

how to build

a diverse
workplace.



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what is diversity in the workplace?

Simply put, diversity in the workplace means having a versatile range of skilled employees at all levels within an organisation. This includes diversity of gender, ethnicity, age, language, personality, religious beliefs, disability, educational background, and expertise.

In today's workplace it also means going beyond just hiring different types of people and encouraging equal participation, performance, opportunity and compensation. A good frame of reference is looking at the community in which a company is based, and correcting inequities based on specific demographics.



diversity and your bottom-line.

When diversity and inclusion come together in the workplace it empowers an organisation's workforce to bring their best to work every day and there have been numerous studies that highlight the various benefits. McKinsey has published 3 global reports exploring the business case for diversity, which have shown the connections between diverse leadership teams and financial success strengthening over time.

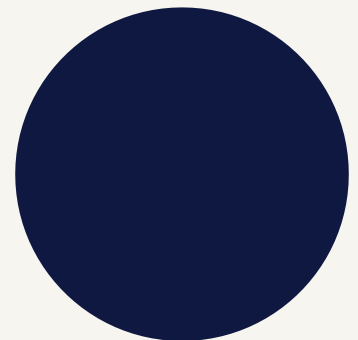
In the [latest analysis](#), companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to have above-average profitability than those in the fourth quartile - up from 21% in 2017. Businesses with the broadest ethnic representation were 36% more likely to outperform less diverse organisations.

Other significant [bottom-line benefits](#) you can gain by prioritising diversity include:

- earnings margins up to 9% higher than those of companies with below-average diversity on management teams
- innovation revenue (the proportion of total revenue gained from new products and services) up to 19 percentage points higher than that of less diverse companies

diversity and your employees

Diversity and inclusion are also key contributors to the well-being of a company's employees. When employees see that differences are embraced and celebrated at work, they are more likely to express their unique ideas which heightens workplace creativity and fosters a closer connection between colleagues. One thing to keep in mind is that diversity and inclusion involves everyone and not just underrepresented groups. This means encouraging all employees to feel confident in their abilities to contribute to the team which will boost morale, employee engagement and profit.



a workforce that reflects today's society.

Hiring a greater range of talent helps to provide insight into the needs and motivations of a wider range of clients rather than just a small part of a company's customer base. When you have employees that come from various backgrounds, they bring invaluable lived experiences to the workplace. This insight can lead to a better understanding of different demographics' interests or pain points which ultimately leads to better messaging that will attract a larger customer base.

attracting high-quality talent

Research by Monster has shown that [83% of Gen-Z candidates](#) view an organisation's commitment to diversity and inclusion as an important factor when choosing an employer. This generation is on course to make up a larger proportion of the global workforce than Millennials and Gen-X, so businesses need to be in tune with their priorities. Companies that lack a comprehensive diversity strategy and aren't investing in people from different backgrounds risk coming off as stagnant, causing five-star talent to choose a company they can grow with, not out of.

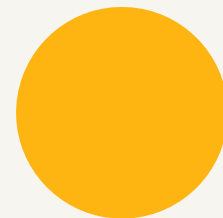


why diversity and inclusion can be challenging to achieve.

International research from reputable organisations including McKinsey and [Boston Consulting Group](#) has linked diversity to improved financial performance and better business overall. But for some companies, the obstacle doesn't lie in denying the benefits of an inclusive and diverse work culture. It lies within being resistant to change, both unconsciously and consciously.

Evidence shows that people feel most comfortable around those who remind them of their in-group. The findings also highlight that hiring managers tend to prefer people who would be a good "cultural fit" based on extra-curricular activities that are unrelated to the job like playing hockey or squash. This type of hiring bias leads to having a homogenous group of people, and can be an obstacle to finding creative solutions. [Research](#) has shown that companies who have a diverse range of talent tend to be more innovative.

Sometimes change doesn't happen naturally and there's a reason why phrases like "business as usual" resonate with the workforce. Changing the status-quo and the typical decision-making rules of how it's always been done can feel uncomfortable. But if an organisation has a detail-oriented diversity and inclusion plan it will undeniably result in happier and more productive staff.



creating a culture of inclusion and diversity.

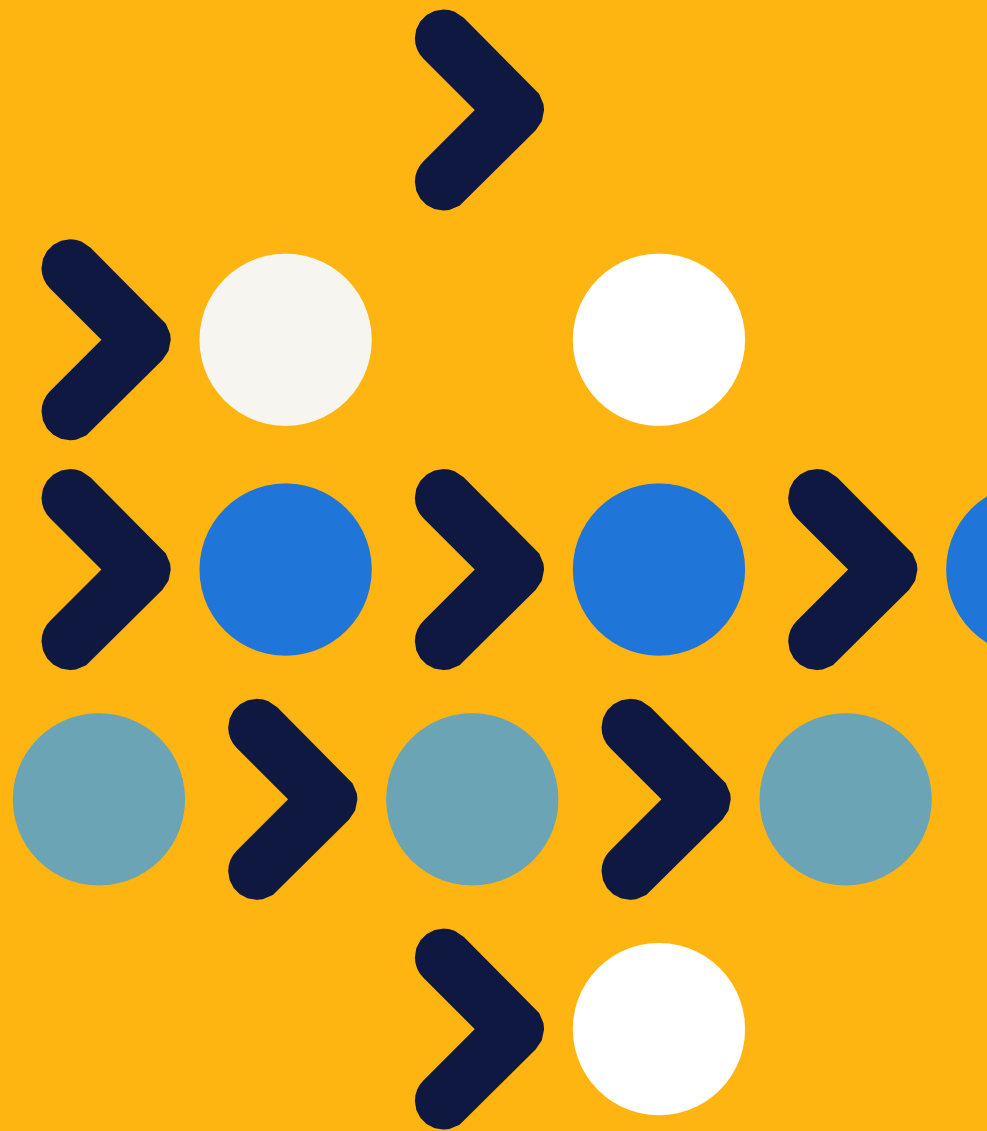
Diversity and inclusion initiatives don't happen in silos and involve everyone from senior leadership, managers, employees, and interns. In order to encourage this type of culture, a number of practices can be put in place at different levels and each organisation will have a different roadmap to success based on information gathered about the current company culture.

Surveying employees can shed light on their perception of the company in relation to encouraging and appreciating diversity and inclusion in the workplace. By capturing data on employee demographics and their experiences at the workplace, an employer will have a better understanding of the diversity of its employees, equity of its internal practices and will be able to better identify any areas of concern or trends.

By assessing the culture that currently exists, a company will be better equipped to develop a strategy based on specific insights that will take them where they want to go.



strategies to
increase diversity.



1. get leadership buy-in

For diversity and inclusion policies to take root in the workplace, leadership buy-in is key. Senior management must understand the business case for a diversity plan and its initiatives must link back to the company's goals. Accountability is also vital, and it may be helpful to task a senior-level team member with managing the plan or selecting a group of employees to ensure the plan keeps its momentum.

2. offer diversity training

Successful diversity training involves everyone from the CEO to the interns and should feel like a safe space to discuss concepts such as unconscious and conscious bias and cultural competency. When employees become more familiar with these concepts, they can begin to identify how and when they show up in real-world situations and what to do next.

Diversity training sessions should be looked at as an ongoing discussion or a series of workshops rather than a one-time programme. This way there are multiple touchpoints to understand different perspectives and to see the value those differences bring to a team. By getting leadership and employees in the habit of thinking about inclusion and how they can take actions, the workplace becomes more inclusive for everyone and the whole team thrives.



3. create a mentorship programme

Mentoring is an essential component when trying to attract and retain diverse talent. Research on the connections between mentorship and diversity has shown:

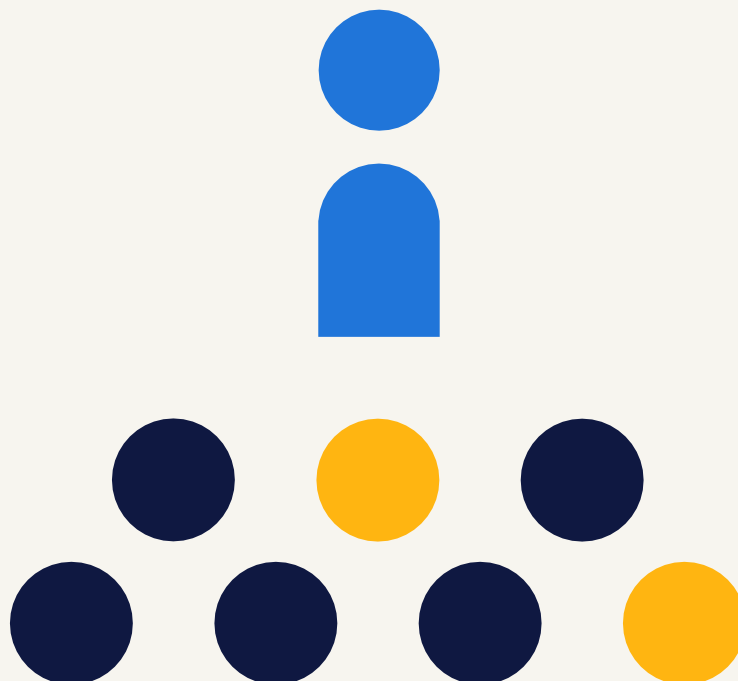
- mentorship programmes have boosted minority representation at management level from 9% to 24%
- women are more likely to have a mentor than men
- in companies with boards that are at least 30% female, 38% of women who have senior mentors believe they will rise to board level themselves

There's no doubt that mentorship programmes with a diverse lens can help foster inclusion at the workplace. In addition to sharing professional knowledge and seasoned guidance, a mentorship programme can also help to develop underrepresented talent for leadership roles by exposing different groups to new opportunities that they may otherwise not have had. Formal mentorship programmes can also tackle various company development goals and can deepen the bonds between colleagues who may be very different, creating greater equity in the workplace.

4. make your hiring process more objective

Whether consciously or unconsciously, many companies have hiring processes that are inherently biased. These biases could allow a hiring manager's overall impression of a candidate to be influenced by the candidate's superficial characteristics, not their qualifications.

During the recruitment process, hiring managers can also unknowingly seek out information that confirms their preexisting beliefs, while dismissing information that challenges their beliefs. To overcome these biases, there are a number of simple and effective tools that recruiters can use to have a holistic view of the candidate based on knowledge, skills, abilities, personality, and behaviours.



5. write inclusive job descriptions

Job descriptions are often the first thing potential candidates read so it's important that the language and content are inclusive. Companies should avoid using unnecessary jargon and gender-coded words that do not accurately portray jobs in ways that make candidates feel as though they won't be a good fit. When discussing job requirements, limit the list to essential skills. This is based on research that has shown women are less likely to apply to jobs unless they possess all of the skills or meet all of the requirements. It's also always a good idea to include in the job description your company's commitment to diversity and inclusion, along with any inclusive benefits.

6. blind résumé screening

Blind resume screening is an important tool for increasing workplace diversity. There is evidence of racial and gender bias during resume screenings which have removed qualified applicants from the running. According to the [research](#), white-sounding names on resumes are 75% more likely to get an interview request than identical resumes with Asian names and white-sounding names on resumes are 50% more likely to secure an interview compared to identical resumes with African American sounding names. The same is seen when looking at men and women as male names are 40% more likely to get a call back than women with the same experience. A study conducted at the [University of Oxford's Nuffield College](#) also found that job seekers from minority ethnic backgrounds need to send 60% more applications, on average, to receive the same level of interest as applicants from non-minority groups.

When using blind resume screening, information such as names, headshots, addresses, schools, extra-curricular activities, and graduation years are all removed because they can give off identity cues that factor into the decision-making process. Blind resume screening attempts to eliminate potential hiring biases by focusing mainly on the candidates' skills and competency, rather than demographic or socioeconomic factors.



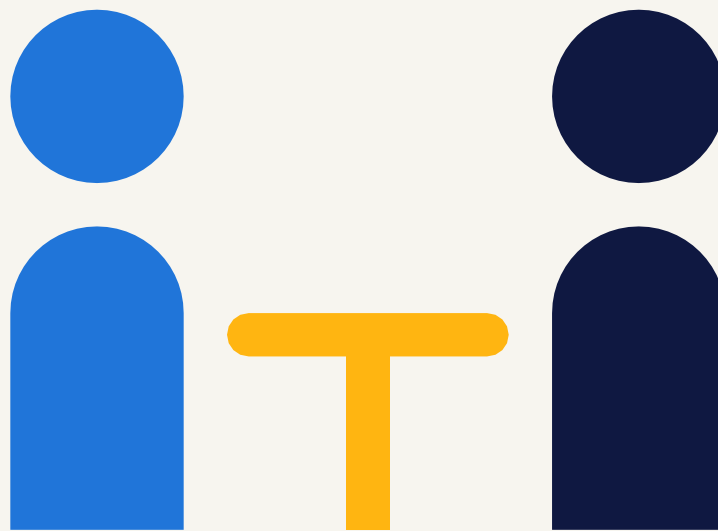
7. standardise your interview format

To level the playing field for all candidates, structured interviews ask the exact same questions, in the same order and are evaluated using an agreed-upon rating scale. To further increase fairness, instead of having just one interviewer, try creating a diverse interview panel. This will help reduce any bias among panel members and also allows the interviewee to see themselves within the company. By reducing hiring bias, a company is more likely to hire the right person for the job and will reap the many benefits that go hand in hand with hiring a more diverse workforce.

8. build an inclusive onboarding process

Inclusive onboarding takes the standard onboarding process to the next level and reflects the diversity of today's workplace. In addition to providing information on the new hire's role, training and practical information, inclusive onboarding is intended to make all employees, new and old, feel seen and supported. Creating a safe and welcoming environment is essential in today's modern workplace. This is especially true for Millennials who make up the largest portion of today's workforce and aren't afraid to look for a new job if they are unhappy, according to research from [LinkedIn](#).

One way to enhance your onboarding process is to prep the existing team with information about the new hire to build a sense of inclusion from the start. Discuss new employees' experience and how they will bring value to the team. In addition to discussing the technical aspects of the job, spend time emphasising the company's mission objectives when it comes to creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workplace.



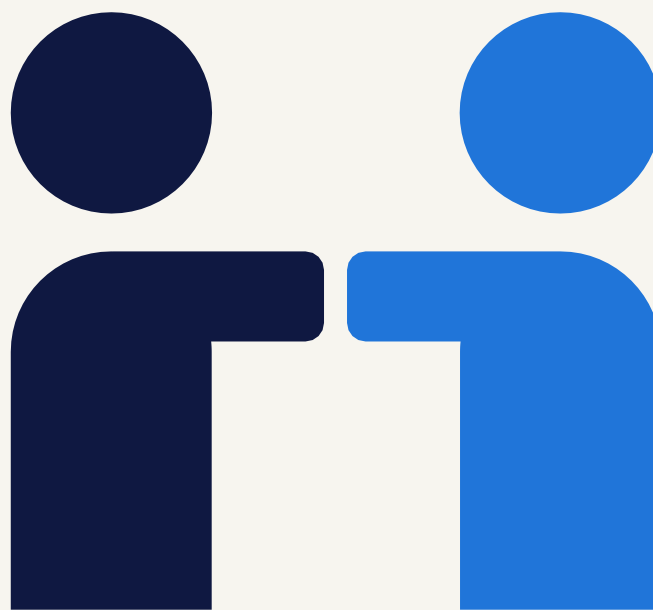
9. implement a buddy system

The use of the buddy system can go a long way to make new employees feel welcomed. For example, new hires may feel uncomfortable asking certain questions to their boss and may be more inclined to speak up with a friendly co-worker. A colleague can help fill in the gaps, introduce the new hire to the team, and make a new employee feel comfortable because they have someone to turn to in confidence.

A successful buddy should have a good understanding of the company culture and processes and should be a friendly volunteer with a good track record at work. When new colleagues are able to develop strong relationships early on, they are more likely to stick around. Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment from day one can also help to reduce turnover, as a study conducted on [workplace culture](#) reveals that 20% of employee turnover happens within the first 45 days.

10. standardise onboarding

While onboarding does involve training, true onboarding is what a new hire feels, sees, and hears after they've been hired. It should leave them with a deeper understanding into the why behind company policies, practices, and culture. Set-up a strategic and standardised onboarding process for consistency among all new hires. This not only helps the new hire create a fundamental connection between the company and the work they do, but it will also create higher rates of performance, employee engagement and retention.



11. encourage discussions

Effective onboarding should be thought of as a welcoming hello or handshake. It's a friendly icebreaker to bridge the gap between new hires and colleagues. Remember that people are social beings and so it's important to encourage conversations during the onboarding period. The reality is, the more comfortable and engaged the new hire feels among colleagues, the more likely they'll be to collaborate and share their unique ideas and perspectives.

12. diversity in communications

To attract the best talent from a diverse talent pool, it is essential to have clear, consistent, and open communication. Having effective communication between co-workers, managers and the senior leadership team creates equal opportunity in the workplace and empowers diverse people to excel because they know their hard work will be seen and they'll be rewarded like their fellow colleagues. Try to communicate regularly about your company's diversity and inclusion progress and share experiences of growth, learning, and best practices.

It's also important to show intersectionality in the visuals selected to represent your company. Not only does this shape the way your company is perceived, but it also helps with recruiting and retaining talent.



13. offer equal opportunities for career progression

It's safe to say that nobody wants to feel stuck or stagnant in their career. To remain competitive, place the growth and professional development of all employees at the heart of company policy. After all, talented people want to work for companies that value them and are willing to invest in their future aspirations.

Everyone deserves an equal opportunity to achieve their goals and designing a system to help with succession planning and promotions is a good way to keep the talent pool strong and diverse. Every employee should have an outlined career path within the organisation so they can better visualise their future at the company. The roadmap should identify specific milestones for achievement, training and development opportunities and career progression goals. Foster a positive culture of equal upward mobility, employees will be more engaged and will be empowered to move up the ranks because they feel appreciated by their leaders.

To make your workplace better for everyone, having diverse career development programmes and networks can also help underrepresented employees on their quest to the top. Mentorship programmes, as well as workshops and networking events are also among some of the best tools a company can use to empower diverse groups. By implementing these tools in a more inclusive way, diverse employees will be able to see themselves in a wide range of roles and can get first-hand advice from peers that have successfully achieved their goals.



putting a spotlight on gender diversity.

True gender diversity at a company goes beyond having an equal number of men, women, transgender or nonbinary people at the workplace. It encourages equal participation and opportunities for all groups of people. It also means that underrepresented groups are hired and promoted at a similar or consistent rate as men.

Although access to leadership roles for women has increased, the disparity between men and women still exists. This is especially true for women of colour. According to a recent study conducted by [McKinsey](#), moving to a managerial role is the biggest obstacle women face on the path to leadership. For every 100 men promoted at this level, only 58 African American women and 68 Latin American women are promoted and unfortunately, the numbers continue to decrease further up the corporate hierarchy. What companies need to realise is, when women and underrepresented groups succeed, the entire workforce does as well.

On a global level, women occupy only 29% of senior management roles, according to research by [Grant Thornton](#). While this matches the highest proportion previously recorded in the study, it remains short of what is seen as the tipping point for greater diversity at senior management level.



how an HR partner can support your diversity goals.

At Randstad, we provide tailor-made recruiting solutions to fit your company's needs. Using agreed upon criteria, our experts thoroughly vet every candidate based on their understanding of the job and your expectations to ensure you're getting the best talent to fill the position. Our recruiting experts can also help you attract candidates who will contribute to both your business goals and your company culture. In addition, using a recruitment agency is a major time-saver as you'll only have to spend time interviewing candidates that fit the bill.

the power of employer branding

Don't underestimate the power of employer branding because it could be the difference between sorting through stacks of talented candidates competing for a role at your company or struggling to find someone to even interview. Your employer brand is how your former, current, and future employees view your company and a number of factors can play a role in turning your employer brand into your competitive advantage. Everything from a company's vision and values, workplace culture, salary conditions, benefits package, daily functions, flexibility, opportunities for advancement, management style, training and mentoring programmes and stability are some of the main conditions that potential candidates will compare when job hunting.

Your employer brand should be appealing and exciting and should promote your company as a great place to work. Having spent more than 20 years conducting [employer brand research](#), we have gained extensive insights into what job seekers want from their ideal employer. Using this knowledge, we can help you optimise your own branding to attract and retain diverse workers who can help your business thrive.

optimising recruitment

It's essential to get your recruitment practices right if you want to identify and attract a diverse range of candidates with the potential to improve your business.

By working with us, you can gain access to HR technologies that will help to diversify your hiring, as well as the knowledge and expertise of our experienced consultants.

We can take on every aspect of your recruitment from start to finish, or we can help you with particular phases in the process, such as writing inclusive job descriptions or tailoring your interviews to provide fair and equal opportunities to all applicants.

tap into our vast network

Working with a recruitment agency like Randstad means having access to our vast network of connections that includes candidates that are actively seeking employment as well as talent that may be currently employed. Through our extended network, you'll be able to connect with top talent for the job and your organisation in record speed.



Randstad is the global leader in the HR services industry. We support people and organisations in realising their true potential by combining the power of today's technology with our passion for people. We call it Human Forward.

[Contact us](#) to start a conversation about your talent needs.