FINANCIAL TIMES Guides

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

YOUR COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL I&D STRATEGY

VIKKI LEACH

FT PUBLISHING

'I recommend it to leaders and practitioners alike – time is ticking down to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 where no one is left behind.'

Richard Poston, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Kodiak Communications Ltd

87 per cent of companies state I&D is a priority area for them, but only 10 per cent of I&D programmes are fully developed. *The Financial Times Guide to Inclusion and Diversity* is an essential read for anyone wanting to build an organisation with an inclusive culture, to be more innovative and agile and achieve better business outcomes.

Expert author Vikki Leach offers a step-by-step guide to the tools, theory and the latest thinking you need to design a compelling I&D strategy that will have a positive impact on performance and results for your organisation.

Praise for *The Financial Times Guide to Inclusion and Diversity*

This is the book I was always looking for!! When I first started my I&D journey I had so many questions and this book expertly answers all of them. It lays out all the steps to build a successful I&D program in a way that is easy to understand. The mix of interviews and theory lets me know that I am not alone in what sometimes feels like a lonely path. The focus on behaviours will help I&D practitioners create safe spaces to have the hard but necessary conversations. This is the perfect companion for any I&D practitioner.

Vusa Tebe, I&D Practitioner

This book 'decodes' the very topical subject of I&D in an engaging, easy read. It not only provides loads of insights, but also great practical tips. We are living in a time of change. We need to build back better. Business has to be sustainable to survive and inclusion for all is at the heart of this. I recommend it to leaders and practitioners alike – time is ticking down to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 where no one is left behind.

Richard Poston, CEO and Founder, Kodiak Communications Ltd

This book is a great practical guide. It gives clear tangibles on how to take action and steps to take to make real impact. I highly recommend it to anyone looking to learn about inclusion and diversity and making a difference.

Nikki Walker, CEO, Quality Compliance Systems (QCS)

A truly inspiring read on how to drive meaningfully sustainable change by seeing diversity as the art of thinking independently together, and a sense of belonging as the heartbeat that drives inclusion. With diversity and inclusion being so imperative to personal, business, social and economic growth, I highly recommend it to anyone who is looking to get into the topic.

Caroline Frankum, CEO, Profiles Division, Kantar

CHAPTER 4
HOW TO EMBED I&D INTO THE BUSINESS STRATEGY

In this chapter we will discuss how to embed I&D into the organisation's strategies. There will be many different types of strategies across the business, and the aim is to have I&D in all of them. Whether that is the marketing, HR, business, behaviour or values strategy, it needs to be visible across them all. This enables employees, customers and other stakeholders to see that it is embedded and integrated into everyday practices.

Inclusion and diversity continues to be well researched and it is proven that focusing on it brings more diversity of thought into an organisation. Embedding the topic into as many strategies as possible will bring it to life. It is hoped that ultimately it will no longer be a debate and leaders will be open to embedding I&D into their approach to business. I&D must start at the top and be spoken about as part of an organisation's everyday strategic conversations.

By embedding it into leaders' mindsets and equipping them to think strategically about I&D, so they see it in the same light as any other business unit that has a strategy, targets and a measurement tool to track progress, you will help them to be accountable. They need to learn how to do this, and will need guidance around it. They don't know what they don't know.

Begin these discussions in as many areas as possible, such as:

- marketing
- customer/client relationships
- product development
- supplier relationships
- partner relationships
- sales

- design
- anything else that is critical in your end-to-end experience of what you do as an organisation.

If I&D is not visible, it will not be addressed.

Approaching different areas of the organisation

For example, meet with marketing and respectfully challenge their customer segmentation and target audience. For example, the Chief Marketing Officer should be having conversations around the customer-facing opportunities for diversity. How do they choose to inject diversity into their offerings – for example, what diverse markets are untapped or potentially ignored? Identify what is not being addressed. This information can be retrieved from existing channels such as customer satisfaction scores and feedback from your own diverse employees.

You may find blind spots and untapped markets you are excluding, because you simply have not thought about it in an inclusive and diverse way.

- What are you missing in your marketing?
  - Identify groups who are not present in your marketing.
- Who are you not talking or thinking about?
  - Identify groups that are not brought into the conversation.
- What and who might you not be considering?
  - Think of these groups and find ways to consider including them.

It is not just about the diversity of customers, it is also about their inclusion. Customers may visit your product or offering, but through looking at the feedback data, you can identify whether they experience inclusion.

Inclusion nudge

'Show the actual pictures of people used in company communications – internal and external'

Inclusive offerings

Designing in an inclusive way is only as good as the creator behind the design. If they have not experienced it, they will not know what individuals really want. For example, the fashion industry still uses terms such as 'nude' and 'naked'

in reference to a pale skin colour. Plus-size garments are still modelled by non-plus-size models, so the clothes simply look baggy on them.

Technical language is still too complicated for the average customer to understand. Simplify language. For example, the mobile phone industry, rather than asking a customer 'How many megapixels do you need?' (quality of picture), simply ask 'What do you use your camera phone for?' This language is more inclusive for all customers.

Work with marketing/sales to increase understanding in the following areas:

- One customer does not fit all.
  - Customers receive the same message, but interpret them in different ways.
- Be aware of the benefits of having a diverse employee base who serve the customers.
  - They will be better able to serve the customer by understanding their needs better.
- Understand the customers' diverse needs.
  - Recognise the diverse needs of customers by asking diverse employees who experience the same needs.
- Use all-encompassing and inclusive language.
  - De-bias the language you use.
- If your sales force are on commission and have priority items, understand whether this is going to inhibit inclusion.
  - Do a checklist of what the priority items are, and audit the items based on how exclusive they may be.

Work with as many business units as possible and have a joined-up approach, with I&D underpinning your decisions at every stage (Figure 4.1).

As soon as I&D can be embedded into as many relevant areas as possible, accountability will begin to shift from the I&D function to the business leaders who are leading these areas in the organisation. If this is seen to be a commercial conversation, these leaders will be even more interested.

Depending on your offering, solutions and customer base, begin by thinking where the niche is. You could consider the following points:

- Spotlight the segment of the market that serves older women.
  - This could be where the higher disposable income is = opportunity for business.
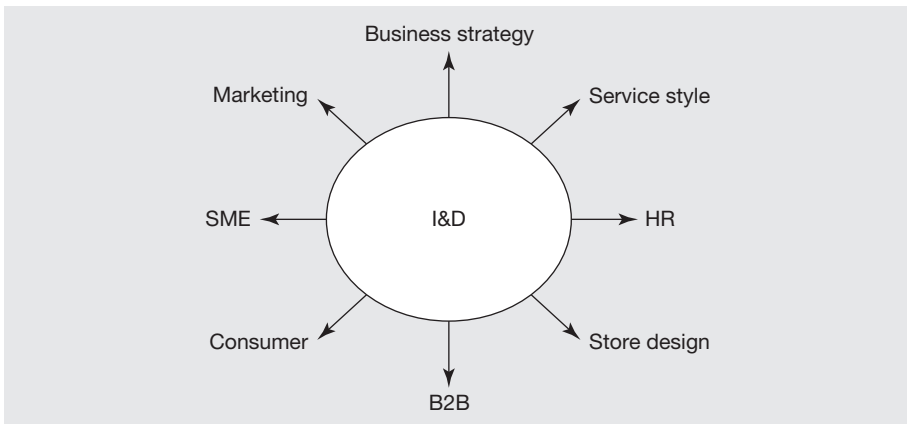
Figure 4.1 Embedding I&D into the business units

- Challenge who could become the next core customer.
  - Do not let past practices limit thinking or obscure your view of the opportunity ahead = opportunity for business.
- Specific groups want different approaches; for example,
  - Women
    - want to be connected with. . . not sold to
    - want to feel they are being understood and partnered with; they don't want to be fending off a sales pitch.
  - Disabled community
    - want inclusive access for customers who use a wheelchair
    - want an accessible user experience from finding an item online through to purchase.
  - Older customers
    - want intelligent advertising and real images.

By having the conversation with leaders in different areas of the business and explaining what is in it for them, you can help them understand commercially how I&D can bring benefits to their area. Leaders are very willing to change if they can see what this will do for them in terms of success.

Further resources

Nielsen, T. and Kepinski, L. (2016). *Inclusion Nudges Guidebook*, p. 40.

CHAPTER 5
WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO SET TARGETS AND MEASURE SUCCESS

Every other business unit in an organisation sets targets. I&D as a business unit is the same. Target setting is crucial in order to measure progress. You want to set targets across as many interventions as you can, and put a measurement tool in place so you can track progress. The two go together:

● Set the target.
● Measure the progress.

Targets are different to quotas. There is often confusion about the difference between targets and quotas.

> **Targets** are aspirational goals that an organisation might set itself but not mandate.
> **Quotas** are mandated outcomes decided and announced by leadership.

In this chapter, I will discuss setting targets rather than quotas. Setting targets across as many different interventions as possible will better serve the organisation in driving I&D to a stronger position. These targets will be integrated into the review of processes, discussions and decisions on future planning, and I&D will be part of these critical planning points.

Below are a few examples of target setting across interventions that will integrate I&D into existing processes.

Recruitment

● **Graduate programmes**
  ● Include diversity types from different cultures, academic backgrounds, ethnicity, and of different gender, for example 50 per cent male/50 per cent female.

- **Diverse interview panels**
  - Set a target for diverse interview panels: a mix of backgrounds. A diverse interview panel can be made just by using common sense. This is better than stipulating that we need to have one woman on the interview panel, this does not necessarily shift the needle. You can become unstuck with this method, as you will find yourself wondering: what do I do next, find a Black person, a gay person? Using a term such as 'a diverse interview panel' does not single individuals out. It brings a diverse group together, where everyone's views will be different, yet respected.

Development

Below are suggestions to ensure diversity is represented and invested in different parts of the development process. Data will always be a challenge, because of data points that cannot be captured, so work with what you have, then consider setting targets across the interventions listed below.

- **Promotions**
  - Track who you are (1) promoting, (2) developing and (3) offering stretch assignments to, against different diversity groups.
- **Succession plans**
  - Track who sits on (1) succession charts, (2) talent grids and (3) high potential lists, and identify the different diversity groups that are present.
- **Development programmes**
  - Look at who is selected for development programmes and at the accessibility of the programme to ensure it is inclusive to all. I remember a Head of Learning & Development who loved outdoor activities. They put a development course in place where participants had to go into the woods and build 'x' and then find their way back. It was not inclusive to everyone on the delegate list and some great talent stepped out of the development programme rather than put themselves through an experience they may have found very uncomfortable.

Retention

- **Leavers**
  - Track who is leaving and who is staying. Look at the diversity groups among these leavers.