

Shattering Biases and Driving Inclusivity in the Workplace

Kacha Recruitment
Gender-Conscious Recruitment

It has been a long uphill battle to improve gender equality and inclusivity.

However, it is still time to keep forging ahead. Using the momentum of recent social developments and the pandemic's highlighting of inequality, there is more opportunity than ever for companies to create impactful, lasting changes.

Bring in a Diversity Expert

Diversity has improved business performance through the resulting fresh perspectives, different skill sets and encouragement of positive change. However, a business transformation that seeks to overhaul the entire recruitment process and employee structure takes significant effort. But it could be a game-changer to enrol an external DEI consultant who can apply impartial, unbiased, and knowledgeable approaches.

Such a consultant could dive into the company policies and practices and engage with employees to get a deep perspective of their experiences in the company. This would support the development of better strategies and plans for practice improvements, including amended hiring policies, the creation of safe spaces for employees, and addressing any unconscious management biases.

Set clear, actionable and measurable goals

In the past traditional Unconscious Bias training has been largely ineffective, leading to increased prejudice and doing the opposite of what UB training seeks to achieve. Practical UB training first develops, measures, and then continues progress tracking[\[1\]](#).

Offering voluntary UB training can limit its effectiveness, particularly for those who believe they already know the issues. Voluntary training may also miss employees who don't wish to change the status quo.

Any training needs to be followed with actionable strategies that will be acceptable and workable for employees. Such ideas include:

- Systems where employees feel comfortable raising complaints without fear of retribution

- Taking steps to change a 'boys club' culture where women find themselves largely left out
- Tracking the effectiveness of policy improvements on areas such as employee retention.

Run a Mentorship Group

By creating a voluntary mentorship group, people can learn in a supportive environment [2]. Mentorship circles can foster a sense of belonging and create the opportunity to help employees overcome challenges in the workplace. Having a designated space to open up and share can improve empathy and bolster employee satisfaction.

Conduct Cross-Department Training

People can significantly enhance their soft skills by volunteering to work in different roles engaging with others in higher and lower hierarchies throughout an organisation.

As ethnicity and gender imbalance is quite common in management, exchanging roles as part of a Cross-Department Training program can help build greater compassion and understanding. It will also reduce barriers and encourage dialogue among people who otherwise may have never needed to interact.

Address the Pay Gap

According to UN Women, globally, there are significant discrepancies between men's and women's income, with women making only 77 cents for every man's dollar [3]. This gap widens even further when issues of race are considered.

One way to combat favouritism the reduce pay discrepancy (particularly when handing out bonuses and pay rises) is to adopt performance-based reviews. Such reviews can focus on measurable results, improve transparency and diminish the effect of superficial, opinion-based decision making.

Complete an audit with your staff

It's challenging to address issues around DEI when there is little or no data to support change. Conversely, the picture becomes more evident when audit-based quantitative and qualitative reporting is integrated into a change program. Such audits can include questionnaires and focus group outputs. Focus groups can be particularly effective when external entities conduct them; They are better able to offer more safety and hence more honesty.

It's also a good idea to release audit findings back to employees as an expression of the company's willingness to be transparent and open.

Acknowledge the presence of employee religion and faith

Include the various religions and religious events or occasions that are important to employees in the audit process. Have corporate or internal affairs officers develop a calendar of such events to ensure they are celebrated or acknowledged by the organisation. Such activities help create a deeper understanding between employees of different faiths and cultures.

Ideas for how the organisation can play a role in its commitment to inclusivity via religious affairs include:

- Letting staff take time off during religious celebrations
- Creating a prayer space for those that may need it
- Release company-wide emails to mark out or celebrate key religious events.

The journey towards becoming a more inclusive business might feel uncomfortable but much-needed transformation will only come about when companies step up and decide to make tangible changes.

In summary

Addressing bias, gender equality, and inclusivity is not an easy road, and many organisations have worked hard with only limited results. But now more than ever, employees want to work for companies that are making an effort towards making the world a better place. When employees see they are part of something bigger than just the commercial needs of the organisation, they feel a greater sense of purpose, commitment and morale.

Kacha's mission is to see men and women leading, influencing, and shaping the world in equal measure.

Follow us to read more articles about diversity, inclusion, equality and gender-conscious recruitment.

[\[1\]](#) Gino, Francesca and Katherine Coffman, '*Unconscious Bias Training That Works*'. (From the Magazine, September–October 2021)

[\[2\]](#) **Zaib, Aneela**, *How a Mentorship Program Can Boost Internal DEI Initiatives* (ASAE – The Centre for Association Leadership)

[\[3\]](#) King, Chidi, *Take Five: At the current rate of progress, no equal pay until 2069* (Equality Department of the International Trade Union Confederation 24 February 2017)