



# TOOL 1: MULTICULTURAL DIVERSITY ON THE AGENDA



# INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is designed by **Vlerick Business School** and **Talentree** with the support of the European Social Fund and the Flemish Government to help organisations in creating a diverse and inclusive work environment. The content of this toolkit is based on learnings we gathered during a project focused on guiding newcomers and companies to fasten the job search and induction process on the work floor. The toolkit consists of 4 tools and is structured as follows:



## **Tool 1: Multicultural Diversity on The Agenda**

By providing facts and figures about multicultural diversity and explaining how it leads to competitive advantage, this first tool helps organisations to build a business case in order to put diversity and inclusion on the agenda.



## **Tool 2: Building a Diverse organisation: Getting The Foundations Right**

This second tool focuses on the critical success factors to build a diverse organisation, the steps towards creating an inclusive company and ways to bring unconscious bias to the forefront.



## **Tool 3: Recruiting for Diversity**

This third tool helps companies to recruit more diverse talent. It focuses on how to set up an inclusive recruitment process and how to tackle bias in recruitment.



## **Tool 4: Managing Diversity in The Workplace**

This fourth tool helps organisations to prepare and manage teams which are becoming more diverse. Next to this, it helps to understand how organisations can provide a great kick-off for the new (diverse) hires.

These 4 tools can be used together or as stand alone tools depending on the specific context of an organisation. Organisations that are just starting with their diversity and inclusion efforts and that are looking to build the business case will benefit from starting with tool 1. Organisations that are further along in their diversity and inclusion journey can jump toward the tool(s) that are most relevant for them. Based on these 4 tools also a training has been developed consisting of 4 modules and accompanying exercise leaflets, through which organisations can deliver an internal training on the 4 building blocks provided in this toolkit. The modules are designed in such a way companies can use them autonomously to set up their own diversity initiatives and workshops.

**Although this toolkit is based on the insights with regard to multicultural diversity, many of the insights and exercises can be translated to diversity in general.**

You can also download the powerpoint and leaflets made for this tool to roll out a training in your own team or company.

# MAIN OBJECTIVE TOOL 1

This tool is the first tool in a series of 4 tools designed to help you create an inclusive and diverse work environment and to reap its benefits in the best possible way. This tool focuses on how to get multicultural diversity on the agenda.

You'll learn:

- ✓ Facts and figures about diversity
- ✓ How diversity leads to competitive advantage
- ✓ When and how to start with implementing a diversity policy



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# 1. DIVERSITY: THE NEW NORMAL



Our world is becoming **superdiverse\***. Besides the enormous increase in the ethnic-cultural diversity, the diversity within the diversity is also growing. People all over the world are pouring in. This is becoming especially clear in urban areas which we often refer to as **'majority-minority cities'**: cities where the majority of inhabitants have roots in migration. So superdiversity is not just a word, **it is an empirical fact that we have to deal with**. This unparalleled variety of cultures, identities, religions and languages presents both **challenges and opportunities** for practitioners and policymakers but also for communities and businesses. Some facts & figures for Belgium\*\*:

21%

of Flemish population are of foreign origin (other nationality, born outside of Belgium and obtained a Belgian nationality or one of the parents is non-Belgian).

37%

of Flemish children are of foreign origin (other nationality, born outside of Belgium and obtained a nationality or one of the parents is non-Belgian).

62%

Dubai (83% of its residents are foreign born), Brussels (62% foreign born) & Toronto (46% foreign born) belong to the 3 most cosmopolitan cities in the world.

67%

The workforce of tomorrow is diverse: two out of three children in Brussels & Antwerp have a migration background.

**The diversity of the workforce has been increasing for decades. And that isn't going to change any time soon. Organisations will have to prepare for the future and embrace diversity.**

Source:\*\*Van Daele, E. (2013, December 18). Superdiversiteit. Consulted from <https://www.socius.be/superdiversiteit/>; \*\*Vlaanderen agentschap binnenlands bestuur. (2018). Samenleven in Diversiteit in Cijfers. Consulted from [http://samenleven-in-diversiteit.be/sites/default/files/sid2017\\_vlim2018\\_brochure.pdf](http://samenleven-in-diversiteit.be/sites/default/files/sid2017_vlim2018_brochure.pdf)

# 2. THE LABOUR MARKET PARADOX

## 2.1. The war for talent continues to rise

The labour market in Belgium, as in most other European countries, is challenged by increasing labour shortages. Many companies are facing a tough fight to attract talented employees. There are 5 reasons why the war for talent is now more apparent than ever\*:

**1. More vacancies than ever.** Belgium has the Euro zone's highest rate of unfilled vacancies (See Figure 1). It doesn't seem like the tension between supply and demand will be solved any time soon. According to Agoria, the Belgian federation for the technology industry, as many as 584000 Belgian vacancies threaten to remain unfilled in 2030 if we fail to take action\*\*.

**2. Digitalisation gives rise to new jobs.** It is expected that technological advancements will create more jobs than it replaces, leading to many new vacancies. This entails a shift in the knowledge and skills that employers will require.

**3. Mismatch and underutilized potential.** Despite the high rate of unfilled vacancies, many people are unemployed. This shows a fundamental mismatch between supply and demand on our labour market. The challenge is to re-or upskill the unemployed for new, sustainable jobs.

**4. Late entry & early exit from the labour market.** Compared to other countries, we leave the labour market early. Belgians have on average an active career of 32 year, instead of 45 years. We don't only leave the labour market early, extended schooling options delay the labour market entry for youth.

**5. Ageing population.** In the coming decades, the progressively ageing population in Europe will have a dramatic impact on the composition of the workforce. While large cohorts of baby boomers will enter retirement – increasing the need for health & care related services – less employees will be entering the labour market. This creates a serious skills shortage for some sectors.

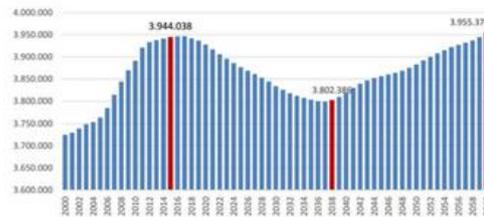


Figure 1. Projections of the working-age population (20-64) in Flanders  
Source: Federaal Planbureau en Algemene Directie Statistiek (bewerking Departement WSE).

## 2.2. Labour market challenges for multicultural talent

Companies are not tapping into **the talent pool of multicultural talent**, as shown by the employability rates of natives compared to people with foreign roots\*\*\*. The gap in employability between natives and migrants is even larger for medium-to-highly skilled people than for lower educated people.

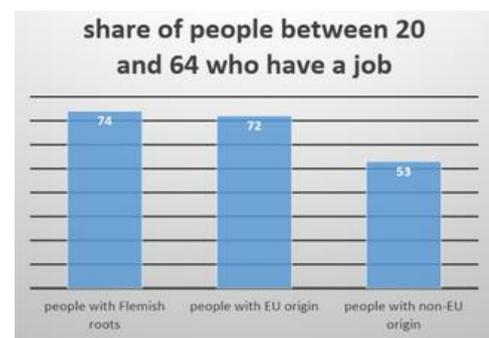


Figure 2. Share of people in the Flemish region who have a job, in the beginning of 2016, classified by roots (Vlaanderen agentschap binnenlands bestuur, 2018).

### Higher educated newcomers



Figure 3. Gap in employability between natives and people of foreign origin (De Cuyper, 2016).

Source: \*<https://markmagazine.be/waarom-woedt-een-nieuwe-war-for-talent/>; \*\* [https://info.agoria.be/hubfs/Be%20The%20Change/Summary\\_Report\\_EN\\_V1.pdf](https://info.agoria.be/hubfs/Be%20The%20Change/Summary_Report_EN_V1.pdf); \*\*\* Vlaanderen agentschap binnenlands bestuur. (2018). Samenleven in Diversiteit in Cijfers. Consulted from [http://samenleven-in-diversiteit.be/sites/default/files/sid2017\\_vlim2018\\_brochure.pdf](http://samenleven-in-diversiteit.be/sites/default/files/sid2017_vlim2018_brochure.pdf)

# Barriers to employment for highly educated newcomers

While supporting highly educated newcomers during their job search journey, we observed the following barriers:

# 1

**Language requirements:** Many Belgian employers require candidates to speak Dutch and/or French. Highly educated newcomers often speak a professional level of English. However, they need time to reach a professional level of Dutch and/or French, which is very difficult to acquire by taking classes only. Language usage on the work floor would be a great catalyst.

*“ Almost every vacancy that fits my profile requires a high-level of Dutch since it includes a lot of internal and external customer contact. I am already writing fluently but speaking still needs to be upgraded to reach a professional level. ”*  
- Turkish auditor

# 2

**Unknown is unappreciated:** Companies/recruiters often cannot relate to the international universities and work experience, which might lead to an undervaluation of the background of newcomers. (See the chapter on bias in Tool 2)

*“ To my experience, it has no added value if you obtained an excellent education abroad. Belgium companies seem to prefer people who are schooled locally. ”*  
- Brazilian financial manager

*“ I do not like to sit and wait at home so I decided to start a new study instead of continuing to look for a job. I took online Google courses to enhance my chances to find a job in digital marketing. But even with these Google certificates I was not able to find a job, not even an unpaid internship. ”*  
- Russian marketer

# 3

**Lack of a local business network:** Entering a new job market also means building up a new network in the ecosystem. This is not easy. Moreover, the networks of newcomers rarely meet the employers network.

*“ It is difficult to build a network since I don't have local working experience. I don't have a big network of my own. ”*  
- Brazilian financial manager





**4** **No implicit knowledge of the job market:** Each job market has its own do's and don'ts, specific procedures that are often implicit and thus difficult to grasp for newcomers.

**”** *The application procedure itself is difficult and long. I had to take extra tests. You need to wait a long time before you get an appointment. Companies say they will get back to you, but they rarely do. So I called them myself. It is very disappointing that you frequently don't get a reply from companies on your application.* **”**

-Russian marketer

**”** *It took a long time to read job positions and all the requirements needed. Sometimes it only became clear towards the end that knowledge of a local language was needed, which meant I did not fit the profile they were searching for.* **”**

-Ukrainian sales manager

**5** **Being overqualified:** Not speaking the local language or not knowing the local market/ecosystem makes it difficult for newcomers to enter the job market at the same level they had in their home country. Nevertheless, entering at a lower level often results in feedback of being overqualified for the job.

**”** *Since I lack a senior network relevant for my role, I applied for roles which offer growth perspective rather than my current level. This, however, leads to feedback that I am overqualified for the roles I apply for.* **”**

- Syrian Medical Managing Director

## 2.3. THE LABOUR MARKET PARADOX

So, here's **the paradox**: organisations are looking for highly skilled talents and have difficulties finding them on the labour market while highly educated newcomers have difficulties entering the job market at their competence-level.

**The HR-barometer**, a yearly survey carried out by Vlerick Business School and Hudson on the key HR trends and challenges in the top 200 largest Belgian organisations, confirms this finding\*. Selection and recruitment has a firm position within the top three priorities of Belgian human resources departments, and respondents also feel they master this field of expertise. For most companies, however, **diversity is not indicated** as a priority at all, nor do companies indicate they master this topic. With organisations under pressure to find talented candidates, this finding is especially surprising.



Source: Trbovic, N., Volckaert, E., Buyens, D., & Defever, E. (2018). HR BAROMETER 2018, HRM trends and challenges in Belgian organisations. Ghent: Vlerick Business School & Hudson.

# 3. WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

## 3.1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIVERSITY AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Research of McKinsey\* shows a **correlation between diversity** in executive functions and **financial performance**. Specifically, companies in the top quartile for ethnic diversity were 33% more likely to experience above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile. Whereas companies in the fourth quartile for ethnic diversity were 29% more likely to underperform their industry peers in the other three quartiles financially.

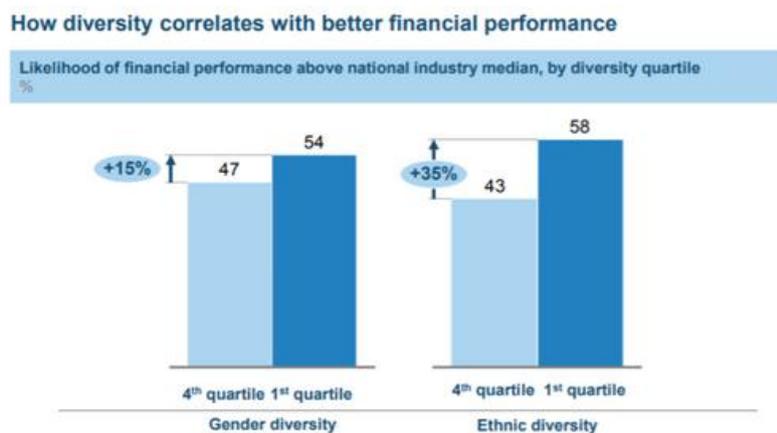


Figure 4. How diversity correlates with better financial performance (McKinsey Diversity Database)

## 3.2. THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY

The reasons for building a diverse organisation go beyond the idea that welcoming people of all types is “the right thing to do.” Diversity is **essential for creating a workforce that delivers competitive advantage**.

**The five main benefits** that diversity brings boil down to\*:

1. Winning the war for talent
2. Strengthening customer orientation
3. Improving decision making & innovation
4. Increasing employee satisfaction
5. Enhancing the company's image

Source: \*Hunt, V., Layton, D., & Prince, S. (2015). Diversity Matters. Consulted from <https://assets.mckinsey.com/~/media/857F440109AA4D13A54D9C496D86ED58.ashx>

### 3.2.1. WINNING THE WAR FOR TALENT



” In our organisation, it didn't matter where someone was coming from, but they needed to speak Dutch or French. Only for the IT department it was sufficient if one could speak only English. But we feel that the war for talent is larger than ever, so we recently adapted our strict language requirements in all our departments.

”

- HR manager, Insurance Company

” When you have hired some internationals, they will help you to keep the ball rolling. They bring in an entire new recruitment pool. They know people and can talk to them and that's how we succeed in hiring people that we would have never found otherwise.

”

- CHRO, biotechnology company

Diversity is a way to bring more talent into organisations. By employing highly educated newcomers, not only the applicant pool becomes bigger, also **the chances to find the right talent increase**. Moreover, research shows that top talents are drawn to organisations that have a diverse leadership and workforce. As the competition for top talent grows increasingly fierce, companies need to become even more intentional in their efforts to **recruit and retain diverse talent**.

### 3.2.2. STRENGTHENING CUSTOMER ORIENTATION



Our increasingly diverse society means that **the customer base** of most organisations will also become more diverse. To deliver value to customers, organisations need **diverse talent, views** and **thinking that reflect the society** in which they work. By committing to diversity as a strategic imperative, companies align their own organisation more closely with an increasingly heterogeneous customer base. This enables them to create more relevant products and respond more effectively to customer needs.

” We have people of different nationalities in our team. So we have a lot of inside knowledge about different cultures and countries. This enables us to penetrate new markets. ”

-Talent manager, pharmaceutical company

” Our international clients are assisted by someone of their own culture. That is very positive for our clients. There is no language that we don't speak. ”

-HR manager, automotive sector

### 3.2.3. IMPROVING DECISION-MAKING & INNOVATION



Today's dynamic business context challenges the longevity of companies. The ability to thrive in the face of uncertainty and change highly depends on diversity. Diversity improves the quality of decision-making and stimulates innovation. Diverse teams bring a greater variety of problem solving approaches, perspectives and ideas, leading them to outperform homogeneous teams. Non-diverse teams are likely to apply a more uniform approach to problem-solving, which ultimately dampens creativity and limits the possible solutions the team will try. A diverse team is better equipped to approach a problem from every angle, resulting in a better, more thought-through solution. The greater the diversity, the greater the breadth of strengths available.

” *By observing other ways of working, you can learn a lot. So I believe that a diverse*

*workforce boosts competence development. Furthermore, it brings people closer; when people need to work together with people of different cultures, they start to develop a greater understanding for each other. By doing so, many prejudices disappear.* ”

*- HR manager, international company*

In a survey by Forbes\* based on an exclusive survey of 321 executives at large global enterprises:

**85%** of the respondents agreed that a diverse and inclusive workplace was essential for the diversity of thought needed to drive innovation.

Additionally, external organisations across industries who score highly on diversity and inclusiveness report:

**57%**  
better team collaboration

**45%**  
more likelihood of improving market share

**19%**  
greater retention

**70%**  
more likelihood of achieving success in new markets

Source:\*Egan, E.M. (s.d.). Global Diversity and inclusion Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce. consulted from [https://i.forbesimg.com/forbesinsights/StudyPDFs/Innovation\\_Through\\_Diversity.pdf](https://i.forbesimg.com/forbesinsights/StudyPDFs/Innovation_Through_Diversity.pdf)

### 3.2.4. FOSTERING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

A Gallup study found that diversity within leadership and the organisation as a whole, leads to **higher employee satisfaction\***. In their survey, 60% of the employees working for companies with a high level of diversity responded that they are engaged in their work. This results is strongly contrasting to the responses of employees working for companies with a low degree of diversity. Here, only 11% of the employees felt engaged with their work. Firms with diverse boards are more likely to adopt programs that signal organisational support for employees and benevolence, and these programs foster more positive satisfaction levels. In addition, diversity is also **a key focus for the future workforce** - millennials - when making career choices.

”

*We are an international company. Our clients expect that we reflect the diversity of our ecosystem in our workforce. Also our employees, especially the millennials, expect a diverse workforce when they opt to work for an international company.*

”

- Business manager, services company



### 3.2.5. ENHANCING THE COMPANY'S IMAGE/CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP



Through its focus on stakeholder relations, a key tenet of corporate sustainability is **CSR**, or corporate social responsibility—a consideration of the organisation's impact, both positive and negative, on the world.

**Good governance** and **reputation management** are no longer optional for organisations. This means that management of business practices such as CSR and diversity are becoming more important than ever. Customers and (potential) employees require companies to behave responsibly and ethically, and hence investing in diversity is an **important way to attract and engage employees**.

“ I think a broad range of stakeholders are a little fed up that change around diversity and equity is not happening at a faster

*pace. This issue will still be relevant in 2019. Employees will be more vocal and demand their employers to take action on diversity related issues. We have already seen this with some companies in 2018 like Google, but I think more employees will feel empowered and expect more from their employers in this regard. Investors will continue to see diversity as an indicator of a company's long term success and its ability to attract the best talent and be more innovative and competitive, and will use their influence to push harder for gender and racial/ethnic diversity.*

”

- VP, software company

## 3.3. RISKS OF BEING NON-DIVERSE

### WHAT IF YOU DON'T INVEST IN DIVERSITY?

Let's look at it the other way around: what if you don't invest in diversity? Then you might risk to face the following **organisational pains\***:

- 1. Limited access to talent:** non-inclusive organisations are often not able to tap into the entire talent pool. This means losing the war for talent and being beaten by to companies who already actively embraced a multicultural talent base.
- 2. Irrelevance:** when there is a significant gap between the composition of your workforce and the stakeholder groups, you risk becoming irrelevant.
- 3. Turnover:** non-inclusive organisations are not able to maintain a diverse workforce. The diverse employees will often feel discriminated and might therefore leave. On average, the cost of replacing an employee is 1,5 times their salary.
- 4. Negative brand:** organisations that are not diverse and inclusive might be perceived as 'behind-the-times'. This has negative consequences for the brand, moral, performance and recruitment.
- 5. Negative reactions:** being non-inclusive opens the gate for all kinds of discrimination, which creates the risk for formal complaints and even lawsuits (think of the context in the US, where this happens frequently), which will negatively affect the organisation's reputation and performance and potentially might cost the organisation a lot of money.



Source:\*Habacon, A. E. (2018). The diversity business case. Consulted from <http://www.aldenhabacon.com/diversity-business-case/>

# 4. WHEN TO START

## 4.1. BRINGING DIVERSITY INTO EXISTING TEAMS AND ORGANISATIONS

Many organisations have a traditional composition and experience **a certain trigger to start thinking about multicultural diversity**. Some examples of triggers are:

- A new business development kick-off abroad
- An acquisition of an international company or merger with an international group
- A small diversity initiative such as hiring a refugee
- Hiring international talent due to a lack of expertise abroad

” *We are super diverse, but I should say that this happened more by accident than by intention. We were looking for skilled employees, and those are hard to find. So we started looking outside of Belgium. And then, one day, you notice that you actually have a quite diverse team. We experienced that this worked well, we became more innovative and our employees were more dedicated. That is why we are now thriving for the target goal of 50%.* ”

- CHRO, biotechnology company

Based on these first triggers, companies start experiencing both opportunities and challenges and gradually move on to formalizing their processes around diversity. So the best way to kick-off is to:

- Experiment with diversity in situations where it might be relevant to your business
- Learn about the opportunities and challenges for your organisation
- Start building a strategy and action plan for full implementation (see Tool 2)

Some companies, however, are international by DNA, being part of international groups or organisations. Nevertheless, these organisations can still work on lifting diversity to a more strategic level, for instance by focusing on new minority groups that might fit their strategy.

” *We have very international teams but we feel we are lacking talent with a local migration background. That's why we are building a plan to recruit from the next generation of graduates.* ”

- Director HR, international pharmaceutical company

## 4.2. DIVERSITY FROM THE ONSET

In case you are in the phase of building up a team or company, it might be useful **to start at the very beginning**. Research by Harvard indicates that timing is a crucial and often overlooked factor\*. In particular, founders and entrepreneurs may place diversity low on their list of early priorities, viewing it as a concern that can be addressed once their firms have grown. But it is far more easy to build a diverse organisation from scratch than to diversify a large, complex, homogeneous organisation. Stacy Brown-Philpot, the CEO of the freelance-job site TaskRabbit, made that point when she reflected on her early days as a financial director at Google9: *“When I joined Google, we were 1,000 people. It took me two and a half years to look around and realize there weren’t a lot of people like me. So my colleague and I set up a group. It was really late. I think that’s part of the challenge.”* Research suggests that an already homogeneous organisation will tend to become even more so as it scales up. So **if you have the opportunity**, it’s valuable to encode diversity in a company’s DNA **at the earliest stage**.

” Diversity is not a topic on our agenda. But international growth is high on the agenda and the world is our playground. So building a mixed team is a natural process. ”

-CEO, Software Development Company

Source:\*Gompers, P. & Kowali, S. (2018). The other diversity dividend. Harvard Business Review, July-August 2018



## 4.3. POSITIVE EXAMPLES



There is a clear need for organisations who serve as **a role model with regard to diversity** and who share their learnings and success stories. This will trigger other organisations to follow. Some firms might not experience diversity as an urgency right now. **Positive examples** can inspire these organisations and let them take the first step.

” *I work in a typical local family firm. We -and I think many similar firms- are never the first movers. Though, examples of bigger organisations who successfully move forward with it inspire us.* ”

-HR manager, building industry

**So when you start, don't forget to share! By doing so you will inspire others to bring diversity into their teams and organisations.**

# 5. TESTIMONIAL BASF



*Katrien Dingemans – Manager workplace learning and relations education*

*Kitty Vinck – Legal advisor labour law and labour relations*

BASF Antwerp is a chemical company in the port of Antwerp region. We employ more than 3.000 employees, of diverse backgrounds. As we see society further evolving towards more diversity and inclusion, we want to reflect this trend in our company as well. Additionally, we are always on the lookout to recruit talented employees and we want to embrace diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process.

## Diversity on the agenda

We actually started on a very small scale, with a few small initiatives.

1. Embracing diversity is already part of the core values and strategy of BASF. Now the time has come to integrate this in our local context.
2. As we become more diverse in a natural way, many questions related to diversity arise in our management teams.
3. Furthermore, it is important for BASF to make a social contribution to the wider society. For example: we support various projects such as workplace learning for certain disadvantaged groups, like low-educated people, immigrants or women. We have also joined the "Boost ambition for a social future" project at Karel De Grote Hogeschool, which aims to give young people with a migrant background more opportunities. After all, these young people are less likely to enter higher education. BASF has financially supported this project and took the lead in its policy coordination.

At some point, all the pieces of the puzzle fell into place: the time had come to set up an action plan on diversity and inclusion.

## Defining an action plan

We are currently setting up an action plan and defining

specific steps to embrace diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organization. We drew inspiration from both inside and outside the organization for the action plan. As a first step, we consulted Unia and the trade unions. Subsequently, HR conducted a great deal of internal research into diversity and inclusion. We concluded that the values and the business case for diversity were there, but that steps still had to be taken with regard to concrete implementation. We explained our ideas to a steering committee, which gave its approval to set up a concrete action plan. We invited an expert who conducted a workshop on diversity management and intercultural communication. This resulted in many tips that we have taken into account when designing our action plan. For example, clear policies are needed that transcend (gender, cultural, ...) diversity: we will not focus on specific target groups and accompanying minority policies. Instead focus will be on inclusion.

## Success stories & ambassadors

At the moment we do not look for publicity for our initiatives. Instead we want to demonstrate the added value of diversity through success stories and ambassadors. In our recruitment processes, creating awareness is crucial. The development of specific guidelines for recruitment is therefore a first priority in our action plan. We will conduct focus groups to further elaborate the action plan. In these focus groups we will look at what is already happening and what can be improved within our organisation. We take into account the needs of our stakeholders, in order to embed our actions as much as possible in existing initiatives. Every initiative will also be checked with the target group.

## 6. INSPIRED BY

The content in this toolkit is created for the Newcomer Induction Management Acceleration Programme (NiMAP), sponsored by ESF and the Flemish Government. Goal of the project is to fasten the job search and induction process on the work floor of newcomers entering the Belgian job market by supporting both talent and employers.

Belgian partners in this project are Vlerick Business School - a top-tier international business school - and Talentree - a new venture building international and entrepreneurial teams. This project is inspired by the Rapid Acceleration Programme from our transnational partner, Stockholm School of Economics, whom we are deeply grateful for a great partnership. A special thanks to Judit Weillbull, Kristina Nilsson and Lin Lerpold!

### The project team:

- Prof Dr Dirk Buyens - Professor of Human Resources and Partner at Vlerick Business School
- Dr Emmy Defever - Senior Researcher Area People and Organisation at Vlerick Business School
- Sarah Quataert - Researcher Area People and Organisation at Vlerick Business School
- Merel Dutry - Intern People and Organisation at Vlerick Business School
- Hannelore Waterschoot - Managing Partner at Talentree
- Nancy Leys - Project Manager at Talentree
- Myrthe Waterschoot - Marketing Manager at Talentree

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# 7. CONTACT INFORMATION



**Prof Dr Dirk Buyens** - Professor of Human Resources and Partner of Vlerick Business School

**Email:** [dirk.buyens@vlerick.com](mailto:dirk.buyens@vlerick.com)

**Dr Emmy Defever** - Senior Researcher Area People and Organisation of Vlerick Business School

**Email:** [emmy.defever@vlerick.com](mailto:emmy.defever@vlerick.com)

**Telephone number:** +32 9 210 97 11

**Website:** <https://www.vlerick.com>



**Hannelore Waterschoot** - Managing Partner at Talentree

**Email:** [hannelore@talentree.be](mailto:hannelore@talentree.be)

**Telephone number:** +32 473 89 42 37

**Website:** <https://talentree.be>





# TOOL 2: BUILDING A DIVERSE ORGANISATION: GETTING THE FOUNDATIONS RIGHT



# INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is designed by **Vlerick Business School** and **Talentree** with the support of the European Social Fund and the Flemish Government to help organisations in creating a diverse and inclusive work environment. The content of this toolkit is based on learnings we gathered during a project focused on guiding newcomers and companies to fasten the job search and induction process on the work floor. The toolkit consists of 4 tools and is structured as follows:



## **Tool 1: Multicultural Diversity on The Agenda**

By providing facts and figures about multicultural diversity and explaining how it leads to competitive advantage, this first tool helps organisations to build a business case in order to put diversity and inclusion on the agenda.



## **Tool 2: Building a Diverse organisation: Getting The Foundations Right**

This second tool focuses on the critical success factors to build a diverse organisation, the steps towards creating an inclusive company and ways to bring unconscious bias to the forefront.



## **Tool 3: Recruiting for Diversity**

This third tool helps companies to recruit more diverse talent. It focuses on how to set up an inclusive recruitment process and how to tackle bias in recruitment.



## **Tool 4: Managing Diversity in The Workplace**

This fourth tool helps organisations to prepare and manage teams which are becoming more diverse. Next to this, it helps to understand how organisations can provide a great kick-off for the new (diverse) hires.

These 4 tools can be used together or as stand alone tools depending on the specific context of an organisation. Organisations that are just starting with their diversity and inclusion efforts and that are looking to build the business case will benefit from starting with tool 1. Organisations that are further along in their diversity and inclusion journey can jump toward the tool(s) that are most relevant for them. Based on these 4 tools also a training has been developed consisting of 4 modules and accompanying exercise leaflets, through which organisations can deliver an internal training on the 4 building blocks provided in this toolkit. The modules are designed in such a way companies can use them autonomously to set up their own diversity initiatives and workshops.

**Although this toolkit is based on the insights with regard to multicultural diversity, many of the insights and exercises can be translated to diversity in general.**

You can also download the powerpoint and leaflets made for this tool to roll out a training in your own team or company.

# MAIN OBJECTIVE TOOL 2

This tool is the second tool in a series of 4 tools designed to help you create an inclusive and diverse work environment and to reap its benefits in the best possible way. This tool focuses on how to get the foundations right to build a diverse organisation.

You'll learn:

- ✓ What the critical success factors are to build a diverse organisation
- ✓ How to develop an inclusive company culture
- ✓ How to tackle unconscious bias



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# 1. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF BUILDING A DIVERSE ORGANISATION



Building a **diverse organisation** does not happen overnight. It takes a **comprehensive effort** and **continued investment** over years to attract, hire, develop and retain a diverse workforce. To reap the benefits of diversity, employers must be prepared for, and deal with, some obstacles. Diversity does not produce better results automatically, through a sort of multicultural magic\*. It does so only if it is managed well. There are some **critical success factors** that need to be taken into account:

## 1.1. C-LEVEL COMMITMENT

This is one of the most common mentioned **success factors** by companies. The CEO and other company leaders are the most visible spokespeople for diversity. Their support is needed to ensure diversity and inclusion efforts receive the appropriate attention, funding and monitoring. **Leaders also set the example** for employees by exhibiting inclusive behaviours, managing their own bias, and supporting employees' best work\*\*. Far more change is possible if people at the top are tangibly committed to diversity and inclusion.

” *This is a topic which requires visible senior executive support, to both initiate diversity programmes and sustain them with sponsorship.* ”

- HR manager, Financial services company

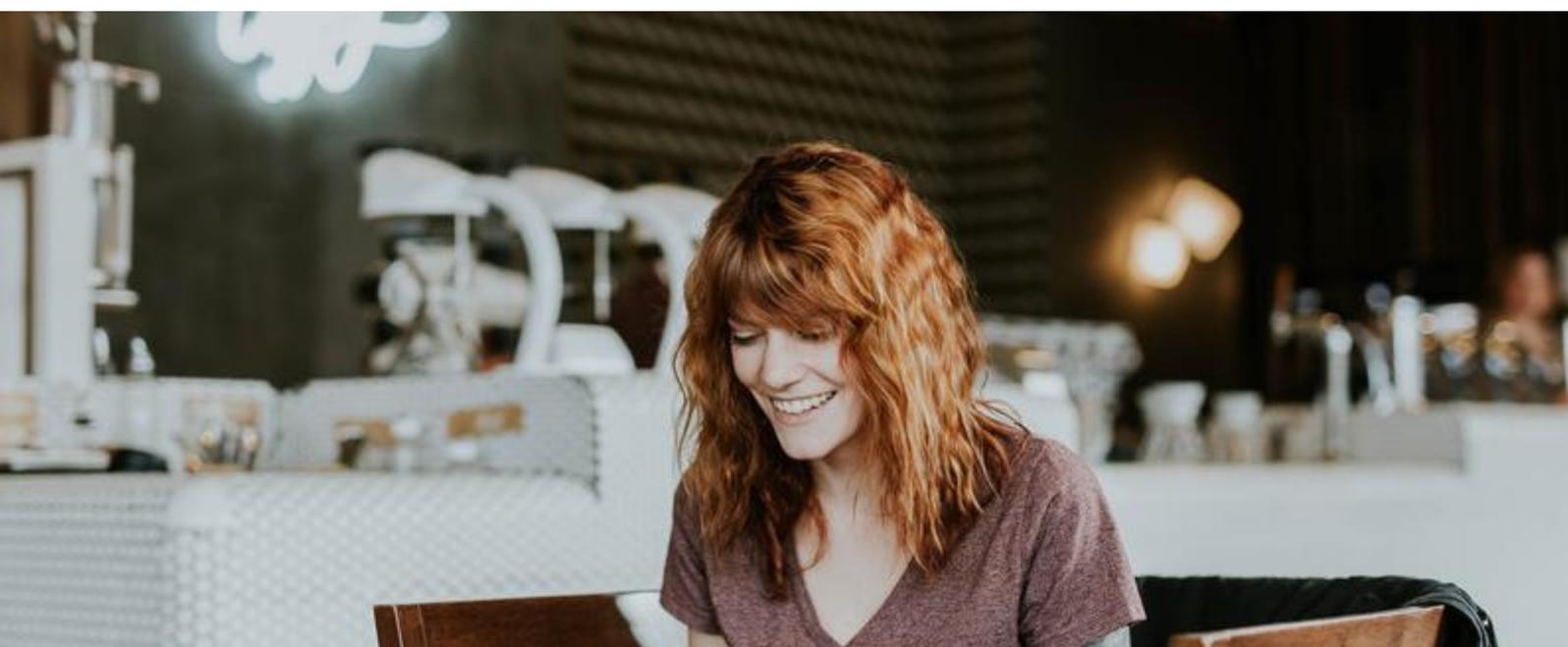
Source:\*Schumpeter. (2016). Diversity fatigue. The Economist. Consulted from [https://www.economist.com/business/2016/02/11/diversity-fatigue?fsrc=scn/fb/te/pe/ed/diversityfatigue&fbclid=IwAR3wKouXWJAXa\\_9LwZjzCAOB\\_V9iIF81mbES419q0m8s8wcNQ\\_BVrWrtU](https://www.economist.com/business/2016/02/11/diversity-fatigue?fsrc=scn/fb/te/pe/ed/diversityfatigue&fbclid=IwAR3wKouXWJAXa_9LwZjzCAOB_V9iIF81mbES419q0m8s8wcNQ_BVrWrtU); \*\*Glassdoor. (2017). RECRUIT TALENT IN TODAY'S MARKET Guide to Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace. Consulted from <https://b2b-assets.glassdoor.com/guide-to-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace.pdf>

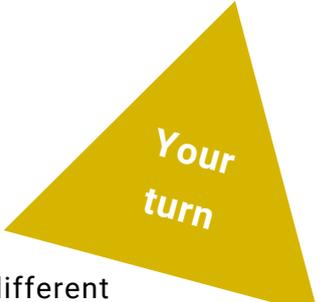
## 1.2. STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

The success of any initiative within an organisation depends not only on C-level buy-in. You need **the support from different groups of stakeholders**. This also applies to the implementation of a diversity management strategy within organisations. As such, it is important to identify particular groups of stakeholders and chose an appropriate way to engage them. In general, companies mention 6 groups of organisational stakeholders that have an important impact on their diversity strategy:

- 1) Board/C-level
- 2) Line management
- 3) HR/recruitment
- 4) Corporate citizenship
- 5) Employees
- 6) Unions

To convince your stakeholders to begin and sustain the journey towards a more diverse and inclusive organisation, you should **make them understand** and **believe in the business benefits** of it. This can be realized by presenting them a diversity business case, in which you conscientiously write down how diversity will benefit the company. A business cases includes both the positive things that will be achieved (pleasure enhancement) and the negative things that will be avoided (pain avoidance).





## HOW TO START BUILDING A BUSINESS CASE

The grid below helps you to build your business case. Think about how the different stakeholders can be convinced to invest in diversity by emphasizing different organisational outcomes that will be positively (benefits) affected when you invest in diversity, or negatively affected when you do not invest in diversity (risks). Think about concrete actions to convince your stakeholders and write them down in the grid. When you completed the grid, make a top 3 of priorities to start with. All details on the benefits and risks can be found in Tool 1: "Multicultural diversity on the agenda".

		Board/ C-level	Line Management	HR/ Recruitment	Corporate Citizenship	Employees	Unions
BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN DIVERSITY	Winning the war for talent						
	Strengthening customer orientation						
	Improving decision making and innovation						
	Increasing employee satisfaction						
	Enhancing the company's image/CSR						
RISKS WHEN NOT INVESTING IN DIVERSITY	Limited access to talent						
	Irrelevance						
	Turnover						
	Negative brand						
	Negative reactions						

## 1.3. ALIGNMENT WITH BUSINESS STRATEGY

Successful diversity & inclusion initiatives are anchored in the business strategy - they are not limited to just being 'training', 'HR' or 'CSR' initiatives\*. This means that an organisation must be able to **articulate a clear and compelling business case for diversity & inclusion**. This can be either simple or complex. A simple business case might be rooted in desired behavioural change such as improving employee satisfaction due to changing workforce demographics. At a more complex level, it may start with a customer-driven business strategy, based upon rapid growth, globalization, or the pursuit of emerging markets where needs may include new products, marketing platform and tools, sales and customer service competence, and/or different employee demographics that mirror customers. In any case, organisations must be able to answer the following question: **"Why does the business need your diversity plan?"**

Diversity and inclusion aren't the objective. They are the means to achieving strategic goals and competitive advantage.

## 1.4. INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Diversity and inclusion go hand in hand\*\*. Whereas diversity is about the demographic constellation of the group, **inclusion goes beyond only counting heads**. Inclusion refers to the degree to which individuals have **the feeling that they can actively contribute to the organisation**. A culture cannot be diverse and successful if employees outside of a dominant group do not feel included. The common phenomenon in which employees omit, hide or lie about certain essential personal characteristics, preferences or activities occurs when employees don't feel that they (or an aspect of themselves) belong\*\*\*. Being inclusive is not about simply helping newcomers to fit in or helping the majority of employees to adapt to newcomers. It's about creating a culture where contributions from all employees are **respected** and **constructive conflict is encouraged**.

Inclusion is a "mindset" more than anything, and believing in its value is the first step.

Source:\*Llopis, G. (2017). 5 Reasons Diversity And Inclusion Fails. Forbes. Consulted from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/workday/2019/01/25/workday-podcast-building-the-worlds-largest-collaborative-data-community/#1690c7f38cec>\*\*Ferdman, B. M., & Deane, B. R. (2014). Diversity at Work: The Practice of Inclusion. New York: John Wiley & Sons\*\*\*Yoshino, K., & Smith, C. (2013). Uncovering talent A new model of inclusion. Consulted from [https://www.lclidnet.org/media/uploads/resource/Uncovering\\_Talent\\_Deloitte.pdf](https://www.lclidnet.org/media/uploads/resource/Uncovering_Talent_Deloitte.pdf)



## 1.5. CRITICAL MASS



There needs to be a certain level of diversity within the organisation, and especially in the executive functions, to be able to reap the benefits of diversity. This is clearly shown by research on gender diversity, which indicates that **it takes more than a critical mass** of women at mid-level to eliminate women's token status in the work world\*. The key to changing the way women are perceived in any company is a critical mass of women at the senior levels. Not only do men view women differently when there is a critical mass of female senior executives in an organisation, women also view themselves differently. For example, women in firms with few senior women are less serious about their work, less satisfied with their firms, less self-confident, and less interested in promotion compared with women in firms with significant numbers of women in senior positions. This may account for the disturbing rate of turnover among talented women many organisations are facing today. Which, of course, presents us with a vicious circle. If the only way to get more women to the top of corporations is to have more women at the top of organisations, we are left a riddle, not a breakthrough. Translating this to multicultural diversity, it means that an organisation will need a **certain number of employees** with another cultural background (a critical mass) - in order to make a difference.

“ Once you have reached that critical mass, you see that people start developing a different mindset and that they become more open to other cultures. That is a positive story. ”

-Director, Government Agency

“ You need to have a good distribution of diversity within the whole company, in all departments. This leads to a snowball effect: it starts to have an impact on everything. ”

-CHRO, Biotechnology Company

“ Some say that the critical point is situated around 15%. For me 15 percent doesn't seem enough. You can only fully benefit from diversity when you have an inclusive culture. There shouldn't be a dominant culture. Once you have succeeded in this, everything will accelerate. ”

-HR Manager, Management consulting company

Source: \*Nichols, N. A. (1993). Whatever Happened to Rosie the Riveter? Harvard Business Review, 71 (4).

## 1.6. A WELL-MANAGED PROCESS

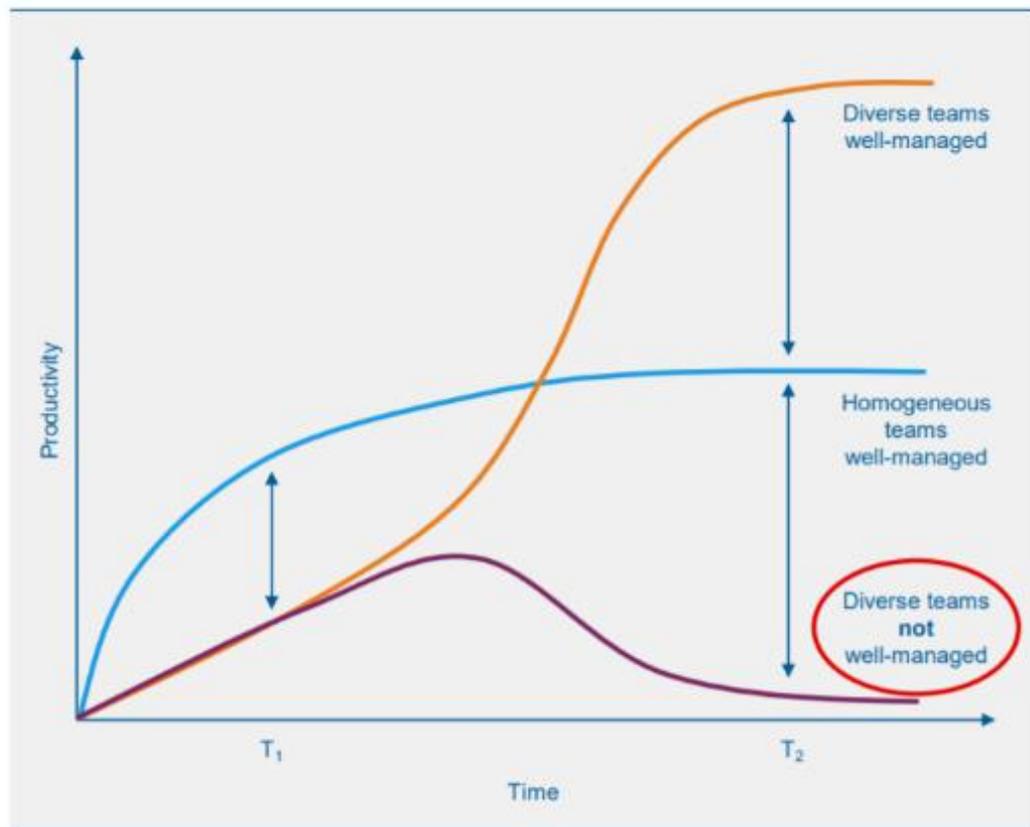


Figure 1. Adapted by QED Consulting from "Unravelling the Diversity-Performance Link in Multicultural Team", by Stahi, Maznevski, Volgt and Jonsen, INSEAD working paper 2007."

**On a team level**, research has shown that cultural diverse teams that are well managed perform better than homogeneous teams. Though, poorly managed diverse teams do not perform with the same effectiveness (see Figure 1). The increased performance of well-managed heterogeneous teams is due to the synergy that comes from their diversity\*. Their ineffectiveness when poorly managed comes from their problems in overcoming the complexity of their teams. When heterogeneous teams can overcome the difficulties of managing their diversity, they are able to capture the benefits of their synergy and be more effective than is the case with homogeneous teams.

**On an organisational level**, building a more diverse and inclusive organisation requires a change management process. This also involves an investment, both with direct and indirect costs like use of supplies, consultants and outside professionals, and the significant time involved by company employees providing and receiving training and participating in other aspects of analysing and implementing diversity management.

Source:\*Tarique, I., Briscoe, D., & Schuler, R. (2015). International Human Resource Management Policies and Practices for Multinational Enterprises.

# Managing complexities in diverse teams

When your organisation and teams are (becoming) more diverse it is important to manage following complexities\*:

**Communication Barriers:** When you build a workforce with employees from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, you increase the number of communication barriers. Give extra attention to communication flows and mutual understanding.

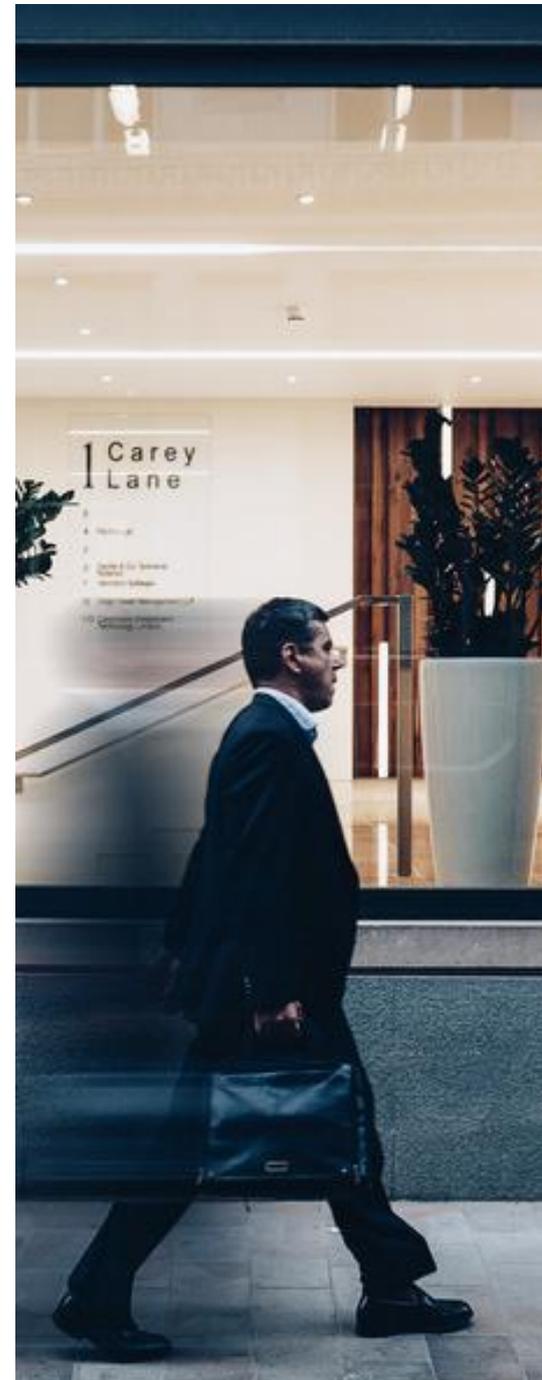
**Cultural Resistance:** When companies become more diverse, it changes the relationships and nature of the workplace. These changes might cause stress among employees and contribute to a negative atmosphere, if not well-planned and managed. Training employees about diversity is important if it will impact their work roles and processes.

**Discrimination Issues:** Discrimination is the unfair treatment of someone because of distinguishing traits. Naturally, if you have a diverse workforce there is more opportunity for discrimination since diversity is based on distinguishing traits among workers. So be aware.

**Overcoming Negativity:** Companies do a better job of increasing diversity when they forgo the control tactics and frame their efforts more positively. It's more effective for instance to engage managers in solving the problem, increase their on-the-job contact with newcomers, and promote social accountability—the desire to look fair-minded.

**Building Trust:** The biggest challenge to create an inclusive culture has to do with trust. Employees need to trust each other if they are to produce their best work. It goes easier to establish trust with those you have a lot in common with. Managers of diverse teams need to invest in establishing bonds of trust within their teams.

The path towards an inclusive culture might be complex and unpredictable. Therefore, organisations cannot be too simplistic in their prescriptions for improving performance through diversity. The ideal mix and set of measures may be unknowable in advance and may evolve as the context changes. Organisations must therefore **be patient** and **try a variety of interventions**, alone and in combination, across locations, functions, and time\*\*.



Source:\*Wroblewski, M.T. (2019). Negative Effects of Diversity in the Workplace. Consulted from <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/negative-effects-diversity-workplace-18443.html>\*\* Tsusaka, M., Reeves, M., Hurder, S., & Harnoss, J. (2017). Diversity at Work. BCG Henderson Institute. Consulted from <https://bcghendersoninstitute.com/diversity-at-work-df670c1254fe>

# 2. TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE COMPANY CULTURE

Many organisations launch diversity programmes without truly understanding inclusion, a self-defeating approach that leads to poor outcomes. Diversity in the absence of inclusion rarely adds value to an organisation. Numbers are important, but successful companies go beyond statistics and engage people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives through participatory decision-making. In order to create an inclusive company culture, organisations should take the following **4 key elements** into account:

**1** Having a high impact inclusion and diversity strategy

**3** Investing in inclusive leadership

**2** Developing an intercultural mindset

**4** Creating awareness of bias



# 2.1. A HIGH IMPACT INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY

To integrate a diverse workforce and to manage it effectively, there are a couple of things an organisation should do. In their study on diversity in the workplace, involving more than 1000 companies across 12 countries, McKinsey found 4 imperatives for a high-impact inclusion and diversity strategy\*:

**1. Commit and cascade:** While an example must be set at senior levels, it is crucial to cascade down to all company ranks and ensure that everyone, especially middle management, has enough resources to buy in to diversity principles.

**2. Link inclusion and diversity to growth strategy:** The inclusion and diversity goals should be explicitly linked to specific business growth priorities, which can only be realized when there is a good understanding of which aspects of diversity act as performance catalysts for specific business metrics.

**3. Craft an initiative portfolio of inclusion and diversity priorities:** The initiatives should be prioritized in alignment with the overall growth strategy. Furthermore, this should go along with creating a genuinely inclusive organisational culture. This way, by combining the “hard” and “soft-wiring”, a coherent story is created, which is required to reap the intended benefits. Therefore, it is important to monitor the perceptions and experiences about diversity and inclusion, together with business impact metrics.

**4. Tailor for impact:** Inclusion and diversity initiatives should be adapted to the different business areas or geographic regions in order to maximize local buy-in and impact.

Just like any cultural change, implementing a real strategy for inclusion and diversity necessarily involves considerable effort by companies. Though, research shows it's worth the effort in terms of the potential company benefits.



Figure 2. The 4 imperatives for a high-impact inclusion and diversity strategy . Adapted by Hunt, V., Prince, S., Dixon-Fyle, S., & Yee, L. (2018). Delivering through Diversity. Consulted from [https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organisation/our%20insights/delivering%20through%20diversity/delivering-through-diversity\\_full-report.ashx](https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organisation/our%20insights/delivering%20through%20diversity/delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx)

Source:\*Hunt, V., Layton, D., & Prince, S. (2015). Diversity Matters. Consulted from <https://assets.mckinsey.com/~/media/857F440109AA4D13A54D9C496D86ED58.ashx>

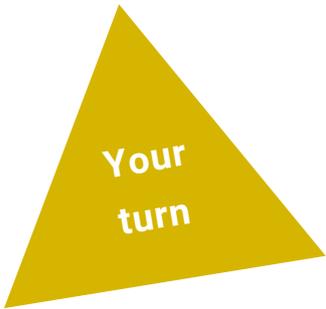
## 2.2. FROM MONOCULTURAL TO INTERCULTURAL MINDSET



Researchers have distinguished **4 phases towards an inclusive culture** within organisations. The 4 phases characterize the evolution from a monocultural mindset towards an intercultural mindset and indicate a sequentially greater ability to recognize and have a more complete understanding of cultural difference. Organisations in the '**resistance**' or '**conformity**' phase have a (rather) monocultural mindset, in that one's own culture is seen as the only culture and to some extent, the 'better culture'. Organisations in the **inclusive** and **proactivity** phase are considered as having a (more) multicultural mindset, in that one's own culture is considered as equal amongst other cultures.

### EXERCISE: How inclusive is your organisation?

Using the questionnaire on the next page, you can find out whether your organisation is currently in the resistance, conformity, inclusion or proactivity phase. You can fill this out together with your colleagues/teams to think about what one can do to become more inclusive. When you have completed the questionnaire, count the score for each colour separately. When you have the highest score for the purple area, your organisation is probably in the resistance phase. When you have the highest score for the orange area, you are probably in the conformity phase. The blue area reflects the inclusion phase, whereas the green area reflects the proactivity phase.



Your  
turn

Cultural diverse managers are seen as a threat				
Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Our organisation undertakes nothing to increase cultural diversity				
Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Our organisation is following the legal minimum				
Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Cultural diversity is primarily considered as a barrier				
Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
We are an example for other companies with regard to cultural diversity				
Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
We are actively searching for ways to increase cultural diversity				
Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)

Management sees diversity as an asset				
Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)

The structure of the organisation is adapted to the needs of people from different cultures				
Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)

Table 1. Questionnaire adapted from Dass & Parker (1999)

Organisations in a **resistance phase** might react in a bad way to imposed diversity initiatives because they do not see the advantage of it. That is why it is so important to first create awareness in such organisations before taking action.

Many organisations today can be situated in the **conformity phase**: they follow societal developments without doing more than what is legally obliged.

Organisations chasing a workforce that represents the ecological framework and who truly believe in the benefits of diversity, can be situated in the **inclusion phase**.

Organisations in the **proactive phase** go even beyond this: they intervene in the organisational structure in order to accommodate diversity the best as possible. Such organisations believe that a diverse workforce is crucial for long-term growth.



## 2.3. INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

### The 6 C's of inclusive leadership

Leaders have an important role to play in creating an inclusive organisation. Research by Deloitte\* reveals that employees feel included when they are treated fairly, when their uniqueness is appreciated and they have a sense of belonging, and when they have a voice in decision making. To achieve these aims, highly inclusive leaders demonstrate **6 signature traits**—in terms of what they think about and what they do—that are reinforcing and interrelated (see Table 2):

1. **Commitment** to diversity at the individual and organisational levels
2. **Courage** to speak up and challenge the status quo
3. **Cognizance** of our bias and blind spots at both personal and organisational levels
4. **Curiosity** and desire to be open to differences and ambiguity
5. **Cross-cultural fluency** and ability to communicate and adapt to cross-cultural interactions
6. **Collaboration** with and empower others who are diverse from us

These 6 traits further break down into **15 behavioural elements**, describing what leaders are thinking about and actually doing when displaying those 6 traits (see Table 2).

Collectively, they represent **a powerful capability highly adapted to diversity**. Embodiment of these traits enables leaders to operate more effectively within diverse markets, better connect with diverse customers, access a more diverse spectrum of ideas, and enable diverse individuals in the workforce to reach their full potential.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Six traits	Commitment	Courage	Cognizance of bias	Curiosity	Cultural intelligence	Collaboration
15 elements	Personal values	Humility	Self-regulation	Openness	Drive	Empowerment
	Belief in the business case	Bravery	Fair play	Perspective-taking	Knowledge	Teaming
				Coping with ambiguity	Adaptability	Voice

Table 2. Source: Dillon & Bourke (2016), Deloitte University Press

### How to develop inclusive leadership capabilities

The six signature traits of an inclusive leader are very tangible and developable. This has important implications for how organisations select and develop leaders. The Deloitte study identified several **actions for organisations to develop inclusive leadership capabilities**:

- **Highlight inclusive leadership** as a core pillar within the organisation's diversity and inclusion strategy
- Ensure that recruitment, competence management and leadership programmes **emphasize inclusive leadership capabilities**
- Embed 'inclusive leadership behaviour' within performance management:
- **Set clear KPIs** to inclusive behaviours and diversity and inclusion outcomes.
- **Hold leaders accountable** for non-inclusive behaviours
- **Ambassadorship**: reward and showcase those individuals who role model the characteristics of inclusive leadership well.

Source: \*Bourke, J., & Dillon, B. (2016). The six signature traits of inclusive leadership Thriving in a diverse new world. Deloitte Insights. Consulted from <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/topics/talent/six-signature-traits-of-inclusive-leadership.html>

## 2.4. BRING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TO THE FOREFRONT

### 2.4.1. WHAT IS BIAS?



**Unconscious biases** are the automatic, mental shortcuts used to process information and make decisions quickly\*. At any given moment our brains take in 11 millions of bits of information per second, but can only consciously process about 40.

Cognitive filters and heuristics allow the mind to unconsciously prioritize, generalize, and dismiss large volumes of input. These shortcuts can be useful when making decisions with limited information, focus, or time, but can sometimes lead individuals astray and **have unintended consequences** in the workplace. Unconscious bias can prevent individuals from making objective decisions. They can cause people to overlook great ideas, undermine individual potential, and create a less than ideal work experience for their colleagues.



*The TED talk by Yassmin Abdel-Magied uses a surprising way to challenge us all to look beyond our initial perceptions.*

Source:\*Microsoft's E-learning on unconscious bias. Consulted from <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/diversity/beyond-microsoft/default.aspx>

## 2.4.2. COMMON TYPES OF BIAS

Let's take a look at 4 unconscious biases that are common in the workplace. These are only a few examples as there are many more biases that influence our decision making.

**Confirmation bias:** Confirmation bias refers to how people primarily search for bits of evidence that back up their opinions, rather than looking at the whole picture. It leads to selective observation, meaning you overlook other information and instead focus on things that fit your view. You may even reject new information that contradicts your initial evidence.

**Affinity bias:** Affinity bias refers to when you unconsciously prefer people who share qualities with you or someone you like. It occurs because your brain sees them as familiar and relatable, and we all want to be around people we can relate to.

**Halo/horn effect:** If someone sees one good thing about a person, the halo effect will mean that they think every single other thing about the person is also good. The horns effect is the opposite of this.

**Conformity bias:** This bias is also known as groupthink: the tendency people have to behave like those around them rather than using their own personal judgment. It occurs because we all seek acceptance from others – we want to hold opinions and views that our community accepts.

For a detailed overview of possible biases, see the '**cognitive bias codex**', which has been developed by Better Humans\*.



Source: <https://betterhumans.coach.me/cognitive-bias-cheat-sheet-55a472476b18>

Your  
turn

## Test yourself for unconscious bias

Harvard professors Banaji & Greenwald developed a series of online tests to identify hidden biases which they define as 'blind spots'.

Use the Harvard Implicit Association Tests to learn more about your own implicit biases:

Take 15 minutes to fill in **the test**. Then reflect on your results.

Encourage people with whom you frequently interact to do the same.

Tips to help\*:

- ✓ Consider taking tests that are most relevant for your business context. For example, gender, race, disability, and sexual orientation. While taking the test, position yourself in a quiet environment with no distractions. Reaction time in the test counts.
- ✓ After taking the test, think about the results: did they surprise you? What areas do you want to explore and learn more about? List 2-3 concrete actions you will take to address these biases.
- ✓ For detailed information about the IAT research and unconscious bias, review this video by researcher Mahzarin Banaji:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABSeKU2qJol>

### 2.4.3. WHERE TO SPOT BIAS

There are many areas where bias might appear within your organisation. Analyze your data and review the following suggestions as you make plans to become **a more inclusive organisation\***:

**Hiring.** Research shows that CV's from people with an ethnic minority background are nearly twice as likely to be left untouched compared to those of people with a Dutch name. Removing all identification details from your candidates resumes and applications might help the hiring team to evaluate people on their skills and experience instead of factors that can lead to biased decisions.

**Performance reviews.** People from a different cultural background are not always evaluated and rewarded on the same criteria. Provide manager training to counteract bias in performance reviews, and ensure objective criteria are provided for evaluations.

**Leadership opportunities.** Are men, women and minorities offered the same development and mentoring opportunities? Look at enrollment in these programs and decide how you can make them more accessible. Consider how to structure mentoring development programs that provide equal access, and counteract tendencies toward male-male favoritism.

**Promotions.** Are men, women and minorities being promoted at the same rate? Look into your data to find out. People who have a tendency to downplay accomplishments might be overlooked when it is time for a promotion.

**Compensation.** Differences in compensation often exist among men, women and minorities, but this can be overcome with accountability and transparency practices. Analyzing your compensation data by diversity groups will allow you to find problem spots.

**Everyday interactions:** Survey data and employee focus groups may help uncover areas where bias operates in your organisation.

*Satya Nadella, an Indian immigrant to the USA, was told early in his management career at Microsoft that he would never make it to senior level "because of the way you talk," referring to his accent. Today he is CEO of Microsoft and oversees one of the most exciting cultural and strategic corporate transformations of our time.*

Source: \*Glassdoor. (2017). RECRUIT TALENT IN TODAY'S MARKET Guide to Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace. Consulted from <https://b2b-assets.glassdoor.com/guide-to-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace.pdf>

## 2.4.4. STRATEGIES TO DISRUPT BIAS

Combating unconscious biases is hard, because their influence on our decisions in a given moment doesn't feel wrong; it feels intuitively right. In order to create a workplace that supports and encourages diverse perspectives, talents, and ideas, you need to give people **the platform and tools to begin unbiassing**. Consider the following **strategies** to manage bias\*:

**1 Commitment to uncovering bias.** Leaders need to understand the importance, science and ubiquity of unconscious bias. Senior leaders can help to bring the conversation about bias to the rest of the organisation.

**2 Creating awareness by training.** Making unconscious bias conscious requires self-awareness. It asks individuals to question their assumptions about the way things work, the way they behave, and the way they make choices. It also requires a willingness to have uncomfortable conversations about bias perceived in everyday interactions with colleagues. Training cannot make bias go away, but it helps people to realize they are permanently biased.

**3 Hold yourself and others accountable.** Avoid that quick decisions are solely based on gut feeling. Make sure first impressions are questioned and decisions are justified. For example, take the time to write down the reasons why you are making a decision to avoid acting on impulse.

**4 Gather data and learn about your organisational biases.** Data is far less prone to unconscious bias than our own cognition (though not immune). Collect and use data to inform decisions in order to reduce the influence of unconscious bias. Collect data about yourself and the decisions you're making (cfr. 2.4.3. Where to spot bias).

**5 Use processes and criteria to support more objective decisions.** A structured process to guide decision-making can help to reduce the potential impact of unconscious bias. For example, define criteria for positions and roles within your organisation, develop structured and standardized interview questions that speak directly to the desired traits for a position and pre-define requirements and goals for success.

Source: \*Glassdoor. (2017). RECRUIT TALENT IN TODAY'S MARKET Guide to Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace. Consulted from <https://b2b-assets.glassdoor.com/guide-to-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace.pdf> + Google. (s.d.). re:Work Unbiasing. Consulted from <https://rework.withgoogle.com/subjects/unbiasing/>

Your  
turn

## Give your own internal bias workshop

If you want to develop your own internal training on bias, you can use the 'NiMAP training toolkit for companies'. Also the learning resources that have been developed by Google, Microsoft and Facebook might be inspiring:

### Google:

- Go to <https://rework.withgoogle.com>
- Read their Guide "Raise awareness about unconscious bias"
- Customize and deliver your own workshop by using the 'Google unconscious bias @ Work slides' and 'Google's unconscious bias @ Work facilitator guide'

### Facebook:

- Go to <https://managingbias.fb.com/>
- View the slides and videos Facebook developed for their 'Managing bias class'

### Microsoft:

- Go to <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/diversity/beyond-microsoft/default.aspx>
- Follow their E-training on unconscious bias

## 2.4.5. THE CASE OF ACCENTURE

### Diversity drives engagement and business results

Three years ago, we decided to challenge ourselves on how Accenture as employer could open up to more diverse talent groups like refugees and migrants. To do this, we wanted to further build on our Corporate Citizenship program 'Skills to Succeed' through which Accenture is already equipping minority groups with the right skills to find a job or build a business. This program not only aligns with Accenture's inclusive company values, but also positively impacts our employee engagement and retention and brings new and different perspectives resulting in better business solutions and results.

### Sponsorship and clear Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

A key driver of our new diversity initiative was the sponsorship of our Country Managing Director, Bart De Ridder. He has a clear motivation: To be a successful as innovation-driven company, you need a diverse workforce with people from different backgrounds bringing in different perspectives. From the outset we defined a very specific KPI with the HR team: 5% of all new hires should be sourced through our Skills to Succeed program. This KPI is set on a country level and not per team because we believe it's better to inspire people to act as role models than to point the finger and force certain actions. In other words: we're convinced that a bottom-up, organic approach is more effective than a top-down directive. Within the HR team, we have a single point of contact (SPOC) who advises the recruitment team, ambassadors (managers who support the initiative and lead selection interviews) and candidates. If necessary, this individual is ready to give them a gentle push to leap into the unknown.

### First success stories

To date, we have hired seven untapped international talents with a permanent contract and welcomed another twelve newcomers with paid internships. This



experience has already taught us that post-hiring follow-up requires just as much attention as the (pre-)hiring phase. As a result, we now assign a mentor to every person hired via the Skills to Succeed program, not only to support their work-related needs but also as a sounding board for private challenges impacting professional life (e.g. administration, childcare...). In terms of developing their technical and language skills, these new hires use the Accenture online learning platforms, available for all our employees and customized to the needs of each employee.

### Stronger together

Today, we share Accenture's good practices with other companies via **Talent2Connect**, a collective platform for impactful employment solutions. The platform builds a bridge between companies looking for talent and the different social

organisations in Belgium working with jobseekers who encounter barriers on the traditional labor market. Talent2Connect facilitates this matchmaking so that companies and untapped talent meet each other in a refreshing and impactful way.

*Magali Frankl, Corporate Citizen lead, Accenture Belgium & Luxembourg*

**The main points to remember** from this case are:

- ✓ Ensure sponsorship of the executives
- ✓ Assign a changemaker, a project owner
- ✓ Establish a joint vision why you do this
- ✓ Develop KPI's
- ✓ Build ambassadorship
- ✓ Build a network of sourcing partners
- ✓ Develop a business case

These main points may be considered as the foundation that is needed before starting a diversity and inclusion initiative.



# 3. INSPIRED BY

The content in this toolkit is created for the Newcomer Induction Management Acceleration Programme (NiMAP), sponsored by ESF and the Flemish Government. Goal of the project is to fasten the job search and induction process on the work floor of newcomers entering the Belgian job market by supporting both talent and employers.

Belgian partners in this project are Vlerick Business School - a top-tier international business school - and Talentree - a new venture building international and entrepreneurial teams. This project is inspired by the Rapid Acceleration Programme from our transnational partner, Stockholm School of Economics, whom we are deeply grateful for a great partnership! A special thanks to Judit Weillbull, Kristina Nilsson and Lin Lerpold!

## The project team:

- Prof Dr Dirk Buyens - Professor of Human Resources and Partner at Vlerick Business School
- Dr Emmy Defever - Senior Researcher Area People and Organisation at Vlerick Business School
- Sarah Quataert - Researcher Area People and Organisation at Vlerick Business School
- Merel Dutry - Intern People and Organisation at Vlerick Business School
- Hannelore Waterschoot - Managing Partner at Talentree
- Nancy Leys - Project Manager at Talentree
- Myrthe Waterschoot - Marketing Manager at Talentree

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# 4. CONTACT INFORMATION



**Prof Dr Dirk Buyens** - Professor of Human Resources and Partner of Vlerick Business School

**Email:** [dirk.buyens@vlerick.com](mailto:dirk.buyens@vlerick.com)

**Dr Emmy Defever** - Senior Researcher Area People and Organisation of Vlerick Business School

**Email:** [emmy.defever@vlerick.com](mailto:emmy.defever@vlerick.com)

**Telephone number:** +32 9 210 97 11

**Website:** <https://www.vlerick.com>



**TALENTREE**

**Hannelore Waterschoot** - Managing Partner at Talentree

**Email:** [hannelore@talentree.be](mailto:hannelore@talentree.be)

**Telephone number:** +32 473 89 42 37

**Website:** <https://talentree.be>





# TOOL 3: RECRUITING FOR DIVERSITY



# INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is designed by **Vlerick Business School** and **Talentree** with the support of the European Social Fund and the Flemish Government to help organisations in creating a diverse and inclusive work environment. The content of this toolkit is based on learnings we gathered during a project focused on guiding newcomers and companies to fasten the job search and induction process on the work floor. The toolkit consists of 4 tools and is structured as follows:



## **Tool 1: Multicultural Diversity on The Agenda**

By providing facts and figures about multicultural diversity and explaining how it leads to competitive advantage, this first tool helps organisations to build a business case in order to put diversity and inclusion on the agenda.



## **Tool 2: Building a Diverse organisation: Getting The Foundations Right**

This second tool focuses on the critical success factors to build a diverse organisation, the steps towards creating an inclusive company and ways to bring unconscious bias to the forefront.



## **Tool 3: Recruiting for Diversity**

This third tool helps companies to recruit more diverse talent. It focuses on how to set up an inclusive recruitment process and how to tackle bias in recruitment.



## **Tool 4: Managing Diversity in The Workplace**

This fourth tool helps organisations to prepare and manage teams which are becoming more diverse. Next to this, it helps to understand how organisations can provide a great kick-off for the new (diverse) hires.

These 4 tools can be used together or as stand alone tools depending on the specific context of an organisation. Organisations that are just starting with their diversity and inclusion efforts and that are looking to build the business case will benefit from starting with tool 1. Organisations that are further along in their diversity and inclusion journey can jump toward the tool(s) that are most relevant for them. Based on these 4 tools also a training has been developed consisting of 4 modules and accompanying exercise leaflets, through which organisations can deliver an internal training on the 4 building blocks provided in this toolkit. The modules are designed in such a way companies can use them autonomously to set up their own diversity initiatives and workshops.

**Although this toolkit is based on the insights with regard to multicultural diversity, many of the insights and exercises can be translated to diversity in general.**

You can also download the powerpoint and leaflets made for this tool to roll out a training in your own team or company.

# MAIN OBJECTIVE TOOL 3

This tool is the third tool in a series of 4 tools designed to help you create an inclusive and diverse work environment and to reap its benefits in the best possible way. This tool focuses on recruiting for diversity.

You'll learn:

- ✓ How to set up an inclusive recruitment process
- ✓ How to attract more diverse candidates
- ✓ How to tackle bias in recruitment



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# 1. SETTING UP AN INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT APPROACH

As described in tool 1 'Multicultural diversity on the agenda', the business case for diversity is clear. Though becoming a diverse and inclusive organisation **doesn't just happen on its own**. Companies need to actively attract and recruit candidates from a variety of backgrounds to ensure they're not inadvertently creating a homogenous workforce. Hence, setting up a concrete approach to increase diversity through recruitment is an important element of any diversity and inclusion strategy.

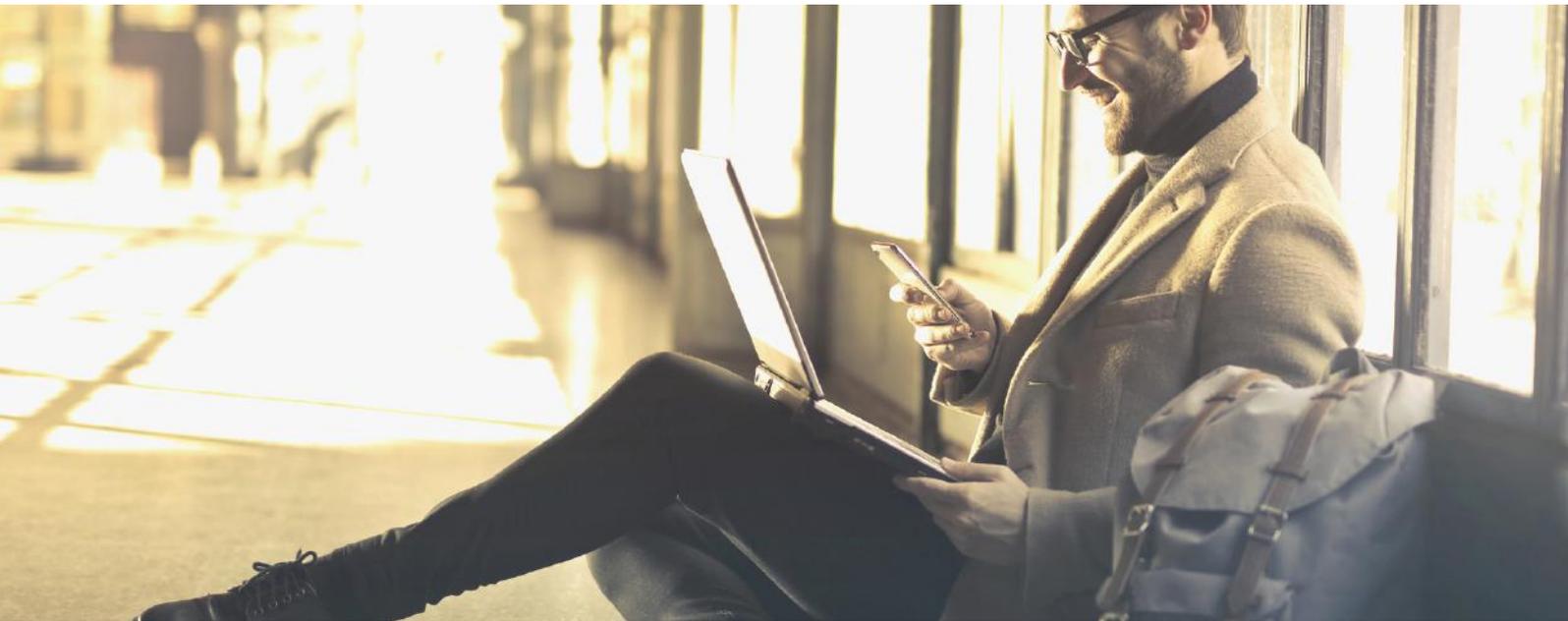
Consider the following steps to **increase diversity through recruitment**\*

- ✓ **Define recruitment targets.** Develop and implement a recruitment plan which identifies recruitment goals for diverse talent. For example, a target may be to increase the percentage of new hires with an international background with 5% in the next 6 months, or to increase the percentage of diverse candidates in the pipeline by 15% over the next year. Organisations that are having the most success in broadening their recruitment recognise the tangible impact that targets can make.\*\*
- ✓ **Include diversity in your employer branding.** Employer branding is an important tool to make sure you are attracting diverse talent. Companies that show a commitment towards diversity and inclusion are more attractive for newcomers. Think of it this way: potential employees need to be able to see themselves at your company in order to feel comfortable applying there (see point 2 in this guide).
- ✓ **Add alternative sourcing channels.** Building a diverse talent pool requires companies to explore ways other than traditional methods to attract new talent. There are several possibilities to broaden and expand sourcing channels (see point 3 in this guide).
- ✓ **Identify recruitment bias.** Also in recruitment, bias is known to lead recruiters to make irrational hiring decisions. Because of this, companies might miss the chance to hire the best talent. It's important that companies consider how bias impacts the sourcing, screening and interviewing of candidates and finally, the hiring decisions (see point 4 in this guide).
- ✓ **Make a plan** – and address low hanging fruit first. To start making early wins, decide which areas can be addressed immediately, then evaluate longer term projects and plan accordingly.



Source:\*Glassdoor. (2017). RECRUIT TALENT IN TODAY'S MARKET Guide to Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace. Consulted from <https://b2b-assets.glassdoor.com/guide-to-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace.pdf>\*\*PWC Report (2017). Gaining an edge in the competition for talent: Inclusive recruitment in financial services survey 2017.

## 2. DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT: START WITH YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND



A first way to get more diverse talent in the pipeline is **to build and promote an employer brand** that supports diversity. In today's competitive global war for talent, standing out from the crowd through a strong and value-infused employer brand is **crucial to attract new talent**. A commitment to diversity recruitment and hiring helps to set your company apart. The Glassdoor site survey indicates that **two-thirds of active and passive job seekers say that a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers\***.

” *Millennials often explicitly check how diverse our team is during the recruitment process. They expect to work in a global setting so the team should reflect this.*

”

- Business manager, services company

When it comes to diversity, you have to **let the outside world know that your organisation embraces difference**. Nowadays (potential) employees want more than just state-of-the-art work environments and fun activities at work. People are looking at the bigger picture and as today's world is becoming more and more diverse, applicants consider a work climate that reflects this global trend an important criterion. By **spreading a genuine story** that emphasizes the importance of these topics, your company will have **a bigger chance to become an employer of choice\*\***.

Source:\*Glassdoor blog article (2014). What Job Seekers Really Think of Your Diversity Stats. Consulted from <https://www.glassdoor.com/employers/blog/diversity/>; \*\* Decker, L. (2016). Becoming the employer of choice: Diversity matters. Consulted from <https://deckerdesign.com/2016/11/becoming-employer-choice-diversity-matters/>

## 2.1. SHOW YOUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

To ensure candidates with diverse backgrounds will feel at home at your company, it's important to show that your company puts **diversity and inclusion high on the agenda**. Here are some ways to show your company values diversity:

- ✓ **Company values:** make sure your company values explicitly or implicitly reflect your focus on and openness to diversity.

” *Diversity & Inclusion is a business imperative embedded in our company values. We actively promote it among our employees, raise awareness, and foster an environment that welcomes and embraces different perspectives, cultures, and diversity of thought.* ”

- Multinational company active both in the consumer and industrial sector\*

- ✓ **Show your diverse workforce:** it is important to show diversity in company messaging and communications. For example, you may include photographs of diverse teams and individuals in web and print materials. You can build stories and testimonials of employees with very diverse types of profiles.
- ✓ **Leverage the diversity you have:** the best way to communicate your employer brand to potential hires is through your current team members. Make them ambassadors and involve them in branding campaigns.
- ✓ **Manage your social media:** a lot of job candidates do their research before accepting a job offer (or even before applying for an open position). In a digital era, social media are the information sources candidates rely on to screen their potential new employer. Make sure your social media posts reflect the values you stand for as a company. In addition, don't forget that candidates often look at the LinkedIn profiles of current employees (your ambassadors). Also your overall product and service branding needs to embrace diversity.
- ✓ **Career pages:** in general, companies devote significant resources to building an effective, far-reaching, and compelling online presence. But too often, organisations forget their own career pages. So make sure to build strong career pages with meaningful and engaging content, so candidates don't bounce after being attracted by a great campaign.\*\*

Source: \*<https://www.henkel.com/company/diversity-and-inclusion>; \*\*Jobbatical. The Ultimate Guide to Hiring International. Consulted from <https://jobbatical.com/blog/international-hiring/>

- ✓ **Showcase specific diversity initiatives:** make your diversity initiatives and events visible to everyone within and outside your company by creating content and spreading this via different channels. Content can be visual, written, audio graphic or a combination of these. It could include workforce demographic statistics, pictures taken at diversity events, mission statements, awards your company has won, information about employee resource groups (these are groups of people within your company who share a common purpose, for example striving towards an inclusive workplace). Find a good balance in communicating diversity initiatives: On the one hand, it is great to share your company's efforts. On the other hand, minority and majority groups might not appreciate they are being put in boxes. Have an open dialogue with all stakeholders involved.
- ✓ **Diversity Rankings:** also, try to be among the first movers to be on diversity listings, already popular in the US and UK and currently rising in Europe. These listings get a lot of (media) attention, which is perfect to boost your company image as a diversity-driven organisation.
- ✓ **Authenticity:** it is important to have diversity genuinely woven throughout the entire company if you want to be seen as a diverse company. If this is not the case, efforts could be interpreted as hollow and ingenuine. This will lead to candidates disconnecting during the selection process or even worse after hiring. In other words: employer branding and communication strategies start with your internal practices and policies. Without real initiatives to put diversity high on the agenda and to build inclusive organisations, an employer brand that focuses on diversity is worthless or even harms your company.

**Getting started: If your workforce is not diverse yet, a first step might be to emphasise how your brand values community and to show that your company is open and looking for more diversity and new perspectives.**



## 2.2. EMPLOYER BRANDING CASE

The police department of Ghent believes in the power of diversity and wants to be a representative billboard of the city. That's why they put **extra effort in attracting people with a migration background to join the team.**

They have set up a recruitment campaign to address a broader and more diverse public, to attract young talents and to ameliorate the reputation of the police among certain communities.\*



The four biggest action points of their campaign are:

- 1 A new jobsite:** which contains information on what it means to work for the police of Ghent. The site gives an overview of all open vacancies and the accompanying selection procedure. It includes tips and tricks for the tests, and gives a clear image of the challenges the person might face during the process.
- 2 Job fair days:** the police organises multiple job fairs where representatives of different operational services, colleagues of the federal recruitment department and representatives of the Provincial Academy for Urgency Services and Local governments are present. They are available to answer all questions that visitors might have. This contributes to a realistic job preview.
- 3 Personnel as ambassadors:** these ambassadors strongly invest in social media, online visibility (including billboards on Spotify and advertisements on Facebook), campus communication, communication in sport and cultural centres... The ambassadors bring authentic stories of policemen (both with or without a migration background) who explain why they were attracted for a job at the police of Ghent and why young candidates should also apply.
- 4 Networking and active dialogue:** the police of Ghent wants to actively stimulate active dialogue between the different communities within Ghent and build a strong network that consists of all population groups.

The campaign frames within the new diversity policy of the police of Ghent. One of the biggest challenges is to **effectively address the increasingly diverse population in the city.** They want to develop a policy with respect for equal chances, one that contributes to the realization of the mission of the police of Ghent – “your police always nearby” – and to a better service for all citizens.

In sum, the diversity policy is based on **four axes:**

- Pursuing **a more diverse workforce**
- Pursuing **an open company culture**, broadening the insights and knowledge about other cultures
- **Strengthening the relation and dialogue** between the communities
- Attention for a **professional work attitude** in political activities and actions

Source:\*Politie Gent zet in op diversiteit met campagne '100% (f)ik' (2017). Consulted from: <https://persuimte.stad.gent/142351-politie-gent-zet-in-op-diversiteit-met-campagne-100-f-ik>

# 3. SOURCING DIVERSE TALENT

To find employees in times of talent shortage, companies need to **start looking beyond the traditional sources** and leverage new talent pools. Next to investing energy in a strong and diversity oriented employer brand, there might be some **additional ways to attract and find international profiles**.

When you have **multiple sourcing tactics**, the chances are higher to create a more diverse applicant pool:

- 1 Targeted campaigns
- 2 Niche channels
- 3 Local diversity channels
- 4 Referrals by your employees
- 5 International recruitment



## 3.1. TARGETED CAMPAIGNS

Use **targeted campaigns** to compete for talent **the way you compete for customers**. When a high-potential employee checks out a company, the first place they go to is increasingly social media. So make sure you use these channels to pull these talents in. **Define new target groups** for recruitment with extra focus on the minority groups you want to hire. **Use contextual advertising**, build applicant job search journeys and check whether influencer marketing might be relevant. Additionally, **LinkedIn** offers great search targeted possibilities, holding the biggest international business community.

## 3.2. NICHE CHANNELS

Looking for **very specific expertise** you might spontaneously start recruiting internationally based on scarcity. Channels that can support you:

**1. Local agencies and international recruitment companies** that recruit a niche of scarce profiles abroad and relocate them, often including administration and local language training/complementary skills training e.g. IT, nursing.

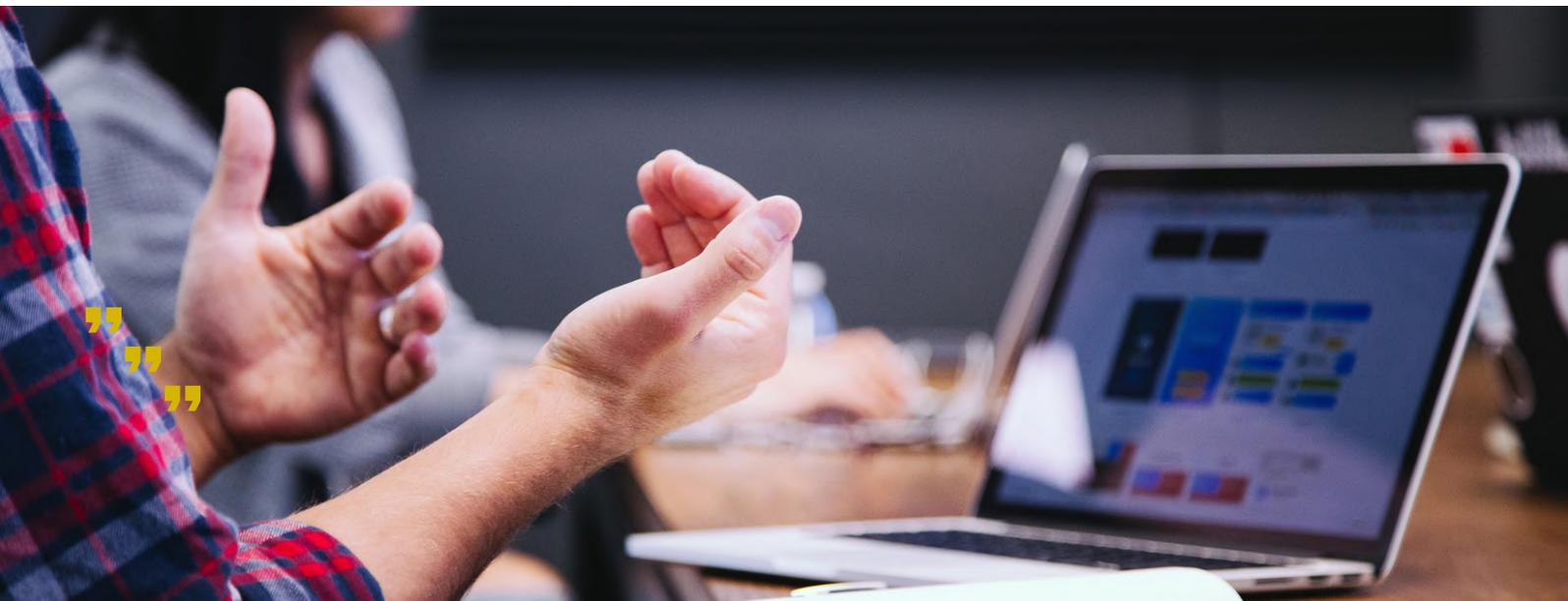
**2. International niche job board** focused on specific profiles.

**3. Acqui-hiring:** Acquisition of small companies, not because of their product or service expertise or customer base, but to recruit its employees who have the needed and scarce skillset.

” Because of our rapid expansion, we are facing the challenge of hiring sufficient employees to support our growth. Through acquisition our company is rapidly increasing its R&D capacity in the field of Power Electronics with expertise covering the entire chain from product conception to production support. This contributes to achieving the strategic objectives of our company, namely accelerated EV development and a stronger position in the field of electric and hybrid transmissions. ”

- Talent manager, company in the automotive sector

Inclusion is a “mindset” more than anything, and believing in its value is the first step.





### 3.3. LOCAL DIVERSITY CHANNELS

One way to get in touch with international talent, is by **targeting minority-specific institutions and associations**. You may need to partner up with local colleges and universities or establish your own diversity networks of professional bodies that have concentrated minority populations. Alternatively, you can work together with sourcing partners who are specifically focusing on diverse talent. In most cases, these potential partners are already in touch with the specific target audience and know more about the context of their network. They can be a catalyst in expanding your talent pool, not only having the right network but also **supporting you to connect to it with the right communication**.

### 3.4. REFERRALS BY YOUR EMPLOYEES

Since social and professional circles often overlap, **homogeneous personal networks** can have a harmful impact on organisational diversity. Decision makers often have the same educational background, are the same gender and race, and have worked at similar firms. Consequently, they can miss a lot of opportunities. That's why some companies have deemphasized referrals, or at least cautioned against their pitfalls. **But reliance on personal networking is still crucial** to the functioning of certain industries. Once you have a first base of diverse employees you can add their network locally and abroad to leverage your recruitment efforts. Some companies reinforce this by **offering matching fees** when bringing in a new colleague. Other companies build on the sense of community building and minority employees are happy to share open positions to their network to support building a more diverse team.\*

Source:\*Gompers, P. & Kovvali, S. (2018). The Other Diversity Dividend. Harvard Business Review, July-August.

## 3.5. INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT

Maybe you have explicitly searched for international mobile talent or maybe your search for specific expertise might have ended with an international hire.

In both cases it is important to **give extra attention to some aspects in the recruitment process:**

- ✓ **Tailor the offer to the needs of the international candidate:** The candidate will make a huge investment moving to a new country: listen closely to what motivates the candidates during the whole process and what he/she might see as thresholds. For example flexible working hours might help to overcome a local support system for the children, a job title might be important to convince a family member, .. Build a job offer that is tailored to the specific priorities, values, and goals of the person you want to hire and be prepared to some back-and-forth negotiating to align the candidate's and company's needs.
- ✓ **Relocation:** When relocating you should not only sell the job, but also your location throughout the whole process. This includes the unique aspects of the location but also cost of living, social security,... Clearly indicate you will support the candidate with all aspects of the relocation process: administration, support for the children and partner e.g. good neighbourhoods to live in, great schools, ...



# 4. TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

A common argument for hiring a certain candidate is **the “fit” with the team and company**. But “fit” does not necessarily mean hiring someone who is the same as your existing staff. Instead, the concept of “fit” might be better understood by thinking of a jigsaw puzzle, where the pieces mesh together but where each piece is unique and contributes something that would otherwise be missing. A necessary thing to do when you want to recruit in a diverse way is **identifying your own bias**. As explained in the tool 2, everyone has certain preferences—often called biases—and **you might not be aware of them**. Once your biases are out in the open, you will understand whether your image of the “perfect candidate” is affected by your particular ways of thinking rather than the actual qualifications and competencies needed for a position. **Only when preferences are discovered**, you will be able to judge candidates on their individual merits.\*



Source:\*Harvard University (2013). Recruiting for Diversity. Retrieved from: [https://hr.fas.harvard.edu/files/fas-hr/files/recruiting\\_for\\_diversity\\_9.17.13\\_0.pdf](https://hr.fas.harvard.edu/files/fas-hr/files/recruiting_for_diversity_9.17.13_0.pdf)

## 4.1. COMMON BIASES IN RECRUITMENT

Research shows that **interviewers already make decisions** about candidates **in the first 30 seconds to 2.5 minutes**. There's no denying it, first impressions count and have a decisive impact on how the interview goes and whether candidates get invited for a second interview. After the first impression is made, most hiring managers will then spend the remainder of the interview searching for validation of that initial decision. Something as little as the way a candidate dresses or his/her accent can bring out unconscious bias in the interviewer's mind, which in turn can skew the rest of the interview process. Most hiring managers will think of it as 'gut feeling' but really it's unconscious bias in their interview approach that might cause companies to lose out on very talented candidates\*.

The following are some **examples of the unconscious biases** that can affect recruitment at the interview level\*\*:

- ✓ **Affinity bias:** affinity bias is the preference for people "like me." In recruiting this commonly occurs when interviewers rate a candidate with a similar background as themselves more highly than a candidate with a different background, even if that candidate is more qualified.
- ✓ **Confirmation bias:** confirmation bias is when someone forms an opinion and interprets new evidence as confirmation of that belief. An interviewer may start with a preconceived opinion of a candidate based on the resume, and ask questions geared to confirming that belief.
- ✓ **Linguistic penalty:** research shows that a common explanation for the un- and underemployment of newcomers is their professional language level. This is referred to as the linguistic penalty bias, which arises not from a lack of fluency in English/local language, but from the largely hidden demands on candidates to talk in institutionally credible ways and from a mismatch of implicit cultural expectations and negative judgements by interviewers. It is the price newcomers pay when they are labelled as 'different' and fail to talk the way we talk and sound the way we sound.
- ✓ **Conformity bias:** we want to fit in. In a hiring panel, it is possible that one of you has a different opinion to others, but if you notice others responding better to a particular candidate, you are more likely to do the same. You will unconsciously decide to agree with the majority, and be swayed by it.

## 4.2. HOW TO DISRUPT RECRUITMENT BIAS

- 1) A diverse hiring team
- 2) Inclusive job descriptions
- 3) Blind CV screening
- 4) Assessments
- 5) A structured interview process
- 6) Use of technology
- 7) Evaluate your recruiting approach
- 8) Value ratings

Source:\*Jobattical. The Ultimate Guide to Hiring International. Consulted from <https://jobattical.com/blog/international-hiring/>\*\*Agarwal, P. (2018). Here is How Bias Can Affect Recruitment In Your Organisation. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pragyaagarwaleurope/2018/10/19/how-can-bias-during-interviews-affect-recruitment-in-your-organisation/#86656a91951a>

## 4.2.1. A diverse hiring team

A strong way to strengthen your recruitment process is to **diversify the hiring team** as much as possible. Not only will candidates feel more comfortable, you will also have **unique viewpoints from each of your hiring members**. Bringing just a few talented women or racial minorities into a group is likely to change the relative balance of power. And recent findings suggest that if those individuals make hiring decisions, they will **affect the group's future makeup**.\*

## 4.2.2. Inclusive job descriptions

The job description is the opportunity to make **a strong first impression**. It provides a blueprint for (potential) candidates to imagine their role with a company, encouraging them to, or discouraging them from, applying for a position. The tone, the language, and the details that are included in the description reflects the organisation and its values. Even subtle word choices can have a strong impact on the application pool. With the increasing interest in diversity and inclusion, companies **need to make sure their job descriptions are inclusive too**. Here are **a few simple tweaks** you can make to your job descriptions to do just that\*\*:

- ✓ **Limit job requirements to 'must haves'**. Instead of including all of the “nice-to-haves” that a dream candidate might possess, stick to the “must-haves,” and you will likely see your applications from diverse profiles increase.
- ✓ **Avoid corporate jargon**. An unconscious, but quick way, to turn off candidates is to use a lot of unnecessary jargon in the job descriptions. Insider language is a quick way to make someone else feel like an outsider. Instead of using company-/job specific acronyms, try to inform potential candidates with universal words.
- ✓ **Emphasise your commitment to diversity and inclusion**. If you are already striving to become an inclusive place to work, you can include a specific statement in your job descriptions. While you can simply state at the bottom that you are “An equality opportunity employer,” a statement in your own words is more powerful.



Source:\*Gompers, P. & Kovvali, S. (2018). The Other Diversity Dividend. Harvard Business Review, July-August.\*\*Huppert, M. (2018). 5 Must-Do's for Writing Inclusive Job Descriptions. Retrieved from: <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/job-descriptions/2018/5-must-dos-for-writing-inclusive-job-descriptions>

- ✓ **Check your job descriptions for stereotypical words.** Software programs such as Textio Hire, that indicate stereotypical words can help counteract the effect of these words. It would be a possibility to remove them and replace them with something more neutral\*. Alternatively you can organise a panel of employees with mixed diverse background to proofread new vacancies and add their suggestions.

### 4.2.3. Blind CV screening

Resumes contain a lot of useful information for employers, but there might also be **a lot of details that can signal race, class, and gender**. A study revealed that employers are twice as likely to ignore a job applicant's CV if they have an ethnic minority name\*\*. 'Anil' or 'Azzedine' do not get the same chances as 'Arthur'. This shows that people from ethnic minorities are at a disadvantage even before their qualifications have been assessed. **Even the most self-aware hiring managers** can turn away qualified candidates because the applicant didn't fit expectations\*\*\*.

One way to prevent early rejections based on bias is to use **blind CV screening**. Delete the name and address of the candidate and label resumes by using numbers instead of names. Next to name and address, universities and activities can be hidden as well\*\*\*\*. This method helps to include the most relevant candidates in your interview pool, based on their qualifications and **not on demographic characteristics**.

Source:\*Bohnet, I. (2016). How to take the bias out of interviews. Harvard Business Review.\*\*CVster onderzoekt: waar begint arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie? Retrieved from: <https://cvster.nl/cv-onderzoek/>\*\*\*Staley, O. (2017). How to keep bias out of the hiring process. Retrieved from: <https://qz.com/work/1095637/diversity-and-inclusion-a-guide-to-unbiased-hiring-from-quartz-at-work/>\*\*\*\*Staley, O. (2017). How to keep bias out of the hiring process. Retrieved from: <https://qz.com/work/1095637/diversity-and-inclusion-a-guide-to-unbiased-hiring-from-quartz-at-work/>



## Build a checklist for your hiring team

Research suggests that checklists can help reduce the influence of unconscious bias in decision-making. Hence, **creating a checklist for your hiring team is one way to help** the team to approach the screening of resumés in an objective way. Here are some **valuable guidelines to include in your checklist**:

- ✓ **Use agreed-on role criteria before looking for a candidate.** It will keep the hiring team from shifting criteria, which often makes you favour 'expected' candidates, even if they're not the most qualified.
- ✓ **Only screen on the must-have competencies** as you described in the vacancy. Avoid implicit nice-to-have competencies (such as competencies that are typical for the current members of the team, the insiders) .
- ✓ **Don't punish gaps in the CV.** Typically minority groups might have a gap in their CV. This might be due to a life transition such as moving from one country to another, time needed to invest in language training or community building, ... Ask candidates why they have a gap in their CV, don't fill in the blanks yourself.
- ✓ **Don't dismiss a candidate based on the CV layout and built-up:** CV writing has a big cultural signature in the way we layout our CV or in the type of information that is included. For instance, in some cultures more information is better, all competencies are added even if not related to deep experience, ...
- ✓ **Be aware of your unconscious bias:** Foreign names, degrees from universities we do not know, work experience abroad lack a known pattern compared to local candidates.
- ✓ **Language is a competence which can be learned:** Non-natives are often quickly categorised as 'no option'. Check the real need for all relevant languages, including the level needed (such as 'able to communicate with colleagues', 'able to communicate with customers'). Take into account that language is a competence that can be trained, especially for highly-educated profiles who show a steep learning curve once they can practice language on the work floor (and not only in theoretical trainings).

## 4.2.4. ASSESSMENTS

Assessments are often part of the recruitment process. They are built-in to assess specific competencies in a neutral way - often implemented by an external partner. Research shows **mixed results on cultural bias**, but overall concludes that standardized test bias is not a major source of discrimination\*. Nevertheless you can **strengthen the assessment process** by keeping into account the following elements\*\*:

- ✓ **Consider giving extra time for people who are taking an assessment in a language that is not their mother tongue/foreign to them.** You should consider an accommodation in the same way as you would for others who read more slowly, e.g. dyslexic candidates.
- ✓ **Make your instructions clear and unambiguous;** use as few words as you need. For someone who's not able to use their native language, each extra word increases the cognitive load.
- ✓ **Give candidates the opportunity to prepare upfront.** For instance, numerical and abstract reasoning tests are common in Western contexts but are rarely used in some other countries. A first time experience might lower the result and bias the real competence of the candidate.
- ✓ **Give clear instructions for the preparation or during the assessment and avoid jargon.** For example, the instruction "Make a pitch of the company" is more difficult than saying "Prepare a 3 minute argumentation on why the company should be by our product/service." A South-American applicant who received the first question during the application process for a job (and who also got the job in the end) asked the assessor: "What do you mean by peach?".
- ✓ **Explain thoroughly how the assessment works and which competencies will be evaluated.** This way candidates who have little experience with assessments know what to expect.
- ✓ **Many applicants have a high level of language proficiency but a low level of cultural knowledge.** Ensure your assessments do not presume cultural knowledge; using case study questions that make assumptions about prior knowledge or context is a common mistake.
- ✓ **If your assessment involves participation or group work, remember that different cultures have different conventions in group communication** – for example about interrupting others or being seen to criticize one another in public.
- ✓ **Make sure you assess the competencies wanted and not assessment/language skills.**
- ✓ **Include work-sample tests and simulations:** the skills required to answer questions well, to describe and speak analytically about one's experience, often differ greatly from the skills which would be required to do the job well. Work-sample tests have shown to be a good predictor of future performance. For instance, applicants for an administrative assistant position may be asked to transcribe an internal memo or to accurately file a stack of paperwork.\*\*\*

**Fairness:** a topic that often arises when discussing diversity and recruitment is 'fairness'. Companies are afraid to reverse from negative discrimination to positive discrimination. When discussing this internally, make sure you involve people with diverse backgrounds.

For example: Can applicants do an online competency assessment in their mother tongue or do they need to do this in a common language used on the work floor? Both ways have pros and cons in terms of fairness and will impact the final hiring result.

Source:\*Reynolds, C. R. & Suzuki, L. A. (2012). Bias in Psychological Assessment. An Empirical Review & Recommendations. Handbook of Psychology, 2nd edition;\*\*Kleeman, J. (2011). Minimizing bias when assessing across culture and language. Retrieved from <https://blog.questionmark.com/minimizing-bias-when-assessing-across-culture-and-language>\*\*\*Knight, R. (2017). 7 practical ways to reduce bias in your hiring process. Harvard Business Review.

## 4.2.5. A STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROCESS

During the interview, it is important to use a **structured question list**. This ensures that all candidates are treated the same and this might even result in a faster and diversifying hiring process. While it's exceedingly difficult to avoid bias as an individual, it's possible to design the interview process in such a way that it becomes harder to skew judgment.

Here are some **very easy-to-apply, but useful, tips** for interviewing every candidate\*:



**Use a checklist to structure the interview and to focus on relevant attributes.** Evidence against unstructured interviews should make any hiring manager think twice. These interviews should not be the evaluation tool of choice; they are fraught with bias and irrelevant information. Posing the same questions in the same order to all candidates allows a clearer comparison between them.

**Evaluate candidates in real time by writing all important details down.** The protocol should also require the interviewer to score each answer immediately after it is provided. This neutralizes a variety of biases: we are more likely to remember answers with vivid examples, and answers that are most recent. Evaluators who wait until the end of the interview to rate answers run the risk of forgetting an early or less-vivid but high-quality answer, or favouring candidates who have a way with words.

**Compare candidate responses horizontally.** That is, if you interview five candidates, compare each of their answers on question one, then each answer on question two, and so on. Comparative evaluations not only help us calibrate across candidates but also decrease the reflex to rely on stereotypes to guide our impressions. People are less likely to rely on whether a candidate “looks the part” when evaluating several candidates simultaneously and comparing them systematically.

**Wait until all interviews are finished before sharing feedback with the other interviewers.** It's best to keep interviewers as independent of each other as possible. Once everyone has evaluated all candidates, the evaluators should submit their assessments before a meeting to discuss an applicant. This allows an organisation to aggregate answers, those one-to-10 weighted scores on questions asked in the exact same order. Assessments with candidates above a certain threshold should advance for further consideration.

## 4.2.6. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Some organisations are **leveraging technology to root out bias**, better identify and screen candidates and help close the diversity gap. Unilever, for instance, got rid of CV screening and instead uses neuroscience games and Artificial Intelligence (AI) enhanced video interviews. Candidates are asked to play a series of

Source:\*Bohnet, I. (2016). How to take the bias out of interviews. Harvard Business Review.

skills\*. After these games, the selected candidates are asked to answer some questions by recording themselves. An AI-enhanced video platform analyses the content of candidates' answers, the intonation of their voices, and their body language. Combined, these two technologies help filter the candidate pool before recruiters even see or hear any potentially biasing information about applicants.

Although **predictive hiring technology can help to reduce bias**, one should also **be aware** of its potential weaknesses. AI learns from the information that hiring managers choose to feed it with. It can then be customized to remove certain biases, such as vocal tics, but that also highly depends on human judgment. Take Amazon for instance, who was forced to stop its new recruitment tool after finding out that the system they had built was showing gender bias against women. The recruitment engine was trained to scan through incoming resumes and to observe candidates of job postings over the past 10 years. Since most of the applicants were men - a still very prominent imbalance across the tech industry - the tool preferred male candidates and would penalize resumes that included gender keywords such as "women's golf club member" and also those who went to women's colleges. Ultimately, AI is automating how hiring managers currently recruit, and if they want to correct for past mistakes, they need to be cognizant of them in the first place\*\*.

## 4.2.7. EVALUATE YOUR RECRUITMENT APPROACH

Building an inclusive recruitment process takes time. The best performing recruitment teams are the ones who **regularly assess their hiring process** to pinpoint the areas that are working and the areas that need to be worked on. Here are some steps you might take:

- ✓ **Make an overview of the full candidate pipeline** and analyse on which moments you lose talents with a diverse background.  
Examine this **internally**: what could be the reason of these drop-outs?  
Examine this **externally**: contact candidates who dropped out to learn more about how they experienced the process and why they dropped out.
- ✓ **Make a list of FAQs by applicants with a diverse background** to get deeper insights in their needs.
- ✓ **Plan regular reflection exercises** with the recruitment team and hiring manager to discuss the strengths and potential pitfalls in the recruitment process.

## 4.2.8. VALUE RATINGS

Recruiting people for their values and behaviours in general is important if you want to be a value-driven organisation. It helps to establish a value-driven work culture and ensures your (future) workforce matches these values. Hiring people with diverse backgrounds makes it even more important to have **profound value checks** throughout the recruitment process as diversity often is a company value itself. A great candidate with the right skills may not be able to align his or her values with the organisational values, and this is **a recipe for disaster**— chances are high that a cultural misfit will be leaving the organisation soon. That's why **alignment with company values must be included** in the candidate selection process. It is relevant to use a value checklist during your hiring interviews, to identify those candidates who share the same values as your company.

Source:\*McLaren, S. (2018). 3 Ways Companies are Fighting Bias in the Workplace and Hiring Processes. Retrieved from <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/diversity/2018/companies-fighting-bias>\*\*<https://www.businessinsider.com/hirevue-ai-powered-job-interview-platform-2017-8?r=US&IR=T>

**How to identify** whether the personal values of a candidate match those of your company?

- List **the values** that your company embraces.
- **Determine values-based interview questions** for each value. Such questions help to find out what your candidates prioritize in the workplace and what drives their behaviour.
- **Think about the answers you want to hear.** For each value-based question, there has to be a set of key criteria that signal “good” answers. Formulating clear indicators maximises objectivity over different interviews.
- **Train your interviewers** to use value-based interview questions to maximise inter-rater objectivity.

” We use a value charter during our selection interviews to find out what they think about our values and whether they have certain points of view which conflict with our values. The candidates need to support our values for 100% if they want to work for our company. For instance, we value gender equality and will check whether the candidate equally cares for this value. ”

- HR director, investment holding company

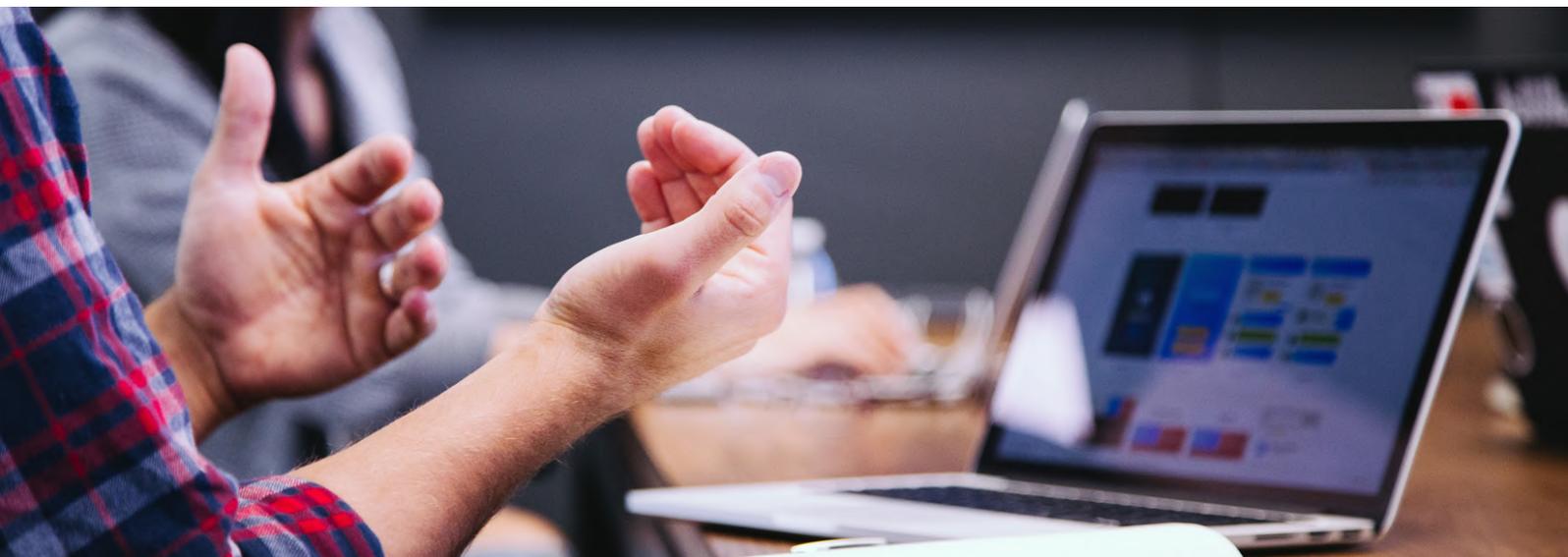
Values are continuously being translated into actual behaviour. Different values can lead to differences in behaviour. For some professions, it might be useful **to screen a candidate’s willingness to demonstrate certain behaviours**

that are necessary for the job. The healthcare and construction sector for example have very clear behavioural policies concerning safety prevention (think of dress codes). If people refuse to follow behavioural guidelines, for whatever reason, this might cause serious problems on the work floor and might even inhibit people’s ability to performing their tasks.

Therefore it is useful to **identify crucial work behaviours** and screen them very early in the selection process. Consider them as a hard selection criterium, like having a driver’s licence for cab drivers or having a medical degree for doctors to avoid difficult situations afterwards.

” During our intake conversation we use a checklist to discuss all the different aspects that are important for the job. This checklist includes expectations with regard to learning the local language, wearing a headscarf, working in mixed-gender teams, punctuality, serving pork and alcohol for instance. We check whether the candidates are willing to carry out the job according to our company values. ”

- Director, residential care centre



# 5. TESTIMONIAL CITY OF GHENT

*Naomi Mike, organisational psychologist, Department Selection, City of Ghent (Stad Gent) & Public Center for Social Welfare Ghent (OCMW Gent)*

The diversity action plan of the City of Ghent and the Public Centre for Social Welfare Ghent (OCMW) was brought to life in 2017. The plan focuses on different minority groups: people with a work disability, people of foreign origin, people aged 50+,... Our ultimate goal is to achieve a workforce that reflects the diverse society of Ghent: our service centres can only provide high-quality service if all layers of society are represented in our work teams.

## Specific goals and actions

With regard to people with a migration background, our objective for 2020 is an inflow of employees of foreign origin that counts for 30% of our total inflow. Several initiatives allow us to take steps in the right direction. For example, in our selection procedure we focus on the candidate's competencies and try to avoid giving too much weight to diplomas and other culture-dependent criteria. Furthermore, the language used in our vacancies must be clear, simple and neutral. In addition, we regularly subject our selection methods to a critical evaluation: we screen the adverse impact of our tools to minimise bias towards certain groups. We also organise meetings with civil society organisations that operate in Ghent. By doing so, we gather a lot of information from our target groups' perspective. We also work closely with these organisations to advertise our open vacancies directly to our target groups.

## Experiences so far

As a result of the diversity plan, our organisation is more consciously thinking about diversity and is more aware of the importance of diverse teams. We are all striving towards one common goal, which creates a sense of unity. Another success story is the introduction of annual vocational trainings: paid internships we offer to



vulnerable job seekers in collaboration with VDAB. This year we offered vocational internships to 8 people of foreign origin and 2 people with a work disability. Overall reactions of line managers, colleagues and trainees were very positive.

## Lessons learned

It is still difficult to determine the minimum language requirements. As a government agency, we are bound by language legislation: as all formal communication is in Dutch, every person who starts working with us must have a decent level of Dutch. However, we do not want to set our expectations too high and, as a consequence, miss talented people.

## What advice do you have for other companies?

Developing and implementing a sound diversity plan costs time and must be coordinated by one or several dedicated employees who are working on diversity projects full time. That's the only way to encourage the entire organisation to participate in our diversity initiatives. In addition, we have benefited a lot from engaging directly with our target groups through the civil society organisations. Gaining primary information is crucial to roll out a sustainable and effective policy that builds on mutual trust between the various stakeholders involved.

# 6. INSPIRED BY

The content in this toolkit is created for the Newcomer Induction Management Acceleration Programme (NiMAP), sponsored by ESF and the Flemish Government. Goal of the project is to fasten the job search and induction process on the work floor of newcomers entering the Belgian job market by supporting both talent and employers.

Belgian partners in this project are Vlerick Business School - a top-tier international business school - and Talentree - a new venture building international and entrepreneurial teams. This project is inspired by the Rapid Acceleration Programme from our transnational partner, Stockholm School of Economics, whom we are deeply grateful for a great partnership! A special thanks to Judit Weillbull, Kristina Nilsson and Lin Lerpold!

## The project team:

- Prof Dr Dirk Buyens - Professor of Human Resources and Partner at Vlerick Business School
- Dr Emmy Defever - Senior Researcher Area People and Organisation at Vlerick Business School
- Sarah Quataert - Researcher Area People and Organisation at Vlerick Business School
- Hannelore Waterschoot - Managing Partner at Talentree
- Nancy Leys - Project Manager at Talentree
- Myrthe Waterschoot - Marketing Manager at Talentree

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# 7. CONTACT INFORMATION



**Prof Dr Dirk Buyens** - Professor of Human Resources and Partner of Vlerick Business School

**Email:** [dirk.buyens@vlerick.com](mailto:dirk.buyens@vlerick.com)

**Dr Emmy Defever** - Senior Researcher Area People and Organisation of Vlerick Business School

**Email:** [emmy.defever@vlerick.com](mailto:emmy.defever@vlerick.com)

**Telephone number:** +32 9 210 97 11

**Website:** <https://www.vlerick.com>



**Hannelore Waterschoot** - Managing Partner at Talentree

**Email:** [hannelore@talentree.be](mailto:hannelore@talentree.be)

**Telephone number:** +32 473 89 42 37

**Website:** <https://talentree.be>





# TOOL 4: MANAGING DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE



# INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is designed by **Vlerick Business School** and **Talentree** with the support of the European Social Fund and the Flemish Government to help organisations in creating a diverse and inclusive work environment. The content of this toolkit is based on learnings we gathered during a project focused on guiding newcomers and companies to fasten the job search and induction process on the work floor. The toolkit consists of 4 tools and is structured as follows:



## **Tool 1: Multicultural Diversity on The Agenda**

By providing facts and figures about multicultural diversity and explaining how it leads to competitive advantage, this first tool helps organisations to build a business case in order to put diversity and inclusion on the agenda.



## **Tool 2: Building a Diverse organisation: Getting The Foundations Right**

This second tool focuses on the critical success factors to build a diverse organisation, the steps towards creating an inclusive company and ways to bring unconscious bias to the forefront.



## **Tool 3: Recruiting for Diversity**

This third tool helps companies to recruit more diverse talent. It focuses on how to set up an inclusive recruitment process and how to tackle bias in recruitment.



## **Tool 4: Managing Diversity in The Workplace**

This fourth tool helps organisations to prepare and manage teams which are becoming more diverse. Next to this, it helps to understand how organisations can provide a great kick-off for the new (diverse) hires.

These 4 tools can be used together or as stand alone tools depending on the specific context of an organisation. Organisations that are just starting with their diversity and inclusion efforts and that are looking to build the business case will benefit from starting with tool 1. Organisations that are further along in their diversity and inclusion journey can jump toward the tool(s) that are most relevant for them. Based on these 4 tools also a training has been developed consisting of 4 modules and accompanying exercise leaflets, through which organisations can deliver an internal training on the 4 building blocks provided in this toolkit. The modules are designed in such a way companies can use them autonomously to set up their own diversity initiatives and workshops.

**Although this toolkit is based on the insights with regard to multicultural diversity, many of the insights and exercises can be translated to diversity in general.**

You can also download the powerpoint and leaflets made for this tool to roll out a training in your own team or company.

# MAIN OBJECTIVE TOOL 4

This tool is the last tool in a series of 4 tools designed to help you create an inclusive and diverse work environment and to reap its benefits in the best possible way. This tool focuses on managing diversity in the workplace.

You'll learn:

- ✓ How to prepare and support diverse teams
- ✓ How to provide a great kick-off for new recruits



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# 1. PREPARING AND SUPPORTING DIVERSE TEAMS



An inclusive culture is not only limited to recruit new hires into the existing company culture. Instead, it has to **expand to incorporate the new perspectives** that diverse hires bring into the company. As such, a huge part of a successful onboarding depends on the existing team in order to integrate the new employee as good as possible\*. **Success stories** with regard to the first diverse hires **are extremely important** to build ambassadors in the organisation, being the hire itself but also the team and line manager. These stakeholders might act in cross-departmental and management meetings as motivators for new initiatives in case of success but can also **add extra barriers in case of failures**.

Preparing and supporting your teams when they become more diverse is crucial. **Three things need to be taken into account:**

1. Creating a clear team context
2. Guiding effective communication
3. Building new competencies

Source: <https://www.lever.co/blog/a-step-by-step-guide-to-cultivating-diversity-and-inclusion-part-8-after-the-hire>

# 1.1. CREATE A CLEAR TEAM CONTEXT

## TRANSLATING VALUES TO A CODE OF CONDUCT

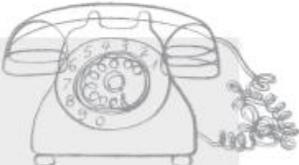
Bringing more diversity into your workforce will create **the need for a new framework**, empowering and helping employees to handle ethical dilemmas they encounter in their daily work. **A clear code of conduct** has value not only as an internal guideline but also as an external statement of corporate values and commitments\*.

**How to build a strong** code of conduct:

- ✓ Clarify your organisation's mission values and principles
- ✓ Link your values to concrete standards of professional conduct
- ✓ Make it concise and concrete
- ✓ Involve different stakeholders and check against real ethical dilemmas

A code of conduct **will help to:**

- ✓ Have benchmarks against which individual and organisational performance can be measured
- ✓ Give employees a central guide and reference to support day-to-day decision making.
- ✓ Encourage discussions of ethics and compliance



### A CHECKLIST OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Know the Code of Business Conduct
- ✓ Respect diversity and inclusion
- ✓ Be inclusive
- ✓ Treat your fellow employees with dignity and respect
- ✓ Stay safe at work and help others do the same
- ✓ Speak up if someone is breaking our Code, regardless of the person's position in the Company or whether the person is a vendor, customer or temporary worker
- ✓ If you have questions, ask for help



*A nice example of a comprehensive and concrete code of conduct by Johnson & Johnson\*\**

## Exercise: Ethical dilemmas on the work floor

1. Define 5 dilemmas you encountered by bringing in more diversity in your team(s).
2. Discuss these dilemmas with different stakeholders, looking at them from a different perspective.
3. Create a guideline on how to handle these and future related dilemmas, linked to your company values.

### Case Nursing Home

A nursing home started hiring nurses with a Muslim background. This brought up questions on wearing hijabs/burqas, serving alcohol and pork meat and female leadership. Leadership and the team discussed these questions from an ethical and practical perspective and developed clear guidelines that are used on the work floor but also as a checklist during applications:

- Dress code: A uniform with mid-long sleeves is foreseen with a focus on not to restrict mobility and avoiding risk of infection + hair should be tied back and can be covered by a tight headscarf with a focus on hygiene.
- All meals including alcohol are served with focus on the request of the patient.
- Colleagues greet each other respectfully (by shaking hands or bowing).
- Men and women are treated equally and respectfully.

### Case Celebration time

A group of employees checked with HR whether they could work on a religious local holiday (e.g. Christmas) and save these days for their own religious festivities. When discussing the topic it also became clear that these colleagues pitied that the company only celebrated these local habits (e.g. Christmas party). The company created a new holiday policy where the official (legal) holidays remained the same, but gave employees the opportunity to take the shift on these days and offering recuperation days on other religious festivity days. It was clear that continuity of the business activities was key and that shifts were scheduled with mutual respect for everyone. Additionally, the parties in the company shifted over different religious/cultural important days. This had a positive impact on the team spirit to have people taking over shifts at days that others wanted to celebrate with their family. People were proud to share their cultural heritage and loved celebrating together.

# 1.1. CREATE A CLEAR TEAM CONTEXT

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

At their core, **diversity and inclusion initiatives should acknowledge and support employee identity in the workplace**. Creating safe spaces like affinity groups or business resource groups (based on sexual orientation, race, class, nationality and other forms of identity) allow employees to raise and navigate issues they may not feel comfortable exploring in general spaces. Some companies, however, step away from these affinity groups and try out alternative ways. A management consulting company, for instance, replaced 'affinity groups' by 'inclusion councils' which are composed of individuals from a range of demographic groups.

Companies also benefit from **creating opportunities** to meet with senior leaders, invitations to solve business problems, or access to an anonymous platform through which people can report identity-related issues. A business resource group for newly-hired people of colour, for instance, might teach the employer a great deal about how to recruit and retain these employees and simultaneously offer them opportunities for mentoring and support\*.

Although affinity groups are relevant, it is important to make sure that **majority- and minority groups stay connected**. Some companies working with locals and expats, for example, reported that the expat community in their company also met outside working hours to build their social life. This started to impact internal professional dynamics (e.g., expats forming a separate group), so effort was made to **reconnect the expats and locals** by openly discussing this challenge and providing additional teambuilding for all employees.



Source: <https://qz.com/work/1160644/if-you-really-want-a-diverse-workplace-you-have-to-build-safe-spaces/>

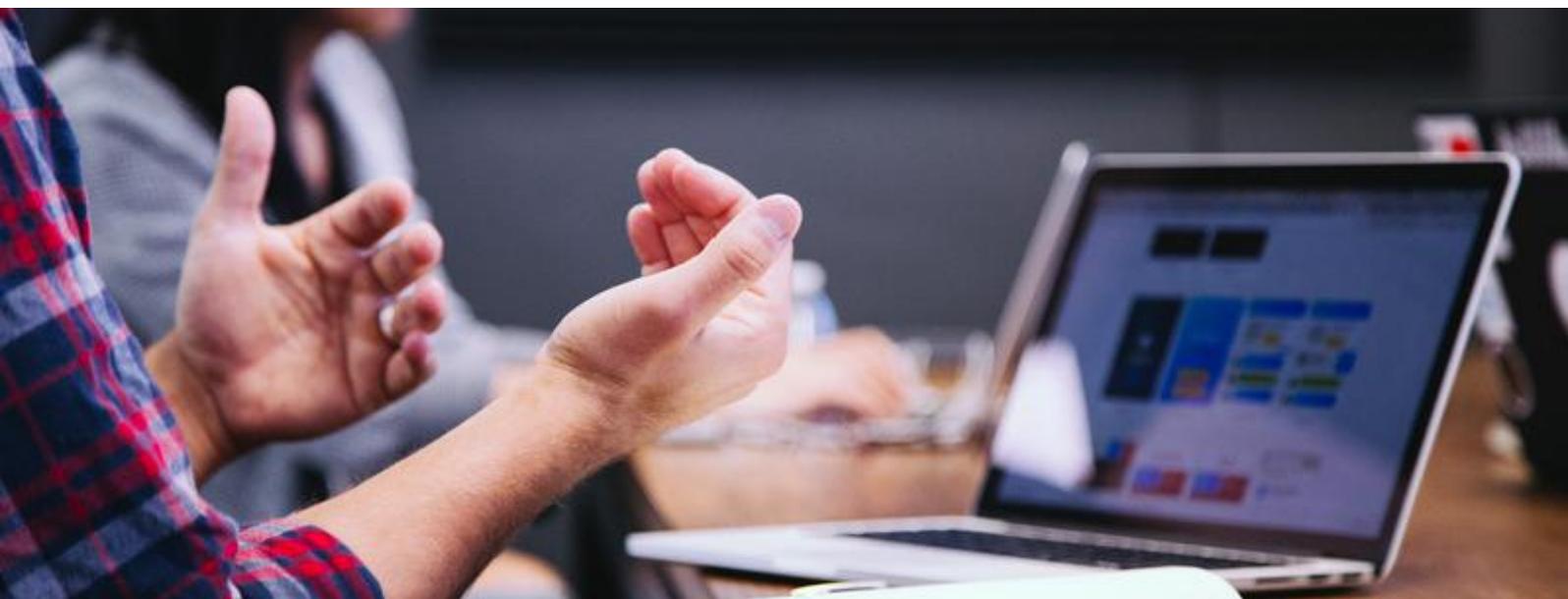
## 1.2. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

**Communication in the workplace is essential** - it underlies productivity and the quality of workplace relationships and it forges organisational success. Building a more diverse workforce requires a focus on effective communication amongst employees, both in terms of understanding how employees perceive communication and in terms of language.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF A JOINT CORPORATE LANGUAGE

A lot of companies have English as their corporate language. Nevertheless doing local business also requires proficiency in local languages, leading to a **mix of languages** being used within the organisation. Some companies who were used to communicate entirely in the local language are now required to use English as a joint language due to globalisation. Apart from the corporate language, take the following into consideration:

- Make sure **all internal documents are available in a joint language**, including the file names and the shared servers.
- Agree on a **joint language for internal e-mail communication**. This way e-mails can easily be forwarded or all colleagues can follow the communication history when added in the conversation.
- Do not underestimate **the importance of joint informal communication** like humour in the office, a talk at the coffee machine or lunch. Not understanding these informal talks might make people feel excluded from the team.
- **Avoid jargon and metaphors**: within a company culture, employees build up a specific jargon. This might add complexity for newcomers entering the organisation. Make sure to be aware of using specific terminology, try to avoid it or explain when necessary. Using metaphors also may be problematic with people from other cultures, since they don't necessarily translate well from country to country. For instance, the instruction "Make a pitch of the company" is more difficult than saying "Prepare a 3 minute argumentation on why the company should be our product/service." A South-American applicant who received the first question during the application process for a job (and who also got the job in the end) asked the assessor: "What do you mean by peach?".



Your  
turn

### Exercise: Lunchtime case

Ghada, a 30 years old Syrian woman, joined the administrative cell of an international pharmaceutical company 2 months ago. She works as administrative assistant for the Belgian division of the company. The administrative team consists of 4 other assistants who have been working together for a long time and form a close group. The team likes to have lunch together in the company restaurant, where they jauntily discuss the novelties of the day. However, Ghada does not join her colleagues for lunch. As she doesn't really master the Dutch language, she doesn't understand what they're talking about and can't participate in the conversations. She would love to join her team members and get to know them better, but doesn't dare to. Her modest character holds Ghada back from asking her colleagues to talk in English instead of Dutch. She thinks that would be quite an impolite request as she does not want to force people to adapt to her individual needs. The administrative team, on the other hand, thinks Ghada is acting rude and uninterested. They interpret her behaviour as a clear sign of a lack of effort to integrate and decide to speak to their supervisor about Ghada's "inappropriate behaviour".

- What would you do if you were the supervisor of the administrative unit?
- What would you do if you were Ghada?

# CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION

**Learning to collaborate effectively** with people from other cultures is a **vital skill** when you are working in a multicultural environment. People from diverse backgrounds often have different ways of thinking and communicating. Gaining insights into the differences between cultures helps team members to understand how culture shapes the way people behave and communicate and how misunderstandings might arise when we misinterpret different cultural behaviours. Cross-cultural awareness and communication training can provide employees with the knowledge, skills and expertise to collaborate effectively across cultures and promote acceptance and respect for diversity. **Three models** that are frequently taught are the models of Hofstede, Trompenaars and Lewis.

## The Hofstede model of national culture

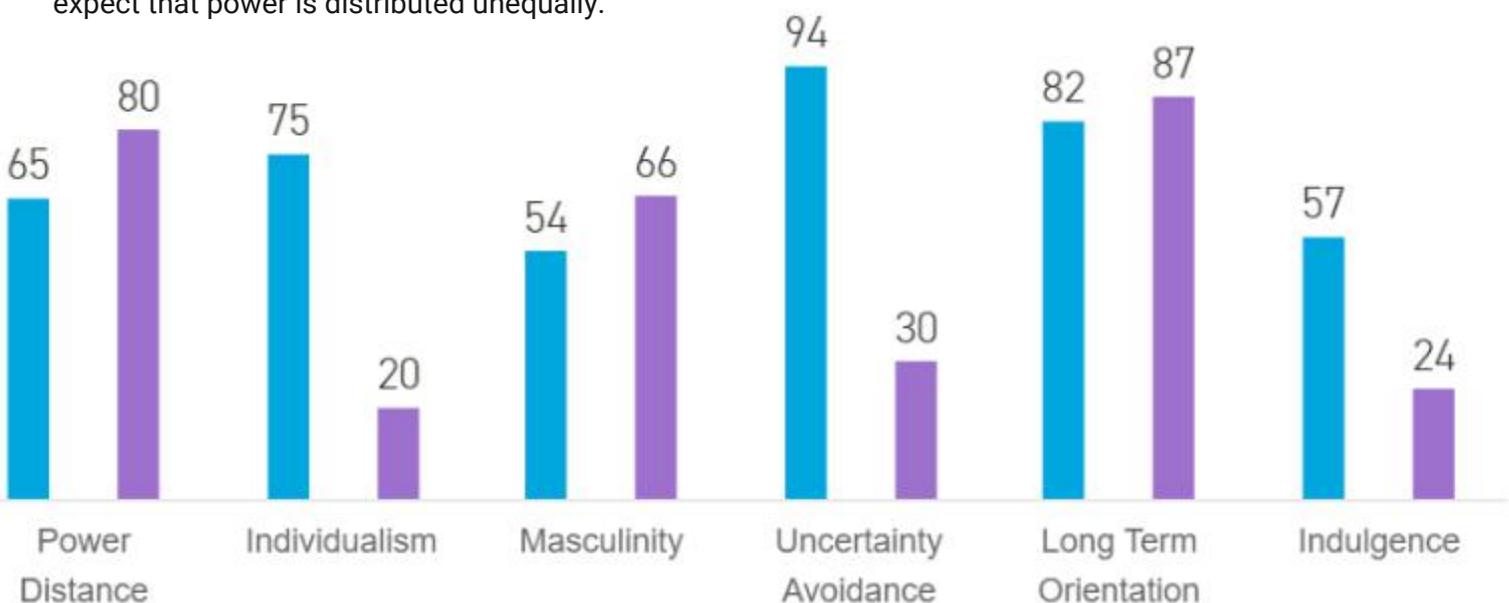
According to the model of Hofstede, culture is defined as ‘the collective mental programming of the human mind which distinguishes one group of people from another’. The model consists of **six dimensions**, which represent **independent preferences for one state of affairs over another that distinguishes countries** (rather than individuals) from each other\*:

- **Power distance:** the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.

- **Collectivism vs. individualism:** the relative importance of individual versus group interests.
- **Femininity vs. masculinity:** what values are considered more important in a society.  Wijzigen naar “the extent to which a society stress achievement (masculinity) or nurture (femininity)”.
- **Uncertainty avoidance:** the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity.
- **Long-term versus short-term orientation:** the extent to which a culture is focused on the future or rather on the past and present.
- **Indulgence versus restraint:** the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised.

## Interested to learn more?

- Check the series of 10-minute videos with PowerPoint presentations created by Geert Hofstede. There is an introduction video and one video per dimension of the national culture.
- You can use the country comparison tool by Hofstede (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>) to compare how countries score on the 6 cultural dimensions. For instance, below you see a comparison of Belgium (blue) versus China (purple):



Source: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/models/national-culture/>

## Trompenaars cultural dimensions: the 7 D model

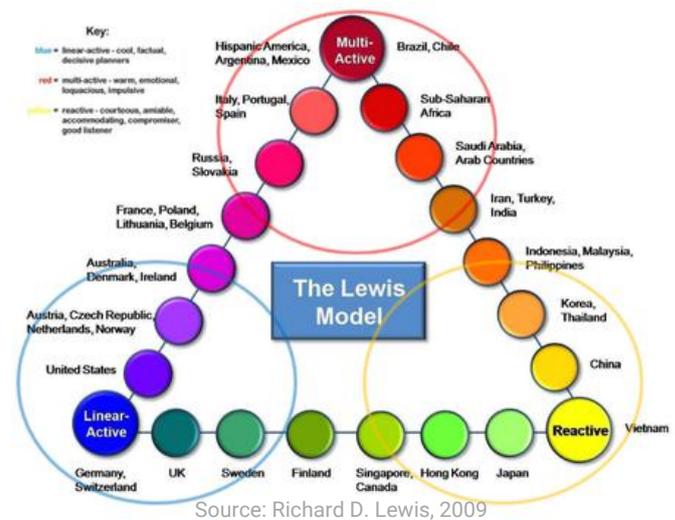
Trompenaars defines culture **as the way people solve problems**. Based on the solutions each culture chooses to certain problems, he defined **the following dimensions\***:

- **Universalism vs. particularism:** the degree of importance of formal rules and procedures over circumstances and relationships.
- **Individualism vs. communitarianism:** this dimension is almost identical to Hofstede's individualism vs. collectivism dimension. Generally this dimension classifies countries according to the balance between the individual and group interests.
- **Specific vs. diffuse:** the extent to which the personal and professional life is integrated or separated.
- **Neutral vs. affective:** the extent to which emotions are displayed in the workplace. In neutral cultures emotions are usually displayed only at a minimum extent, while in affective cultures individuals feel comfortable to express their feelings and emotions in public.
- **Achievement vs. ascription:** this dimension is quite similar to power distance cultural dimension presented by Hofstede. It marks the level of tolerance of society towards the pattern of distribution of power and status amongst members of society.
- **Sequential time vs. synchronous time:** whether things get done one at a time or whether many things get done at once.
- **Internal direction vs. external direction:** the degree to which individuals believe they have control over external environment.

**2. Multi-active.** Multi-active cultures have people that are much more extrovert, rely on their eloquence and ability to persuade and use human force as an inspirational factor. They often complete human transactions emotionally. Such people are great networkers, working according to people-time rather than clock-time.

**3. Reactive.** People in reactive or listening cultures rarely initiate action or discussion. They prefer to first listen to and establish the other's position. Only at a later stage will they react to it and formulate their own position in the discussion\*\*\*.

While the three types of cultures are distinctive, each possesses behavioural elements from the other two categories. It is a question of **which one is dominant**. Many individuals deviate from the national type in a work situation, for example engineers and accountants tend to be linear, sales people multi-active, lawyers and doctors reactive\*\*\*\*.



## Lewis Cultural Types Model

The Lewis model triangulates countries and their culture between **3 clear categories**. These categories are not based on nationality or religion but on behaviour:

**1. Linear-active.** People in linear-active cultures are people who carefully plan and manage their actions. They do things one at a time, according to schedule, and so are very accurate and efficient in their work. They like working with others who focus on the task and who appreciate structure and reason\*\*.

Source: \*International Business Door Stuart Wall, Sonal Minocha, Bronwen Rees + <https://expertprogrammanagement.com/2017/10/trompenaars-cultural-dimensions/>, \*\*<https://magnussonllc.wordpress.com/2011/01/19/the-lewis-model-cultural-dimensions/>, \*\*\*<https://www.crossculture.com/about-us/the-model/reactive/>, \*\*\*\*<https://www.crossculture.com/the-lewis-model-dimensions-of-behaviour/>

## Exercise: Learn about your team members' business habits

Cultural awareness helps to strengthen collaboration between colleagues in a diverse team. An open discussion on the local business habits of team members already helps to understand why people act and communicate the way they do. You can use one of the cross-cultural models above as a starting point to discuss similarities and differences between the different cultures represented in your team. One way of facilitating a discussion is to make a list of do's and don'ts per country. Another way is to list the topics that you want to discuss and that are relevant for your work and map how each culture represented in your team deals with this.

Behaviours	Belgium	Netherlands	Japan
Way of greeting			
Informal communication			
Decision making			
Feedback giving			
Handling emotions			
Dealing with hierarchy			
...			

## FEEDBACK CULTURE

Giving and receiving feedback is crucial for professional and personal development, but **the way we like to give and receive feedback depends on culture**. In some cultures, being direct in giving feedback is highly appreciated. In other cultures, it is considered polite to deal with feedback more indirectly. It is important to **create a feedback culture where everyone feels at ease**. For example, practice an open door policy with care\*: Do not only wait until people come to you and give feedback but actively ask for feedback.

When giving feedback, **use methods that focus on behaviour to avoid interpretations** (often biased by your own background). Recommended methods are the Situation-Behaviour-Impact model developed by the Center for Creative Leadership\*\* or the non-violent communication process developed by Marshall B. Rosenberg\*\*\*.

### Situation-Behaviour-Impact Model

The Situation-Behaviour-Impact Model (SBI) of Center for Creative Leadership, has **proven to reduce the anxiety of delivering feedback and also reduce the defensiveness of the recipient**. This 3-step process may feel awkward or too formal at first, but once managers get some practice, they find it is incredibly helpful.

**S** **Situation:** describe the situation. Be specific about when and where it occurred.  
*Example: "This morning at the 11 a.m. team meeting ..."*

**B** **Behaviour:** describe the observable behaviour. Keep to the facts. Do not insert opinions or judgements, and do not assume you know what the other person was thinking.  
*Example: "You interrupted me while I was telling the team about the monthly budget" (instead of "You were rude.")*

**I** **Impact:** describe what you thought or felt in reaction to the behaviour.  
*Example: "I felt frustrated when you interrupted me because it broke my train of thought."*



Source: <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/seven-ways-to-better-communicate-in-today-s-diverse-workplace-seven-tips-for-communicating-in-today-s-diverse-workplace>, <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/hr-pipeline-a-quick-win-to-improve-your-talent-development-process/>, <https://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/>



## Non-violent communication

The non-violent communication process as developed by Marshall B. Rosenberg **helps you understand that feedback is a reflection of the other person's perception of your actions.** The basis of the non-violent communication strategy is to focus on **4 components:**

- **Observation:** give the facts, state the behaviour someone showed that you want to address/give feedback on. Be as precise as possible.
- **Feelings:** tell the person how their actions made you feel and why.
- **Needs:** tell the person what you would need.
- **Request:** request what kind of behaviour you would like the person to show in the future. Be as clear and concrete as possible. Also use a positive tone to phrase your request.

Consider the following **concrete example**, which illustrates possible ways of giving feedback to someone who missed a deadline:

Last week you didn't meet your deadline on handing in the paperwork for project X (Observation). This made me feel really stressed because I was waiting for it to finish my own work (Feelings). It would have helped me if I knew before that you couldn't reach a deadline so I could have adapted the scheme or set priorities (Need). So, next time can you communicate earlier so we can follow up closely on the deadline (Request).

In some cultures, missing a deadlines gives the perception that the person must have had other priorities. In other cultures, missing a deadline could create the perception that you are a slow worker and an underperformer. When you are frustrated you might be inclined to give the following feedback: "You are not a trustworthy team member. You missed the deadline again." Or "You're under performing, I think you're a really slow worker. Next time you'll have to work faster." This type of feedback will trigger a negative response or feeling without learning impact or solution.



*"Every two weeks, I have one-to-one feedback meetings with my leader and I have monthly meetings where VDAB is also there. Now, I am confident with the process, but it was difficult for me in the beginning to get used to the level of directness. The feedback here is much more direct than in Iraq! In Belgium, they are always looking for zero error performance. In Iraq, you can make 50% mistakes and more."*

– Omar from Iraq

# 1.3. BUILD NEW COMPETENCES

**The development of inclusive competences** is important when your organisation is becoming more diverse. These competencies encompass new leadership skills (cfr. Tool 2 - Building a diverse organisation: getting the foundation right), handling unconscious bias, and cross-cultural awareness and communication skills to learn to collaborate effectively with people from other cultures.

One of the most common ways that companies attempt to build such competencies is through **formal training**. A recent publication in Harvard Business Review indicates that research on the effectiveness of such programs has yielded mixed results. This has led to some pessimism regarding diversity training, though a recent meta-analysis of over 40 years of diversity training evaluations showed that diversity training can work, especially when it 1) targets awareness and skill development and 2) occurs over a significant period of time.

Research highlights how **changing a few aspects of diversity training can make your efforts much more impactful**. **Some important elements** to include in a diversity training are\*:

- ✓ **Perspective-taking**: this is the process of mentally walking in someone else's shoes. The Harvard study shows that by writing a few sentences imagining the distinct challenges a marginalized minority might face – can improve pro-diversity attitudes and behavioural intentions toward these groups. These effects persisted even when outcomes were measured eight months after training. Even more exciting is the fact that perspective-taking was shown to be capable of producing crossover effects to other minority groups.
- ✓ **Goal-setting**: this can be successfully adapted by asking diversity training participants to set specific, measurable, and challenging (yet attainable) goals related to diversity in the workplace. For example, a trainee might set a goal to challenge inappropriate comments about marginalized groups when overhearing them in the future (in combination with receiving information about how to best handle such situations).
- ✓ **Include all levels within the company**. Every employee, regardless of their status in the company, can and should benefit from the sessions. Even the CEO needs to participate in the diversity training like everyone else. This does not only show others how serious the company is about the issue, it also acknowledges that bias is not always a conscious problem, and everyone can improve themselves with training\*\*. Additionally, having an authority figure endorsing the importance of diversity initiatives can enhance the effect of training for individuals with resistance (linked to hierarchy and social dominance).
- ✓ **Link diversity training with your current processes**. As described in Tool 2 on how to set the foundation right, building a diversity and inclusion strategy works best when aligning with other strategic initiatives. Do not build diversity trainings on itself but incorporate them in your existing processes like onboarding, competence & leadership development, performance management, ...

Source: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/models/national-culture/#International-Business-Door-Stuart-Wall-Sonal-Minocha-Bronwen-Rees>; © American Psychological Association. Final version published as: Bczukova, K., Spell, C. S., Perry, J. L., & Jehn, K. A. (2016). A meta-analytical integration of over 40 years of research on diversity training evaluation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 111, 1227-1274. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

# 2. A GREAT KICK-OFF FOR NEW RECRUITS

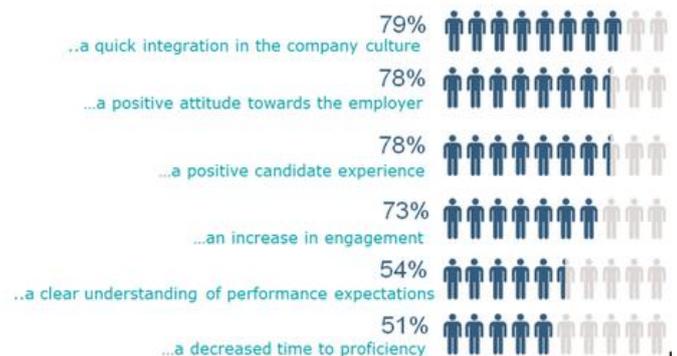


## 2.1. ONBOARDING IS KEY

Why is onboarding important?

An onboarding process is **essential for making employees feel included** in the organisation from day one. It sets the tone for a person's tenure at your company, laying the foundation for their organisational knowledge and working experience. Ensure you get the foundations right and business can reap the benefits of a diverse and international workforce\*.

A recent study by Vlerick Business School and Talmundo\*\* shows that pre- and onboarding leads to **significant positive outcomes**. Due to the onboarding employees experience:



Source: \*<https://wavelength.asana.com/inclusive-onboarding-experience/>; \*\*Buyens, D. & Vandenbroucke, A. (2018). The Power of Onboarding: What new hires want and what HR offers them. Unpublished manuscript, Vlerick Business School, Belgium

As already mentioned in this guide, it is important **not to assume that candidates with diverse backgrounds are aware of all 'normal/local' ways of doing business** and how to behave in your organisation. So make sure that you make implicit knowledge on how things are done explicit for new hires during the first days and weeks on the job. Some example of how newcomers experience the Belgian working context:



*"Brazilians are more inclined to work. In Brazil, there are no labour organisations, you do not get paid for sick leave, whereas in Belgium, people get paid when they have a burnout, and you have strong labour organisations looking after the workers here." – Victor from Brazil*

*"I do have an impression that in general, there is a Belgian mentality that supports independency of employees more than guiding them. In the Middle East, most employees are guided on what they have to do. In Belgium, there is a big space of independency and creativity. In other parts of the world, your employer decides how your skills should develop. In Belgium, you decide that yourself." – Anas from Syria, lived in many places in the Middle East*



*"I heard that Belgian people are usually more distant and cold. However, this is not the case at the company where I work. Here, everyone is friendly and gentle. However, I will say that I miss the more spontaneous get-togethers we used to have in Belarus. Here, you always have to make appointments with people because they are so busy." – Nina from Belarus*

*"In Belgium, I find that there are more rules, more computer systems to navigate and in general some much more advanced systems than the ones from Iraq I am used to." – Hadeel from Iraq*



## Most important onboarding elements

- 1** **Share your company culture, strategic focus and code of conduct.** Make sure newcomers see the bigger pictures of where the organisation and team are heading and which values are key. A clear code of conduct as described above can help. Ideally this is done by senior leadership to already lower the threshold for future communication and connection.
- 2** Discuss personal performance expectations and development needs. Give newcomers a clear overview of their objectives for the first weeks and more long-term goals. Also discuss the competences that might need development and how to speed them up via learning-on-the-job and training.
- 3** "Self-confidence of international talent or talent from minority groups is often fragile. After looking for a job for quite some time or becoming part of a job market that you do not know inside out like you did at home, impacts your self-esteem. So make sure you empower and support these new hires and challenge them to use their additional talent, perspectives, ... Be careful not to pamper them since this might potentially reinforce their self-doubts. (Founder of job platform for international and multicultural talent).
- 4** Make sure all practical arrangements are made. Feeling welcome is subject to how well the organisation has prepared for your arrival. Newcomers might feel insecure or offended because practical things like keys, laptops, ... are not arranged in time (often due to complex internal processes). This also slows down their kick-off in the company, making them less efficient from the start. Minority groups who enter the organisation with some insecurity will be extra sensitive to this.
- 5** Facilitate interactions with different stakeholders. Quickly building an internal and external network is key for all newcomers. Make it a priority to introduce newcomers to all team members and stakeholders in other departments including senior leadership. Help to break the ice by organising individual or team meetings, organising a personal tour, asking colleagues to invite the newcomer to join at lunchtime, ...
- 6** Assign a mentor. Next to the supervisor it is important that newcomers have someone whom they can bother with informal and small questions. The mentor can also help to create an internal and external network. Moreover, the mentor can also be a sounding board for more personal challenges that impact the job like sick child care. See point 6.4 in this guide for more information on how to approach mentoring.
- 7** Give and ask feedback (check-ins): Regular follow-up moments by the supervisor are important to make sure everything is running well, that the newcomers feel at ease in the team, that performance expectations are set and they know how to reach them. Moreover, feedback from new hires can be refreshing to rethink your way of doing things in the company so handle them with care and listen intentionally.

Your  
turn

## Getting to know each other: “I Am, But I Am Not Exercise”

This inclusion activity suggested by MIT is a great way to break down misconceptions and stereotypes by allowing employees to report on how they identify themselves, while also allowing them to address the stereotypes behind these identifying factors. Here are the steps for the “I Am, But I Am Not”\*:

- Each team member should fold a piece of paper in half to create two separate columns. In the first column, write down the heading ‘I Am’. In the second column, write down the heading ‘I Am Not’. In between these two columns, write down the word ‘But’. The final phrase will read “I am \_\_\_\_\_, but I am not \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Participants should fill out the first blank with some kind of common identifier, such as their race, religion, etc. and the second with a common stereotype about that group which is not true about them (whether the stereotype is positive or negative). For example “I am Asian, but I am not good at math.”
- Allow enough time for all participants to list at least 5 statements.
- Allow participants to share their statements with the team and have an open and respectful discourse on stereotypes.

## LEARNING ON-THE-JOB

A low threshold way to introduce new types of talent in your company is to make use of different types of **internship and learning-on-the-job initiatives** sponsored by the public employment services and associations. These formulas offer **the following advantages:**

- Low risk experimenting with new types of hires with a period to assess competencies, learning curve and (company) culture fit.
- Learning by both sides: The employee gets local work experience and starts building a local network, which also aids in practicing the local language on the work floor + the organisation learns about the challenges and opportunities of introducing the new type of hires to be prepared for further action.
- In case of a fit, you have a very engaged hire on board!

Here you can find some **examples of learning-on-the-job formulas:**

- An internship to get acquainted with the job (Beroepsinlevingsstage or BIS) by VDAB/Actiris: a paid internship.
- Individual profession training (Individuele beroepsopleiding or IBO) by VDAB/Actiris: limited fixed monthly fee for the first months of employment where the organisation provides an educational journey to further build the competencies of the newcomer for the job with the goal of hiring him/her. Additional (free) language coaching on the job is offered for non-native speakers.
- VDAB, Actiris and Forem offer financial benefits for certain type of employees (e.g. junior professionals, ...).
- Each industry has associations offering education and financial benefits.
- Employer associations offer learning circles on on-the-job learning like the WELT initiative from VOKA.

Source:\*Harvard University (2013). Recruiting for Diversity. Retrieved from: [https://hr.fas.harvard.edu/files/fas-hr/files/recruiting\\_for\\_diversity\\_9.17.13\\_0.pdf](https://hr.fas.harvard.edu/files/fas-hr/files/recruiting_for_diversity_9.17.13_0.pdf)



## 2.2. EXTRA ATTENTION FOR RELOCATED TALENT

If your new hire recently relocated for the job or for family/personal reasons, there are a couple of things an organisation needs to take into account:

- ✓ **Administrative formalities:** Newcomers need to arrange quite some administrative formalities, such as their work permit, a new ID or driver's license, signing up for healthcare, etc. This might be a hassle when doing it for the first time, both for the employee and the employer. Making a checklist for new hires will bring them up to speed. Procedures for work permits have recently been streamlined. More information can be found on this website.
- ✓ **Partners/family:** Moving to a new country also means you need to start building a new social life. Take into account that newcomers have extra challenges for balancing their work and private life since they have no backup (like grandparents) for their family in case of sickness, ... Newcomers' partners also play an important role in the happiness of your newly moved employee. Supporting family matters by offering a good relocation package (including housing, schools, partner job search, ...) might have a positive impact on employee retention ensuring strong talents do not leave the company because their families do not feel at home in their new country. When dealing with this for the first time, an experienced relocation office could help you to build expertise, eventually leading your organisation to run this in-house. A strong relocation offer might also give you an additional boost in terms of employer branding for attracting international top-notch talent. Also take into account that your new employee builds his/her community at work but the spouse or partner of your new hire might struggle to feel at home. Organising events where partners are included might support them in building a new social network as well.





## 2.3. IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL LANGUAGE TRAINING

Belgium has 3 official languages: Dutch, French and German. Depending on the specific context of companies, a lot of vacancies require a reasonable proficiency in one or more of these three languages. Employers can **help new hires to learn the local language by providing language training externally or on the job:**

### External language training

A first possibility is to support newcomers to find a suitable **external language course** which can help them lift their fluency in the local language to the next level. Companies might opt to provide **time during working hours** to engage in external language training or to (partly) subsidize the cost of language training outside the workplace. There are **different providers** that offer language training courses, for example:

- **Universities** (such as Linguapolis, University Language Centre) offer high-paced language training courses.
- **Public employment services** (such as VDAB, Forem or Actiris) offer different courses depending on the obtained level of proficiency.
- **The Berlitz language school**, which can be found in Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent, Liège and Waterloo, offers a wide variety of courses individually or in group. They also offer online courses.
- **The adult education centers**, which can be found in most major cities in Flanders as well as in the Brussels area, offer courses depending on the proficiency level.
- **Duolingo** is an online language-learning platform. It's free, has an app and supports people to learn a language by using it 5 minutes a day at work.
- ...

These are just a few example of possible external language courses which might be helpful for new hires. It might be worthwhile to **make a list of possible options and discuss with employees what the best option is for them**. Depending on employee's preferences and job characteristics (e.g. for some positions it is impossible to be absent for a whole week), language training might take place in different formats. Think of immersion courses (very intensive group lessons, often organised at an external location), standard classroom settings (in group, during the day or in the evening), individual sessions face-to-face or virtually through video conferencing.

### Language training on the work floor

Alternatively, companies can also invest in **language training on the work floor**. The Flemish employment service VDAB, for instance, developed the language course 'Dutch on the work floor'. The aim of this course is to give non-Dutch speakers in a predominantly Dutch-speaking environment enough understanding of the language to work effectively. Providing opportunities to learn the local language on the work floor is very valuable. **Highly-educated newcomers show a steep learning curve** when they get the chance to practice language on the work floor, and not only in classroom settings.

## 2.4. MENTORING

### What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a **two-way relationship** in which a more experienced or knowledgeable person (the mentor) helps to guide a less experienced person (the mentee). Once the candidate is hired, mentoring can be used to stimulate integration.

Mentorship is **mainly relationship-oriented** as it focuses on experiences, feelings and personal challenges, rather than task-related issues. As a consequence, **it is important for a mentor to get to know the mentee on a personal level** (and the other way around). By asking about each other's backgrounds, personal interests, and ambitions, chances are higher to build a long-term, sustainable connection. Furthermore, if the new hire arrived in the new country very recently, he/she might benefit from some practical help outside of work: housing, registrations, insurances, obtaining a driver's license, interpretation of the first pay slip... the mentor can play an important role in this administrative tasks, either hands-on or by referring to relevant institutes.

Mentorship **can help decrease bias in organisations by exposing employees to more people who are less like them**. Important remark is that hierarchical relationships may not have the same effect as horizontal ones.

In fact, many assigned mentorship programmes are by nature hierarchical and may actually aggravate individuals' prejudices\*. In other words, it is important to frame diverse mentorship programmes as mutual learning processes and not as "teacher-student" relationships.

“Now we have some international talents working for the company, we noticed that follow-up after hiring requires as much attention. That is why we ensure that every person that is hired through the Skills to Succeed initiative gets a mentor, who can probe for mood and questions or concerns on a regular basis and who can guide that person.”

-Magali, Corporate Citizenship Lead, Accenture

### Two-way street

It is important to understand that mentoring is a two-way street where **both mentor and mentee can learn from each other**. Especially when mentor and mentee are different from each other in terms of professional background, gender, ethnicity,... a mentoring trajectory might be very interesting because they learn about each other's perspectives.

Source: <https://hbr.org/2018/07/the-other-diversity-dividend>





If managed successfully, these diverse mentorship programmes **send a strong positive signal throughout the company about diversity**. They help to establish connections between different groups of employees, build communication networks, and make it possible to spread different ideas across the company. Mentoring has proven to be a highly effective technique to allow employees to grow their network and improve careers in terms of promotion rates. In other words: If properly positioned and designed, a diversity-focused mentoring program can provide **outstanding results for both mentor, mentee and the organisation\***.

” *An enriching experience that builds bridges between different cultures and ages: a win-win!* ”

- Eva, 55 years old, mentor at DUO

### Matching mentor and mentee

A good fit between a mentor and mentee **is a key determinant of successful mentoring\*\***. Some of your workers will be more receptive to adapting to a diverse work culture than others. These individuals could fill a valuable role as mentor. Pair them with workers from different cultures to provide training and help with assimilation into the work environment.

Still, matching mentors and mentees to each other **is not a simple process**. Use data to gain more insights in the characteristics of your (new)

population. One way to get information is creating a questionnaire that asks potential mentors and new hires about their career objectives, communication styles, and what they are looking for in a mentor or mentee. As such, a good match can be achieved, which leads to a successful relationship based on similar interests and complementary goals\*\*\*.

### Internal or cross-organisational mentorship programmes

Mentor and mentee can be two employees within the same organisation, but a mentor can also be linked to an external organisation or Ngo. Several institutes (like **Connect2Work** or **DUO**) have as their core business to link a mentor (often a volunteer) to a person of foreign origin who recently arrived in his/her new guest country (the mentee). In this setting, mentees are often still looking for a job. The mentor helps him/her to get to know the job market, to find the job search strategy, to write a CV and cover letter,... But also after the mentee found a job, **mentor and mentee stay in contact to exchange experiences**. Testimonials describe the process as enriching for both mentor and mentee.

**Talent2Connect** - a platform where different organisations from the private, public and social sectors join their forces to guide untapped talents to the right employment solutions - have made a clear overview of interesting mentoring projects per region.

Source: \*<https://chronus.com/blog/mentoring-helps-diversity-in-organizations>+<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nazbeheshti/2019/01/23/improve-workplace-culture-with-a-strong-mentoring-program/#1c62264576b5>\*\*<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0018726708098081>\*\*\*<https://www.roberthalf.com/blog/management-tips/how-mentoring-relationships-help-strengthen-your-company>

# 3. TESTIMONIAL HELLO CUSTOMER

Leslie Cottenje, CEO, Hello Customer

## Diversity, not a goal in itself

Diversity is not a topic on the strategic agenda of Hello Customer. However high on the agenda is our international growth where we see the world as our playground: building an international team fits these goals and also further builds our entrepreneurial company culture.

## From a natural process to a strategic approach

Our first international hires were not planned to be international but based on strong match with the profiles and competences we were looking for. These talents also came through international and local networking rather than true the classic recruitment channels. The recruitment process is aligned with the process for local candidates: check of the track record and motivation. The first meeting is by Skype and if well, we will invite them over. We will also add an extra check on why they would like to live in Ghent since moving for your job has a big impact on your professional and private life. This should be a very conscious part of the decision process.

For our IT talents we recently decided to combine our local team with international IT sourcing in Morocco, Portugal and Warschau.

## The importance of a good onboarding process

We have a strong onboarding process for all new recruits, so no separate approach for internationals. Nevertheless we pay extra attention for the following:

- We stimulate internationals to **learn the local language(s)**. Although our corporate language is English, informal communication inside and especially outside the company is in Dutch. A fast-track in language helps to feel 'home' more quickly.
- We pay extra attention **not to treat internationals differently**. One experience learned us we were pampering a new talent who started with an internship too much, withholding her to stretch her wings. After an open talk, she received clear goals and freedom in her process and her self-confidence grew with great business results for her project.
- In **our company culture** health and well-being are high on the agenda. We provide some extra's like a healthy breakfast, a leisure area, fun activities after work... This also has a positive impact on our international team member, helping them to quickly connect and build a social link.



## 4. INSPIRED BY

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### The project team:

- Prof Dr Dirk Buyens - Professor of Human Resources and Partner at Vlerick Business School
- Dr Emmy Defever - Senior Researcher Area People and Organisation at Vlerick Business School
- Sarah Quataert - Researcher Area People and Organisation at Vlerick Business School
- Hannelore Waterschoot - Managing Partner at Talentree
- Nancy Leys - Project Manager at Talentree
- Myrthe Waterschoot - Marketing Manager at Talentree

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# 5. CONTACT INFORMATION



**Prof Dr Dirk Buyens** - Professor of Human Resources and Partner of Vlerick Business School

**Email:** [dirk.buyens@vlerick.com](mailto:dirk.buyens@vlerick.com)

**Dr Emmy Defever** - Senior Researcher Area People and Organisation of Vlerick Business School

**Email:** [emmy.defever@vlerick.com](mailto:emmy.defever@vlerick.com)

**Telephone number:** +32 9 210 97 11

**Website:** <https://www.vlerick.com>



**Hannelore Waterschoot** - Managing Partner at Talentree

**Email:** [hannelore@talentree.be](mailto:hannelore@talentree.be)

**Telephone number:** +32 473 89 42 37

**Website:** <https://talentree.be>

