



Promoting gender equality, advancing the economy

JUMP Corporate Hub 21st September 2017

Inclusive leadership:
*What does it mean in practice? How do you identify it
and select the right talent for the future?*

Summary of the session

1. Introduction

The Deloitte Inclusion Pulse survey (April 2017) showed that an inclusive culture is critical to attract and sustain talented employees. If so, what do companies need to do in order to achieve this inclusive environment?

Twenty-six people from nineteen different companies gathered at Accenture building to participate in this session dedicated to inclusion and inclusive leadership.

Thank you to our host: Marta Pogorzelska from Agility & Transformation Services, Inclusion & Diversity Lead at Accenture BeLux

2. Expert Presentation: Inclusive Leadership, How To Make It Happen?

Thais Compont, Founder & CEO Declic International, author of “Succeed as an Inclusive Leader”

How to implement an effective inclusive leadership strategy? Thais first looked at the concept of inclusive leadership, then went on to explain why inclusive leadership matters, and how to implement it in organisations.

Inclusive leadership – what is it and why it matters

Thais defines **inclusive leadership as the ability to attract, to engage and to influence people with different backgrounds**. Inclusive leaders value human differences and understand the underlying mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, which plays a key role in building diverse teams and creating an inclusive culture. An inclusive leader is like a good cook: they know they need lots of different ingredients to make a good recipe!

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There are two key reasons to pursue inclusive leadership. The first reason lies in the crisis of traditional leadership. 50% of people leave their job because of the poor quality of management (i.e., non-inclusive environment). The second reason is that there has been increasingly robust Inclusion & Diversity business case. E.g. Organisations are 6 times more innovative when they are inclusive. Inclusive leadership is an interesting new way to reframe gender equality issues and combat inequalities that women may face.

So why does inclusive leadership not occur naturally? This put forward two key reasons: **unconscious bias and lack of empathy**.

In addition to unconscious bias, conscious bias is growing too with more and more freedom to share what one thinks. Affinity bias is also a factor: as human beings, we prefer to be with those who resemble us.

The other reason is lack of empathy: we are not always good at being empathic towards individuals with different background. Empathy is the ability to put yourself in other people's shoes, emotionally and cognitively, to understand "what does he/she want?" or "where does his/her motivation come from?" Humility was acknowledged as important to ensure an empathetic frame of mind; you need to be able to acknowledge your blind spots to better understand the other person's views.

The 3 key signature skills of inclusive leaders

To make inclusive leadership to happen, This proposes **three signature skills of inclusive leaders**. She has developed them in her "inclusive leadership propeller model": the propeller boat is a team and the three wings of the propeller correspond to these inclusive leadership skills, which will contribute to driving an effective and inclusive team (*cf.* PPT of session).

The first skill is **fairness**. This starts from acknowledging that you have a potential to exclude others ("acknowledge your inner Darth Vader") and challenging your own biases. For example, when hiring or doing a performance evaluation, look for your biases, evaluate what new things this person may bring.

Bias can be subtle, even benevolent; for instance, some may feel the need to protect and go easy on female colleagues with children, and thus not give them the same opportunities as others, not offer them the opportunity to work abroad assuming it will not fit with their family situation, without even asking their opinion about the opportunity.

To be fair, it is important to challenge your biases and other people's biases. One way to be free from bias is thinking about the fit with the organisation (i.e., what this person could bring to the organisation?) instead of thinking about their gender or cultural background. In addition, follow structured process and look at metrics and history since they show patterns that you cannot see everyday life.

The second skill is **empathy**. The "golden rule" says treat others as you'd like to be treated yourself. This introduced the Platinum rule, which says treat others as others would like to be treated. To be empathetic, you must be curious about people, be aware of your impact on people and adapt to people's different styles and needs.



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You can develop empathy by asking: ask people about your leadership style, what they need from you, what you can do for them, what you are doing right and what you are doing wrong...

The last skill is **proactivity**. There are several misconceptions that diversity & inclusion is positive discrimination; that when people get support because of their gender or cultural background, this might be to the detriment of their competencies. This argument gets stronger if the individuals who got help did then not perform as highly as they were expected to do. This leads to the question of the difference between positive discrimination and positive action.

Positive discrimination is to hire a woman or a person from a minority to meet a quota. This can go wrong. Positive action means removing the barriers that prevent us from seeing talent in its diversity. Proactivity means breaking down misconceptions and understanding unconscious bias, raising awareness about inclusion and diversity, reaching out to diverse candidates (“fishing in different pools”) and being a mentor and sponsor for people from diverse background.

How to implement an effective inclusive leadership strategy?

For an inclusive leadership strategy to be effective, it needs to be systemic. One initiative here and there does not work; this is why one often hears “diversity training doesn’t work”. Thias proposes a 4-pillar Inclusion & Diversity system, with a clear strategy and vision, and a real business strategy approach.

The 4 pillars are as follows:

- (1) Accountability (strategy, sponsors, dashboard, individual objectives),
- (2) Capability (training, communication, employee network),
- (2) Environment (HR processes, corporate cultures, working condition)
- (4) Connection (schools/universities, customers, suppliers, communities, public authorities).

Stand-alone training is not the solution: you can train 100 top managers for an hour, and there will be no change. You need to prepare the training, ask the managers to do some tests or exercises to increase their awareness before the training. The training itself needs to be experiential – so take the time needed. After the training, put in place action plans and accountability.

Inclusive leadership should not be a specific training, it should be embedded into existing leadership training. Thias concludes: inclusion should be mainstreamed into companies’ recruitment processes, talent management, leadership programmes.

3. Company Testimonial 1: Cargill

Sabine Sagaert, Global Malt Managing Director malt Cargill. Winner of women@work award 2017

Sabine shared her experience of inclusion at Cargill. When she won the Wo.Men@Work Award, she became an ambassador of inclusive behavior. Over time as ambassador, she realised how important it was, and, at the same time, how diffi-



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cult it is to make it work. Achieving an inclusive environment can be a gradual process, but we should be courageous enough to make it happen.

Cargill has more than 150,000 people working across 70 countries and has more than \$100 billion in sales revenue annually. The main focus of Cargill is sourcing, making and moving food around the world and the purpose is to be the leader in nourishing the world in a safe, responsible and sustainable way.

The new CEO of Cargill has a passion for diversity and has been a key driver to build their case for change. Cargill is about people, it cares about its people. In line with the purpose of the company, he wants the people in his company to feel good and included. D&I is part of the culture, to ensure that people feel good regardless of where they came from.

Sabine continued with her own personal experience as a leader and as a woman, with experiences in typical male environments where she was lucky to meet some exceptional managers, sponsors of diversity, and sponsors of her development and career, while working hard and getting to results.

When she started to work in Cargill, diversity was rising as a topic and she started to think more about what it meant. In her career until now, she never thought that diversity was an important topic. She was lucky to have a good education and personal environment where it is normal that women have a career and men are co-responsible for family management. Nevertheless, she realized, after many conversations, that that is not “the normal” for everyone.

She choose to build a diverse executive team, bringing in people from different gender, religion and age. Such diversity results in different kind of atmosphere, which stimulates better results. And although a diverse team is important, it needs an inclusive atmosphere to perform effectively.

Sabine believes in both a **“push”** and a **“pull”** approach to realise diversity and inclusion.

The “push” approach is when you sometimes need to force the system to achieve fast results. She gave the example of a fully male plant operations unit, where she asked the plant operations manager to hire a woman. Despite multiple excuses of why this was difficult, she insisted. He finally hired a woman, without giving up on qualification and competence. The plant manager became an ambassador for diversity, promoted the lady and replaced her by another woman.

The “pull” approach is about encouraging women to put themselves forward, bringing them in and make them belief in themselves. It is about searching actively for competent women to join your team. It requires additional effort but is worth it. This was illustrated with the example of a candidate put forward by a recruiter, that other companies had not rated. Despite the candidate coming from a very different industry, Sabine decided to hire her. When she needed someone for her business on the other side of the world, her own unconscious bias suggested this woman would not want to move again, she would never convince her husband to leave. Nevertheless she



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asked her whether she wanted to job, and the answer was a delighted “Yes!” – so don’t make assumptions and always ask.

One question for Sabine was, when she needed to hire a diverse team, did she sometimes hire someone for the sake of diversity? Sabine’s response was that she always hired capability first, and when she decided she wanted diversity, this was added to the recruitment objectives and simply meant that recruitment might take a little longer.

4. Company Testimonial 2: Accenture

René Mat, Managing Director, Accenture Technology Brussels Communication, Media & Technology (CMT) aligned

René introduced himself as a business leader at Accenture, a sponsor of LGBT in the company, a father of 2 boys and a daughter.

For René, diversity is a fact. It covers all areas, from gender equality to sexual orientation, religion and more. There are two reasons why we should build more inclusive environments. First, diverse team performs better. Second, the world is becoming more and more diverse and this should be reflected in the company policy to keep up with the complexity of the world.

To this end, Accenture has signed Paradigm for Parity engagement in 2015 with 2 bold goals: increase the percentage of women managing directors to 25% globally by 2020, and achieve 50/50 gender-balance by 2025. Making such a public statement shows commitment and forces the organisation to do more.

To achieve these goals, Accenture is working on multiples challenges. They look at the inflow of candidates to achieve more diversity in recruitment; they bring diverse role models to university fairs, they use gender neutral wording in job postings; they use quotas in their Masterclass to bring gender-balance.

There is also a moral obligation to move the needle for the future: Accenture provides fun IT games for boys and girls to encourage them into STEM.

Finally, as a leader, you need to embody inclusive leadership in your own life and foster a change in mindsets.

René concluded by emphasizing that you need diversity to be successful. To do so you need to put the women with skills in leadership positions, encourage them to stay, provide role models and coaching. At the end of the day, you need diversity because it is the right thing to do.

5. Best Practices Sharing Session

How to engage the middle managers in inclusive leadership

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A company shared its frustrations that despite the CEO walking the talk, the processes and trainings being put in place, the needle is not moving in terms of gender equality. It was suggested that the blocking factor might be the middle management. If processes are imposed by HR and inclusive behaviours not adopted by all, this will slow down the move towards gender equality. To engage the middle managers, Thais suggests re-framing gender equality as an opportunity (“light the fire of a successful team”), as well as sharing the data and statistics of the organisation.

Sodexo correlated the NPV of each business unit with diversity, and showed that diversity led to better employee engagement, better customer retention and better business results.

Elisabeth Kelan (professor at Cranfield Business School, speaker at JUMP Forum) wrote a good report on how to engage middle managers and promote inclusive behaviours (cf. report in JUMP toolbox on Inclusive Leadership).

Lack of women in the talent pool?

One discussion explored what to do when it is felt that there are not enough women in the recruitment pool. Some hypotheses were put forward: the jobs themselves are not attractive to female candidates, we are not understanding women’s motivations, or we do not communicate effectively towards women to attract them.

Possible solutions to increase the number of women in the talent pool were given. First, identify what makes it difficult to reach out to competent female candidate and make an effort to improve the situation. Second, while making that effort, consider how other people in the group might perceive the decision you will make. Third, when communicating with women, watch the framing of words which may impact on their performance and adjust. Fourth, analyse the data to identify where the problem really stems from. Finally, embrace the concept of ‘allies’.

“Push” strategy

Part of the discussion focused on the “push” strategy, such as quotas or imposing the hire of a woman. Can this be taken too far to the detriment of capabilities? Is there not a risk of hiring less competent people to fill quotas? There was a concern that capability should be the priority for recruitment and a push strategy might be undemocratic.

Pushing for diversity should be considered in the same way as pushing for an extra skill or competence. It needs to be positioned for the right reasons: because this diversity will bring extra performance. But it should not be to the detriment of capabilities.

Such a push strategy is sometimes needed because things do not happen on their own, to kick-start the process it needs a little “push”. It is in the power of the CEO to do this, to “push” the teams to hire a woman, when they naturally would see many barriers to doing so. Once they have tried and are convinced, the process will continue on its own.

Measuring the level of inclusion in the company and its leaders



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Next point of discussion was on how to measure the inclusive environment or inclusive leadership.

One participant shared her company's practices. In her company, managers do an annual 360° survey with a series of questions their inclusive leadership skills. She said that she received this report before and mentioned that it gives you an idea on how you are doing when it comes to inclusive leadership. The survey is anonymous and managers are free to use this report or not.

It was noted that a new inclusion survey is currently being developed by the Vlerick Business School.

Achieving long-term commitment to gender equality

Lastly a participant asked how we can move forward from a "ticking the box" approach to a long-term commitment.

One needs to understand the "why" – the business case and benefits of diversity – and the "why not" – because it's not a natural human behaviour, and act upon this. It's a standard cost-benefit analysis: what is the cost of diversity and what are the benefits.

For example, looking at flexibility, we can look at the costs of having a liquid workforce, but this should be measured against the benefits: more well-being and less absenteeism, retention of workforce, competitive advantage.

In summary, creating an inclusive environment is essential to attract and retain people with talent.

Save the date for the next events!

Join the next HUB session in Brussels, on 14th November 2017 from 12.00-15.30, hosted by Procter & Gamble: **"Managing gender and generations: the end of "careers" as we know them?"** with our guest-speaker Saskia Van Uffelen, CEO Ericsson Belux, Digital Champion and Digital Mind of Belgium, Author of "Tous Patron! De la coopération entre quatre générations"

Don't miss the up-coming JUMP Forum Brussels on 8 March 2018, hosted by Mercedes, Woluwe-Saint-Lambert.

Thank you to all participants!