



# HOW TO CREATE A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE CULTURE

AN SRG GUIDE

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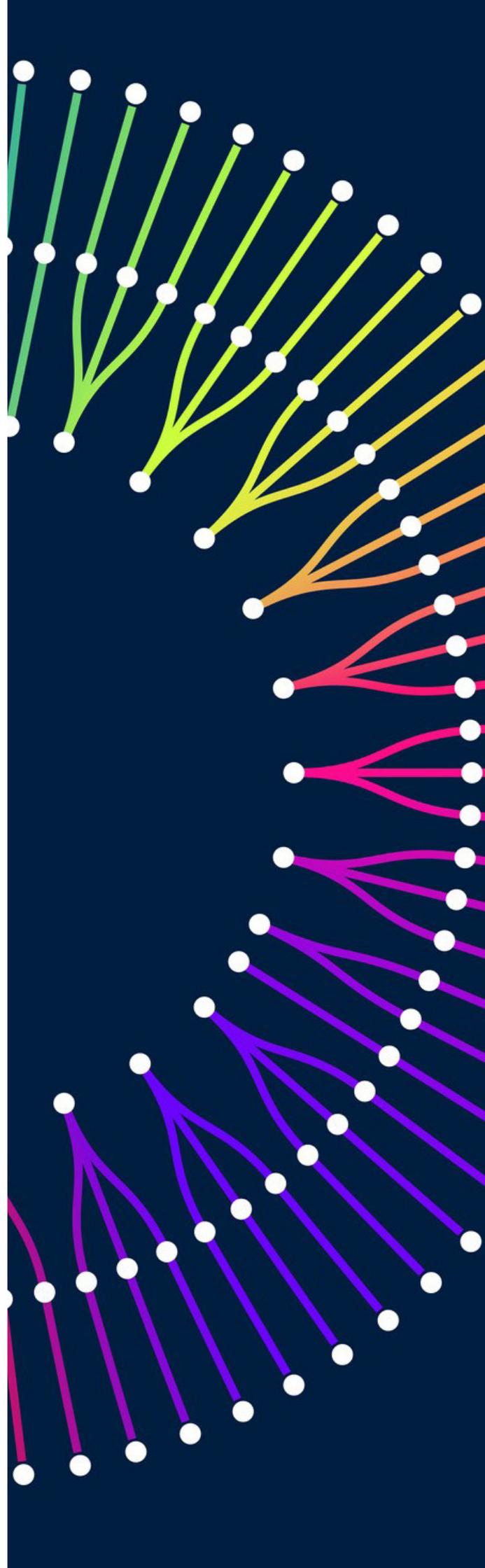
# INTRODUCTION

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Diversity in the workplace is one of the key drivers of innovative thinking, creativity and problem solving. To maintain a competitive environment, it is crucial that businesses hire and retain top talent. Research shared on Glassdoor reveals that diversity attracts top talent to a business and in the competitive environment we all work in, it is vital that businesses address these issues within their talent attraction programmes. None of this is news to business or HR leaders. D&I has been at the forefront of conversations in HR and boardrooms for years. What is proving difficult however, is finding that elusive best practice in order to be at the forefront and create a truly inclusive work culture. This SRG guide will show you how to benchmark, measure and set up a diversity and inclusivity programme.

“Companies within the top quartile percent for diversity are 21% more likely to have successful financial returns. To maintain a competitive environment, it is crucial that we hire and retain top talent. Diversity in the workplace is a key driver of creative and innovative thinking and therefore a vital element to include in talent attraction programmes” Michelle Claire, Internal Talent Ambassador, SRG.

Although creating a diverse workplace can benefit everyone, implementing inclusion and facilitating diversity can be difficult for businesses. Below we share our top tips to overcome these difficulties and it all starts with benchmarking.



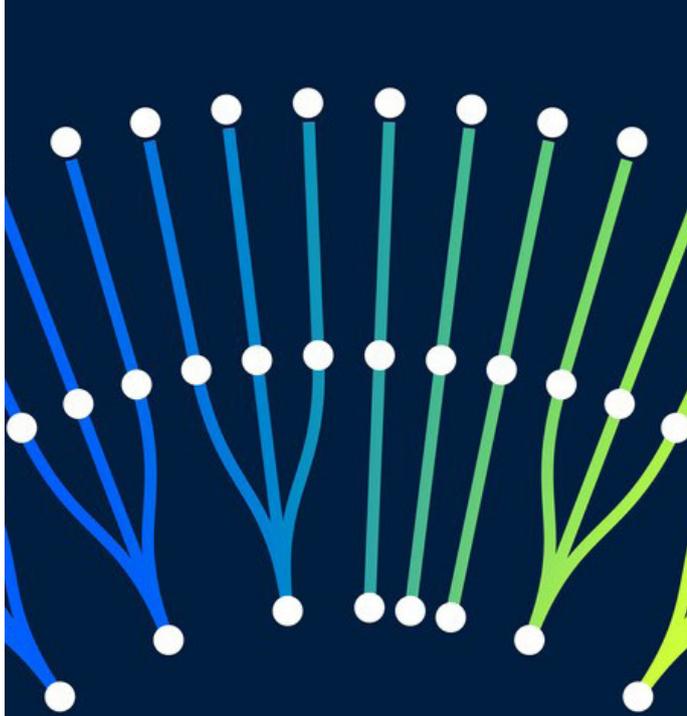
# BENCHMARKING

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## Diversity

As a HR professional or a passionate advocate, collecting data on diversity and inclusivity is an important first step to implementing a programme. To be able to change anything requires full knowledge of the starting point, so in order to clearly see where you want to get to, you will need to complete a full audit of the current levels of diversity and sentiments of inclusivity within your organization.

You then need to compare these figures to externally sourced data to see how you compare. Collecting information on the current workforce is a basic tenet of strategic diversity measurement. But benchmarking is what makes the data meaningful. Advanced organizations are on board with external benchmarking. They use industry, census, or other outside data to inform their diversity goals and measure success at increasing representation compared to its industry or community at large. Remember, true diversity means having a workforce with a full spectrum backgrounds and identities. Traditional models of diversity include looking at gender and people of ethnic minorities but today's definition needs to be widened to include religious backgrounds, members of the LGBTQ community, veterans, people over 60 and more. These differences are not always visible so using a survey is an excellent way of measuring inclusivity and diversity. These two things need to be treated as separate exercises.



## Diversity & Inclusivity Step by Step

Benchmark – D&I

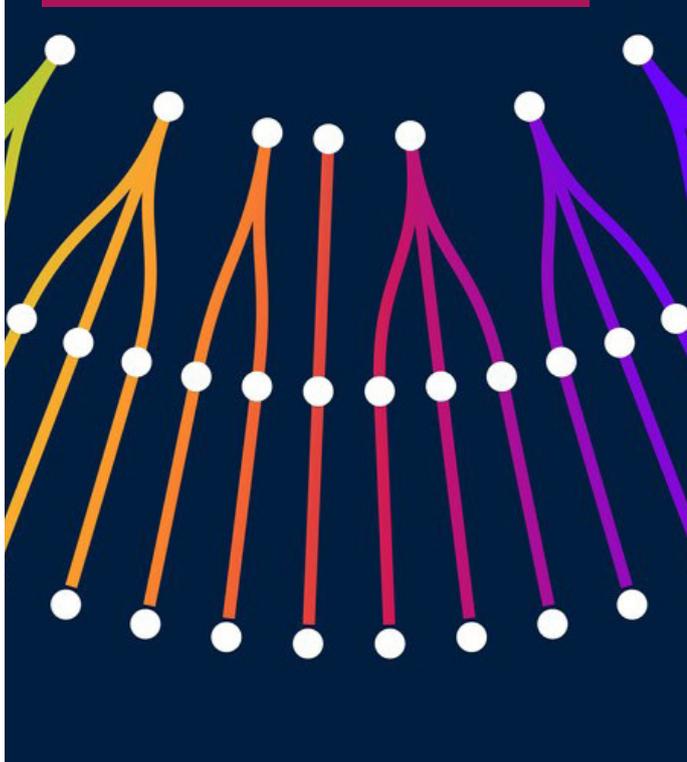
Goal setting – D&I

Promote – D&I

Recruit - D

Environment - I

Assess – D&I



## BENCHMARKING

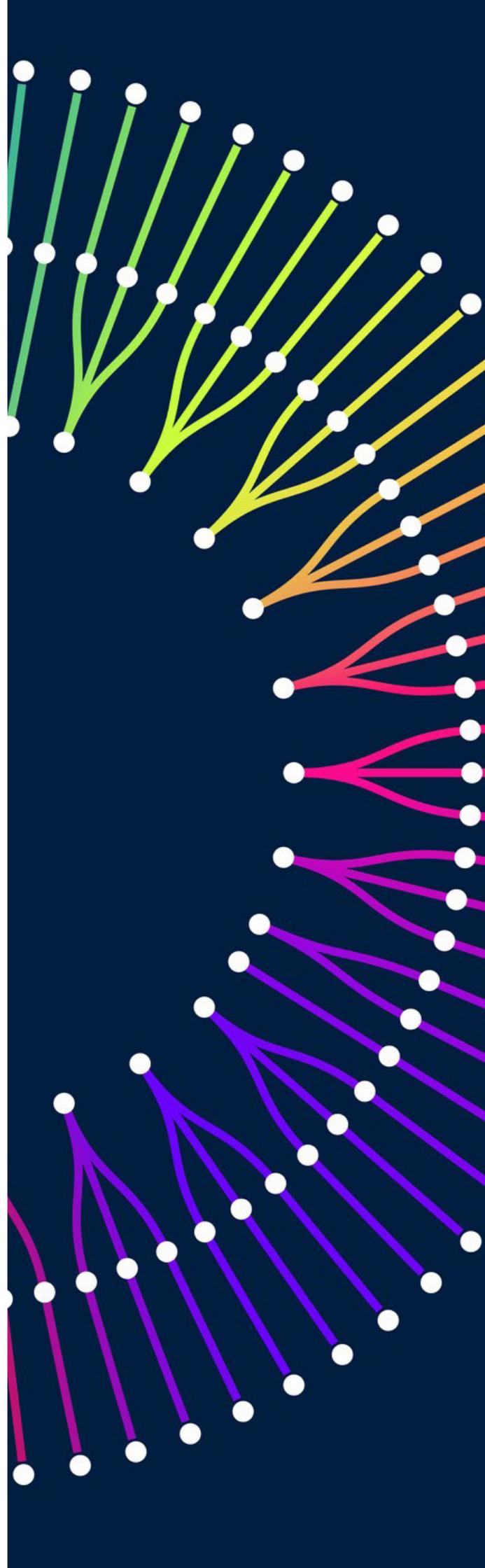
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### Blueprint for your diversity survey

Suggested questions to include in a diversity survey (please note: some of the questions will need pick lists to help respondents)

- What is your gender identity? (See ONS for current gender identity terms)
- What is your racial or ethnic identity? (See ONS for current list of identities)
- Are you a person living with a disability?
- How old are you?
- Is English your first language?
- What languages do you speak at home?
- Do you identify with any of the following religions? (See ONS for current list of religions)
- Are you a parent or caretaker of children?
- Are you a caretaker of adults?
- Have you ever served in the armed forces?

Asking about race, gender, and sexual orientation in your surveys can feel personal and invasive, but Census Bureau research in the US has found that respondents are rarely put off by them and that people are no more likely to skip these types of questions than any other. Research done for the 2021 census in the UK has shown that 84% of respondents are happy to answer questions of this nature as long as they understand why they are being asked.



## BENCHMARKING

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As long as your options are 'standard' or inclusive, you're unlikely to lose responses just for asking. Just make sure you are clear to respondents on how the data will be used and why you are collecting it. The survey intro can reassure participants the survey is anonymous and/or confidential. If you're worried about excluding anyone, include an "other" option in your demographic questions so that survey takers can write in their own identities.

### Points to remember when setting up a survey

- Make responses anonymous.
- Consider making every question optional so respondents can skip any questions they're uncomfortable with.
- Be transparent about the reason you're sharing the survey. Respondents are more likely to share information about themselves if they know that their responses will help support diversity and inclusion.
- Be conscious of language. When you're asking about sensitive topics, you're asking respondents to be vulnerable. Non-inclusive language can inadvertently offend respondents and prevent them from answering honestly. Consider adding an "other" option to ensure you are not excluding anyone.

### Points to remember

Make responses anonymous

Consider making questions optional

Be transparent about why you are sharing your survey

Be conscious of non-language

## BENCHMARKING

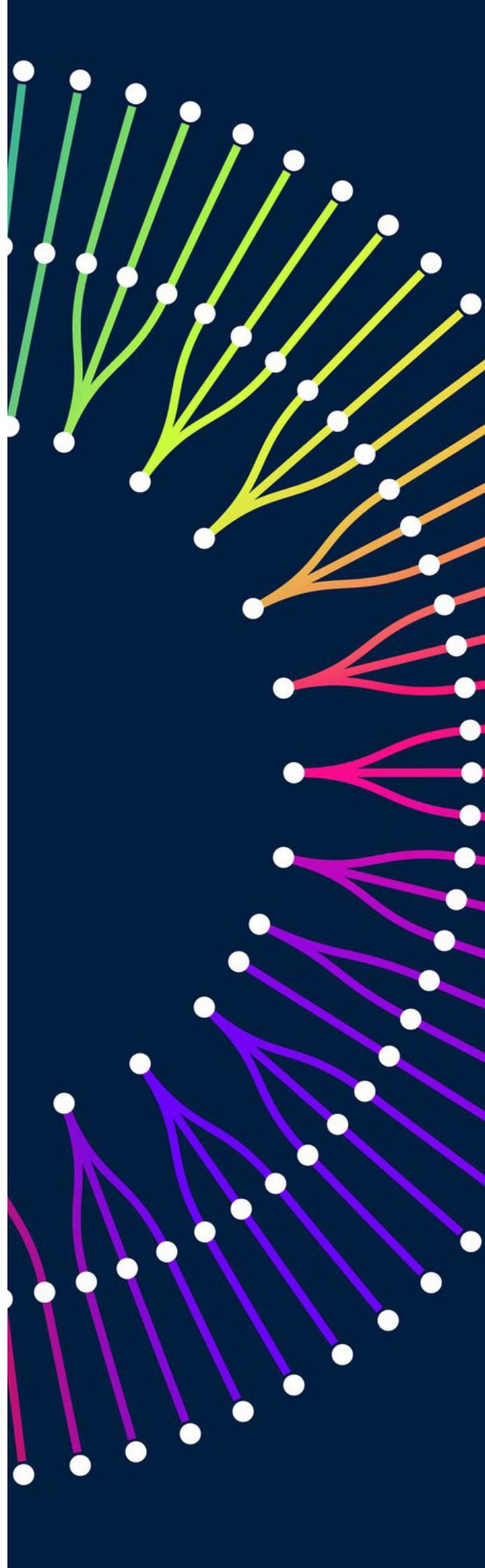
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### Inclusivity

Inclusivity is trickier to measure and most definitely separate from diversity. You can have diversity without inclusivity. With diversity, once tracked you can produce statistics on promotion rates, hiring numbers, demographics etc to help tell your organisation's story. Once hired, people from underrepresented groups need to feel safe and respected with a clear and successful career path otherwise your retention will suffer and with it the reputation of your company to potential hires.

Inclusivity is hard to quantify because individuals' experiences are exactly that: individual. Often people at varying levels within a business can have different perceptions of initiatives, with those at the top not seeing a problem that exists to people on the ground.

To track and measure inclusivity, three areas that you could focus on are the basis of research done at Stanford University. They cover objectivity, growth mindset and belonging and according to the research, they are the pillars of a positive employee experience when done well.



## BENCHMARKING

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### Blueprint for your inclusivity survey

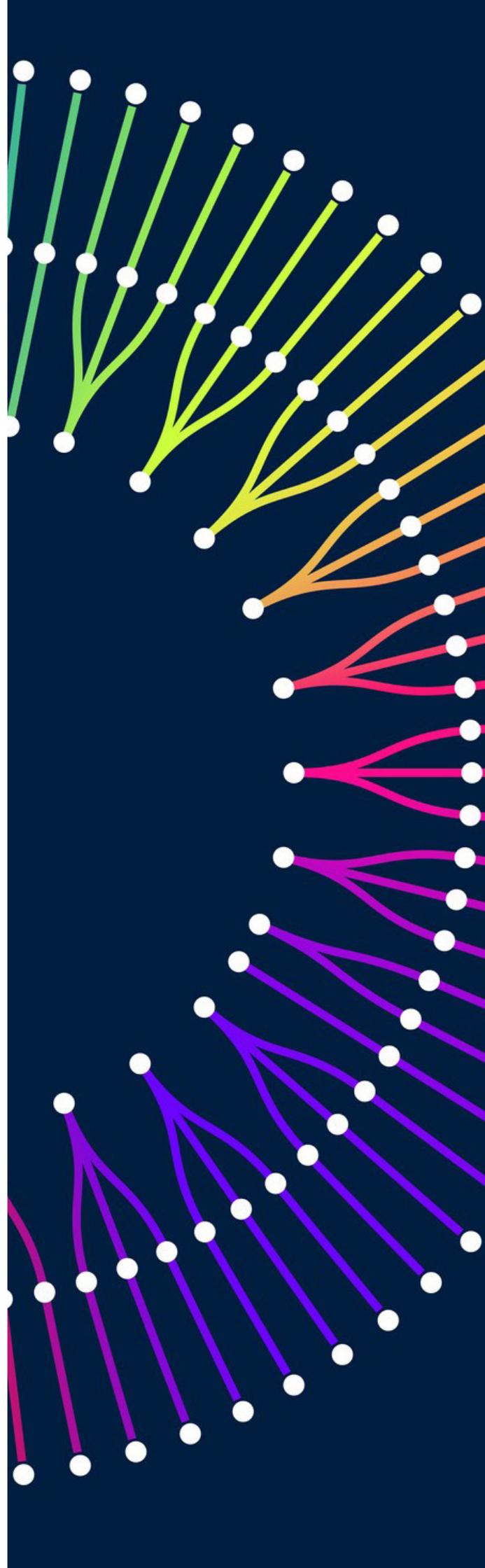
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- I feel like I belong at my company
- I feel like I might not belong at my company when something negative happens for example a negative social interaction with a colleague or when I get developmental feedback from my manager
- When I speak up at work, my opinion is valued
- Admin tasks that are not owned by anyone in particular are fairly shared around the company
- Promotion decisions are fair at my company
- My job performance is evaluated fairly
- I feel my job compensation is fair and relative to similar roles within the company
- My company feels that people can always greatly improve their talents and abilities.
- My company feels that people have a certain amount of talent and there is not much they can do about it.
- I often worry I don't have much in common with people at my company.
- I feel like my colleagues really understand who I am.
- I feel respected and valued by my team members.



## BENCHMARKING

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- I feel respected and valued by my manager.
  - I have all the information and resources I need to complete my role.
  - My company enables me to balance my work and home life.
  - Opportunities for training and development are available to all employees where possible.
  - How much of a priority is diversity to my manager?
  - How much of a priority is diversity to Senior leaders within the business?



# GOAL SETTING

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Once you have collated your results you will know where you need to improve and therefore where to focus your hiring efforts. Improvement follows goal setting as it provides a clear guide to where you want to be.

**Tip:** Slicing and dicing the data will tell you the groups within your business that feel less included.



# PROMOTE

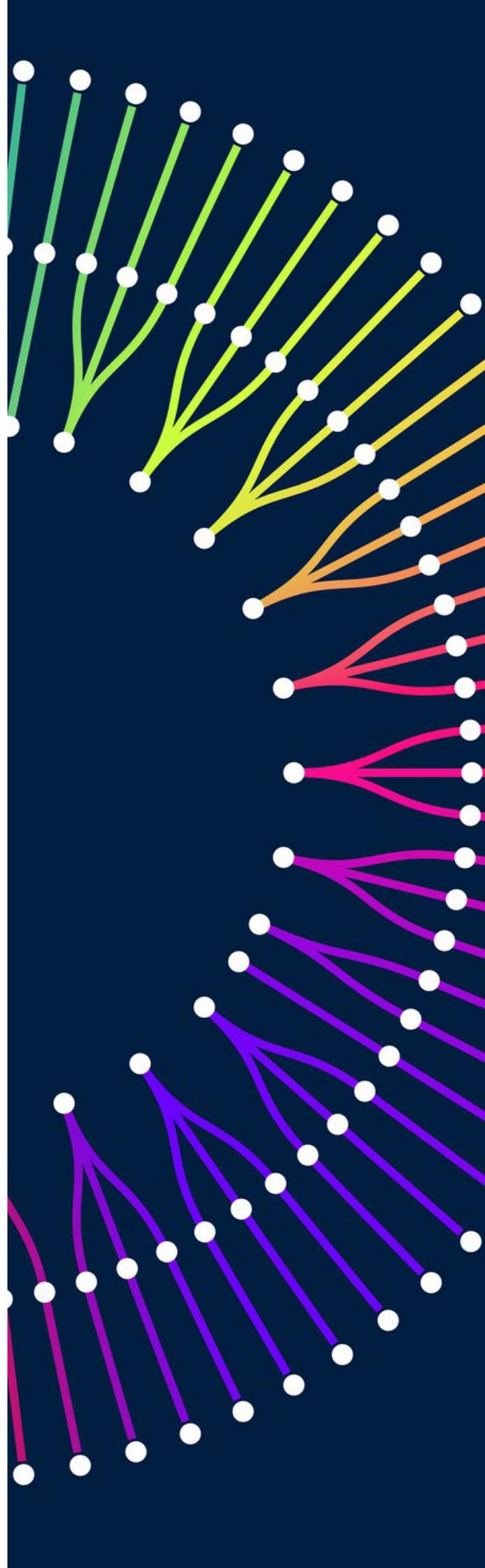
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## Bringing diversity and inclusivity into your internal and external communications

If you want to be perceived as an inclusive and diverse place to work you will need to position yourself in this way.

Ensure you dedicate areas of your website to showcase your position, values, policies and statistics (if appropriate.)

Allow your workforce to be your brand advocates across social media. You can set guidelines around this via social media guides and training.



# RECRUIT

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## Bringing diversity into the heart of the recruitment process

Businesses tend to have a set way of recruiting and this is great, however if a business is looking to improve their levels of diversity, by continuing to recruit from the same sources, the same types of candidates will be attracted to the business. Repeating established processes means that you are restricting the types of people you are attracting to your business. Thinking about new ways to recruit into the business will open up different avenues.

Here are some tips to help widen your recruitment outlook.

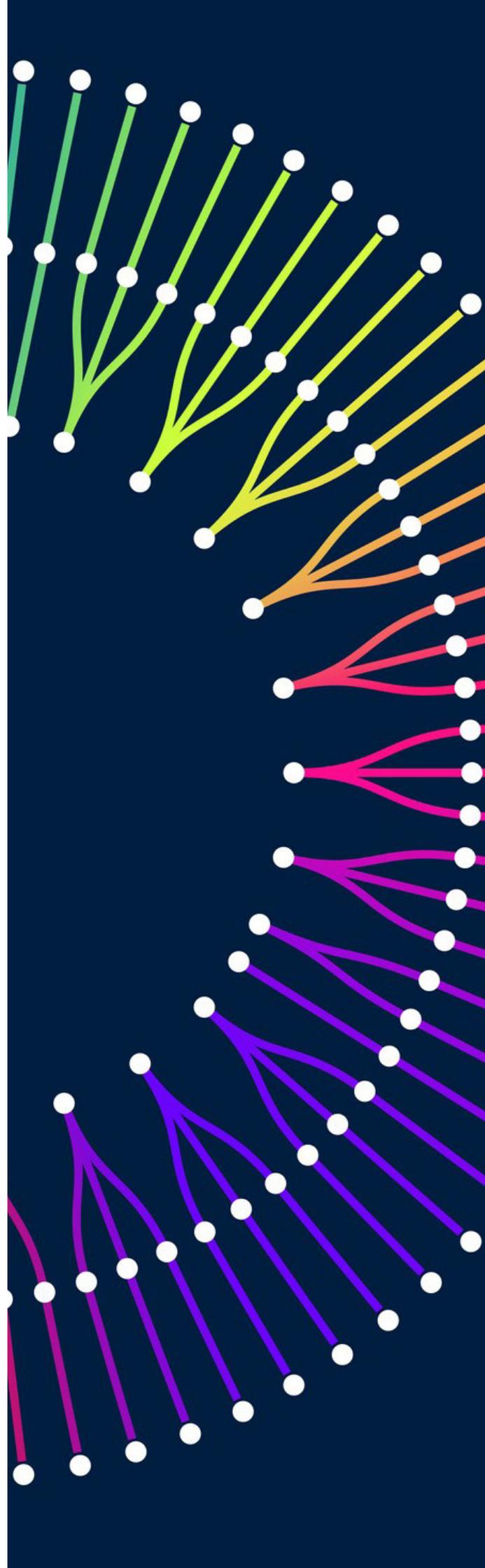
- Most employers would agree that bringing diversity (and inclusivity) into the workplace is an important action, however, according to a McKinsey study in 2016, only 52% of employers ask recruitment agencies to provide diverse candidate lists. This is a way to widen access to a more diverse group
- Ensure your job adverts do not include wording that might subconsciously put off professionals from different backgrounds
- Provide an employee incentive scheme for introductions that lead to hires
- Professional networks and friendship groups often provide a rich network of diversity
- Ensure the company website is accessible to those with disabilities



## RECRUIT

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- Introduce anti-bias training so that during the recruitment process none of your team members unconsciously eliminate candidates based on name or gender. Your recruitment agency can help here by anonymising candidate CV's sent so that candidates are assessed purely on their skills and experience. Introducing a wider pool of internal CV reviewers from different backgrounds, levels and identities can also help to remove unconscious bias.

Create a candidate experience that is welcoming and inclusive. Part of this requires looking at the whole interview process and ensuring that the interview panellists represent the diverse population within your organisation. This requires coordination to make it work, however the final result will show potential candidates that there is a place at your organisation for people from all sorts of backgrounds and identities and that everyone can thrive.



# ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

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## Beyond recruitment and diversity: bringing a culture of inclusivity into the workplace

Once you have done your benchmarking, set your goals and addressed your recruitment process and you have a firm grasp on the groups that exist within your organisation, you will need to look at how included the different communities within the business feel. Your survey results will help you identify areas that need improvement. Below we have highlighted a few initiatives that have been proven to help with inclusivity agendas when done well.

You might consider setting up Employee Resource Groups (ERG) for the different communities that exist within the business. Maybe your survey revealed a significant number of people from one community or a really small number of people from another. Both are valid reasons to start an ERG.

ERG's are usually started from the roots up and they require enthusiastic employees to make it a success. They really don't work if they are forced upon a group of individuals, so finding out if any employees would be interested in being part of or leading a group is a vital part of this process. The empowerment is in the fact that they are self-driven with central resource support not the other way around.

Remember we talked about the 3 pillars of employee contentment: Objectivity, Growth Mindset and Belonging? Mentorship programmes are a great way to help create this kind of environment within your business.



## ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

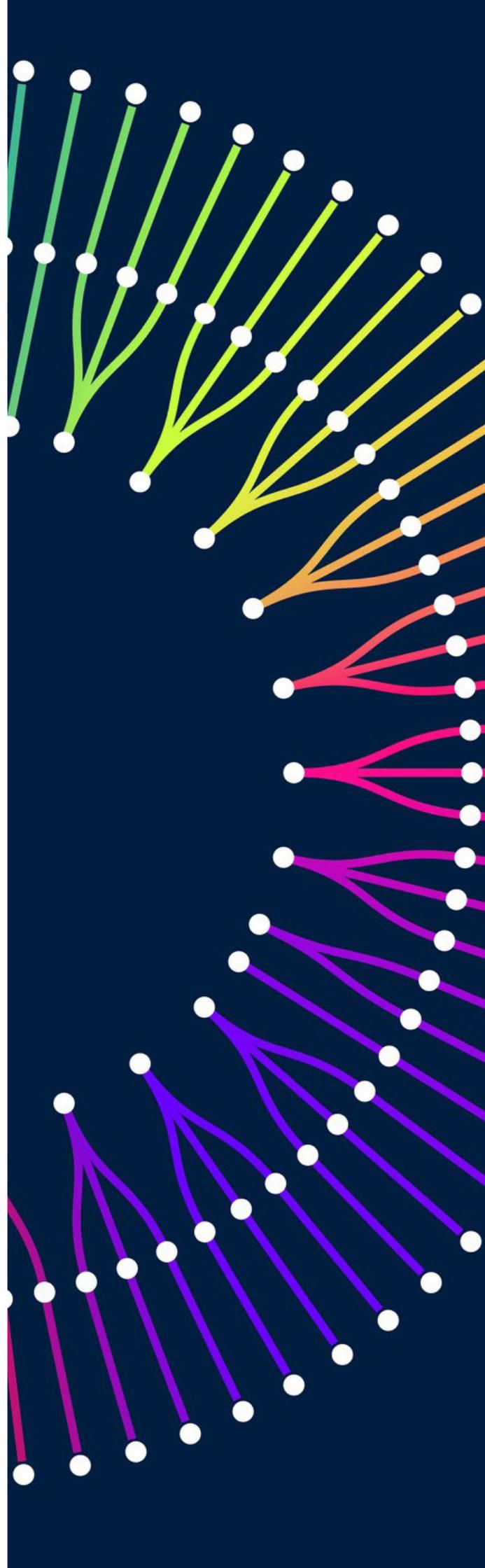
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These programmes create a learning culture, they rely on continued growth for the individuals involved and foster a sense of belonging due to the very nature of the relationships formed.

### Creating a physical environment that encourages inclusivity

Some of these suggestions require careful planning and some require a certain level of resource and commitment, however creating a space which accommodates different needs is vital to creating an inclusive environment.

- Ensure that the building and common areas are accessible to people with disabilities
- Dedicate a conference room for prayer or employee group meetups during certain times of the day
- Create gender-inclusive labels for the bathrooms that say something like, “Use the bathrooms that most closely aligns with your gender identity.”
- Create private spaces that people who struggle with anxiety or other mental health issues—or who simply need a break—can utilise for a while.
- Ensure that your branding and conference room names are inclusive and non-offensive.



## ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

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Looking specifically at disability within the workplace. What can companies do to support their disabled employees?

- Offer flexible working policies
- Offer an accommodations process (access etc)
- Provide noise-free work areas and private resting rooms where possible. Quiet can be really important for many people with disabilities (as well as non-disabled employees) and is a scarce commodity in open-plan offices. If an employee has a panic attack or a muscle tremor, needs to adjust a prosthesis or needs to lay down for a few minutes, a private resting room is an extremely valuable resource.
- Normalise self-care through regular employee education
- Educate employees about how to discuss disability
- People struggling with mental health issues tend to either feel like their challenges aren't valid or that they're too personal to talk about. Encourage mental health days as these will end up serving the entire employee base



## ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

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### Looking specifically at micro-aggressions

Micro-aggressions are classed as the subtle yet harmful forms of discriminatory behaviour experienced by team members. Addressing these micro-aggressions can often be a quick win that makes a huge difference to groups within a business.

Here are a few to take into consideration:

- Doing imitations of accents
- Making assumptions about someone based on clichés about their country of origin
- Mistaking someone for someone else of the same ethnicity
- Asking someone to speak on behalf of everyone from their racial group
- Suggesting that someone can't be a certain way because of stereotypes about their identity (e.g. female engineers can't be fashionable, gay men can't be masculine, older people can't be tech-savvy).
- Casual touching—not an explicit sexual violation but non-consensual
- Speaking over or belittling people in meetings, especially women or other underrepresented groups
- Inequitable distribution of work, whether that's high profile projects or 'office housework'



## ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

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Micro-aggressions can affect people from every demographic, but they tend to affect employees from underrepresented groups the most. Microaggressions can also have a more painful impact if the recipient already senses that they don't belong. The effect is incredibly disempowering.

### Implementing an exit survey

In order to fully track how successful any programme or initiative you implement is, you need to ensure you have an exit interview process in place. Exit interviews allow individuals to feedback to the company and it is usually when they are at their most candid.

### Steps to D&I strategy

1. Benchmark - diversity
2. Benchmark - inclusivity
3. Set targets for diversity
4. Set targets for inclusivity
5. Promote
6. Recruit
7. Environment

# FINAL THOUGHTS

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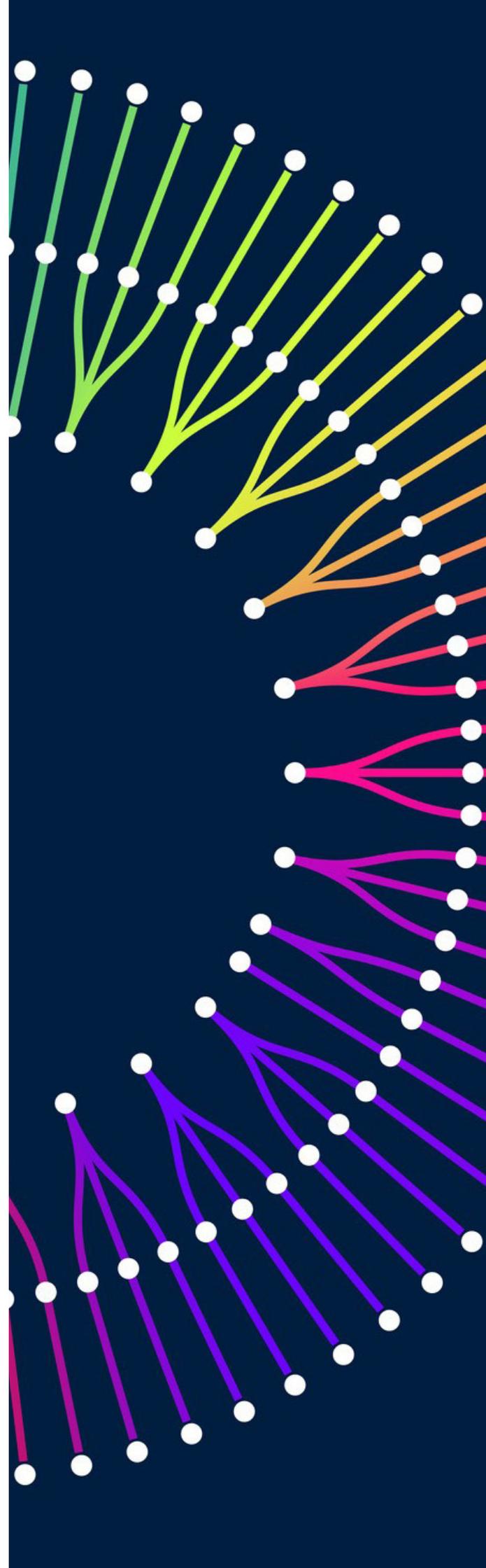
Leadership buy in is one of the most important elements you will need to ensure your D&I agenda works. Without this, almost everything you put in place will be overridden by behaviours that contradict the policy. Organisations that have a mature diversity and inclusivity strategy have more leadership buy-in, which helps them break through potential roadblocks and secure budgets for initiatives. They secure this support through clear and consistent reporting to leadership on diversity metrics. Advanced organisations are 20-25% more likely to report workforce diversity metrics to the CEO, senior executives, and board of directors. They're also much more likely than the average to report diversity metrics to non-HR mid-level managers.

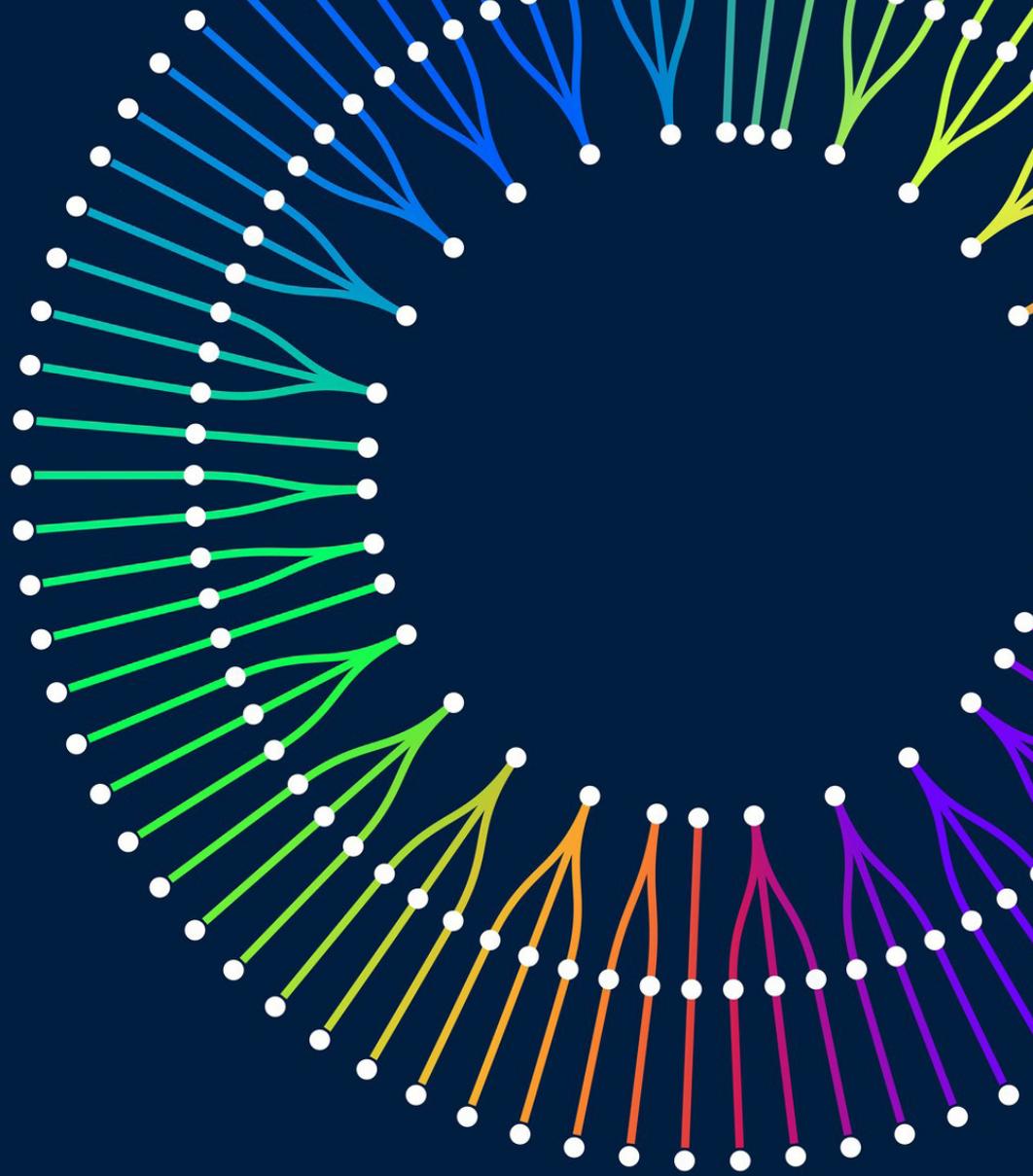
Set leadership targets for diversity and inclusivity. If your leadership right now does not include diverse representation then that is something that needs pointing out and addressing.

## Partner with the leading STEM talent network

If you would like to discuss this guide and how SRG can help with your diversity and recruitment strategy contact:

[info@srgtalent.com](mailto:info@srgtalent.com)





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