

# 3 Learning Strategies to Improve Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace



Diversity and inclusion are extremely hot topics, with HR communities, and businesses as a whole, very focused on them.

Within a modern business, it's a lot more common to work in multilingual and multicultural environments, with a customer base that's spread right across the world.

To ensure your businesses thrive in this economy, it's essential to develop a culture that incorporates inclusion, diversity, support and understanding.

We've detailed three strategies below to help your company increase and promote positive diversity and inclusion plans within your organisation.





# 1. Improving Diversity & Inclusivity through Recruitment, Onboarding & Mentorship

When recruiting for new positions at your company, it's important to weave inclusion into the process by using inclusive language within your job descriptions, widening searches to include diverse groups and ensuring shortlisting is fair. Always keep this in mind, whether you're recruiting via a recruiter, an agency, at a university career fair or as part of an internship program, as this will help to ensure a diverse group of new recruits for any vacancies.

Once you have this strategy in place, you can then set about creating time for valuable mentorship sessions to help you mould your future company leaders. Mentorship is an effective method of incorporating diversity as, by its nature, it ensures inclusion and puts a focus on conveying the company's values.

Mentorship can take shape internally, by having mentors within your company who can help colleagues to feel included, welcome and part of the team. However, this mentorship can also be in the shape of an external institution that, perhaps, has more experience or knowledge in helping to nurture a diverse and inclusive work environment.





By introducing a mentorship company program, you can be certain that your workforce isn't feeling marginalised or excluded. Whilst diverse hires can help with this, inclusivity must be accounted for.

For many, it may feel more comfortable being mentored by someone of a similar profile but there is also actually a huge benefit that can come from working with people who don't have the same background or perspective. This should be seen as an opportunity to break down any preconceived perceptions so that they're able to learn to see the world from a broader and more varied perspective.

Consider what you'll need to do to ensure a successful mentorship program, such as encouraging your mentors to learn about their mentees' backgrounds and showing how important the program is by protecting the time to show it's a priority to you. It's also important to remember to measure the results in order to gauge how helpful and effective the program

is. You can keep track of retention rates and advancements, as well as testimonials and assessments to ensure the full picture is captured from the meetings. It's a good idea, as part of these meetings, to have a third party who can act as a neutral contact in the program for any concerns, questions or complaints to be raised; thereby creating a safe space for all parties concerned.



## 2. Acknowledge and Provide Training

When it comes to diversity and inclusion, most companies still have a lot of work to do. The first thing to do is to look at the situation in your company and acknowledge the efforts that need to be done and what can be improved. D&I conversations can be sensitive and it can sometimes feel like we are walking on eggshells. This can create a very wary environment, where people are unsure of what to say or how best to react in certain situations. To stop this from happening, you need to acknowledge that a change needs to occur.

If employees feel understood and respected, this will have the effect of making them feel more engaged at work and therefore increase job satisfaction.

For a CEO or for leaders of a team within the organisation, start to shift and improve the methods of communication. Begin with the facts; ensure you're sharing statistics on the company's diversity within teams, roles, the hierarchy and the company as a whole. This data can be used to identify when change is needed and this information is also a great way of looking back to show any improvements. This information can help form the development of a Diversity and Inclusion program which can be supported by the Learning and Development team to ensure your company's goals are met.

It's important to remember that making improvements to diversity and inclusion in the workplace is not simply based on a percentage shift of your employees, it actually depends upon changing and improving the culture of the company. If you can nurture a workplace culture that highlights and embraces diversity and differences, you're going in the right direction.



### 3. Improve Communication and Work Skills via Language Learning

Promoting diversity can often be misunderstood and seen as simply recruiting employees from different identities or backgrounds. However, it's about much more than this, it's about encouraging a work culture that's based on communication, where any knowledge can be shared freely and where employees feel listened to. This ensures that each and every employee feels fully supported.

Another strategy to ensure all employees feel supported and appreciated is to help encourage development of communication and teamwork skills by providing language learning opportunities and resources to them and additional learning and language learning can be an excellent way to do just that.

Speaking a second language can play a crucial role in helping your company to achieve multicultural awareness, showcase a business's brand values and increase your employees'

interpersonal skillset by improving listening and communication skills, for example. International companies that employ people from all over the world often need English internal communication and better communication makes for better inclusivity.

Learning another language can actually help to raise awareness of cultural differences, shaping thought processes and perceptions, along with biases and an employee's behaviour on a professional and personal level. Language can have such an effect that it can impact everything from how we treat and relate to others and, from a business perspective, helping you to understand business etiquette, such as which hand to accept gifts in and if it's possible to make small talk in business meetings.

Building more effective communication skills helps us to build bridges with others, regardless of culture or background, meaning that the workplace as a whole can become a much more inclusive place.







## Ready to start your learning journey to improve diversity and inclusion in the workplace? See how Busuu can help you.

At Busuu for Business, we have expertly designed a digital language training programme to please. We believe language learning should be enjoyable, inclusive and beneficial both for companies and employees alike.

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