



HMThinking

D&I Advisory Council London

November 2021 Meeting



In our November 2021 Meeting, our Advisory Council considered the following three questions:

- ◆ In the 'shortage economy' how do you ensure you are still driving diversity when to serve your customers and clients, you just need someone in post right now?
- ◆ The 'straight white male fear' is growing and getting louder. How can our organisations drive change whilst ensuring they remain inclusive for everyone?
- ◆ Targets with Teeth are key to making progress. How should targets be applied and embedded into the fabric of the organisation?

In the 'shortage economy' how do you ensure you are still driving diversity, when to serve your customers/clients, you just need someone in post right now?

As businesses re-bound from the pandemic and the demand for top-tier talent at all levels in our organisations has exploded. It is easy in this 'shortage economy' to abandon the medium-term goal of creating a more diverse organisation with the short-term expediency of 'just making the hire'. Our Advisory Council made the following three observations:

Evaluation of the Recruitment Process

Businesses do have to serve their customers and clients so short-term expediency, and filling the vacancy, is a material factor.

However, if the current market means you are tending to hire 'more of the same' then it is critical to look at the supply of candidates into the organisation and ensure you are tapping into as diverse a pool as possible. As part of this, critically evaluating your employee brand to understand whether it speaks to people other than your 'usual hire' is paramount.

The Council also highlighted the importance of having a diverse panel of interviewers and suggested a good practice is to ask candidates from underrepresented groups if there are additional people in the organisation they would like to meet. A compelling way of demonstrating your commitment to diversity and openness to thinking differently, is to involve your diverse clients and customers. They may want to contribute to your message and have thoughts on how to reach more diverse pools. Even more powerfully they may be open to meeting candidates and playing an active role in your recruitment process.

Understand progression of Underrepresented Groups

Evaluating a recruitment process with diversity in mind is also a good opportunity to appraise how underrepresented groups are progressing in the organisation. Many organisations have undertaken this work and realised that there are underrepresented groups who are progressing slower than others or, in some cases, just not progressing at all. This is an indication of bias and requires concerted efforts to understand it and ensure the playing field is level.

Buddy System.

Introducing a buddy system and linking the value-add, longevity and belonging of new joiners to the annual appraisal of each buddy can really make a difference. Even better is making the buddy role aspirational by offering it to high-performers. Managers must also be accountable for the success of their team and understand they have a role to play in the progression of their diverse employees – see Targets with Teeth below.





The ‘straight white male fear’ is growing and getting louder. How can our organisations, drive change whilst ensuring they remain inclusive for everyone?

Back in December 2020, we highlighted ‘the straight white male fear’ – individuals that feel they are being disadvantaged. Twelve months on and that fear is real and becoming more vocal. Our Advisory Council had the following advice:

The facts – it is important to be unequivocal about the need for change. Our organisations are still dominated by white men at a leadership level and there are very significant gender and ethnicity pay gaps. However, to be inclusive for everyone there are four actions and behaviours that organisations can take which will have a positive impact.

- 1. Bring everyone into the conversation** – fear is often grounded in feeling left out, not listened to or being ignored. Therefore, a valuable first step is to bring the majority into the conversation and help everyone to feel part of the wider discussion.
- 2. Create a safe space for discussion and education** – developing a culture of psychological safety will allow everyone to voice their fears and feel listened to. By enabling an open dialogue, you can pave the way for sharing, education and, ultimately, empathy for all.
- 3. The concept of intersectionality** – in an environment where diversity is discussed and valued, those who may not consider themselves to be diverse can quickly feel sidelined. By introducing the concept of intersectionality and helping everyone to see their own unique characteristics, you can find a powerful way to engage the majority and be truly inclusive.
- 4. Celebrate the achievement, not the diversity** – it is easy to get into the mode of celebrating the latest diverse hire or promotion. However, it is critical to emphasize the quality of experience and skills the person brings rather than their diversity. Cultures that celebrate people for their contribution are key to creating inclusivity for everyone, including the diverse hire who does not want to be singled out for their ‘otherness’.

Targets with Teeth are key to making progress. How should targets be applied and embedded into the fabric of the organisation?

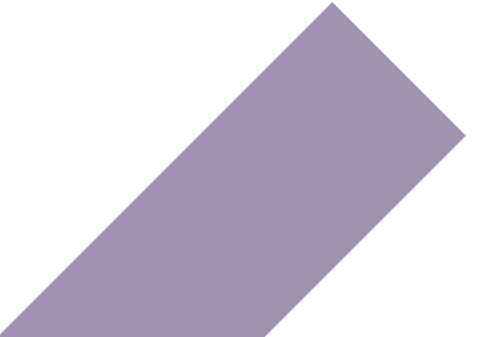
Our Advisory Council is very clear that without targets no real progress will be made. However, targets can come under fire for failing to address the real barriers to progression and creating a culture that is sceptical of success in underrepresented groups. Our Advisory Council had several thoughts on how to apply and embed targets for maximum impact.

Apply them to all levels, not just the top – targets are most effective when applied at all levels in an organisation, not just at the top. This facilitates consistent progression for underrepresented groups and will deliver a pipeline of talent.

Link targets to promotion and financial reward – holding leaders accountable for outcomes is critical and by linking promotions and financial reward to the success of leaders in hiring, promoting and developing underrepresented groups, will deliver results.

Publish your targets – as highlighted in our December 2020 Advisory Council, at EY, the leadership published its gender diversity targets both internally and externally and journalist Alex Spence, then at The Times, enjoyed holding the firm to account. The combination of internal and external scrutiny drove results.

Value process alongside outcomes – it is important to place emphasis on the process which delivers more diverse outcomes. Framing targets around process, and not just outcomes, encourages the right actions, and if the process is a good one, will lead to improved DEI outcomes.





Diversity. A passion for and the power of.

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[Liz Bingham](#), OBE, Former MP of People, EY and currently CEO of R3, Liz has received numerous awards and honours including ranked in the top 50 of World Pride Power List of influential LGBT people worldwide.



[Tunde Banjoko](#), OBE, Chief Executive and Founder of social mobility charity Making The Leap which supports young people in advancing their careers and runs the UK Social Mobility Awards, focused on organisations social mobility initiatives.



[Asif Sadig](#), MBE, Asif Senior Vice President, Head of Equity and Inclusion, International at WarnerMedia, Asif has received a number of accolades that include the highly commended Head of Diversity Award at the European Diversity Awards.

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