Equality and diversity in the workplace

When words are so often said together in the same sentence it can be difficult not to see them as a pair. Such a fusing together could be said of the terms **equality and diversity.**

While both equality and diversity have a common cause that does not mean to say they are the same thing.

When it comes to your workplace it's possible to have a diverse workforce that is unequal, or an equal workforce that's not diverse – which means you won't see the benefits of either.

Supporting both of them, however, will result in an inclusive atmosphere that encourages employee engagement and is accepting of everyone.

Here, we're going to look at why it's important to support equality and diversity in the workplace, and how it benefits everyone - from CEOs to customers.

Read on to discover:

- Why you should encourage diversity
- Be inclusive
- See where you can improve
- Look to the next generation
- Make it a priority
- Make it unique
- Have a conversation

So, why should you encourage diversity?

It seems obvious, but a successful football team isn't made up of only strikers or only goalkeepers – the same should go for your team. A diverse workforce which features people from a variety of cultures, backgrounds, abilities and lifestyles benefits everyone.

By having a workforce that is better representative of society your business will have access to a wider range of talent, meaning you have a greater chance of finding the right person for your new opening.

In addition, a diverse workforce has also been shown to improve productivity and enable companies to be more financially successful than less diverse ones.

Also, by reinforcing a **positive company culture that is diverse and inclusive** you are more likely to stop employees looking for jobs elsewhere and reduce staff turnover.

And if that wasn't enough, the Harvard Business Review also found that teams are quicker at solving problems when they're cognitively diverse.

Now you know just
some of the benefits of
a diverse workforce,
**how do you ensure
equality and diversity
in the workplace?**

Here's our tips...

Be inclusive

It's not enough to just hire diverse talent and expect to see a wealth of positive results, diversity is also about increasing participation, not just symbolic participation or positive discrimination.

Treating your diverse talent equally is what will lead to an inclusive workplace than enables all people to succeed.

See where you can improve

While it may be hard or even uncomfortable, if you want to ensure equality and diversity you have to first acknowledge where you may be lacking.

Understanding what unconscious bias is and how you can mitigate it will help you to address practises that you may have been previously unaware of.

The conversation around equality and diversity will continue to happen on a larger scale, but it is important to recognise that we all bare a personal responsibility to make our workplaces more inclusive.

Taking the time to read, and listen to other people's voices enables each of us to gain a better understanding of other people's experiences.

Look to the next generation

Diversity is inclusive of many factors, and one of them is age. Both older and younger generations can benefit from their respective experience and youth.

As Millennials continue to enter and rise in the workplace they want to be part of workplaces that have diversity programmes which seek to create more inclusive company cultures.

Make it a priority

Understanding that diversity and equality are important and prioritising them are two very different things.

An equality report by Accenture found that 76% of leaders prioritise financial performance over diversity (34%) and culture (21%).

In order for equality and diversity in the workplace to be successful it should be **ingrained into your company culture**, not just an afterthought.

Make it unique

Small businesses are unique, so your diversity programme should be too.

One size certainly does not fit all, so definitely do your research on where you think improvements can be made.

By clearly identifying what you're trying to achieve you'll be able to see if you've managed to hit your target or not. When you're able to align your intentions with your implementation you're going to have a better chance at succeeding.
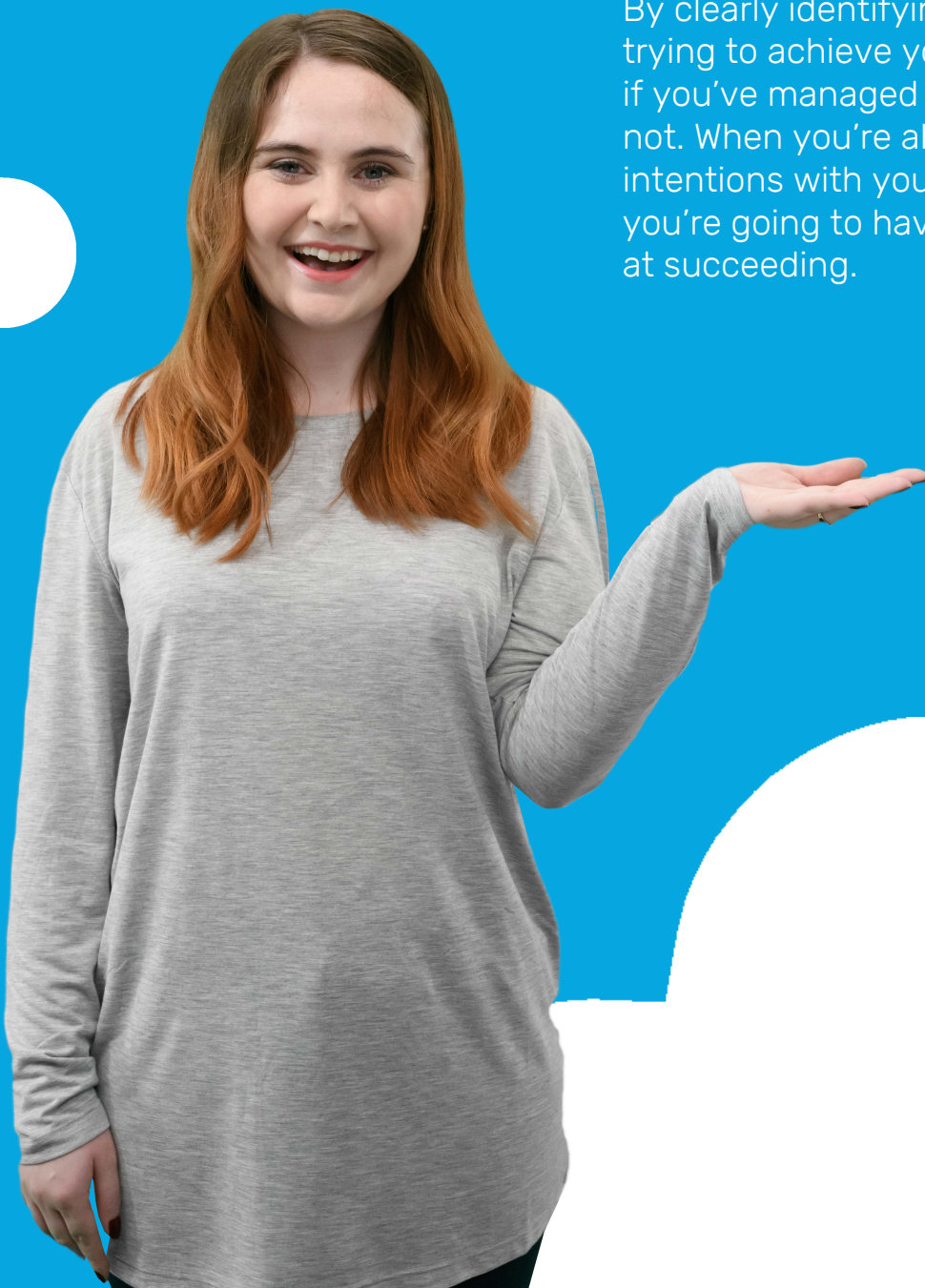
Have a conversation

The value of communication cannot be overstated. The same study by Accenture found that two thirds of leaders believe they create empowering environments, but only one third of employees agree.

One way to close that gap and to achieve a "culture of equality" is to have an **honest and productive conversation**.

By sitting down and discussing with your team what would make them feel more empowered, not only are you taking steps towards a diverse and equal future but the collaboration ensures that you remain transparent and accountable.

Equality and diversity aren't just hot topics for the moment, they've always been important and will continue to be in **all aspects** of life.

Read next:

8 benefits of encouraging diversity in the workplace

Business Leadership

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