews and encouraged them to talk so I could find out about them – if they had the right skill set to be developed. For example, one woman had a stunning CV but she couldn't interview for toffee. She'd had amazing experience with a previous company. She was gifted but just couldn't interview. I just gave her the job. She didn't fit the HR camp – I bypassed that – she would have failed their tests. I was right. She became an assistant manager within a year and then on to senior manager. Another member of my team is from Malaysia. Their English and comms aren't great – so we need to support them – but their work is first class. I was invited to their child's christening. I know how important family life is for them – it meant a lot to them that we went – we were treated like royalty. I focus on what we need for the team – I don't follow rules. It's not always the person with the best CV or who has been to the best University – often they don't stay long. I've turned this male dominated geeky team into a more balanced highly effective team of men and women with different skills.' (male inclusive leader)

'Taking the time to get to know someone – to understand their drivers, be genuinely interested in why they think that way. Then you can tap in to the insight and ability people have. So you can coach and influence them rather than make assumptions about them.' (male inclusive leader)

'I've nurtured her for ten years, taken her out of her comfort zones – taken big steps at times. She's fantastically good at her job – just understated – the last person to promote herself. I was keen to develop her – make the most of her. She needs a bit more of a push than many guys to put her in the front line. She needs a sponsor – I do that to help publicise her to other leaders – who've now joined the fan club.' (male inclusive leader)

Behaviours of a great inclusive leader

The top 8 behaviours that are characteristic of great inclusive leaders are:

1. Being trusting of others, trustworthy and honest
2. Being approachable
3. Demonstrating a genuine interest in and respect of differences in other people, avoiding stereotypes or judgements
4. Being open about your own strengths and weaknesses
5. Being non-hierarchical – not letting hierarchy get in the way of forming an inclusive relationship, whilst maintaining good leadership
6. Being constructive and supportive to others enabling them to improve their impact and performance and in reaching their career goals. Understanding how career aspirations fit within the context of their (sometimes changing) personal lives
7. Being authentic in your leadership style and behaviours – avoiding saying one thing but doing another
8. Being resilient in constructively challenging behaviours and actions in others and organisational systems and processes that do not support inclusion

'My leader was different – not public school or degree – not perfect – open in what she needed from me, comfortable in her own skin. She was curious about me as an individual – genuinely interested in me – very approachable. I felt relaxed with her. As she progressed she was a role model to me – I realised I can be myself. She taught me to be comfortable in my own skin – keep it simple. I wasn't scared of sharing my weaknesses and concerns with her – I trusted her. Other managers I wouldn't always do that – I wouldn't trust that they would not use it against me. She also recognised her weaknesses and we worked as a team. I became so loyal to her – I went in even if I was sick – I was fearless – I knew she had my back if things went wrong. I could try things out. I was myself – open – it made for a great relationship.' (female)

'My son got leukaemia – I was a single mum. She (inclusive leader) was amazing – she made me feel I could carry on. She was very flexible – didn't put pressure on me. I pay it back now. It didn't impact negatively on my career goals. I'd only been in the role six months – I had to build up relationships. She just said – it won't have a negative impact on you – she still encouraged me to think about where I wanted to go with my career when it was going on. She reassured me there was no pressure – no one was taking my job. She could see beyond it.' (female)

'He created space and time for everyone in the team, made you feel important. He was very honest with you – wouldn't duck a question. It was about you and what you could do for him – he was a great coach. We'd discuss work stuff, then he'd say – enough of that – how are you and your career? I said I'm at a cross roads. He offered me help to map things – spent an hour with me. He made me feel I want to work for the organisation – that he'd give me that time. He wasn't judgemental about what I wanted to do – he was just there for me. There was no sense of – I'm the boss – he provided direction and strategy – but he really listened to us.' (female)

Actions of a great inclusive leader

The top 8 actions that typify great inclusive leaders are:

1. Getting to know people in your team personally (e.g. their background, experiences, individual needs, values and aspirations), remembering what they have told you about themselves and helping them to get to know you and understand your background and motivations
2. Helping people in your team understand the bigger organisational, business and strategic picture
3. Seeking out, coaching and mentoring high potential diverse talent
4. Helping others in your team to recognise and focus on their strengths
5. Providing sponsorship to others – particularly those that typically do not progress within the organisation – helping them to raise their profile (e.g. through visible projects or providing opportunities to stretch and develop their skills); highlighting the success of others to senior peers
6. Influencing others on the importance of inclusion and diversity for the business and challenging behaviours and processes when they obstruct making progress on inclusion and diversity
7. Asking for feedback on the impact of your behaviour, style and approach, particularly from those whose background and style are different from your own
8. Focusing on work output and quality rather than when and where it gets done to enable greater flexibility in work organisation

'We were at a conference in the US. I noticed her standing alone and went to talk to her. She said she didn't know many people – was stuck out in a small business location. She was from Australia – I started a friendly conversation about cricket. She asked if she could contact me as she was about to do some work at my location and wanted help with working out who was who. She nervously called me – she was a junior. I started to realise that she had a lot more to offer the business, she was ambitious. I started coaching her. She was very understated, not a lot of presence, very softly spoken. I gave her feedback and support in presenting and projecting herself – nobody had helped her with that before. She wanted help in advancing her career. 4 years later she holds a senior position – I still mentor her now. It was motivating and fulfilling for me and I know she values the relationship – it's safe.'
(male inclusive leader)

'She had a big team but got to know each one of us individually and our different approaches. I like to think things through to reach a conclusion. She knew what to do to motivate me and challenge me. She shared information with me. I wanted to know the big picture – other managers hide it – knowledge is power. It helped me to manage my stakeholders better – to do a better job.' (female)

'We run a CEO programme. I hired a young PhD – very clever woman and let her run the whole programme – rather than me. Someone said at the end of it that I should have run it as I was more senior. But I wanted to bust the hierarchy in small and big ways and this is one example of how I influenced and challenged that. It would have been better for my profile to run it – but I wanted to give the visibility and opportunity to develop her career. It's important to share the platform with other people – even when it's not beneficial to me – put yourself on the line.' (female inclusive leader)

'I've worked with women, for women and have women in my team. I've coached and mentored a lot of women. There are institutional barriers for women – assumptions are made about them – what they won't want to do. That's not my decision – it's the woman's decision. I put forward a female Director to lead a big time intensive project. I could see colleagues questioning whether this was right – they wouldn't have questioned it if it were a man. I fight to make sure that women have the same chances as men in my team. I have to constantly message this to my peers. As a firm we like to make decisions for people rather than let them make them themselves. There are negative attitudes to the 4 day week – how can you have someone on a 4 day week managing an account – but they put in what's needed – and of course don't get rewarded for the extra they inevitably do. As the leader sometimes you have to learn to work differently – a lot of leaders don't get that – they want the team to be down the corridor.' (male inclusive leader)

Inclusion, not mirroring

We asked our survey respondents to think of a great inclusive leader. It was important to us to be sure that inclusion was a skill set, and not just “someone like me”. It is clear from the results that great inclusive leaders come from a range of backgrounds themselves and do not have to mirror the personal characteristics such as gender, race, age, sexual orientation or disability of the person they are leading:

- 52% of female respondents reported that their great inclusive leader was male
- 75% of BAME respondents reported that their great inclusive leader was from a different ethnic background to themselves
- 55% of disabled respondents reported that their great inclusive leader did not have a disability
- 85% of lesbian, gay and bisexual respondents reported that their great inclusive leader did not have the same sexual orientation as themselves

Characteristics of great inclusive leaders

The 24 characteristics – knowledge, skills, behaviours and actions that define a great inclusive leader are summarised in the table below.

Knowledge & Skills	Behaviours	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating diverse teams • Flexing your style to match others • Providing tailored coaching and mentoring • Creating two-way communications across boundaries • Cognisant of your own assumptions and stereotypes & skilled at minimising their impact • Skilled at leveraging the personal motivators and drivers of others to maximise performance • Role modeling inclusive leadership • Building safe environments that empowers creativity, innovation & problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being trusting of others, trustworthy and honest • Being approachable • Demonstrating a genuine interest in and respect of differences in others • Being open about your own strengths and weaknesses • Being non-hierarchical • Supporting others in reaching their career goals • Being authentic & consistent • Being resilient in constructively challenging behaviours & processes that do not support inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know people in your team personally • Helping people in your team understand the bigger organisational picture • Seeking out, coaching and mentoring high potential diverse talent • Helping others in your team to recognise and focus on their strengths • Providing sponsorship to others • Influencing others on the business impact of inclusion and diversity • Asking for feedback on the impact of your behaviour, style and approach • Focusing on work output and quality & promoting flexibility in work organisation

Where are we now – pioneer leaders

We have established that inclusive leaders are vital in building engagement, improving employee performance and developing a diverse leadership equipped to meet the business challenges of the decade. We have shown that inclusive leaders are particularly skilled at being adaptable and leveraging innovation and diverse talent to maximise organisational performance.

Despite their importance, inclusive leaders are not yet widespread in organisations. This is largely due to a failure of many organisations to take the formal actions required to develop inclusive leadership. Those inclusive leaders that exist – the pioneers – have developed more through osmosis than design. Our research shows that these pioneer inclusive leaders are forging out how their organisations can more effectively leverage the benefits of diversity. Without more formal action being taken by organisations to build and sustain inclusive leadership, we are unlikely to have enough inclusive leaders to meet future challenges.

The inclusive leadership gap

The in-depth interview asked each participant to think of and tell us about a leader that was, for them, a great inclusive leader. Each of the 68 participants could think of such a leader. However, many of them told us they could not think of more than one. This indication of inclusive leaders as a powerful but rare commodity in organisations today is borne out by the results of our survey with 600 employees:

- 66% of survey respondents report that, in their experience, less than half of the managers and leaders in their organisations are great inclusive leaders
- Only 5% of respondents report that three-quarters or more of leaders in their organisation are great inclusive leaders

My current manager I don't trust – he would use something against me, take credit for my work or if things go wrong - its my fault. If I say I'm nervous about something he won't support me – he'll give the work to someone else. He thinks he's an inclusive leader but he's completely un-self aware. He says he's in it for the team but he isn't. He has meetings to take feedback from us but nothing ever happens – he doesn't use it. (female)

'Those inclusive leadership skills are rare here. We're quite hierarchical. There are leaders who say the words but their actions don't match up' (female)

This research also indicates that many of the inclusive leaders present within organisations still have development needs in becoming great inclusive leaders. More survey respondents reported that the inclusive leaders they had experienced were highly effective in demonstrating many of the core general people focused skills and behaviours, such as being approachable, trustworthy, honest and encouraging innovation. Fewer reported that those leaders were highly skilled at the more diversity specific skills, behaviours and actions such as challenging non inclusive behaviour in others, being aware of and able to minimise their own stereotypes or assumptions or understanding how diversity can add value to the team or the business.

Less than half the survey respondents reported that inclusive leaders they had experienced were very effective in demonstrating the 8 elements of inclusive leadership that most specifically relate to diversity. (Table 4). Notably:

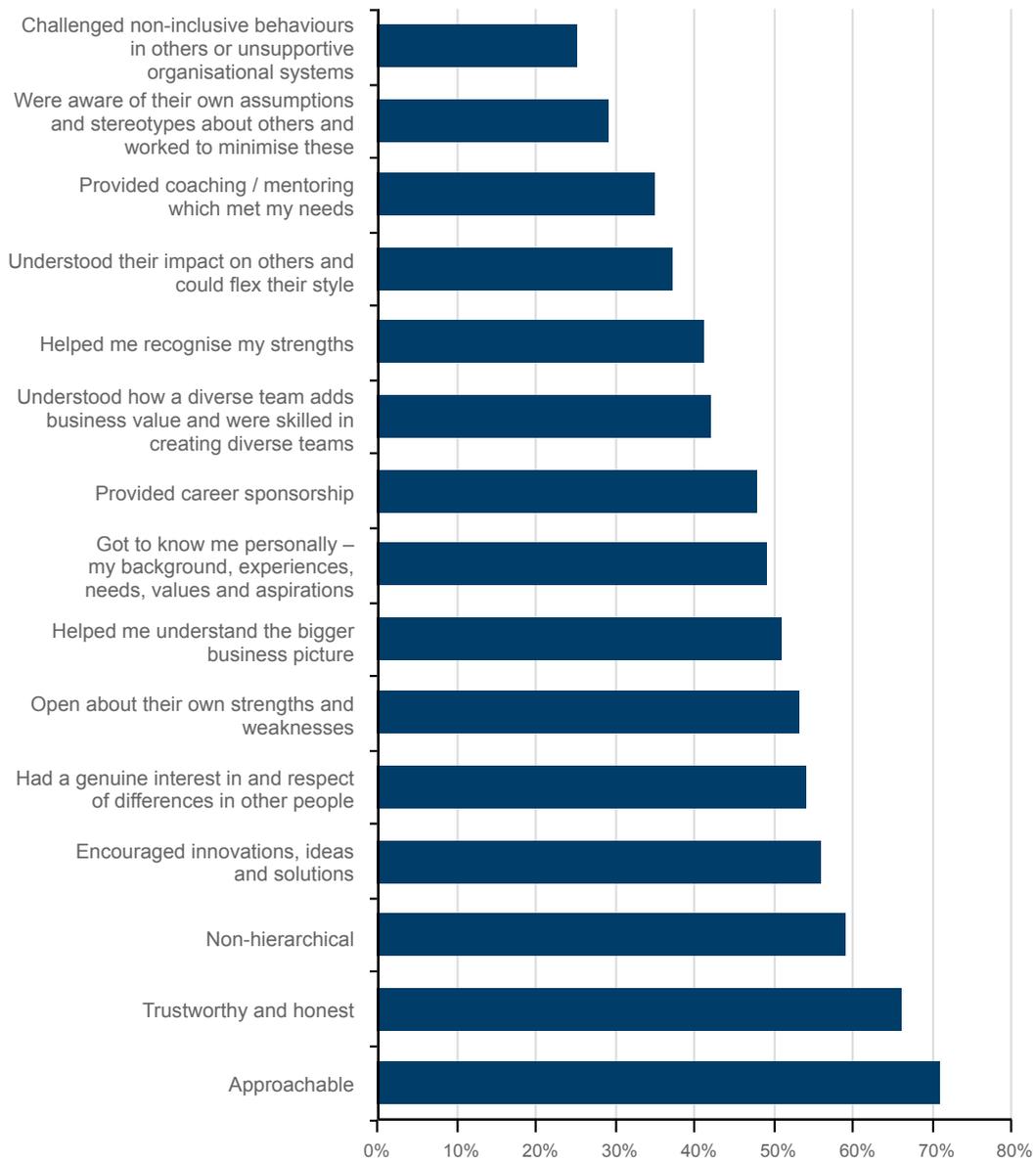
- Only 29% of respondents agreed that their inclusive leader was highly effective in providing coaching and mentoring that met their individual needs
- Only 37% of respondents said that their inclusive leader was highly effective in understanding their impact on others and skilled in flexing their style to match others

- Only 25% of respondents agreed that their inclusive leader was highly effective in challenging non-inclusive behaviours in others or unsupportive organisational systems

- Only 29% of respondents said that their inclusive leader was very effective in being aware of their own assumptions and stereotypes about others and skilled in minimising these

Even the strongest inclusive leaders our survey respondents were able to think of were falling down at challenging non inclusive behaviours and minimising the impact of their own assumptions and stereotypes. The leaders our respondents were describing had some great qualities, but still had development needs around equalities. There is a long way to go if inclusive leaders are to move from being pioneers to the mainstream.

Table 4: The extent to which our survey respondents had experienced characteristics of inclusive leadership



Inclusive leadership – by osmosis not design

We spoke to 17 leaders that were put forward by their organisations as good examples of inclusive leaders. Not one of these leaders described how they had developed their inclusive leadership strengths through a formal development programme. Their strengths had developed over time through a mix of personal and organisational experiences. These pioneer leaders chose to build inclusion into their

leadership approach because they had experienced the value inclusive leadership brought to the business in developing highly effective teams that were engaged, productive, motivated and high performing.

The research has found two key ways in which these pioneer inclusive leaders are currently developing their skills and behaviours:

- Learning from others – viral spread
- Learning from personal and organisational experiences

'We can't be successful if we're not inclusive. Our shareholder value is driven by collaboration with other countries and companies. If we are there with a UK or company perspective we'll get a suboptimal solution – it has to be collaborative – inclusive. If we are only trained in a UK centric perspective, it's disastrous in an international environment.' (male inclusive leader)

'Why is leadership important in inclusion and diversity? Because it's consistent with a total performance culture. Culture change has to be driven through leadership behaviour. We need a cadre of leaders to take the challenge on. We can't do D&I separately – it has to be part of the core leadership agenda.' (male inclusive leader)

'Clients are diverse – so without diversity we wouldn't connect so well with our clients. I can think of some clients – if they had to deal with a white 50 year old Oxbridge man we wouldn't have got to the first meeting let alone get the work. It's about matching interests.' (male inclusive leader)

'If you give people belief, encouragement and a chance – there's no limit to their performance!' (female inclusive leader)

Learning from others – viral spread

The in-depth interviews described how inclusive leadership could be spread like a positive virus – through experiencing it, learning from that experience and replicating it with others. Inclusive leaders described how they had worked for an inclusive leader and experienced first hand its impact on their own performance

and career development. This experience had motivated them to develop an inclusive leadership approach with their own team.

The survey responses reinforced the interview findings:

- 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that working with or for an inclusive leader helped them to replicate their behaviours, actions and skills.

'When you've had that good experience you mirror the behaviour in how you work with others and manage others. It raises expectations of good management.' (male)

'Taking the time to get to know someone – to understand their drivers, be genuinely interested in why they think that way. Then you can tap in to the insight and ability people have. So you can coach and influence them rather than make assumptions about them.' (male inclusive leader)

'I want to be like that (the inclusive leader) for someone else.' (female)

Learning from personal and organisational experiences

Being different – perhaps a minority in a majority environment, working flexibly or having worked with people who are different from yourself – in a work, community or voluntary capacity are all experiences that

were reported in the in-depth interviews to be highly effective in helping to develop inclusive leadership. These experiences were effective in helping to build insight on diversity, enabling individuals to be aware of, interested in and consider the implications of the different needs and perspectives of others.

'He'd worked at a senior level – and had a nervous breakdown. Someone had helped him get through it. It changed his perspective and style of leadership.'
(female)

'Being different myself I've learnt to be more aware about what makes other people uncomfortable.'
(male inclusive leader)

'I work flexibly – I move around a lot – including one day a week at home if possible. So I know it doesn't matter where you are to do a good job for the team and client. I have two young children – I work from 7-3 – see my kids 3-5 and then work 5-7. I value that flexibility in my life – so if others want flexibility we should make it happen and believe in it. Also, I hate commuting – and want to see my children. Other leaders who are uncomfortable with flexible working – I challenge them and tell them that you do more and better quality work from home.' (male inclusive leader)

'I come from a working class background I knew deep down I had the ability – but no-one had put themselves out for me before. It influences how I am now.' (female inclusive leader)

'As women we know we can have a negative voice in our heads – so I know it's important to tell women in particular how good they've been – give them feedback. It's important to focus on strengths. Men don't always need that as much or realise that we do.' (female inclusive leader)

'I've had experience of working in a number of different countries – it gives a lot of perspective and helps to shape my views. Growing up I lived in a racially diverse community. That experience shaped me – it gives you different perspectives.' (male inclusive leader)

Reinforcement from organisational systems and processes

A significant factor in enabling and encouraging inclusive leadership described in the in-depth interviews was the extent to which organisational systems and processes reinforced the value of inclusion. Leaders that worked in an organisation which, for example, enabled and valued flexible working or specifically supported women's development or could point to senior leaders who were themselves role models of inclusive leadership were motivated, encouraged and supported to develop and demonstrate inclusive leadership themselves.

'The women's development programme was one of the best courses I've ever been on. I came away feeling they'd invested in me. I was encouraged to take time out and work out what I wanted – we were given tools to help us and to be honest with ourselves.... I had a few "aha" moments – I realised it was OK to be me and not fit the mould.' (female inclusive leader)

'I'm moving to another city – I'd thought I'd have to leave – but she (the inclusive leader) has been very, very supportive. I can move my role. She told me – we, the company can be flexible for you. This is the most inclusive organisation I've ever come across. I'm so grateful they've done this for me. I'll make sure it works for them' (female)

Closing the inclusive leadership gap

This research strongly indicates that if we continue to rely on the 'viral' spread of inclusive leadership alone, organisations are unlikely to develop the inclusive leaders required to meet the business challenges of the decade head on. More formal approaches to developing inclusive leadership, in addition to the positive viral spread already taking place, are required.

Survey respondents were asked to identify from a list of six possible actions, which three they thought would be most effective in developing more inclusive leaders. The six actions were:

1. Make it essential to demonstrate inclusive leadership skills & behaviours when recruiting & promoting
2. Make it essential to demonstrate inclusive leadership skills & behaviours when awarding bonuses
3. Create more opportunities within development programmes for managers and leaders to build inclusive leadership skills and behaviours
4. Provide more regular and formal routes for 360° feedback to managers and leaders on the impact of their skills, behaviours and actions
5. Create more inclusive leadership role models at all levels of the organisation to encourage others to emulate them
6. Create more opportunities for managers and leaders to gain experience of diversity and inclusion e.g. by working in cross-functional teams, diverse teams, overseas etc.

The three actions that survey respondents believe will make the most difference in creating more inclusive leaders include:

1. Creating more inclusive leaders as role models to others – 61%
2. Building inclusive leadership in to core leadership development programmes – 56%
3. Ensuring that demonstrating of inclusive leadership capabilities is a key factor in recruiting and promoting leaders – 51%

It takes hard work – effort and time to be an inclusive leader – it can be easier to be dictatorial. You've got to be confident in yourself to allow your team freedom to challenge you. You need self awareness of how you like to work and know how others like to work You have to change yourself as a manager and not make others change themselves. But not everyone can do that – you have to be taught.' (female inclusive leader)

'Most of my peers understand the business perspective of inclusion but the challenge is how do we make it relevant for them and translate it to a practical outcome – help them know what to do.' (male inclusive leader)

'We expect our department heads and leaders to be good managers and leaders – but we don't train them. We need to develop them as inclusive leaders.' (male)

'Most senior people have good beliefs around inclusion but they don't have the background or context or experience to help them know what to do.' (male inclusive leader)

How to mainstream inclusive leadership – conclusions & recommendations

From pioneer to mainstream

This research has shown that inclusive leaders are highly effective in increasing the performance and engagement of the workforce. They also make a positive impact in building diverse leaders for the future that are equipped to meet the challenges of the changing business landscape.

Inclusive leaders stand out from the rest in demonstrating three core qualities. They are:

- **Adaptable** – they are highly aware of diversity amongst the people they work with and manage. They are comfortable with using different and flexible approaches to work organisation to get the best results and the most from their team. They are skilled at adapting their style to complement others, shifting cultural perspective in authentic ways.

- **Skilled in building a diverse talent pipeline in an organisation** – they understand their own role and responsibilities in seeking out and supporting the development of the best talent from a range of backgrounds and play an active part in this process. They are key to ensuring that the business has the range of diverse talent needed.

- **Innovative** – they understand the value of small, incremental innovations that can improve quality, productivity, customer satisfaction and save costs; as well as larger innovations which can help lead to new products & markets. They are skilled at creating a working environment that fosters innovation – where employees feel safe, valued and empowered to innovate.

Despite the critical contribution of inclusive leaders to business success, they remain a valuable but scarce resource across UK organisations. Pioneer inclusive leaders have developed their qualities largely through experience and learning from others rather than by organisational design.

The shift that will move inclusive leaders from rare pioneers to the mainstream requires a whole system approach. It requires inclusion to be positioned centre stage on the leadership agenda and not approached as an issue that is additional or parallel to the mainstream leadership development strategy.

**Five step framework for mainstreaming inclusion
as a core leadership capability**



The move from pioneer to mainstream requires organisations to consider the extent to which the skills, knowledge, behaviours and actions of inclusive leadership are reflected in their core leadership framework, leadership development programmes and talent management and reward strategies. Inclusive leadership should be core to the recruitment, retention and development of leaders and managers. We recommend organisations follow our framework that will enable them to:

- Identify their current inclusive leadership capabilities
- Move inclusive leaders from pioneers to mainstream
- Assess the effectiveness of their inclusive leadership capabilities in helping to address core business challenges

Different organisations will have different starting points as they begin this work – our five step model can be flexible, and is not intended to be prescriptive.

Step 1: Build a sponsorship and change agent group

To achieve whole system change, all key change agents need to be involved. This helps to gain widespread buy-in right from the start and spread responsibility and accountability for achieving positive results across key players.

The change agents that are key to involve in mainstreaming inclusive leadership will vary between organisations, but are likely to include:

- Senior leaders and decision makers
- Known inclusive leaders
- Talent management / Leadership development practitioners, HR practitioners responsible for recruitment, promotion and reward processes

- Emerging leaders from groups who are currently under-represented in leadership
- Inclusion & Diversity practitioners

The role and responsibilities of each of the change agents are set out within the remaining four steps of the Framework. However, it is essential that at least one of the senior change agents becomes a sponsor of the work required to develop and mainstream inclusive leadership. The role of the sponsor includes:

- Helping to ensure that the rationale and approach for developing and mainstreaming inclusive leadership is approved by senior decision-makers
- Overseeing the progress of the change and helping to facilitate the necessary actions being taken
- Providing a link back to the senior decision making team on progress being achieved, and build in ultimate accountability at a senior level.
- Taking responsibility for the successful development and mainstreaming of inclusive leadership

Step 2: Define the strategic imperative for inclusive leadership

Unless the role of inclusion in meeting core business challenges is well set out and understood, it is highly unlikely that progress will be made in mainstreaming inclusion as a core leadership capability.

The business rationale is most effectively defined by the change agents working together, as each will bring a different perspective on the role and potential impact of inclusive leadership. Involvement in

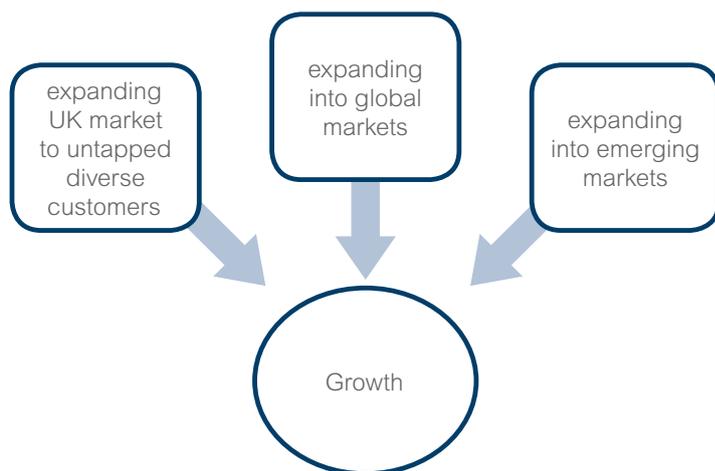
setting the rationale will also help to gain buy-in from each of the change agents and begin to build responsibility and accountability.

Clear organisational commitment and a well understood business case are vital if your work on inclusive leadership is to be successful. Define where inclusive leadership fits within your organisational goals, and how it will help deliver corporate priorities.

Once defined, it is important that the rationale for developing and mainstreaming inclusive leadership is communicated across the organisation.

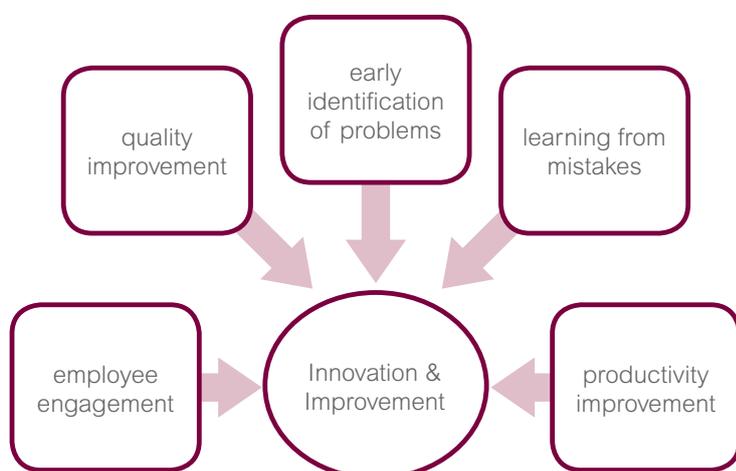
The diagrams below are two examples of strategic imperatives developed by different organisations, and questions that help to clarify their business case.

Example 1: Inclusive leadership as an Enabler of Growth



- How well does our workforce reflect the diverse customers we are seeking?
- What understanding of diverse customer needs do we have?
- How engaged are we with diverse customers?
- Do we have the skills & understanding we need to thrive in global & emerging markets?
- What are the cultural issues associated with growth in global & emerging markets?

Example 2: Inclusive leadership as an Enabler of Innovation & Improvement



- How involved are diverse staff in the quality improvement & innovation process?
- How valued do diverse staff feel?
- Is there 2-way flexibility – the organisation in meeting the needs of employees from different groups and employees meeting the needs of the organisation?
- Is there diversity of background & thought amongst teams and decision makers? Is there a danger of group think?

Step 3: Identify your organisation's inclusive leadership gap

This research found that inclusive leadership is not yet widespread across organisations and that even good inclusive leaders often have further development needs particularly in relation to specific diversity issues. The business case that drives your work on inclusive leadership will help you determine how you prioritise your work.

In order to establish your organisation's inclusive leadership base line, the organisation should ask itself:

What is the extent of our inclusive leadership capabilities and where are our inclusive leaders?

There are a number of different ways in which you can establish a baseline capability in inclusive leadership.

We set out 4 suggested approaches below. You might choose to adopt one of these approaches or a combination of:

- Diagnostic conversations
- Employee surveys
- 360 degree feedback
- Self-assessment questions

Identifying your inclusive leadership gap: diagnostic conversations

What?

The diagnostic conversation approach draws on the methodology employed to carry out the in-depth interview stage of this research. It uses group and individual conversations to identify:

- The inclusive leadership strengths of the organisation
- Role models of great inclusive leadership
- The impact and benefits to your organisation of inclusive leadership
- The enablers that will help to make inclusive leadership more widespread and the blocks that might get in the way of progress

The approach draws on the experience of people at all levels and in all areas of the organisation and uses both bottom-up and top-down perspectives to build an inclusive leadership baseline.

How?

Consider setting up groups for the diagnostic conversation which include:

- Employees
- Managers and leaders
- People who reflect the diverse demographics present within your organisation
- People from a range of departments and functions

The diagnostic groups use conversation and the re-telling of individual experiences to identify the extent to which the elements of inclusive leadership are demonstrated in your organisation and that you are developing leaders who are adaptable, innovative and able to maximise the talent potential of your organisation. The bottom-up approach asks individuals to re-call and re-tell about a time when they have experienced great inclusive leadership in your organisation. The top-down approach asks leaders to describe a situation related to the inclusive leadership capabilities identified in this research. The facilitator(s) listen for and watch for reference to the inclusive leadership capabilities and record these.

Appendix 2 provides sample briefing sheets that can be used to invite and prepare individuals for the diagnostic conversation sessions. They include the prompt questions that can be used within the sessions to draw out the inclusive leadership capabilities within your organisation.

Outcome

The results of the diagnostic conversations can be used to analyse:

- The extent to which the elements of inclusive leadership are reflected in the overall leadership capabilities within the organisation. The analysis should particularly identify:
 - o Were there any leaders that stood out as role models of inclusive leadership?
 - o Were there any areas of the organisation that were stronger or weaker in inclusive leadership?
 - o Were all elements of inclusive leadership reflected – which elements are missing or less well developed?

- The impact of inclusive leadership:
 - o What was the impact of inclusive leadership on employee performance and the factors that enhance performance e.g. motivation, feeling valued, team working, problem solving etc
 - o To what extent was the impact the same or different for employees from different groups (e.g. did this vary by gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation or by department, level etc.)
- What are the ways in which inclusive leadership capabilities are currently being developed?
- What actions would make the most impact in developing inclusive leadership more widely?

Identifying your inclusive leadership gap: Employee surveys

Employee surveys are a useful tool for establishing your inclusive leadership baseline and one that is already used in many organisations. By simply ensuring the right questions are included within the survey to analyse inclusive leadership capability and cross-referencing results by the different demographic groups within your organisation, key indicators of your inclusive leadership baseline can be established.

Questions that will help to provide indicators of inclusive leadership in the survey should go beyond the usual suspects such as 'my manager values diversity'. They should include an analysis of more fundamental inclusion issues that impact on an individual's ability to fully participate and contribute to the organisation and reach their potential. Examples of such questions include:

- To what extent do you receive formal or informal mentoring or coaching from a manager in a way which effectively meets your development needs?
- Do you have regular and constructive feedback sessions with your manager (outside the formal appraisal process) about your strengths and areas for development?
- To what extent is your manager effective in motivating you to be productive and perform well?
- To what extent do you trust your manager to support you if you make a mistake?
- Is your manager approachable – are you able to go to her/him with questions or suggestions?
- Does your manager help you understand the bigger organisational picture and priorities and how your role fits within that?

Use the results of questions such as those provided above to present a baseline indication of your organisation's inclusive leadership capability. Include within this presentation any differences between responses from women and men and from minority groups.

Identifying your inclusive leadership gap: 360 degree feedback

360 degree feedback provides a powerful tool for individual managers and leaders to use in assessing the impact of their own behaviour and style on others and the development of their inclusive leadership capabilities. Aggregate responses to the inclusive leadership questions can provide the organisation with a baseline indication of overall capabilities. Questions that can help to provide feedback on inclusive leadership within a 360 degree framework include:

- How confident are you that this manager/leader would challenge behaviours in others that do not support achieving equality, diversity and inclusion?

- To what extent does this manager/leader demonstrate a genuine interest in and respect for differences in others?
- To what extent is this manager/leader effective in identifying and supporting people with high potential talent from a range of backgrounds?
- To what extent does this manager demonstrate understanding of why inclusion and diversity is important to this organisation?
- How approachable is this manager/leader in being open to discussing problems or ideas for improvement?
- How effective is this manager/leader in providing mentoring and support to you in realising your career aspirations?

Identifying your inclusive leadership gap: Self-assessment questions

Overleaf are 10 questions that every leader in your organisation can ask themselves. If they cannot answer the questions or answer no to three or more of the questions, it is likely that they would benefit from developing their inclusive leadership capabilities. The collective score of your leaders to these questions will also help to establish your base-line inclusive leadership capability.

10 Inclusive leadership self-assessment questions

1. Do you sponsor someone with high potential who is from a group currently under-represented in leadership to support them in realising their career aspirations?
2. Do you ask those you manage or lead for feedback on the impact of your style and approach in supporting them to perform well and/or progress their careers?
3. Do you know the different values and drivers that motivate those you manage or lead and do you leverage these to help improve performance?
4. Do you challenge others if their behaviour or actions do not support inclusion and diversity?
5. Are you aware of the stereotypes, assumptions and judgements you make about different groups (unconscious bias) and what you can do to minimise the potential negative impact of these?
6. Do you involve and encourage those you manage or lead to identify problems early on, come up with solutions and improvement ideas?
7. Does your team reflect diversity in its demographic make-up, background and perspectives and do you leverage this to avoid group-think?
8. Are you clear how inclusion and diversity can help you meet your own and the wider organisation's business goals?
9. Do you help those you manage or lead understand the bigger organisational and strategic picture and their role within this?
10. Do you mentor others, including women and people from minority backgrounds and check that your approach meets their specific needs?

Step 4: Equip leaders to become great inclusive leaders

There are four aspects to consider when equipping leaders to become great inclusive leaders and to ensure that inclusive leadership runs through the DNA of your organisational processes.

In order for inclusive leadership capabilities to become embedded in your organisation and for this to be sustainable, it is important to **check, challenge** and where needed, **change** elements in each of the above four areas associated with leadership development:

- Recruitment
- Performance management, promotion and reward
- Leadership development
- Organisational policies

You should also ensure that those who shortlist, interview and appoint are themselves equipped to be able to identify great inclusive leadership in applicants. This goes beyond the more common practice of making sure there is diversity on the recruitment panel. It means that members of the recruitment panel should have inclusive leadership capabilities themselves in order to be able to identify this in others. The questioning approach set out in Appendix 2 for establishing a baseline of inclusive leadership can also be applied to recruitment interviews. For example, interview questions might include:

- *Tell me how you have supported others to achieve their career aspirations – if you can – tell me about two quite different people you have supported and anything you did to meet their diverse needs.*
- *Tell me about a time when you have influenced or constructively challenged others on inclusion and diversity issues – what was the outcome of this?*
- *Tell me about a time when you have drawn on inclusion and/or diversity to help you achieve a successful business outcome.*

Recruitment

When appointing to management and leadership roles it will save an organisation development time and resources to recruit people who already have inclusive leadership capabilities. Over time this will also help to develop a leadership team with shared values around inclusion. To achieve this, the elements of inclusive leadership, as set out in this research, should be built in to your management and leadership person specifications. Consider focusing on those elements where you currently have gaps, or which have the greatest strategic importance for your organisation.

Step 4: Equip leaders to become great inclusive leaders



Performance management, promotion & reward

We recommend that organisations check, challenge and where necessary make changes to their performance, management promotion and reward processes to ensure that inclusive leadership becomes sustainable. Each of these processes should be considered in light of the extent to which the 24 elements that define inclusive leaders are embedded within them. Organisations should ask:

- *Does our performance management process explicitly consider the extent to which managers and leaders are demonstrating inclusive leadership and build in objectives for developing this capability further?*
- *Do we ensure that we reward and promote managers and leaders who demonstrate inclusive leadership capabilities?*

Leadership Development

This research has set out the knowledge, skills, behaviours and actions that define great Inclusive Leaders. It has shown that Inclusive Leaders are:

- **Adaptable**
- **Skilled in building a diverse talent pipeline**
- **Innovative**

This research has shown that inclusive leaders are currently being developed more by osmosis than design. Few reported that they had developed their capabilities through formal development programmes. More commonly, they had developed their capabilities by learning from other great inclusive leaders. The spread of inclusive leadership through peer to peer learning is important but unlikely to be sufficient to develop the spread of inclusive leadership capabilities an organisation needs to build a diverse leadership that is equipped to meet critical business challenges.

We recommend that organisations:

- Ensure that their leadership framework reflects the core qualities of inclusive leadership and that the characteristics are explicitly built in. Inclusive leadership should become a mainstream and valued dimension of leadership.
- Consider the range of development opportunities it provides to support the development of inclusive leadership capabilities – through both formal and informal routes.

This should include:

- Checking to ensure that mainstream leadership programmes are effective in developing the elements of great inclusive leadership and introducing changes where necessary

- If inclusive leadership is developed as a stand-alone programme that its role and relationship to core leadership capabilities is clear. The inclusive leadership programme should not be an optional extra but regarded as a key element of a leader's development to ensure they become adaptable, effective innovation leaders and able to maximise the talent potential of the organisation.

Also consider opportunities beyond formal development programmes to develop great inclusive leaders. This should include:

- Profiling inclusive leaders as role models of leadership excellence

It might also include:

- Community volunteering
- Mentoring a woman or someone from a minority group
- Working as part of a cross-national team
- Experience working abroad
- Championing or chairing an employee network / affinity group
- Being a member of a diversity committee or group
- Being mentored by an Inclusive Leader
- Working for an inclusive leader

Organisational policies to support inclusive leadership

Check whether the formal processes in your organisation support inclusion. For example:

- Do you operate an effective flexible working policy?
- Are there opportunities for groups under-represented in management and leadership to access opportunities and development programmes specifically tailored to raise their profile and meet their development needs?
- Do communications reflect inclusion and diversity in the images and messages presented?
- Do you encourage a listening and learning organisation? You may have used tools such as 360 degree feedback, focus groups and surveys to establish your inclusive leadership gap – they are also invaluable in creating an organisational culture in which individuals are more likely to listen to peers, reports and partners. Ongoing feedback can be sought on the extent to which people perceive the organisation to be inclusive and how fair talent management systems are.
- Do you have mechanisms to give women a voice in your organisation? There is a range of evidence from employers that creating spaces for women and men to speak about their experiences can be transformative in developing understanding and changing attitudes.¹⁹
- Do you tackle unconscious bias? Tackling unconscious bias in organisations can be an important lever for change
- Do you have a system of mentors and sponsors? Mentoring systems are likely to work in different ways for women and men – you can have a real impact if, for example, you assess the success of your mentoring/ sponsorship scheme depending on how successful women mentees became in reaching senior positions.
- Do you have a communications strategy that includes highlighting senior women role models, and other successful role models, including promoting existing inclusive leaders?

19 Diversity Dimensions, Opportunity Now, 2004

Step 5: Assess the outcomes of mainstreaming inclusive leadership

It is important that the progress of the organisation's work on building inclusive leadership is regularly measured and monitored. In the experience of Opportunity Now, senior buy in and accountability is crucial to achieving real and sustainable change.

Mechanisms used to assess your inclusive leadership baseline could be repeated to maintain a sense of how progress is being made.

Other indicators are also valuable. Consider whether your work on inclusive leadership has increased the diversity in your organisation, for example:

- Diversity in current leadership
- Diversity in promotion
- Diversity in leadership talent pipeline.

Do also make use of your existing measures of engagement to assess the effectiveness of your work, or consider measuring:

- Employee survey results showing the proportion of the workforce, analysed by under represented groups, that:
 - o Report high levels of motivation
 - o Are involved in day to day problem solving and improvement
 - o Report that their views and contributions are valued.

Appendix 1: Methodology

This research addressed three questions:

- What makes a great inclusive leader?
- How can inclusive leadership add value to an organisation?
- What are the ways in which organisations can grow and develop their own inclusive leaders?

The research included a literature review, in-depth interviews and a survey sent out across the Opportunity Now membership. The combination of methods allowed for results to be triangulated to maximise the reliability and validity of the research findings.

In-depth interviews

A combination of one-to-one and group interviews were held with 68 people, both employees and leaders from across three organisations. This included women and men drawn from different backgrounds including people from ethnic minority groups, from different professions and hierarchical levels. It included participants who described themselves as being from a working class background, having a disability and being lesbian or gay.

The interviews were semi-structured and asked participants to describe their experience of inclusive leadership.

We did not present a definition of inclusive leadership in the interviews. Participants were asked to consider what inclusive leadership meant to them. From the notes taken during the interviews, a system of coding was used to identify the behaviours, skills, knowledge and actions referred to by participants in describing inclusive leadership.

Survey

Based on the results of the in-depth interviews, a survey was designed to test out with a bigger population:

- The relevance of the skills, knowledge, behaviours and actions identified in the interviews to inclusive leadership
- The impact of inclusive leadership on the performance and career development of employees
- The extent to which inclusive leadership is being demonstrated across organisations

- The extent to which organisations are actively developing inclusive leadership
- What actions would make the most difference in further developing inclusive leadership

600 people from numerous private and public sector organisations responded to the survey in July 2011. The survey responses to the core questions were cross analysed by different groups responding, including by:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Part-time / Full-time
- Sector (public, private, third)
- Age

Where critical differences occurred between groups, these have been highlighted in the research report.

Appendix 2

Inclusive leadership – from pioneer to mainstream The Diagnostic Conversation Approach Conversation Group Briefing & Questions

What makes a great inclusive leader?

How does inclusive leadership add value to our organisation?

How can we grow and develop more inclusive leaders?

Great leadership is at the heart of great business and great organisations. It is also at the heart of creating cultures which are not only diverse, but cultures which leverage that difference for competitive advantage.

Inclusive leadership is basically a leadership style which embraces, encourages and taps into the creativity and ideas which come about in non homogeneous groups.

This conversation group builds on the research carried out by Opportunity Now with diversity expert Dr. Gillian Shapiro which identified what defines an inclusive leader and the positive impact they can make to building a more diverse leadership that is equipped to meet critical business challenges.

The Diagnostic Conversation Approach

We are carrying out group conversations with employees from a range of backgrounds and areas of the organisation to get a better understanding of:

- What and where are the inclusive leadership strengths in this organisation?
- What is the impact of inclusive leadership on the performance of our employees and in helping us to build a more diverse leadership for the future?
- What actions will make the most difference in helping us to further develop inclusive leadership?

Your contribution

We would like to invite you to participate in a one hour facilitated diagnostic conversation. Within this session you will be asked to describe times when you have had a positive experience of inclusive leadership and the impact this had on you and / or times when you have demonstrated inclusive leadership and the impact this has had on individuals, the organisation and on you. Your contributions will remain confidential in that nothing you say will be attributed to you. Chatham House Rules will be applied during the focus group. The results will be used to answer the three questions set out above and determine the actions we need to take to further develop inclusive leadership as a mainstream leadership capability in this organisation.

Preparing for the diagnostic conversation

Please take some time to think about how you would answer the following questions before you come to the session. The session will not be limited to these questions and there will be an opportunity for you to contribute on other related issues you want to raise.

Questions for Employees (and can also be used with managers and leaders)

Tell me about a time when a manager or leader has specifically supported you in your career:

- How did the situation arise?
- What did the manager / leader do and say?
- What was the impact of this intervention on you?
- Was there anything that stands out about this manager/leader and about their approach that made them particularly impactful?

Tell me about a manager or leader that has helped to create a more inclusive working environment in this organisation which has helped you feel motivated, that you are valued, included and that there is the opportunity for you to reach your potential:

- What has the manager/leader done and said?
- What has been the impact of what they did and said on you?

- What do you think has been the impact of what they did and said on the whole organisation?
- Was there anything that stands out about this manager/leader and about their approach that made them particularly impactful?

Tell me about a manager or leader that has helped you to make an active contribution to improving this organisation. This might have been through coming up with ideas on how processes can be improved, cost savings can be made, identifying problems early on, solving problems, enhancing customer experience or new business ideas:

- What was the situation and how did it arise?
- What did the manager / leader do and say?
- What was the impact of the manager / leader on you?
- Was there anything that stands out about this manager/leader and about their approach that made them particularly impactful?

Questions for managers and leaders

Tell me about a time when you supported the career of a woman or someone from a minority background in this organisation?

Tell me about a time when you have influenced or challenged others on inclusion and diversity issues.

Tell about a specific intervention you have made that has supported this organisation in becoming more of an inclusive and diverse organisation.

Tell me about a time when you have drawn on inclusion and or diversity to help you achieve a successful business outcome.

Tell me about a time when you were particularly pleased with what you accomplished on inclusion and diversity that is not covered by any of the previous examples.

For each situation / intervention, consider:

- How did the intervention / situation arise?
- What did you do and say?
- What was the impact of what you did and said and how you behaved on the individual(s); on others / the organisation and on you?

Questions for everyone

What do you think are the things that help and that get in the way of inclusive leadership in this organisation?

What actions or changes do you think would make the most difference in developing more inclusive leaders in this organisation?

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