



Getting started with Diversity, Equality & Inclusion – a Case Study

Most businesses know that innovation and healthy debate only come when there's true diversity of thought round the table. Putting diversity on the agenda means access to a wider talent pool, greater retention, and better innovation and decision-making.

Knowing where to start though can feel overwhelming, and some companies will feel they have a mountain to climb. Here we take you through our recent work with a UK-based STEM organisation, on their journey to truly embracing diversity, equality, and inclusion.

Balancetogether approached this client with a view to undertake some discovery work in the organisation. They really saw the value in having consultants, who could carry out diagnostics in a truly independent and objective way. We were seeking to identify untapped potential that would support the business to drive greater success.

How we conducted our diagnostic work

Following an initial fact-finding exercise with HR and Senior Leadership, we designed an online survey aimed at understanding how better gender balance could be achieved, and how talent could be better leveraged. The key areas of focus in the survey were around Organisational Culture, Organisational Development and HR Practices. The survey went out to all UK-based staff and was answered by 61% of its workforce.

We then spent a day onsite speaking to employees in small groups and individual interviews, to gain more qualitative information. This was a key stage of the process and we found that employees were open and honest and willing to share their personal experiences, welcoming the opportunity to engage with external consultants on a journey to make the client organisation a better place to work.

We combined all this evidence with pay data to identify any potential gender pay gap challenges, but also to understand the organisational make-up of our client better. Having access to this data and being able to view it in an objective way, led to several insights that were invaluable to our client.

Despite a healthy split of male versus female staff (with 41% of staff members being female), we were interested to find out why the Board and Senior Management team were more male dominated. As part of our diagnostic work we looked to understand why this imbalance may exist at a senior level.



What our diagnostic work revealed.....

Our clients were pleased to understand the practices staff already valued highly. Fortunately, no systemic issues were found, although the client was still surprised at how many actions arose from the process; all focused on achieving better outcomes both for employees and the business. We provided practical action points based around recruitment practices, monitoring data, reviewing key skill dependencies, and many more. We were also able to give our client the confidence that HR Practices that they had already introduced were valued by employees:

- 71% of respondents believe that the Board actively support women to progress
- 82% of respondents believe that men and women are given equal opportunities to take responsibility for high-profile, business-critical clients/tasks
- 90% of respondents said that the company provides flexible working practices to fully meet their needs.
- 89% of respondents said that they would be comfortable asking for flexible working arrangements.

We also identified several areas where our client could improve:

- 10% of staff said that inappropriate gender-related remarks happen.
- 19% of staff said that women routinely perform 'office housework'
- 19% of female respondents disagreed that they had equal opportunity to progress within the business
- 70% respondents felt that their career would benefit from having a mentor.

Next steps

Based on our feedback and diagnostic work, our client has been able to create an action plan which will be communicated out to all employees. The action plan includes items such as:

- ensuring E, D and I matters have Board representation,
- setting recruitment targets for under-represented groups over a 3-year period,
- ensuring recruitment adverts use gender-neutral language,
- introducing a long-term approach to homeworking,
- providing training to colleagues to enable them to access management roles
- and putting mentoring and coaching programmes in place to ensure access to opportunities is equal.

The Head of People said: *"It's so valuable to have an objective and unbiased view of the organisation. What surprised me was, the things I felt we could do better were already highly valued. We were able to gain detailed insights that have enabled us to put tangible next steps in place."*

Without the intervention from balancetogether, our client would not have had the knowledge and confidence to make a difference to their gender balance and therefore start to deliver tangible business benefits.