



Information and Communications Technology Council / Conseil des technologies de l'information et des communications

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20 Ways to Ensure an Inclusive Workplace¹

A key part of managing your talent – including IEPs – is to make your workplace more inclusive. Creating a welcoming environment where employees feel at home can enhance employee satisfaction, and in turn encourage retention.

Check off what you are already doing, and consider what else might work in your organization – and how – to help make your workplace practices more inclusive.

Diversity and Inclusion: Some definitions...

Diversity is going to the party.

Inclusion is being invited up to dance.

Source: Unknown.

While diversity is about counting heads, inclusion is about making heads count.

Measure	Already in place?
Communicate	
1. Communicate the value of an inclusive workplace, and promote staff behaviours that will support it at your company on a regular basis. This can be articulated during management meetings, company events, or informal sessions with employees.	
2. Be a role model. Walk the talk and practice what you advocate by participating actively in initiatives to promote an inclusive workplace (e.g. training, workplace activities, employee network groups, etc.).	

¹ Adapted from Singapore Ministry of Manpower. Workplace Diversity Management Toolkit. Manager's Guide, p. 12. ; ICTC HRM Guide.

Measure		Already in place?
Connect		
3.	Build a sense of community amongst staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘MBWA (Management by walking around) • Arranging for lunch with the CEO/a senior manager for all new employees • Encouraging employees to participate in executive chats, group breakfasts, town halls 	
4.	Connect IEP hires that are new to Canada or your region with local immigrant-serving organizations providing settlement help – for both themselves and family members.	
5.	Encourage full participation of all team members in meetings by using different methods to enable sharing of perspectives – e.g., inviting each person to share, forming break-out groups, inviting input in writing or verbally.	
6.	Provide opportunities for team members to interact and build understanding of one another through inclusive social activities – e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular team lunches bearing in mind dietary restrictions due to culture or religion. • Informal activities to help employees interact (e.g., sports activities, family outings). • Acknowledging and/or celebrating special holidays of the nationalities/ cultures of team members, and encouraging them to share more about their respective cultures (including food, music, etc.) to facilitate understanding between colleagues. <p>Poll your staff for innovative ideas on events and activities everyone can freely participate in. To maximize participation, organize them either during regular office hours or make them open to employee family members.</p>	
7.	Encourage and support informal employee networking	
Support		
8.	Onboard each new hire in a comprehensive manner, and provide ongoing support through the first 90 days in particular	
9.	Actively manage each employee’s performance through setting appropriate goals, regular feedback and recognition and annual reviews	
10.	Encourage all employees to participate in any company mentoring program to aid their integration and engagement	

Measure		Already in place?
Support		
11.	Be committed to providing career development – both formal and informal, in an equitable, bias-aware manner. Ensure that IEPs and other candidates from diverse backgrounds are not overlooked for promotion due to cultural assumptions – e.g. a perceived lack of interest may simply be that the IEP anticipates that it is the manager’s role to notify him/her when they are ready to advance	
12.	Address and resolve biases, inappropriate behaviour and conflicts promptly. Make employees aware of the process to address grievances and direct them to relevant policies and resources.	
Educate		
13.	<p>Look for ways to enhance your diversity and intercultural competence, including participating in any diversity and cultural awareness training for managers – e.g. leading diverse teams, bias-aware management practices.</p> <p>Encourage employees to expand their awareness and skills in intercultural communication and addressing micro inequities (small semi- or unconscious behaviours and gestures that can undermine others – e.g. acknowledging your idea after someone else restates it).</p> <p>Many courses and resources are available for free through government and immigrant-serving organizations – e.g. Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace from the Government of Alberta.</p>	
14.	<p>Get access to a multicultural calendar and educate yourself on how to acknowledge key cultural events and any accommodation an employee may need, e.g., Chinese New Year, Diwali, Ramadan, etc.</p> <p>For example, the Graybridge Malkam multicultural calendar.</p>	
Accommodate		
15.	<p>Acknowledge and accommodate your employees’ religious and cultural observances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proactive; ask new IEP employees what their religious and other accommodation needs are to avoid any surprises and possible conflicts. Clarify the organization’s accommodation policies to set realistic expectations. • Allow flexible work schedules (home-based work, job sharing, telecommuting, etc.). • Allow open dress code when appropriate. 	

Measure		Already in place?
Engage		
16.	Look for opportunities to utilize employees' varying linguistic skills, international experience and knowledge of other markets to support your business.	
17.	Leverage the cultural awareness of employees – solicit employee feedback, and consult with employee networks or groups as available, on inclusiveness of company programs, policies and accountability, as well as products and services – and areas for improvement.	
Measure		
18.	Keep track of the workforce and of promotions and development opportunities for diverse talent. Over time, look for trends that could indicate any barriers to the inclusion, retention and advancement of certain employee groups, and ask you what could be causing them. Metrics to track could include: who is leaving the company after six months; who is and is not participating in company programs, such as mentoring, coaching and networking, as well as company social events; who is and is not being recognized or rewarded and receiving a promotion.	
19.	Conduct exit interviews with employees who leave the company to better understand their challenges and issues, and consider introducing annual employee satisfaction or engagement surveys to take the “pulse” on how included your employees feel and to get input on how to make your workplace more inclusive.	
20.	Tie the corporate goal of an inclusive workplace into performance management objectives for employees, and recognize individual employees and teams for their contribution to building an inclusive workplace – e.g. mentors, buddies.	

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Resources

Hire Immigrants Roadmap for accommodation tips, webinar and sample policy – see Onboard > Understand and meet accommodation needs.

“I like the environment and how people communicate – people are very helpful and mingle in such a way that, even if you have a small doubt, you can freely contact anyone.”

IEP employed in ICT

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