Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is, and should be, a cornerstone of all organisation's hiring and retention efforts; it should be a conscious commitment by organisations to improve diversity within their business to make opportunities more equal, and inclusive.

With greater diversity comes greater operational efficiency, engagement, and achievement; the more inclusive you and your organisation are when it comes to ensuring everyone has a voice, the more likely it is you will achieve greater things as your operation will be more inclusive.

As both a training provider and a conscious employer we are proud of the diversity statistics for our apprentices:

Here are just a few benefits of having diversity in your apprenticeship and general workforce:

- Every 1% increase in the diversity rate of a workforce can lead to a 9% rise in sales revenue.*

- Businesses with a healthy balance of men and women are 15% more likely to outperform their competitors.*

- Businesses with employees from a good mix of ethnic backgrounds are 35% more likely to outperform their competitors.*

- Companies increasing their commitment to being ethnically diverse and inclusive are 33% more successful, 1.7 times more likely to become leaders of innovation, and have higher chances of attracting top talent.*

24%
of Kaplan apprentices are from non-white backgrounds.
10% above the national average**

24%
of Kaplan apprentices live in the most disadvantaged areas
4% above the national average**

* webrecruits website
** funding year 2021/2022

However, in the general apprenticeship market, we are still seeing:

- Women are underrepresented in STEM subjects making up around 11.4% starts in those roles.*

- Black, Asian, and ethnic minority uptake was 13.3% in 2019/20 and has increased to 14% in 2020/21.*

- An estimated 20% of the population has Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD). This could be a 'hidden', 'visible', or multiple and complex disabilities.*

It is clear to see the many benefits as well of acknowledging the challenge that organisations face and we acknowledge and understand that having the resources, knowledge, and confidence to do this is not always easy

This document will provide tips for inclusive recruiting and how you can support your ongoing EDI strategy.

Before you start to recruit, think about your values and culture in the workplace, does it promote inclusivity, and what parts of your culture might you need to address. The recruitment process is one element of encouraging EDI, you need to ensure your people that potential candidates will share the values and culture you are trying to achieve.

Challenge your own culture

It is widely recognised that a strong diversity and inclusion strategy can help your organisation attract top talent, but creating an inclusive culture can often be more difficult than expected.

- Companies need to provide all employees with an equal opportunity and give them a voice that is going to be heard.

- Spending time to understand how employees feel across all levels of your organisation, what they think can be improved on and what barriers they believe need to be overcome is the first stage.

- Once you have the information then it's imperative that you act upon it and put in the necessary policies or processes in place.

- Essentially an inclusive culture will take time to deliver but having the right principles in place is paramount to making the first steps.

There is a toolkit here – socialmobilityworks.org – which can help measure your progress as an organisation and get you started.

We work with some amazing organisations who would also be able to support you – 10,000 Black interns, Multicultural Apprenticeship Alliance (ADD AGE ORG?)

* webrecruits website

Through our Kaplan recruitment service, we work with all of our clients and adverts and omit any language that would seem non-inclusive. Here are some of the tips for starting your recruitment process:

Improve job Ad Inclusivity

Take a look at your advert and consider how it will make others feel. Making sure that your advert appeals to the widest possible audience are key to driving EDI across your organisation.

Language

- Use a gender-neutral copy decoder to assess whether the language in your adverts could be impacting the applications you receive. For example, the BBC reported that women are less likely to apply for a job where they are expected to "manage" rather than "develop" a team. Words like "competitive", "leader", and "rockstar" are associated with male stereotypes, whilst words like "support" and "interpersonal" are associated with female stereotypes. Gender-coded language can send the message that your workplace is better suited to one gender or another – and it can put people off applying for a role.

- Avoid using acronyms and instead use simple, straightforward language.

- Consider the skills that are truly needed for the role when you include a degree qualification requirement in your job adverts, you exclude lots of great potential candidates.

- A few simple tweaks to your job ad formatting could make reading through it easier for people with dyslexia. According to the British Dyslexia Association, some fonts and font sizes are more readable than others. Use san-serif fonts such as Arial, Verdana, or Calibri in a 12-14 point size. Highlight words in bold rather than with italics or by underlining.

- Avoid words like 'tech savvy' that appeal to a certain demographic.

- You need to ensure that any potential candidate feels that they would be capable of the role, fit into the workplace and feel supported with fair pay and equal rights.

- Imagery – Do the images you use reflect your current workforce or the workforce you are trying to attract?

- You can also add a strong EDI corporate message to strengthen your values.

Offer greater flexibility

- If you can demonstrate that there is flexibility for a hybrid role, travel costs covered for interviews, etc that will enable a greater advantage for those with a disadvantaged background. It enables a wider talent pool access to companies that might be in big cities that previously affordability of travel etc would have prevented them from achieving.

- Are there flexible hours? That may entice a different level of 'return to workers'.

Tools that can help you

- Using automation and AI technologies as part of the recruitment process is a growing trend that not only aids efficiency but also the greater EDI recruitment strategies being adopted too. Whether you simply wish to remove personal information so that applications can be shortlisted without potential bias, a software solution will provide you with the latest technologies to help.

- If you do not have access to this, the Kaplan recruitment service recruits in this way and you can always use the blind hiring practice. Upon application ensure the CV does not list the candidate's name, ethnicity, or even gender can help create a more equitable hiring process.

Ensure an inclusive interview process

- To be truly inclusive at the interview stage you would ideally have a diverse interview panel and then you may need to offer several options.

- Whilst face to face interviews in an office location help support a more consistent approach and environment in which to interview candidates. Travel costs can be a factor for potential apprentices and also it can be very daunting if you have a very smart/polished office environment.

- During the pandemic, many of our clients commented that they had a higher level of applicants and were more diverse during virtual recruitment. It is important to recognize that some people may find it difficult to find a quiet place with a strong WIFI signal etc.

When you have successfully hired someone it is important that you ensure the support of these individuals is felt in the workplace.

Some things to consider:

- **Physical spaces** To make sure the workplace is a comfortable environment for all, there are specific areas that certain individuals may require. Allocated spaces to pray, meditate or to be specifically used for quiet work supports individuals who either have invisible disabilities or follow certain religions and need a place to de-stress in a space without external distractions. Such a place is integral to supporting the well-being of employees.

- **Multi-Faith Space** A Multi-Faith Space is required for certain populations to pray. This should include washing facilities, a simplistically designed (without provocative images) clean room with chairs.

- **Well-Being Space** A Well-Being Space is required for certain individuals who require a space to de-stress from the work environment. This may include sofas, bean bags, and non-work-related books.

- **Quiet Space** A Quiet Space is similar to a Well-Being Space but with a focus on the room being quiet and ultimately with reduced sensory distractions. This may include single acoustic sofas, soft-painted walls, and natural light with blinds.

- **Parental Space** Space to provide parents to support kids if required (breastfeeding etc).

At Kaplan, we aim to provide an environment which embraces diversity and promotes equality and inclusion to make Kaplan a great place where everyone can succeed.

If you have a query that relates to equality, diversity and inclusion either prior to or during your studies with Kaplan please email us:
edi@kaplan.co.uk

KAPLAN