

Rethinking inclusion in the new world of work

Your handbook for a culture of inclusion and gender balance in the post-pandemic world



With the support of :



Région
Île de France

BRUSSELS CAPITAL-REGION

equal.brussels
BRUSSELS REGIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE

Beiersdorf

This handbook was developed with the support of :

The Region of Wallonia



Brussels Capital Region
Equal.Brussels



The Region of Île de France



Beiersdorf



Thank you to our partners :



Publisher : Isabella Lenarduzzi, JUMP Founder and Managing Director, Ashoka Fellow

Author : Christine Cecil, consultant, trainer and changemaker in Gender Balance and Diversity & Inclusion

With the contribution of : Victoria Hatem, Paul Lee Evans, Dorothy Dalton, Salomé Trigano, Stéphanie Tinel

FOREWORD

In 2019, JUMP published a handbook entitled '**How to build an inclusive workplace**', co-developed with Dorothy Dalton, diversity and inclusion expert, founder of 3Plus International.

This handbook provides the definitions of diversity, equity and inclusion, explains how to manage our stereotypes and biases so that we do not discriminate (or as little as possible), introduces the concept of the dominant culture in our organisations and indicates the key steps to build an inclusive culture. It also provides tests to understand where you stand and where your organisation stands in terms of inclusion. It is available free of charge on our website : www.jump.eu.com/resources/inclusion

And then the pandemic happened...

All people in office jobs were forced to rethink their ways of working and adapt to new tools. At JUMP,

as was the case for many other organisations in the events, training, and communication sectors, we had to completely rethink our business model to avoid disappearing. We no longer needed the same skills in the team to be able to share our expertise in DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) and our way of serving our mission changed profoundly.

Very quickly, I called on public institutions, media, and companies to highlight the absolute necessity of measuring the impact of the pandemic on the inequalities already present. To measure is to reveal. And we can only act when we know.

As time passed, new ways of working were introduced, and new aspirations of employees emerged. Unfortunately, in most cases, inclusion was not at the centre of the thinking that led to the choice of new rules and their

implementation. And then the labour market became tighter. It is increasingly difficult to recruit, retain and engage staff. For the first time, companies are sharing their sense of urgency and fear of no longer having enough people to ensure their performance or even their survival. The subject of gender balance, diversity and inclusion is coming back in force to try to find answers to these new challenges.

To help provide answers and tools, JUMP decided to write a new edition of its practical guide on inclusion that would tackle the new ways of working. We have been working on this for over two years and it has taken all the intelligence and experience of Christine Cecil to tell the story, synthesise the tools available and structure our recommendations. JUMP wants to contribute to a fairer society so that equality is no longer an intention but a reality. **Every manager**

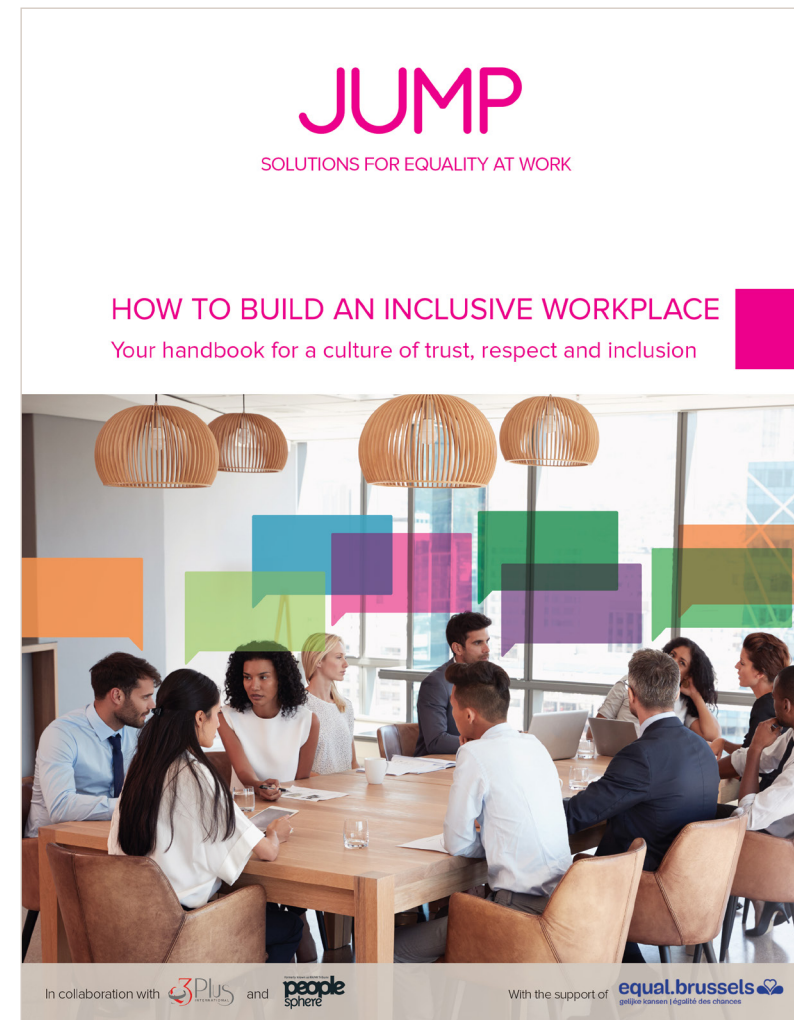
and every company has a role to play in achieving this objective. It is essential for their performance and fundamental for our model of democracy.

Thank you to each and every one of you for being our allies for a more inclusive, fair and sustainable economy. Thank you to our partners for giving us the opportunity to spend the time necessary to produce this guide.

In full partnership,



Isabella Lenarduzzi
Founder of JUMP



www.jump.eu.com/resources/inclusion

This handbook looks at understanding the impact of new ways of working on gender balance, diversity and inclusion, providing guidance on how to manage inclusively, without discriminating, in the context of the new ways of working post Covid-19.

In this handbook we will provide:

- *Our analysis of the impact of the pandemic on gender equality and diversity & inclusion*
- *Insights on the new way of working in the post-pandemic world and the risks for women and other under-represented groups of these new work models*
- *Practical tips and useful practices to ensure that, in the transition towards this new way of working, you – as leaders, managers, HR or D&I practioners – can better integrate inclusion into the new work practices and culture of your organisation.*

INDEX

INTRODUCTION

Creating an inclusive culture in your organisation	8
□ Why we are not there yet	8
□ Focus on equity to achieve equality	11
□ The added complexity of intersectionality	12
□ So how do organisations achieve Diversity & Inclusion?	13
□ What works in advancing D&I: allyship	14
□ Why this handbook?	15

PART 1

How the pandemic impacted people in the workplace differently	16
□ The pandemic: the biggest revolution in work practices for decades	16
□ A magnifying effect on pre-existing gender inequalities	17
□ Blurring of boundaries between work and personal life	20
□ A negative impact on the sense of belonging at work	20
□ A concerning phenomenon : Quiet Quitting	21
□ A new challenge: facing up to the Great Resignation	22
□ In summary	23

PART 2

The inclusion challenge of the post-pandemic way of working

□ Inclusive recovery : a challenge for countries and organisations	24
□ Flexible work is here to stay	25
□ Flexibility : an opportunity for increased diversity	27
□ New power dynamics in the hybrid workplace : in-office vs remote	28
□ Reduced visibility for remote workers	28
□ A high risk of increasing the gender gap	30
□ Reinforcing the generational divide	33
□ Managing the differences between blue and white collar workers	33
□ Collaboration and teamwork at risk	34
□ Difficulties in training & development	34
□ Deterioration of company culture and reduced sense of belonging	35
□ Moving from a collective to individual approach	36

□ Further challenges in public institutions	36
□ Diversity and inclusion at the heart of the new way of work	37
□ In summary	37

PART 3

How to ensure inclusion in the new way of work

□ The future of work is flexibility	38
□ What companies are currently doing to support hybrid and remote work	39
□ JUMP's framework for an inclusive future of work	40
□ Tips for managers	48
□ Guidelines for HR & DEI professionals	56

LEARN MORE: USEFUL RESOURCES

Referenced articles and books	63
-------------------------------	----

FREE RESOURCES FROM JUMP

JUMP provides surveys, reports, best practices, videos, posters...	68
--	----

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION : Why this handbook

We need to rethink inclusion in the post-pandemic world to avoid perpetuating, or even reinforcing, existing inequalities. As they shift towards flexible and hybrid work, organisations must re-examine their Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) activities to ensure that they continue to promote inclusion.

Understanding and recognising inequalities at work is key to understanding that the pandemic has not had the same effect on everyone and that everyone cannot be treated in the same way. Given the structural inequalities in the workplace and the social constructions that impact the experience of women and under-represented groups at the management level in organisations, it is essential to measure the impact of new ways of working on different types of people and to adapt the tools to ensure all are given the same opportunities (equity) and to achieve a fair and respectful environment (inclusion).

PART 1 : How the pandemic impacted people in the workplace differently

The pandemic accelerated the shifts in working patterns that were already underway – virtual working, flexibility, the need to tailor HR policies to each individual, also the importance of retention. Thanks to Covid-19 we had the opportunity to reinvent the way we work – and we realised that working from home was possible for many of us. Flexible working became the norm rather than the exception.

The pandemic impacted all in terms of wellbeing. But women, younger generations and other under-represented groups suffered more than most. Indeed, inequalities that existed before the pandemic were amplified during the crisis. Due to gendered roles, the “return home” did not have the same meaning and impact on women as it did on men. During lockdown, women lost the social emancipation they had obtained when going to work. Women have always done more than men in the domestic sphere – and as a result it was them who took on all the stereotypically gendered tasks such as childcare, cleaning, schoolwork... This had a negative impact on their careers and well-being, and many had to step out or down.

Following several waves of lockdown, employees started to feel disconnected from their companies. Employers are faced with a talent crisis, where people are leaving their companies, searching for fewer constraints or purpose, as illustrated by the “Great Resignation”, the “Great Break-Up” of women, or the “Quiet Quitting” of the younger generations...

Part 2 : The inclusion challenge of the post-pandemic way of working

The biggest risks for inclusion are the new power dynamics that come into play in the new way of work. The transition to hybrid and remote working is creating new sources of inequalities. There are those who choose to come into the office, those who work from home, and those who have no choice and have to be at work due to the nature of their jobs.

Proximity bias or flexibility stigma means that those who choose to come to the office are unconsciously favoured vs those working from home, independently of objective performance measures - because they are more visible. Employees working remotely might de facto be excluded from important meetings or go un-noticed during virtual meetings. Those in the office will have informal access to executives, gossip from the coffee machine and build networks – and thus have a distinct advantage in terms of visibility and career opportunities. There are also those with better technology or a room of their own to work - often the most senior, the most financially well-off, the leaders, etc.

It is usually those who were already "outsiders" before the pandemic, such as women, minorities, disabled or older employees who will choose to work from home. There is a great danger that these employees will suddenly become even more under-represented in the office, with reduced visibility and a negative impact on their career.

If equity and inclusion are not integrated into policies and new work practices, there are considerable risks to further existing inequalities in the workplace.

Part 3 – How to ensure inclusion in the new way of work

As companies are rethinking their work models, they have a unique opportunity to address inequalities and embed inclusion in their flexible working arrangements. To support them, we propose a framework in 5 parts:

- 1 Measure to ensure equity
- 2 Develop hybrid leadership skills

- 3 Reinforce the company culture for more inclusion – and promote psychological safety
- 4 Rethink systems & processes for mass-customization of the employee experience
- 5 Invest in tech and inclusive workspace design

Managing the new way of working for inclusion is going to be complex. Workplaces must be built to ensure equal access to opportunity for those in hybrid and remote conditions as well as those in the office, and will also need to address individual work life needs. Change may be slower in some areas (e.g. home office spaces). It is thus critical to listen, consider different needs and build change in collaboration with employees rather than imposing it on them.

In the new way of work, new skills will be critical for success. This implies supporting and training the managers and HR/D&I practitioners to intentionally counter the biases and act for more inclusion in the new way of work.

Companies face a classic risk/reward choice. Hybrid work has the potential to offer a higher level of flexibility, a better work-life balance, and a more tailored employee experience. This can have a hugely positive impact on D&I efforts, as well as on performance. However, hybrid work also has the potential to create an unequal playing field and to amplify in-group vs. out-group dynamics, to the detriment of equity and inclusion.

By adopting an intentional D&I approach to the new way of work, companies have a unique opportunity to ensure the benefits outweigh the risks.

INTRODUCTION

Creating an inclusive culture in your organisation

We don't talk as much about the business case for diversity and inclusion as much as we used to. When we wrote the first JUMP Handbook "[How to build an inclusive workplace](#)" in 2019, discussions were still very much focused on "Why should we invest in this?". Endless studies proved the correlation between diversity, gender balance and business performance. Leaders and managers had to be convinced – and convinced again – that they should make this a strategic area of focus.

But companies across the planet are now stepping up to a range of new moral responsibilities, and the pressure to be exemplary is rising. Following the pandemic and the massive disruption it had on the workplace, companies more than ever need the innovation that diversity can bring as well as agility and flexibility to thrive in the VUCA¹ world. Topics such as employee wellbeing and engagement have been propelled to the top of the priority lists of leaders and managers as they face the risks of the Great Resignation. "#MeToo" and "Black lives matter" have further forced organisations to rethink office culture and leadership competences to be more inclusive – or be left behind. **For Diversity & Inclusion, the focus has shifted from the "why" to the "how".**

Why we are not there yet

But people and organisations are still riddled with biases and obstacles, and change is slow. As we know, **good intentions are not sufficient**, and there is no silver bullet on the "how". Despite

investment in Diversity & Inclusion initiatives, we are seeing a disconnect between commitments and results. Indeed, although most leaders recognise the need for an inclusive organisation, they are challenged in making it a priority due to the pressure of delivering short-term results. And this generates frustrations and a certain amount of gender- or diversity-fatigue.

Unconscious bias and stereotypes remain one of the key barriers to inclusion. Unconscious biases are systematic patterns of thoughts that we are unaware of. Because of them, our spontaneous decisions may be biased decisions, and this leads to incorrect assumptions, prejudices, and discrimination – whether conscious or unconscious.



Definitions

DIVERSITY IS A FACT

Diversity is the set of our different attributes and facets that makes us unique. A diverse workplace means it ensures representation of employees with a wide range of different characteristics. Some of these are visible differences such as gender, age, ethnicity and physical ability. Others are less visible, such as personality types, learning styles, education and socio-economic background, sexual orientation, religion.

INCLUSION IS A CHOICE

Inclusion is the ability and willingness to understand, value and leverage all these aspects that make us different. An inclusive workplace builds a culture of belonging and respect by actively inviting the participation and valuing the contribution of all people.

¹ VUCA : Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity



HOW STEREOTYPES AND BIAS LEADS TO DISCRIMINATION

BIAS BIAS is a strong feeling, inclination or prejudice in favour or against a person or a group. It can be positive or negative, and is not necessarily based on fair judgement.

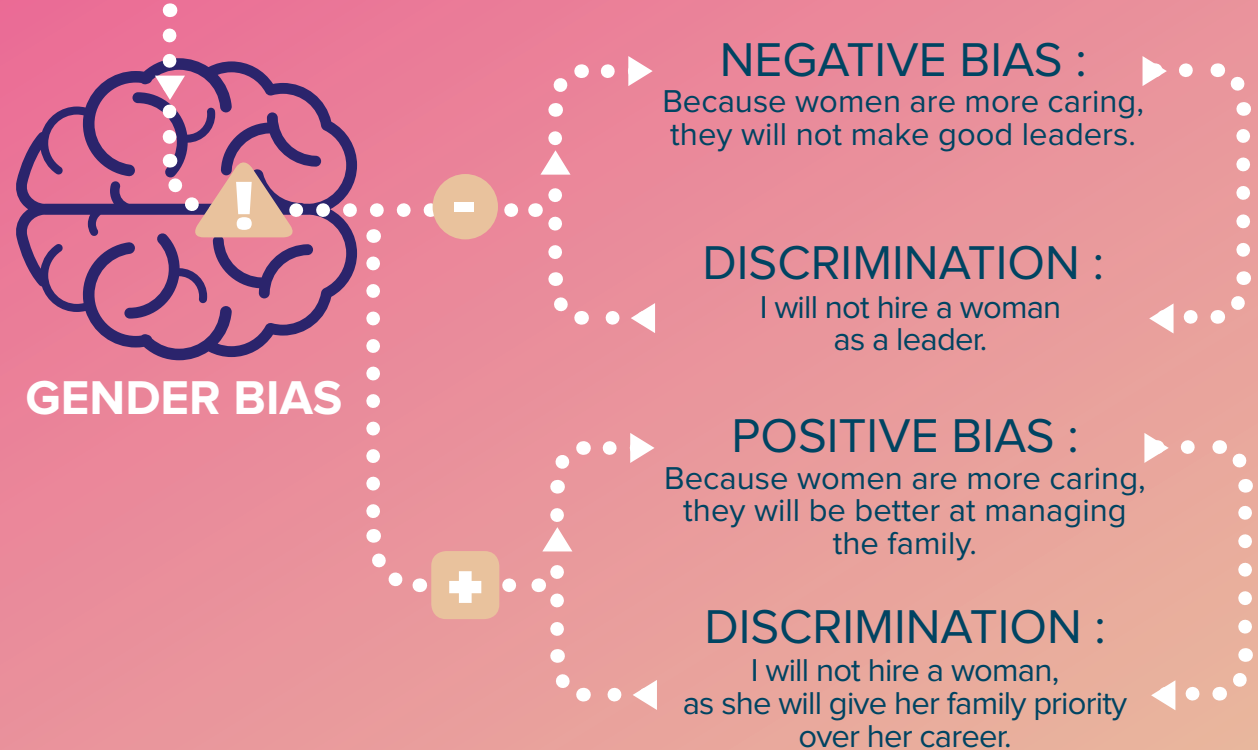
STEREOTYPE is a generalized belief about a group of people based on shared characteristics. Bias can develop into a stereotype, or from a stereotype, but not necessarily.

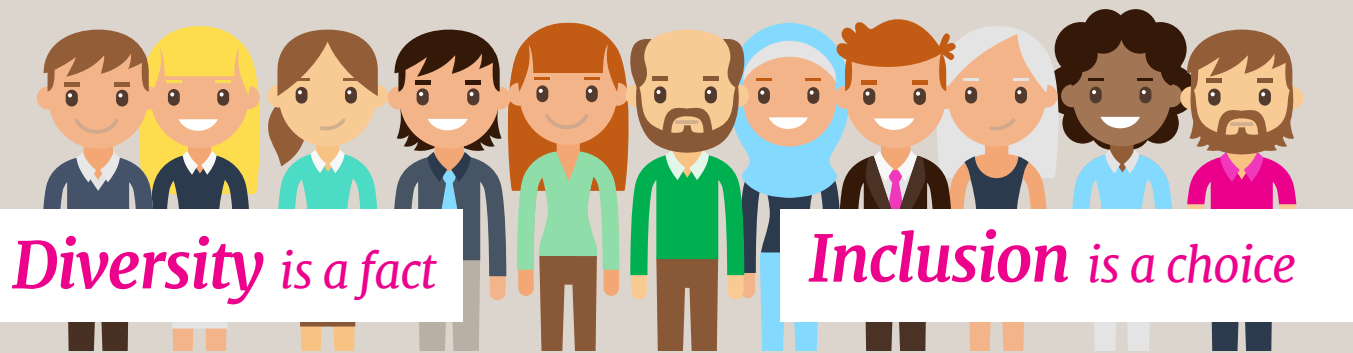
The Harvard Implicit Association tests show gender stereotypes to be prevalent in all countries: when people take the gender & career/family test – be they women or men – they make strong associations between the concepts “female” and “family”, and between “male” and “career”.²

The science of “implicit bias” demonstrates how such barely conscious thoughts and feelings can affect our decisions about others. Such gender norms and associations influence perceptions and unconsciously lead to discriminatory behaviours, as illustrated in the examples below.

² Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People. Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald (2013)

STEREOTYPE : Women are more sensitive than men





Diversity is a fact

Inclusion is a choice

We live in a society where equality is a fundamental value that is promoted in most Western countries. This belief is so anchored in us that we are often oblivious to or dismissive of the biases and stereotypes that are still prevalent in the workplace. Yet they are still very much present – they are just more subtle and possibly unintentional. This is what we call **second-generation bias**³. More than 25 years ago, the social psychologist Faye Crosby stumbled on a surprising phenomenon: most women are unaware of having personally been victims of gender discrimination, and they deny it even when it is objectively true and they see that women in general experience such discrimination.

Most organisations have an invisible culture that people talk about but struggle to define.

This culture tends to exhibit the characteristics of the dominant group – often based on a

nationality, gender, type of education and type of personality: **“this is the way we do things here”**. The people who are part of the dominant group as known as the **insiders**, they navigate the unwritten rules of the workplace with ease and without even being conscious of it.



“Privilege isn’t about what you’ve gone through, it’s about what you haven’t had to go through.”

Janaya Khan, social activist and co-founder of Black Lives Matter Toronto

Those who are not part of the dominant group are the **outsiders**. Research shows that employees will prefer to adapt their personality and style to fit into this dominant culture and to avoid negative stereotyping, exclusion, or harassment. But this comes at a price, for the individual and for the organisation. It is only by rethinking culture, and by promoting trust, respect and inclusive work practices, that people



Definitions

INSIDERS

They set the norms without knowing it and are oblivious to their norms, because “this is just the way things are”. They may or may not be the numerical majority, but they are those with the power. They feel like they naturally “belong”. They are unaware of the differences between them and the outsiders, and overlook or minimize the others’ differences or uniqueness.

OUTSIDERS

They are on the outside looking in. They work hard and constantly to fit in, as they navigate unwritten rules determined by the insiders. It is harder for them to access “insider benefits”, no matter how hard they work. They might be aware or unaware of their differences with the insider group, but they feel as though they don’t quite belong.

feel comfortable to speak up and organisations ultimately benefit from the richness of diversity, and the higher rates of innovation and performance that it brings. **Inclusion is critical to benefit from diversity.**

³ Educate Everyone About Second-Generation Gender Bias, by Herminia Ibarra, Robin J. Ely, and Deborah Kolb – Harvard Business Review (2013)

Focus on equity to achieve equality

Many managers tell us: “Equality is very important; we do everything to make sure everyone is treated the same here.” Equality aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and lives in the same conditions.

There has been an evolution in D&I strategies to integrate the notion of equity – we now talk of **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)**. Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful, providing equal

opportunities and fairness in access to information and resources for all, taking their differences and the inequities of the system into account. It implies working to level the playing field, being aware of visible barriers such as a physical handicap that could limit access to the workplace or use of working tools, but also invisible or structural barriers at work and in society that unconsciously impact perceptions of competence and career progression.

Equality



Equity



© 2017 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
May be reproduced with authorisation

The added complexity of intersectionality

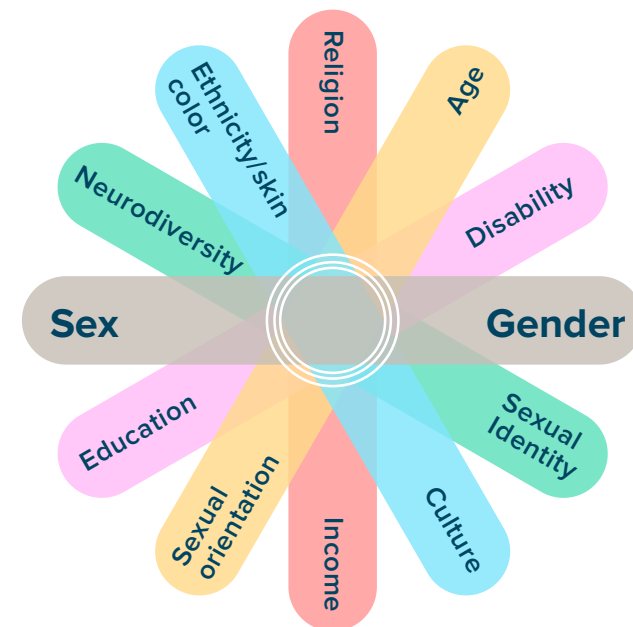
Diversity is the set of different attributes and facets that makes us unique. You cannot consider a person based on his or her ethnic origin, gender or social class. Everyone has multiple identities, AND gender AND social class, and so on... Intersectionality shows us that social identities create unique experiences, opportunities, and barriers for each person. For example, a lesbian black woman will experience the world according to her sexuality, gender, and skin colour - this will be a different experience to that of a white heterosexual woman.

Especially in the experiences of minority individuals or groups, intersectionality is the complex, cumulative way in which multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, and intersect. When it comes to thinking about inequalities, categories like gender, ethnicity and social class are best understood as overlapping and mutually constitutive rather than isolated and distinct.

Being aware of how intersectionality affects all of us, both in our work and personal lives, will help us to communicate respectfully with peers, and better understand the ways in which diversity, equity, and inclusion are relevant to our organisation and society.

INTERSECTIONALITY

We all have multiple identities



So how do organisations achieve Diversity & Inclusion?

Becoming an inclusive organisation is a cultural transformation like any other. You need to embed inclusion into the culture of the organisation to ensure that all employees feel a sense of belonging, valued for who they are, and empowered to participate and contribute freely. It is a long-term journey and requires the integration of three key organisational elements to stimulate change:

- **Leadership commitment** : Understand the benefits of diversity & inclusion for your organisation and act as a role model and ambassador.
- **Systemic Change** : Examine the organisational processes that either accelerate or hamper the achievement of your D&I goals.
- **Individual Change** : Recognising how each individual can learn to manage their own biases and behaviours to enhance business success.

YOUR D&I STRATEGY TO PROMOTE A CULTURE OF INCLUSION



What works in advancing D&I: Allyship

Peter Drucker said: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast”. So creating a culture of inclusion is critical to achieve business results. But the right D&I actions and policies alone cannot shift workplace culture; it’s critical that all employees become part of the cause – not only those that are defending their interests because they are part of an under-represented group.

That’s where allyship comes in. **Key to the success of any D&I strategy is to get the support of those that are part of the majority “insider” groups.** However, while most employees think of themselves as allies, relatively few white male employees actually step up and perform basic allyship actions, such as advocating for gender, ethnic equity or LGBTQ+⁴.

To create change, employees need to recognise their privilege and power, build awareness and understanding of the inequities at play, identify advantages they can use to level the playing field and make workplaces more equitable.

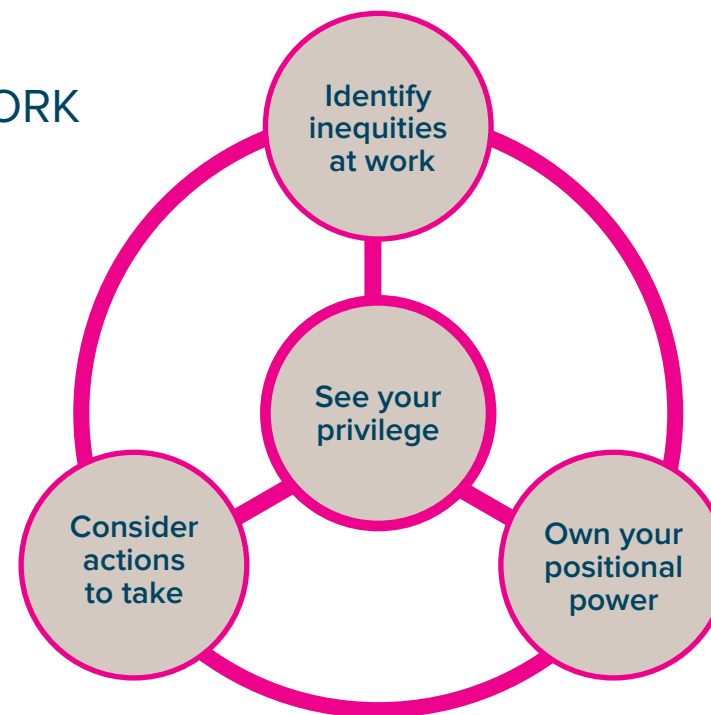
⁴ Allyship at work. Lean In.

Tip: Practicing allyship

Allyship is an active and consistent effort to use your privilege and power to support and advocate for people with less privilege.

Allyship is an action. It is a practice, like learning a new language or modifying your diet. To be efficient, keep your privilege and positional power in mind to see where you are best positioned to drive change. We all have some form of positional power: it is based on your role and level.

ACTIVE ALLYSHIP FRAMEWORK



WHY THIS HANDBOOK?

We need to rethink inclusion in the post-pandemic world to avoid perpetuating inequities.

Understanding and recognising inequalities at work is key to understanding that the pandemic has not had the same effect on everyone and that everyone cannot be treated in the same way.

Given the structural inequalities in the workplace and the social constructions that impact the experience of women and under-represented groups at the management level in organisations, it is essential to measure the impact of new ways of working on each category of person and to adapt the tools to ensure all are given the same opportunities (equity) and to achieve a fair and respectful environment (inclusion).

As they shift towards flexible and hybrid working following the pandemic, organisations must re-examine their D&I activities to ensure that they continue to promote inclusion in the context of this new era. This is what we aim to examine in this handbook.



“The pandemic represents a rare but narrow window of opportunity to reflect, reimagine, and reset our world.”

Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum



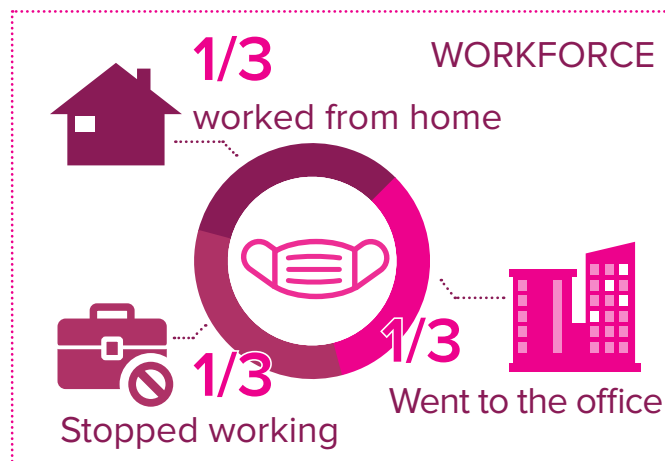
PART 1:

How the pandemic impacted people in the workplace differently

The pandemic: the biggest revolution in work practices for decades

The pandemic greatly accelerated changes affecting the world of work that were already underway – virtual work, flexibility, the necessity to adapt HR policies to each individual, as well as the importance of retention management. It's a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine how we work, as after the industrial revolution, the second world war, and the advent of computers and the internet. Covid-19 transformed the way we work, making flexible work the norm rather than the exception.

This massive shift to working from home impacted people differently, varying with the economic structure, culture and pandemic support mechanisms of each country. During the first lockdown in France, approximately a third of the workforce went virtual and worked from home while another third stopped working entirely, and the last third continued



to go to the office or physical workplace⁶. Whatever the country, the pandemic proved that a flexible work model was viable on a large scale.

This was not without a cost. The pandemic decelerated other changes: **in terms of gender equality, over 30 years of advancement were lost in one year of crisis⁷** and the well-being of workers in general was so heavily impacted that they are now questioning the traditional work models.

⁶ L'impact du Covid-19 sur l'emploi des femmes. Fondation des Femmes (2021)

⁷ Lutte pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes : 30 ans de perdus en 1 an de crise. Flora Sauvage, Public Sénat (2021)



A magnifying effect on pre-existing gender inequalities

The crisis linked to the Covid-19 pandemic had a negative impact on women's rights and experiences, raising fears of significant setbacks in this area, both in the short and long term.

Existing gender inequalities were exacerbated during the pandemic because of their specific place in the labour market (short-term contracts, service sectors, informal economy, etc.). Women were more vulnerable to layoffs :



Across the globe, it is estimated that over 64 million women lost their jobs in 2020, costing them at least \$800 billion in income.⁸

Women are more likely to work in sectors such as tourism, leisure and education that were hit hard by the pandemic or in lower paying and precarious roles, and these were the sectors and jobs that were first cut. In Italy, women represented 70% of those who lost their jobs in 2020. In December 2020, this reached a staggering level where 98% of the 101,000 people who lost their jobs were women!⁹

Women were on the front line during the pandemic, both at work – as caregivers, nurses, cashiers, etc. – **and in the home** where the responsibility for domestic tasks combined with home schooling and childcare fell mainly on them. Many left the labour force for childcare reasons or due to extreme burnout.

⁸ Covid-19 cost women globally over \$800 billion in lost income in one year. Oxfam International (2021).

⁹ Italie : l'emploi des femmes gravement fragilisé à cause de la pandémie. Caroline Bordecq, Axelle (2021)

The pandemic had the effect of visibly bringing to everyone's attention **many pre-existing gender inequalities**. Because of gendered roles, the « return-to-home » did not have the same meaning and impact on women as it had on men. Historically, women's emancipation and participation in the labour market had been made possible when they were able to leave the domestic sphere, sharing or delegating domestic roles. When they were sent back home during lockdown, they lost this freedom. Women continued to do more than men, as they had always done before Covid-19, but now they had to step up again to stereotypically gendered tasks that could no longer be delegated to external individuals or structures, rather than sharing them equally with their male partners.

In France, for example:



58% of women spent over two hours doing domestic work vs **only 35% of men**.¹⁰



40% of mothers of children under 16 said they spent daily more than 4 additional hours to take care of their children vs **only 25% of fathers**.



70% of women reported supervising the schoolwork of their children daily, compared to **32% of men**.



BUT only 25% of women could isolate themselves to work vs **47% of men**.¹¹

¹⁰ Covid-19 : Menaces sur les femmes dans le monde. Marlène Schiappa, Fondation Jean-Jaurès (2020)

¹¹ L'impact du Covid-19 sur l'emploi des femmes. Fondation des Femmes (2021)

Women often did not have dedicated workspaces, work tools or work time – they had to share computers with the children, work with constant interruption as they cared for their younger children or step in to help with home schooling, generating parental exhaustion.



“Unlike men, who have managed to impose that they should not be disturbed for part of the day, women, who are in charge of family affairs, cannot compartmentalise in the same way. They must remain available.”¹²

François de Singly, French sociologist

Since they assumed responsibility for most of the domestic work and/or their partners failed to share, it was women who had to reduce their working hours or take career breaks to look after the children. In Belgium, this was the case for 51% of women vs only 7% of men. Indeed:



of ‘corona parental leaves’ were taken by women in Belgium.¹³

Single-parent households were hit harder. Since single mothers represent over 80% of single-parent families across the EU, this contributed to furthering the gender divide. Single mothers lost 20% of their standard of living (while they were already living precariously with incomes one third below those of men).¹⁴ In Brussels, for example, 86% of single-parent families are headed by a woman and these families are at high risk of poverty.¹⁵

¹² L’impact sous l’angle du genre du plan pour la reprise et la résilience (PRR). IEFH (2021)

¹³ L’expansion du télétravail et son impact sur les femmes. Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique (2021)

¹⁴ Advancing Gender Equality: The role and situation for gender equality mechanisms in the context of COVID-19. Council of Europe conference (2020)

¹⁵ L’impact du COVID-19 sur les inégalités entre les femmes et les hommes à Bruxelles. Conseil Bruxellois de l’Egalité Femmes-Hommes (2021)

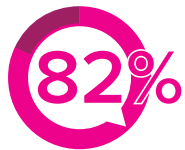


Female single parents also faced greater challenges at work:



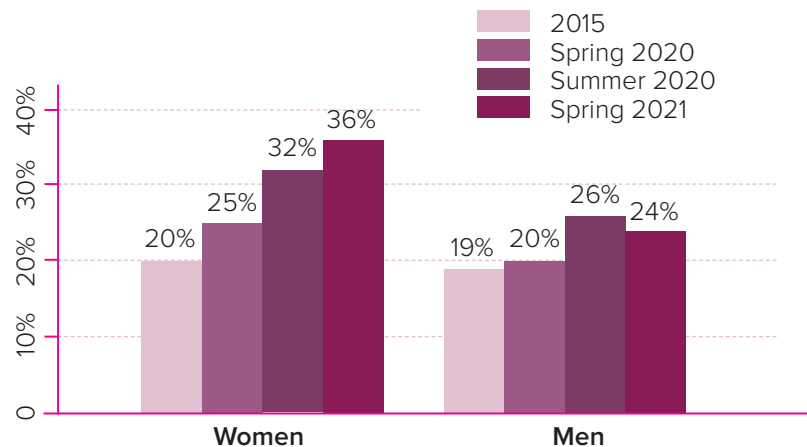
of them reported a negative impact on their relationship with their employer when they had to reduce/change their working hours due to caring responsibilities (vs 45% of parents in the overall sample).

Even women without caregiving responsibilities were feeling added pressure to be always “on”, taking a toll on their well-being.



of working women said their lives have been negatively disrupted by the pandemic, and nearly 70% of those that experienced these disruptions were concerned that their career growth might be limited as a result.¹⁶

Worklife balance : "Too tired after work to do some of the household jobs which need to be done"¹⁷



¹⁶ Understanding the pandemic's impact on working women. Deloitte (2020)

¹⁷ Eurofound survey (2022)

Women were left feeling more exhausted, burnt out, and under pressure than men.¹⁸ They were 1.3 times more likely to experience anxiety during Covid-19.

The negative impact of the pandemic is often considered in the context of the first months of lockdown. Unfortunately, schools, day-care, children's extra-curricular activities and holiday camps took two years to go back to normal and has led to a permanent sense of insecurity for parents.

Lockdown led to another serious issue for women: increased domestic violence. The pandemic saw increased calls to helplines and visits to websites offering support and assistance, increasing by 20-60% across the EU.¹⁹ And with physical isolation from the office, colleagues had less chance to notice and come to their help.



“Today, as life has returned to normal, only 60% of women now have confidence in their professional future, 15% less than men.”²⁰

BCG report

¹⁸ Seven charts that show COVID-19's impact on women's employment. McKinsey (2021)

¹⁹ The gendered impact of the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period. Clare Wenham (European Parliament, 2020)

²⁰ Crise de la COVID-19 : un retour en arrière pour la parité hommes-femmes au travail ? Report by BCG and IPSOS (2021)

Blurring of boundaries between work and personal life

One of the biggest impacts of the pandemic has been the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life. As people continued to work during lockdown, children popped by and appeared in online meetings, bedrooms and kitchens became visible in videos, personal lives were no longer private for working colleagues. **We have become more aware of each other's personal lives**, more accepting of personal interruptions, more empathetic. Others chose to step back from work to avoid revealing their personal lives for fear of negative perceptions and consequences.

Moreover, with home working, it becomes more difficult to switch off from work. If people were not necessarily working more, they were working at different times. An IPSOS / BCG study showed that 39% of employees said they worked at lunchtime, without taking a real break, more often than before the crisis²¹. Compared to before the crisis, 31% of employees work more often late at night or on weekends. And this has impacted certain categories of people more than others, notably women who struggled with work life balance before the pandemic.

Employee wellbeing deteriorated drastically with the stress of the pandemic, with fatigue setting in, as well as difficulty in disconnecting from work, deterioration of social networks, and weakening of their sense of belonging to their companies.

²¹ Crise de la COVID-19 : un retour en arrière pour la parité hommes-femmes au travail ? Report by BCG and IPSOS (2021)

A negative impact on the sense of belonging at work

At the beginning of the pandemic, nearly 50% of managers tried to interact more with their teams, and 25% of employees perceived an improvement in the relationship with their manager.²² But this change did not last, and there remains a lot to do both at the corporate and at the societal levels to prevent employee mental health problems, with talent dropping out of the labour market — particularly in the case of female talent.



employees consider that the pandemic has had an impact on their sense of belonging to their organisation.²³

Paradoxically, while technology enables instant communication with virtually anyone, it can also contribute to feelings of isolation. **Many employees working from home say loneliness is one of their top remote working challenges.** Employees are increasingly looking to their workplace for personal fulfilment and satisfaction, and a sense of belonging becomes more important.²⁴

Generations were impacted very differently during the pandemic, and **the younger generation seem to have suffered the most, both economically and emotionally.** Nearly one-third of Gen Z's lost a job during the pandemic compared to 19% of Millennials, 18% of Gen X's, and 13% of Baby Boomers. About one-third of Gen Z's describe the pandemic as being «extremely negative», which is double the share of Baby Boomers.²⁵

²² Crise de la COVID-19 : un retour en arrière pour la parité hommes-femmes au travail ? Report by BCG and IPSOS (2021)

²³ Les moteurs d'engagement des salariés dans l'entre deux vagues de la Covid-19. Jeremie Sicsic (2020)

²⁴ Belonging in a time of crisis. Matthieu Etchegaray, Deloitte (2020)

²⁵ How Covid-19 Has Impacted Different Generations of Workers. Dan Schawbel, Workplace Intelligence (2020)

Before the pandemic, younger generations were the most interested in work flexibility, though their experience of remote working during the pandemic left them with a bitter aftertaste: 95% of Gen Z's and 93% of Millennials had difficulty in remote working.

They found they were less productive, feeling disconnected from their company and colleagues. Many were in their first jobs and did not learn the codes of good working and the culture of the company. The lack of face-to-face onboarding, training and team connections meant that their capacity to deliver was handicapped, and their sense of engagement plummeted.

A concerning phenomenon : Quiet Quitting

Since Covid, professionals in general – and especially the younger generation – have been struggling with motivation and wellness issues, leading to what the French are calling an epidemic of "**can't be bothered**" ("**flemme**" in French): 46% of 25-34 year olds are less motivated by their work than they used to be.

²⁶ Grosse fatigue et épidémie de flemme: quand une partie des français a mis les pouces. Survey by Fondation Jean-Jaurès (2022)

Younger generations feel they are losing out more than they are gaining from their work. They are pushing back and setting clear boundaries - a phenomenon called "quiet quitting", which means doing only what your job requires and nothing more.



of employees under the age of 30 say they will only do the bare minimum if they do not feel "belonging" to the company.²⁶

For companies that have been used to employees "going the extra mile", this disengagement is an important issue to tackle.



*"It is a huge number and, especially for employers, it is quite worrying anyway. Because when almost half of employees under the age of 30 are suddenly no longer willing to commit 100%, an organisation can quickly run into trouble."*²⁷

Els Van Der Veken, director at Robert Walters

²⁷ Robert Walters survey - La génération Z est-elle davantage susceptible de se désengager au travail? Peoplesphere (2022)



A new challenge: facing up to the Great Resignation

Employers must confront the broadening disconnect between how they and their employees see the future. While business leaders attempt to rebuild a sense of normality and are expecting their staff to return to the office with one or two days remote, employees are less eager to go back:

1/3 More than a third of employees would like to work from home for two or more days per week, and more than half want at least three days of remote work.

There is a growing gap between the aspirations of employees and what managers expect. While companies are focusing on setting up policies for remote working and how many days staff are expected to be at the office, employees want adaptability and flexibility. They see these fixed policies simply as a new way of control.

34% of knowledge workers have been obliged to return to working from the office five days a week (vs only 19% of executives).²⁸

Companies are underestimating the disconnect and are confronted instead with the “**Great Resignation**”. Since the beginning of the recovery period, a record number of people have left their jobs. After an extended period of working from home with no commute, many rediscovered a connection to their home and family in ways that changed them, and they are now looking for a sense of purpose in their lives. They are challenging the inflexible work and pay conditions, looking for better work-life balance.

²⁸ Inflexible return-to-office policies are hammering employee experience scores. Future Forum (2022).



This "great resignation" shows no sign of abating and is leading to a shortage of labour.



workers plan to quit their jobs in 2022, according to one of the largest surveys of the global workforce.²⁹

Work-related stress and anxiety is skyrocketing among full-time office workers and those without flexibility. Rigid policies are likely to drive attrition, particularly among underrepresented groups, such as women, ethnic minorities and parents who continue to report the greatest interest in flexible schedules and working locations.

In addition, **we are seeing a "Great Breakup", with women leaders leaving their companies in unprecedented numbers.** They aren't leaving the workforce entirely but are choosing to leave for companies with better flexibility, career opportunities, and a real commitment to DEI.

²⁹ The Great Resignation is not over: A fifth of workers plan to quit in 2022. World Economic Forum (2022)



*"I think people have come through the pandemic feeling a bit more empowered. We've realized that being in a toxic environment where you're not happy is just not worth it."*³⁰

Black woman, Vice President (Lean in Report)

This is a potential pipeline disaster for many companies, who will see their efforts on gender balance go backwards as a result.

³⁰ Women in the workplace. McKinsey & Lean In (2022)

IN SUMMARY

Organisations need to wake up to what employees want

The great resignation is forcing companies to rethink their policies around flexibility, wellbeing and inclusion. Employees have so much choices and won't stick around if they aren't being treated fairly. Joining a company and team with an open and positive culture, where they feel recognised, is what job seekers are looking for nowadays. Work is more than ever the obvious way out of daily loneliness. But employees also are looking for autonomy and flexibility to work when and where they want.

This is of course the paradox of a hyper individualised society: at work as in life, people want everything and its opposite.



*"The important lesson that we can draw from this is to never, oh never, underestimate the social value of work. Although rarely quantified and quantifiable, we are convinced it is most certainly more decisive than its economic value."*³¹

Jean-Paul Erhard,
Managing Partner Peoplesphere

³¹ Défi recrutement : une recette miracle pour captiver et capturer les talents? Jean-Paul Erhard, Peoplesphere (2022)

PART 2:

The inclusion challenge of the post-pandemic way of working

Inclusive recovery: a challenge for countries and organisations

While society and the economy are struggling to recover from the pandemic, a key question that arises is how to ensure this recovery does not reinforce inequalities that were aggravated by the pandemic.

Women were already in a less favourable situation than men before the pandemic, which then negatively impacted women's participation in the labour market and their income. Recovery plans should correct inequalities, as the European Parliament and Commission have recommended. To benefit from the recovery fund, the EU requires that each investment proposal integrates the gender equality dimension.

However, this gender dimension has rarely been taken into account—and it's a missed opportunity. According to the UN, only one in eight countries have considered gender in their national action plans to fight

the pandemic. Feminist associations and gender equality networks across Europe have denounced this lack of vision, calling on government to take stronger measures to rethink their recovery plans to promote more gender equality.³²

Take Belgium for example: the Belgian labour market is characterised like many other countries by a «horizontal segregation» of women and men in different sectors of activity. Public investments of €6 billion that are planned within the Belgian recovery plan (Plan pour la Reprise et la Résilience) focus largely on sectors such as construction, energy, STEM/ICT, following EC recommendations. All these are male-dominated sectors where women represent less than 20% of the Belgian workforce. Injecting billions into these sectors without taking measures to increase their diversity simply reinforces the gender imbalance between men

and women in the labour market and contributes to increasing the already existing shortage of workers in these sectors.³³ The gendered approach to the Belgian recovery plan aims at allocating 3 million euros to support women in the labour market and to facilitate female entrepreneurship – yet this is only 0.05% of the total amount of the recovery plan!³⁴ This will have negative long term implications on women's access to employment, income and economic independence.³⁵

Without strong measures, economic parity between women and men will remain a dream, and women's participation rate in the labour market risks going down again. **The World Economic Forum describe the post-pandemic period as a window of opportunity for a “great reset”. But to achieve this, gender equality must be at the heart of economic recovery.**

³² "La relance doit être paritaire" : l'appel à Macron de 120 responsables de réseaux féminins et entrepreneurs. Le Journal du Dimanche (2021)

³³ L'impact sous l'angle du genre du plan pour la reprise et la résilience (PRR). IEFH (2021)

³⁴ Les femmes, une clé du monde d'après (carte blanche). Signed by women of the Belgian cdH party. Le Vif (2021)

³⁵ L'impact sous l'angle du genre du plan pour la reprise et la résilience (PRR). IEFH (2021)



Organisations have an important role to play in this too. As new ways of working emerge, it will be critical to ensure that the gender dimension, as well as the diversity dimension, are not ignored in experimentation by companies and their own recovery plans.

Flexible work is here to stay

Flexible working was not very prevalent pre-COVID-19. It was often rejected on the basis of trust issues, complexity, technological difficulty, and reduced productivity. However, all those objections were rapidly pushed aside as lockdowns were imposed while companies needed to keep people working. **Overnight working from home become the new normal for many.**

Before Covid-19, flexible work was already promoted as an important lever for inclusion, but it was not adopted by many organisations. Flexible work is now seen as a way of the future. Many employees say they prefer working remotely at least some of the time, and many do not wish to return to the office full time.

There are clear benefits from these emerging work norms - better worklife balance and less commuting for individuals, leading to potentially higher rates of engagement and retention for businesses. Catalyst research finds that access to remote work is highly appreciated by employees:³⁶



more likely to feel engaged when they have access to remote work



more likely to feel included

³⁶ Remote-work options can boost productivity and curb burnout, by Tara Van Bommel, Catalyst (2021).

New way of work : definitions

Flexible working

Possibility to adapt **when** you work (working hours), **where** you work (the place of work), **how much** you work (the time the employee is required to work), and much more. It is often used to describe an amended working pattern requested by the employee, such as part-time working or working from home.

Remote working

Refers to **where** you work, i.e. from outside the office, usually from home. This can also be called **location flexibility**.

Hybrid working

Refers to **where** you work, and it implies a combination of remote and office-based work.

Agile working

Refers to **how** you work, i.e. having a variety of work settings from which employees have the freedom to choose, depending on which is most appropriate for what they need to achieve.

Anytime working

Refers to **when** you work, i.e. the possibility to choose when to do your work during the day/week. This can also be called **schedule flexibility**.

Organisations have good reason to embrace remote work: in addition to increased engagement, employees are 63% more likely to be innovative and 30% are less likely to look for another job.

With flexible work there has been an emergence in particular of ‘**anytime working**’:

69% of employees say the 9-5 has been replaced by anytime working³⁷

“**Anytime working**” should not be confused with “**always on**”, being always available and reachable for work. However, the lines between anytime working and being ‘always on’ are blurring: 58% of workers felt that the rise in remote working has meant they are ‘always on’, leaving them unable to relax or switch off from work.

Companies are experimenting with different models, and the model that is emerging for many companies is that of hybrid working. But the lessons learned during the pandemic are not sufficient to help leaders address this new way of working. A hybrid model is more complicated than a temporary, fully remote one. All kinds of workplace norms and practices that have been accepted for decades are being put to the test, and leaders are a long way from having figured out the new working norms.

³⁷ The evolution of the workplace: Europe & Middle East. Poly study (2021)

Working in the Metaverse : the end of the physical office ?

Will everyone be logging in remotely and meeting up in the Metaverse to work together virtually in the future way of working? Probably not. Teams will likely still be hybrid. The metaverse, like each wave of previous innovation, is less of a substitute for location and more a complement to it. The real world remains important to build emotional connections, while the metaverse will be effective for transmitting large amounts of information.

Companies will need to think more strategically about what the office is for and where physical presence is required. Offices in the era of the metaverse might be less focused on doing work and more focused on connecting and socializing — in other words, more café or canteen than cubicle.

“The metaverse will enhance – not replace – companies’ physical locations”

V. Boutenko, R. Florida and J. Jacobson. Harvard Business Review (2022)



Flexibility : an opportunity for increased diversity

Flexible and remote working can be a real opportunity for organisations to increase the level of diversity in their organisations. Working from home appeals to **people with care responsibilities** – in many cases women, as it allows for greater autonomy and flexibility to work.



of women leaders say flexibility is one of the top three things they consider when deciding whether to join or stay with a company, compared to 34% of men leaders.³⁷

Companies can also hire people who live further away, outside commuting distance. Thus if a group is underrepresented locally, you can look elsewhere to create a more diverse workforce. This is an opportunity to increase the **social diversity** of the organisation, by attracting people who cannot afford to live in city centres.

People with **physical disabilities** who are less mobile can be hired more easily when offered remote working possibilities, as barriers to working like commuting or ill-adapted office facilities are lifted. People with long term illnesses can also work more easily from home and stay connected to work.

Remote and hybrid work are game changers for attracting women and under-represented groups:

³⁷ How hybrid organisations can get the benefits of diversity, by Lydia Watson, Qlearsite

³⁸ Women in the workplace. McKinsey & Lean In (2022)

Only 1 in 10 women wants to work mostly on-site—and it's not just about flexibility:



more likely to experience demeaning and "othering" microaggressions - this is the experience of women when they work on-site compared to when they work mostly remotely.³⁸

Some employee surveys have shown a drop in bullying, harassment and discriminations when remote or hybrid, and reports show that black people, LGBTQ+ and transgender/non-binary employees report fewer micro-aggressions when working remote.³⁵

The question of the inclusive workplace becomes all the more important in this case. If people are preferring remote work to onsite work to avoid micro-aggressions, companies should be questioning their work culture rather than just encouraging these groups to work remotely to avoid such toxic behaviours.

As flexible working becomes the norm and people are preferring flexibility for reasons that are linked to inequalities at work and at home, work culture must be tackled more intentionally than ever to ensure that these people are well integrated into the companies and do not suffer from their remote positions.

New power dynamics in the hybrid workplace: in-office vs remote

If working from home has removed some of the traditional forms of inequality and disrupted some traditional power bases, the move to hybrid work opens up new sources of inequity – especially between the **in-office ‘insiders’ and remote ‘outsiders’**.³⁹

Recognising that there is a power imbalance at play is key. Those with better technology, more visibility, informal access to senior leaders, to the coffee-machine gossip and to social networks will hold a definite advantage in the work and career tournament. It is important that leaders and organisations become aware of these new power dynamics and take positive steps to address the imbalances.

Working from home presents disadvantages such as the risk of distancing oneself from the company. It has an impact on development and progression, with risks of isolation on wellbeing and safety. **And it is typically those who were already ‘outsiders’ before the pandemic, notably women and minorities, who are impacted more than others**, reinforcing in new ways obstacles that already existed pre-Covid.

³⁹ The inclusion challenge of post-pandemic hybrid working, by Paul Brady, Consultancy.co.uk (2021)

Reduced visibility for remote workers

‘Proximity bias’ may exclude those working remotely the most. Being out of sight means that employees working from home are often far from the decision-making part of their organisation. They have less visibility, participate less in informal networking and are not available for ad hoc discussions and meetings that crop up in the coffee lounge or corridor.



think hybrid or home workers feel discriminated against or treated differently to employees in the office full-time.⁴⁰

This reinforces what is known as the **‘flexibility stigma’**, as some managers continue to view those who work remotely as less dedicated to their role than those who come into the office. Women suffer from this the most as they are the ones to ask for flexible work. Male employees are often reluctant to ask for flexible working from fear that it will slow their career prospects or that their manager will judge them for spending time looking after the kids. Even when they do ask, they are more likely to be turned down than women, as there is an assumption that one must have a reason to work flexibly and that it is the women who are considered the primary caregivers. **This phenomenon increases gender gaps at work.**

⁴⁰ The evolution of the workplace: Europe & Middle East. Poly study (2021)

BIASES AT PLAY IN THE NEW WAY OF WORKING

Proximity bias

Unconscious tendency to give preferential treatment to those in our immediate vicinity. Research shows that we look more favourably on people we see more often.



Presence disparity

The different experiences people have of the same event if they are not in the same physical space. Typically, in a hybrid meeting, those that are remote may miss out on “offline” conversations or miss some important body language cue.

Flexibility stigma

The belief that workers who use flexible working arrangements for care purposes are less productive and less committed to the workplace. Because of gender stereotypes, this especially applies to women whom one typically believes will spend this remote time taking care of children; whereas in the case of men, the underlying assumption is that he wants to concentrate more on his work by working from home.

Common examples of proximity bias in the hybrid workplace include:

- ☐ Evaluating the work of onsite employees more highly than remote employees regardless of objective performance metrics.
- ☐ Offering the most interesting projects, assignments or development opportunities to onsite employees.
- ☐ Excluding remote employees from important meetings or forgetting to ask them to speak up on calls.

Remote colleagues will often have a second-class experience and feel excluded from discussions:



“There is nothing worse for inclusion than being remote and watching all those in the meeting room at the office have side-chats or get into a debate forgetting that you’re there.”

Heard at recent company meeting

Unequal speaking times in online meetings, especially in hybrid meetings, will reinforce confidence bias. Typically, it will be women who are less likely to be heard – especially as they are more likely to be remote.

It is important to remember that unequal speaking time for women is an existing trend even when women are present in the room. A study by political scientists finds that when groups of five make democratic decisions, if only one member is a woman, she speaks 40% less than other men. Even if the group has a majority of three women, they each speak 36% less than each of the two men. Only in groups with four women do they each take as much airtime as the one man. Women are afraid of speaking up and being perceived as dominant and controlling; indeed, people expect men to be assertive and ambitious but women to be caring and other-oriented.⁴¹

⁴¹ Who won't shut up in meetings? Men say it's women. It's not. Adam Grant, Washington Post (2021)

A high risk of increasing the gender gap

One of the main advantages of flexible work is the ability to combine both professional and personal life. As women still hold most caring responsibilities and do most domestic work, they are the ones more likely to make the most of flexible workplace opportunities. This is what Françoise Goffinet from the Belgian Institute for Equality of Women and Men calls ‘a mechanism of auto-discrimination’⁴².

There is a danger that certain employees such as women, under-represented groups, minorities, disabled employees or older generations are those that choose to work from home more than others and become even more under-represented in the office.

Previous studies have shown that women are given fewer of the hot jobs needed to advance and are less visible than their male counterparts.⁴³ In the new way of work, this will be exacerbated. Indeed, if women are more likely to take the flexible jobs, this will lead to a **proximity bias** favouring the men who will be more present in the office.



of women in a hybrid arrangement say they've been excluded from important meetings, and about half feel they don't have enough exposure to company leaders.⁴⁴

⁴² Coronavirus : le télétravail, bonne ou mauvaise nouvelle pour les femmes ? by Johanna Bouquet, RTBF.be (2020)

⁴³ Good Intentions, Imperfect Execution? Women Get Fewer of the “Hot Jobs” Needed to Advance, Catalyst report (2012)

⁴⁴ Hybrid work is just not working well for most women. Megan Leonhardt, Forbes (2022)

REMOTE WORKING: THE DIGITAL TRAP FOR WOMEN



Armelle Carminati-Rabasse

Chairman of the “Comité Entreprise Inclusive” of the MEDEF (National confederation of French employers)

Just as was the case with part-time work since the 1970s, the boom in remote working in the 2020s is proving to be a further catalyst for gender inequalities at work.

Indeed, it was by getting paid to work outside the home that women have historically been able to free themselves from the unpaid work at home. The recent return home of women to remote work - that they often choose themselves to ease the struggles of worklife balance - locks them in a “digital prison”, disconnected from decision-making circles, collective learning loops and the informal circulation of information, all absolutely critical for team performance and individual recognition by the company.

There is a triple penalty:

1. The gender distribution of domestic work worsens.
2. Women become invisible in times of promotion and decisions around career opportunities.
3. Creative and/or collective activities escape them as they are relegated to routine tasks compatible with remote working.

To avoid wasting decades of efforts to move the needle on gender balance, employers must be all the more vigilant in ensuring individual and collective reminders, to avoid the disappearance of key female talents lured by an attractive but penalizing new way of working, if used blindly without countering the consequent biases that result from it.

A Room of One's Own (Virginia Woolf)

In 1929, the feminist Virginia Woolf wrote this extended essay in which she highlights women's social inequalities: **"A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction"**.

Almost 100 years later, women are still less likely than men to recreate in the family home an office or personal place dedicated to work, and they are thus more often than their spouses interrupted by their children when they work from home.

Gender gaps are being reinforced through women's difficulties in combining work and family when working from home.

Recent studies have revealed how mothers remain more available and are more interrupted than fathers, even though the men do a little more housework than they used to.⁴⁵ **Indeed, women are 1.3 times less likely than men to have a home workspace and are thus interrupted 1.5 times more than men while working from home**, with an impact on productivity, promotions and mental health.⁴⁶ Parents of young children – and especially women – see the office as a way of escaping these constraints.

Women also continue to deal with non-inclusive behaviour at work, which takes a different form in the virtual workplace:

52% of women have experienced some form of **harassment or micro-aggression in the past year.**⁴⁷

These forms of harassment can range from the belief that their judgement is being questioned because they are women to

experiencing disparaging and/or sexual comments.

In the United Kingdom, a survey by a law firm specialising in employment law found that over 35% of women surveyed had been asked by their management to wear make-up or dress sexier during videoconferences, to win new contracts or be more pleasing for colleagues and customers. A quarter of those asked to make such dress and makeup efforts agreed to do so fearing negative impact on their careers if they did not. And 60% of these women did not report those requests for fear of professional repercussions.⁴⁸

The International Labor Organisation (ILO) flags this in its guide on remote working: **if part-time and occasional remote working can help reduce certain forms of harassment that involve personal contact, wide-spread remote working risks increasing acts of cyberviolence, cyberbullying and cyberstalking.**⁴⁹ Because remote workers are more isolated, situations of psychological or sexual harassment can be complex to detect and manage.

⁴⁸ Bosses tell women to be 'sexier' on video meetings. Slater Gordon (2020)

⁴⁹ Femmes et télétravail en période Covid-19 : quels enseignements tirer pour la mise en place d'un télétravail structurel ? FPS (2021)

⁴⁵ L'expansion du télétravail et son impact sur les femmes. Report by the Conseil des Femmes francophones de Belgique (2021)

⁴⁶ Crise de la COVID-19 : un retour en arrière pour la parité hommes-femmes au travail ? Report by BCG and IPSOS (2021)

⁴⁷ Women @ Work. Deloitte (2021)



Different experiences of hybrid working

It is important to remember that people will have different experiences of hybrid working, and what works for some does not work for others.

*A day in the life of the post-pandemic hybrid worker*⁵⁰

Jane is married with two teenage children, lives in a house with garden in the suburbs, has a full-time job as an innovation project manager for an energy company.

“ I’ve gained a lot thanks to this new way of working.

“ Because I don’t have to commute, I now also have time for the school run and **enjoy 15 mins with my kids catching up** in the car to school.

“ I even have **time to do yoga or walk the dog** before I get on a call with colleagues in Asia.

“ I work for a couple of hours. Thanks to everything going online, I have far more opportunities to **regularly interact with colleagues across the world**. It’s very enriching.

“ I go into office once a week. My boss gave **clear directives on which day we should all be there**, so the team meets up and **we work effectively together in person**. It’s nice to meet some colleagues face to face occasionally.

“ I have my **bi-weekly call with my team leader**. I used to not speak to my boss 1-1 that often but since Covid he’s made an effort. **This has helped me a lot in being recognised**. There is real positivity in all of this.

Juliet is married with two children of 8 and 10, lives in an apartment in the city, has a full-time job as a bank manager.

“ This post-pandemic way of working has really taken a **toll on my life and career**.

“ Before Covid it was easy to get the kids off to school. Now the **kids are stressed and difficult**. It’s tantrums every morning.

“ I work mostly from home now. **I envy my husband who gone back to office 3x a week**. It’s important for his job to be visible. **I’ve had to step back**. I need time to deal with the kids who’ve suffered through covid, with parents who are high risk for immune reasons, supporting my best friend who lost her mother.

“ There are **no clear guidelines of which days to go** to the office, so when I go, **it’s often empty**. I regret not having lunch with my colleagues anymore.

“ **I don’t feel noticed at work**, I feel left out being and disconnected from my colleagues.

“ **I haven’t had a career talk in years**, I don’t know where my job is heading. **Covid has been hard, I should really look for another job** but I just don’t have time.

⁵⁰ Hybrid Working, the new normal. Jo Aidroos, Partner EY, LEAD webinar (2022)

Reinforcing the generational divide

Aggravating the generational divide is another risk in the new way of working. First, younger staff often lack a quiet room to work and good Wi-Fi that older employees have. Many prefer the “equalising” nature of the office.

Another consideration is that for many Gen Z’s, their first real work experience is no longer a typical one. Before the pandemic, most of the onboarding was in-person. In the new world of work, they are starting off in a hybrid workplace where many days are worked from home, and this could hold them back.

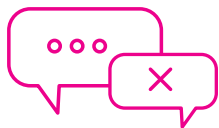
Younger employees worry about the impact of working remotely on their abilities to form relationships and communicate with their peers:



52% of workers aged 16-24 were concerned that working remotely would have a negative impact on their development and career progression, compared to the average of 43%.



53% of 18–24-year-olds worry that remote working has made them less confident in their ability to communicate and work with colleagues effectively, compared to the average of 42%.



50% of young workers fear they have lost the art of small talk, compared to the average of 39%.⁵¹

⁵¹ The evolution of the workplace: Europe & Middle East. Poly study (2021)

Managing the differences between blue and white collar workers

Elon Musk asked his all employees at Tesla to return to the office, indicating that **“anyone who wishes to do remote work must be in the office for a minimum (and I mean *minimum*) of 40 hours per week or depart Tesla. This is less than we ask of factory workers.”**

His approach was criticized for not accounting for the flexibility that many employees now want, but it highlights a growing issue.

The rise in remote working has been heavily skewed towards highly paid, white-collar jobs and a huge proportion of the global workforce doesn’t have the same luxury. Indeed, during the pandemic only one in five workers below the median of the 2019 income distribution were able to work entirely remotely, compared with half of workers in the top 10%.⁵²

While remote working has the potential to be positive for work-life balance, fostering a greater sense of autonomy, and increasing job satisfaction and well-being, this will be reserved for a select, highly-educated few. This could impact workplace cohesion and worsen long-established inequalities, with growing concerns of increased social divide.

⁵² The Good Work Framework: A new business agenda for the future of work. World Economic Forum (2022).

Collaboration and teamwork at risk

For organisations, hybrid working can lead to scattered communication channels and thus inequitable access to information, resources and opportunities. This undermines coordination, collaboration and efficiency, ultimately damaging the productivity of the organisation and its financial bottom line.



of leaders say remote work makes collaboration in meetings harder.⁵³

Remote work can put collective intelligence at risk. While it may increase individual productivity, this is not true for creative work in teams. Collective creativity can be organised through brainstorming on Zoom, but this is rarely as effective as the spontaneous conversations, sidebars, and unexpected things that can happen when we kick ideas around with others or work intensively on solving a problem together.

Managers now have to coordinate the complex workflow of people who cannot be counted on to be present at predictable times. All collaborative work requires coordination, but **the challenges of coordination increase with hybrid teams.** “Faultlines” can emerge between those who work together in person and those who work remotely. It takes extra effort to coordinate with those who are not in the office, and they get left out of small exchanges and minor decisions made by those who are working together in the office.

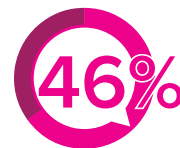
⁵³ Who won't shut up in meetings? Men say it's women. It's not. Adam Grant, Washington Post (2021)

Over time, this can mean they can get left out of bigger conversations and more important decisions.

Leaders and managers are struggling to balance flexibility and autonomy, and bringing people together for collaboration and effective teamwork, and the solutions to ensure the correct balance are not obvious.

Difficulties in training & development

Another risk in terms of inclusion is training and management. It can be significantly harder to **train people** if you cannot be with them, work alongside them or supervise their learning. This is particularly the case when on-boarding new employees. It impacts both retention and teamwork, as well as the feeling of belonging to the organisation.



of employees said they were worried that working remotely could impact their career development and progression,



while 54% said they were concerned they would miss out on ad hoc learning and development opportunities, including learning from peers and seniors, while working from home.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ The evolution of the workplace: Europe & Middle East. Poly study (2021)

Deterioration of company culture and reduced sense of belonging

Leaders have realised that working from home seriously impacts organisational culture and belonging. Without having everyone in the same space sharing rituals, chatting at the coffee machine or in the elevator, how to you maintain a strong company culture?

Studies by anthropologists and neurologists show that psychological safety is built in high-performing teams through little “signals” that confirm you are safe and belong to the group (social interactions and signs of recognition, such as fist bumps, laughter, active listening, and thanks), and that these physical interactions are essential to employees’ sense of connection and belonging.⁵⁵



of remote workers feel less connected to their organisation and 64% reported weaker bonds with colleagues.⁵⁶

Physical distance can lead to psychological distance. It is much easier to check in on colleagues when in the same office. Often, one glance is enough to tell if someone is having a bad day. Office exchanges with colleagues outside immediate working areas or departments have a positive effect on organisational dynamics and can impact performance. It is significantly **harder to create loyalty** in a team whose members do not have opportunities to bond and feel part of the bigger picture. This can impact both retention and teamwork.

⁵⁵ Télétravail: nouveau levier d'inclusion? Laetitia Vitaut, Welcome to the Jungle (2021)

⁵⁶ The complete guide to the future of the workplace. Qlearsite (2021)





Moving from a collective to an individual approach

This massive switch to more flexible work arrangements following the pandemic has not yet been supported by legislative framework. It has been left to the discretion of individual arrangements, and therefore carries the risk of lacking formal collective labour relations and collective bargaining mechanisms.

For example, as individuals work remotely, they have fewer opportunities to share with team-members, and they might not link certain difficulties or micro-aggressions experienced to those that other teams are experiencing and call them out collectively.

Issues relating to wellbeing and safety at work, labour inspectorates, need to be addressed to ensure that the collective responsibility of employers are not transferred onto individual workers.

Further challenges in public institutions

A study of remote working within the public organisations in the Brussels region⁵⁷ showed

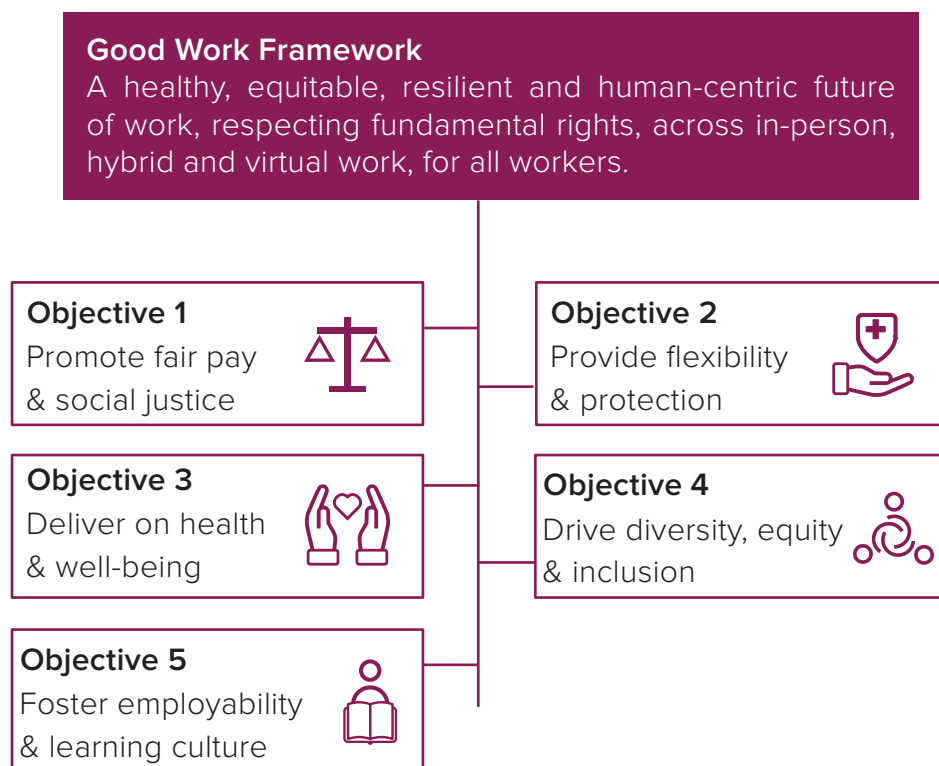
⁵⁷ Enquête relative au télétravail au sein des institutions de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale. Idea Consult pour talent.brussels (2020)

that remote working was already well implemented before the lockdown and that the pandemic reinforced this practice. They found that the organisation of work and management was favourable to remote working, with a certain amount of autonomy and trust that led to increased productivity. In line with our observations above, employees at these institutions struggled with finding a dedicated space to work (68% of them did not have one), experiencing a sense of disconnection and isolation, and deterioration in the quality of teamwork.

However, the return to work is proving more difficult. **There has been a later return to the workplace in the public organisations, while guidelines concerning behaviours to adopt and rules of attendance are not clear.** In many institutions, employees must be in the office for a certain number of hours, but the team leaders do not indicate specific times to be present — when staff go to the office, there is hardly anyone there from their department. Managers are less often trained in the new trends on leadership such as authentic leadership and emotional intelligence, and they are less agile at dealing with the complexities of the new flexible or hybrid workplace.

Diversity and inclusion at the heart of the new way of work

As employers and workers seek a “new normal” after the disruptions of the last few years, there is an opportunity to develop a new vision for the future of work, one that is ready for the new economy and society. **The World Economic Forum proposes a "Good Work Framework"**⁵⁸ to enhance job quality and address post-pandemic challenges **for companies**, with DEI as one of its core objectives:



⁵⁸ The Good Work Framework: A new business agenda for the future of work. World Economic Forum (2022).

IN SUMMARY

Inclusion is critical for success in this new way of working

"Diversity, equity & inclusion" is one of the core goals of the World Economic Forum's Good Work Framework in the new way of working. Indeed, if equity and inclusion are not integrated into policies and new work practices, there are considerable risks at play for women and under-represented groups, furthering existing inequalities as well as being exposed to new biases.

Business leaders cannot ignore this. If they do not move proactively to address inequalities in the workplace, they are likely to lose some of their best people. They may struggle to recruit younger talent who will choose employers that demonstrate a truly inclusive culture.

One of the key recommendations for an inclusive post-pandemic recovery is to raise awareness within organisations and companies on the consequences of remote working, notably on its gendered impact and the need for an inclusive approach.⁵⁹ More than ever, managers and HR practitioners will now need to be accompanied and trained in spotting blind spots and biases that result from this new form of work organisation.

⁵⁹ L'impact du COVID-19 sur les inégalités entre les femmes et les hommes à Bruxelles. Conseil Bruxellois de l'Egalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes (2021)

PART 3:

How to ensure inclusion in the new way of work

The future of work is flexibility

Since the pandemic, companies are looking at how to manage flexible work, building innovative strategies around flexible working, time management and where work takes place. While every organisation will face its own set of challenges, **leaders have a one-time opportunity today to use this context to rethink the way of working and people's relationship to work.** People's health and wellbeing was often secondary before the pandemic. It has now become central, and it needs to stay that way.



“The destination is clear: to humanize the future of work.”⁶⁰

Deloitte, 2021

If flexibility is now perceived as key for retaining talent and for ensuring wellbeing, what about inclusion? Learning how to make a flexible workplace work should not be

⁶⁰ From survive to thrive : the future of work in the post-pandemic world. Report by Deloitte (2021)

tackled on its own, but within the framework of creating a diverse and inclusive organisation – because **if you get it right, it can be a powerful tool for diversity, but if you get it wrong, it can be counterproductive for inclusion.**

Companies can take bolder steps to support remote and hybrid work. To ensure that these new ways of working work for everyone, you need a mindset shift, not just a tweak of old policies and practices.

The World Economic Forum recommends three key enablers for making good work a reality for all:

- 1 Human-centric leadership
- 2 Applying workforce technology thoughtfully
- 3 Improving reporting



What companies are currently doing to support hybrid and remote work

For companies that are transitioning to remote and hybrid work, it's critical to ensure that these new modes of working work for everyone.

Companies efforts are focused on ensuring support and information is provided to remote workers in the same way as office workers. People managers play a central role here, and many could benefit from additional training on how to foster remote and hybrid employees' career development and minimize flexibility stigma.

Companies need to invest further into measuring the outcomes to ensure a level playing field and training their managers and HR practioners to tackle the inequities that remote working can lead to.

% of companies that are putting the following practices in place



Source: Women in the Workplace 2022. Lean In & McKinsey

JUMP's framework for an inclusive future of work

Measure to ensure EQUITY

- Management by results
- Monitoring between remote and in-office workers of project allocation, promotions...
- 360° feedback

Reinforce the company CULTURE for more inclusion

- Psychological safety at work
- Hybrid or remote working but in person collaboration and social events

Rethink SYSTEMS for mass customisation of the employee experience

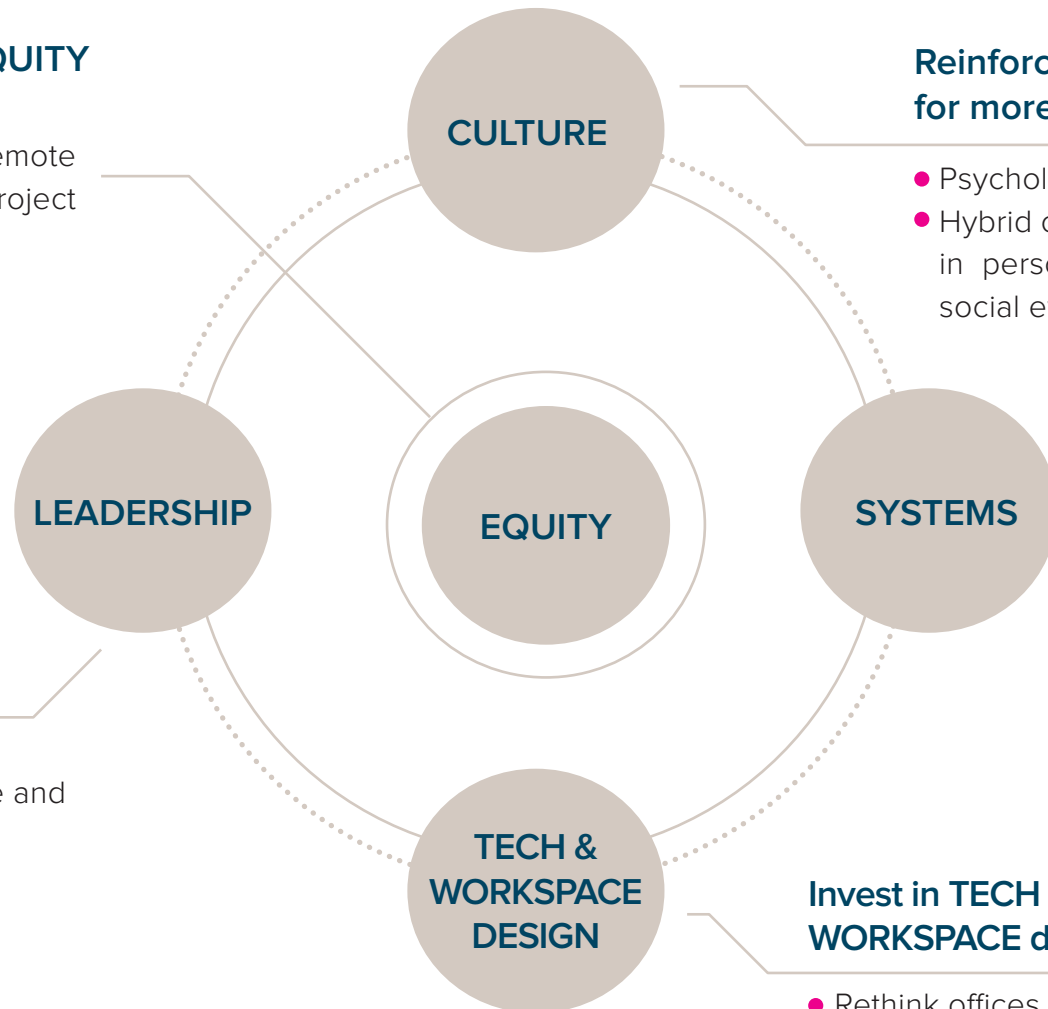
- Account for the different needs of different groups of people
- Implicate employees and managers in decision-making

Invest in TECH and inclusive WORKSPACE design

- Rethink offices / open spaces for hybrid working
- Adapt technology for all and provide support

Develop hybrid LEADERSHIP skills

- Virtual collaboration
- Emotional intelligence and empathy
- Online charisma



1 Measure to ensure equity

The focus should be on equity in order to achieve equality. It's not about treating everyone the same, it's ok to make exceptions. Customising the employee experience challenges traditional management and HR principles such as full-time employment, linear and hierarchical career progression, and "fairness as equal treatment" in total rewards and talent management. There is a shift towards mass career customisation.

Key to levelling the playing field is **a focus on outcomes rather than attendance.** This means a results-oriented approach with clear and easy-to-measure KPIs that quantify success. Managers need to be trained in this, to reduce the risk of proximity bias, with monitoring to ensure that progression stays fair and equitable.

Take a systemic approach to work allocation and map who gets access to senior leaders and the interesting opportunities. This is also essential and will uncover where inequities may be playing out. If the collaboration and assignments to the best projects happen only at the office, this can impact the motivation of remote workers.

Most importantly, organisations must work on ensuring **that the criteria used to assess career progress are equitable regardless of people's working patterns or locations.** "Once you have systems in place that are inclusive you can communicate this to your employees as part of reassurances that work/life balance is important and that employees have a right to ask for flexibility," says Sarah

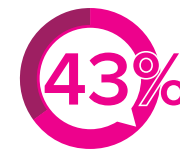
Jackson, an expert on flexible working.⁶¹ "Be open about the fact that it won't impact their careers, and that you have put infrastructure in place to ensure that it won't."

2 Develop hybrid leadership skills

Companies today need leaders who are people-oriented and **empathetic**, focusing on **communication, collaboration, and teamwork.** Those skills have been increasingly important in recent years, but following the pandemic and its economic disruption for organisations worldwide, these skills have become business critical.

Train the leaders and managers in the soft skills.

With today's workforce going hybrid, new management skills are required to manage them. It's no longer just about achieving business results, it's also about how you achieve them and how you engage your hybrid team to do so.



The probability for an employee to have a burnout linked to work is reduced by 26% if they have access to remote working. It is reduced by 43% when you add manager empathy.⁶²

⁶¹ How can we ensure flexible working is inclusive of all genders? Sarah Jackson (2021)

⁶² Remote-work options can boost productivity and curb burnout. Tara Van Bommel, Catalyst (2021).

Teach managers how to promote healthy conversations and healthy conflict in a hybrid world. Collaboration is not about agreeing, it's about being able to challenge. But it's more difficult to challenge online. We have been pushed to invest in hybrid, but how do we build collaboration into the virtual world?

Leaders will need to develop virtual charisma.

The ability to empathise and to build and manage relationships is hard enough in the real world, but in the virtual world, it's a lot harder. Hidden behind screens on Zoom or Teams, we can't read body language as easily or tell when someone is disengaged or is distracted. We do not connect in the same way, and it is harder to show someone that we are actively listening.⁶³

Virtual charisma means clear and simple messages, high levels of energy – a skillset closer to that of TV personalities who learn how to engage a TV or cinema audience. Early indicators in research suggest **up to three times more energy will be needed to keep team members engaged in the hybrid world.**⁶³ **This unfortunately favours extroverts and is harder for introverts and neurodiverse.**

⁶³ How leaders can overcome the challenges of online meetings. Sankalp Chaturvedi, People Management (2022)

The 5 skills of hybrid leaders



- 1. Digital Leadership.** Remote leadership and online collaboration.
- 2. Communication.** Positivism and expectation management.
- 3. Inspirational leadership.** Coaching and talent development
- 4. Team Building.** Engagement, Company Culture & Inclusion
- 5. Empathy.** Stress management and burn-out prevention.

Download the report: <https://www.goodhabit.com/en-gb/inspiration/downloads/hybrid-leadership-research-report/>



3 Reinforce the company culture for more inclusion

A new approach to culture will be required in the hybrid world. Leaders will need to think how best to protect long-term relationships with all their employees, motivating and supporting without the intangible benefits of physical proximity: the chats at the coffee machine, the ad'hoc catch-ups in the corridor, the social drink after work...

Psychological safety will be an important part of culture in the hybrid environment to ensure a speak-up culture and to build inclusion in the workplace. Unfortunately, remote and hybrid working makes psychological safety anything but straightforward.⁶⁴



“Psychological safety is the belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.”⁶⁵

Amy Edmondson (Harvard Business School)

Psychological safety is all about building trust and empathy within your relationships. Transparency is key to this, as is a certain amount of benevolence. Managers can cultivate this by setting the example themselves, and encourage everyone on the team to maintain transparency, kindness, and support as they continue to pave the best path forward, together.

⁶⁴ The fearless organisation. Amy C Edmondson (2019)

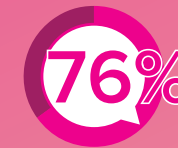
⁶⁵ What Psychological Safety Looks Like in a Hybrid Workplace. Amy C. Edmondson and Mark Mortensen, Harvard Business Review (2021)

WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY?

Psychological safety means an absence of interpersonal fear. When psychological safety is present, people are able to speak up with work-relevant content.



Amy Edmondson from Harvard developed this concept in her book “The fearless organisation” (2019), when exploring its relationship to team learning and performance. **Psychological safety is the belief that one can speak up without risk of punishment or humiliation** — and it has been well established as an important driver of high-quality decision making, healthy group dynamics and interpersonal relationships, innovation, and effective execution in organisations.



Psychological safety leads to 76% more employee engagement.

It's critical for individual wellbeing - 89% of employees believe psychological safety is essential - and it's crucial for the performance of teams. Google's study of 180+ teams showed that those that performed the most effectively were those where team members feel safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other. Psychological safety was the most important dynamic for team effectiveness, it increases employee retention, it allowed them to harness the power of diverse ideas and develop innovation and bring in more revenue.

Check out Google's re:Work guide for the full story on their team effectiveness research as well as their **toolkit** to help teams foster psychological safety.

Download here: <https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/understanding-team-effectiveness/steps/introduction/>

4 Rethink systems & processes for mass-customization of the employee experience

Adopt a flexible approach, rather than a fixed hybrid approach.

This means redesigning the workplace and workday for broad flexibility around when, where, and how work gets done, rather than adopt a top-down, one-size fits all approach. Borrowed from known marketing techniques of “customer-centricity”, HR are now focusing on the employee experience or “employee value proposition”.



“HR is out, long live HX ! Today it is HX – Human Experience – that counts. To achieve this, we need to reinvent leadership. A leadership that is conscious, value-oriented, transparent, trusting and that takes into account the wellbeing of each individual, their motivations, their talents. This is how companies develop collective energy.”

Karine Becker, founder of Hire & Higher

Involve teams in the hybrid work choices and listen to your employees. We are still in the process of experimenting with the new way of working, as with all experiments, we will get things right and wrong. Having a speak-up culture will allow people to share more openly how they are feeling, what is functioning well and what is not, helping us make the required adjustments.

Take into account the needs of different groups of people, so that policies and practices do not adversely impact a specific group. Some disabled people may need specific software so they too can

easily work from home. Parents who work from home with young children may prefer to work non-standard work hours. Younger generations may be sharing flats and prefer to work from the office.

5 Invest in tech and inclusive workspace design

With hybrid work in mind, companies need to rethink their office space and tech equipment to enable employees to connect and collaborate effectively from anywhere – be it at the office or at home.

Office space can be designed to be inclusive, so that when people are in the office, it works for all. Open-plan offices have been the trend, reducing hierarchy and increasing social engagement, but they are less adapted to frequent online meetings from office desks, or to an aging workforce or neurodivergent people who may prefer more isolation. Surveys suggest **noise will be a particular hot button for workers returning to the office**, with the potential to cause friction between workers:




expressed concern that noise levels in the office will make them less productive, and 42% worried they will be prone to “noise rage” if their colleagues are too loud.⁶⁶

Create enough dedicated quiet spaces (booths, cubicles, more rooms, spacing out desks). This is essential since workers will continue to join online meetings when at the office. Organisations may

⁶⁶ The evolution of the workplace: Europe & Middle East. Poly study (2021)

want to invest best in noise cancelling products, to reduce distractions, improve productivity and ensure equality of experience. Redesign your office with new employee expectations in mind.

 *“People don’t want to commute into an office just to sit at a desk all day — that’s what they’ll use their time at home for. The hybrid office should be much more focused on creating those serendipitous “water cooler” moments that drive connections and a true sense of culture.”*⁶⁷

Dan Schawbel (Workplace Intelligence)

With flexible working comes an **investment in tech** that must not be ignored if this new way of working is to be fully inclusive. There is an important inequity between those who are well equipped to work from home (dedicated workspace, good equipment, desk and office chair, headset, strong internet bandwidth...) and those who are not – usually because they cannot afford it. Companies will need to level the playing field by providing their employees with the correct tools to work from home - although this will not resolve the issue of dedicated workspace.

Technology in offices must also be adapted: invest in tech that facilitates better communication, from video software to chat tools to knowledge sharing to video conferencing.

When investing in tech, do not forget **technological support** – it’s not always intuitive for everyone to adapt to new tools used, especially

in the case of older generations. Some people will be more at ease navigating the new way of work, adapting to new technology, maintaining networks, ensuring visibility, finding new opportunities. It is important to ensure upskilling of all employees in these newly required competencies of the hybrid world.

Designing inclusive workspaces starts with an engagement process to understand people’s experiences and how they might evolve. Start with a consultation process before committing to long-term physical or policy changes.

IN SUMMARY

Managing the new way of working for inclusion is going to be complex. It’s going to be the management of paradoxes, such as the paradox of wanting the flexibility to work from home and wanting the benefits of the office, or the paradox of putting in place policies and adapting to the individuals.

Inclusive flexible workplaces must be built to ensure equal access to opportunity for those in hybrid and remote conditions as those in the office, and must address individual work life needs. Change may be slower in some areas (e.g. home office spaces). It is thus critical to listen, consider different needs and build change in collaboration with employees rather than imposing it on them.

⁶⁷ 8 Dos and Don’ts for Hybrid Working. Dan Schawbel (2022)

The pandemic hit Accenture in a context that was not new to them, as they already had been working with flexible habits for many years, such as working in a site agnostic way and using digital collaboration tools. This gave them a good basis to evolve their I&D strategy in Covid times and for the new Future of work. To reshape their action plan and keep this omni-connection, they considered Accenture values, reviewed their past and existing people initiatives and talked to their employees, one-to-one and via surveys.

Redesigning the D&I framework: “Many faces of us”

“We embrace”: Recognizing, respecting, and accepting everyone

During the pandemic, the already existing networks (eg. Pride, Parenthood, Cross-Cultural, Gender Equity..) needed to reshape from an in-person set-up to a virtual one. They set up regular Parenthood virtual coffees to support parents who were especially challenged. In addition, a Digital Inclusion Charter was developed, and the Inclusive Panels Charter signed by leaders. This continued after the pandemic with the hybrid working model ensuring an omni connected experience.

“We learn”: Leaders are learners

Accenture revisited its Team Leader Circle, to better equip leaders in emotional intelligent behavior and in role modeling time management. They also supported their clients with free info sessions on remote work (on resilience, collaboration, etc.).

“We empower”: Make everyone feel able to speak up, take care of themselves and each other, and shape their career path

Accenture started a campaign on psychological safety, with workshops on personal resilience, and trained colleagues to become Mental Health ambassadors, an initiative that continues post pandemic. Listening to all levels in the organization received even higher priority, so multiple surveys

were conducted and through “BeLoud”, a platform from youngsters in Accenture, improvement suggestions were given bottom-up.

“We act”: Acting with purpose

Working towards a sustainable and fair future, for ourselves and generations to come, was key to giving Accenture employees a sense of purpose also during the pandemic. Accenture continued to support nonprofit organizations with pro-bono projects or specific project funding, and even used the strong Alumni network to enable an ex-colleague to support the supply chain for all European Hospitals in Brussels.

Communication

They adopted a dedicated communication strategy with monthly all-employee calls, to inform of the biggest changes and ensure continuous connection. Company magazines were sent to homes, showing the “Many Faces of Us” strategy through personal stories from colleagues. Connection was maintained in a safe way thanks to their own radio show, with colleagues sharing songs, advertisements and personal music.

Going forward in the future of work

In addition to remote working, Accenture continuously invests in its employees, with more flexibility and benefits when it matters. They just launched 16 weeks of birth leave for the gestational parent and 8 weeks for the non-gestational parent, with close to full pay for the whole period.

YOUR CHECKLIST: How to ensure inclusion in the new way of work

TIPS FOR MANAGERS



- ❑ Be aware that remote working impacts people differently according to their personality-type
- ❑ Create psychological safety with your hybrid teams
- ❑ Manage hybrid meetings for more inclusion
- ❑ Stimulate collaboration & innovation inclusively in a hybrid world
- ❑ Manage teams inclusively across flexible work schedules
- ❑ Foster team-bonding to ensure inclusive company culture in the hybrid world

GUIDELINES FOR HR & DEI practitioners



- ❑ Don't adopt a "one-size fits all" approach to flexible working
- ❑ Support and train managers in inclusive hybrid team management
- ❑ Educate managers to mitigate biases linked to flexible work models
- ❑ Rethink Learning & Development especially for newcomers
- ❑ Adapt your support programmes like employee networks or mentoring programmes
- ❑ Consider setting up a working-from-home (WFH) charter




TIPS FOR MANAGERS

How to ensure inclusion in the new way of work

As with any change in the workplace, managers face a significant learning curve associated with hybrid working and the model continues to evolve and improve. As you develop your company's hybrid work practices, be aware of the inequities hybrid work can create or make worse and be intentional about levelling the playing field between those who are remote and those who are in the office.





Be aware that remote working impacts people differently according to their personality-type


 People react differently to remote working, according to their personality types and working style preferences. Some people love working from home. This is most likely if they are introverts, or a naturally task-focussed person. Such people will thrive on uninterrupted quiet time to focus on work and time to dive into the details. Be careful though not to let a task focussed person become so focused on the task that they lose sight of the big picture! Make sure introverts do not over-isolate themselves and use working from home to avoid interacting with the team.


Extraverts however get their energy and ideas around other. These people often find remote working de-energising, lonely and isolating. It can also stall their creativity. To keep them engaged, encourage people-focussed employees to find opportunities to regularly interact with colleagues and customers.

Create psychological safety with your hybrid teams

 **Provide trust and autonomy that the work will get done.** This is the starting point of hybrid work, managing by results and outcome.

 **Get to know your team and encourage discussions.** Leadership is no longer about having the right answer or solution for everything. Be transparent by sharing your own difficulties about hybrid working. Actively organise open discussions and constructive feedback with and between your team members, as informal exchanges are more difficult in hybrid working.

 **Ensure your employees can safely raise work-life issues.** In the past, managers could keep “non-work” issues off the table. As boundaries between work and personal life are blurred, managers have to be open to support their team as a whole person and not just on their working identity.

 **Train your teams in “growth mindset”.** Encourage teamwide development, where mistakes are an opportunity to learn and identify what can be improved. A culture that encourages employees to learn with and from one another will be key for inclusion in the new way of work.

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

How to create psychological safety in the hybrid workplace⁶⁸



Amy Edmondson

Author of "The Fearless Organisation", Professor at Harvard Business School

Simply saying “just trust me” won’t work. Instead, she suggests a series of five steps to create a culture of psychological safety that extends beyond the work content to include broader aspects of employees’ experiences:

1. Set the scene. The first - very simple - step is having a discussion with your team to help them recognise not only their challenges, but yours as well. The objective of this discussion is to share ownership of the problem.

2. Lead the way. Expose your own vulnerability by sharing your own working from home or hybrid work personal challenges and constraints. Remember, managers have to go first in taking these kinds of risks. Be vulnerable and humble about not having a clear plan and be open about how you’re thinking about managing your own challenges.

3. Take baby steps. Don’t expect your employees to share their most personal and risky challenges right away. Start by making small disclosures yourself, and then make sure to welcome others’ disclosures to help your employees build confidence that sharing is not penalised.

4. Share positive examples. Don’t assume that your employees will immediately have

access to all the information you have supporting the benefits of sharing these challenges and needs. Put your marketing hat on and market psychological safety by sharing your conviction that increased transparency is happening and is helping the team design new arrangements that serve both individual needs and organisational goals.

5. Be a watchdog. Most people recognise that psychological safety takes time to build, but moments to destroy. As a team leader, you need to be vigilant and push back when you notice employees make innocent comments like “We want to see more of you”, or “We could really use you,” which may leave employees feeling they’re letting their teammates down. This is a really hard thing to do and requires skill. The idea isn’t to become thought police or punish those who genuinely do miss their remote colleagues or need their help, but rather to help employees frame these remarks in a more positive and understanding way.



⁶⁸ What Psychological Safety Looks Like in a Hybrid Workplace. Amy C. Edmondson and Mark Mortensen, Harvard Business Review (2021)

Manage hybrid meetings for more inclusion

✔ **Alternate virtual meetings with face-to-face meetings when possible,** so that people who do not have a workspace of their own can join a professional meeting space, or remote workers do not always feel excluded. Decide which meetings would benefit from physical interaction, and hold these in the office if those working from home can join. When some are remote, consider making meetings virtual for all. Indeed, when half the team members are together in a meeting room, those working remotely will be less included by default.

✔ **Agree with your team a code of conduct for remote meetings.** This can cover dress code, eating, smoking, whether to allow a blurred background or not, deciding when cameras are on or off, checking the chat for inappropriate comments, and setting up grievance process.

✔ **Use moderation to promote equitable speaking and implement a no-interruption rule.** Make sure everyone is heard, especially in meetings, and allow time for those

who are remote to contribute. Over the course of several meetings, **keep track** of whose ideas are acknowledged, built upon, or adopted vs whose ideas are ignored or appropriated. Do you see any patterns?

✔ **Ensure communication is explicit.** When we cannot see each other physically or read body language, nuances and implicit reactions will be lost. You might miss essential information, misinterpret a reaction or feel misunderstood. There is little place for second degree or irony in hybrid meetings. Explicit communication is often used to avoid misunderstandings when there are cultural differences, and it can come in useful in this context too – it might feel “clunky”, but it is the most inclusive approach to ensure everyone has the same level of understanding.

✔ **Check-in or check-out for inclusion.** Plan 5 minutes at the beginning or end to ask whether your team feels connected, and what could help. Make time for small talk.

✔ **Limit meetings in number and time.** Meetings are not always the best option; if they are, make sure they are well structured to ensure they don't become a waste of everyone's time. Make calls 5-10 minutes shorter so people can get a breather in between. This is even more important in the hybrid world where attention is dissipates quickly on-screen and zoom fatigue sets in quickly.

TIP : HOW GOOGLE MADE ITS HYBRID MEETINGS MORE INCLUSIVE



How do you ensure remote workers have as much importance in hybrid meetings as in-office workers, and are not just a checkerboard of faces on a distant screen? Google imagined meeting rooms where every person has his or her place at the table, whether in person or remote.

<https://blog.google/inside-google/life-at-google/hybrid-approach-work/>

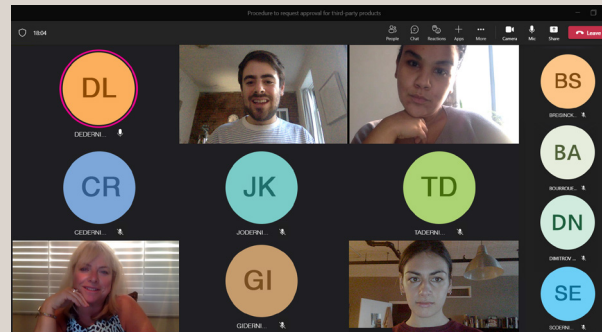
Debate – What is more inclusive : camera on or camera off?

As employees spend more time in virtual meetings, managers are debating whether employees should keep their cameras on. Surveys make some executives' feelings very clear: **92% don't see a long-term future for employees who turn their cameras off, and 93% feel those employees are less engaged in their work.**⁶⁹

When people aren't seeing each other in person, virtual meetings give them a way to still have face-to-face interactions. When cameras are on, participants can better observe body language and other expressions. Human interaction is more effective in business – would you not choose a live meeting rather than a phone call if you want to have impact?

Have cameras on is a way of showing a minimum of respect to the facilitator or trainer. It is very difficult to speak to a black wall without engagement or cues from body language to gauge interest or disengagement. If you cannot have it on all the time, at least turn it on at start/end of meeting when checking in, when you speak up, and when you are asked to do so

by the meeting organiser. If you have your camera off, show your presence by providing your full name (and function or company), by responding in the chat, or with emoticons.



Having cameras on can highlight inequities in people's lives – showing up their personal living spaces, distractions in the background. Being able to turn their camera off allows all of these people to join without feeling self-conscious about their home lives or anxious that they'll be penalised for having to multitask. This would suggest that allowing people to have their cameras off is more inclusive.

Research also shows that keeping video on all day actually increases so-called “Zoom fatigue”

and reduces employee engagement.⁷⁰

However, If some have their cameras on and others don't, bias come into play again: those who don't become 'invisible' and often won't be remembered as having been in the meeting. Even when they speak up, later their ideas are likely be attributed to other participants who were seen on screen.

Managers need to be aware of this debate, and decide when it is important in terms of inclusion for all cameras to be on and when it isn't. If the meeting is camera-on, let your team know in advance so they can mentally and physically prepare for it. And at the end of the day, It's up to the meeting host or facilitator to make sure everyone is included in a video meeting — regardless of whether they have their cameras on or off.

⁷⁰ Research: Cameras On or Off? Allison S. Gabriel, Daron Robertson, and Kristen Shockley, Harvard Business Review (2021)

⁶⁹ Should Employees Be Required to Turn On Cameras During Virtual Meetings? Kylie Ora Lobell, SHRM (2022)

Stimulate collaboration & innovation inclusively in a hybrid world



Rethink collaboration in a structural way to stimulate innovation while remaining inclusive. Fear of losing their innovative edge may push some leaders to reject hybrid work arrangements, but this can be countered by intentional actions.

McKinsey identifies three ways to help achieve inclusive teamwork in hybrid workplaces⁷¹ :

- encouraging employees to know one another and how they get work done
- creating buddy systems
- coaching employees through effective conflict management

The switch from office-based to virtual work changes team communication patterns, and there is a risk of silo effects or isolation with remote work, which could certainly dampen innovation. Some organisations are creating office hubs where people come together less frequently, but when there is a need to innovate, for example product innovation, brainstorming or training.

⁷¹ Hybrid work: Making it fit with your diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy. McKinsey (2022)

Others are testing **asynchronous virtual brainstorming**, using tech tools for virtual idea generation, challenge and revision. Asynchronous brainstorming begins by providing team members the topics to think about on their own. Each team member then submits their ideas anonymously. All ideas are then circulated among the whole team, with further rounds of iteration proceeding as desired. Finally, the team comes together, virtually or in person, to review the final set of ideas.

Psychological safety in the hybrid world is all the more important for innovation. Trust and inclusion breeds creativity and is the catalyst to make things happen. It encourages people to be honest, express their ideas freely, and take chances.

To build psychological safety and deep connections in teams, leaders must embed team-building activities and norms in the ways of working.

Manage teams inclusively across flexible work schedules



Embrace schedule flexibility with asynchronous working. With the emergence of “anytime working”, employees prefer the freedom to set days of the week when they need to come into work, and the time of day when they work. They will be more efficient if allowed to do so.


Ensure that teams get together on the same days to promote effective collaboration and avoid scattered teams. Do this in a way that suits the majority but also accounts for specific needs (e.g. avoid Wednesdays in France or Belgium when children have no school in the afternoons).




Proactively ask about all team members’ personal priorities or commitments that are important to honour as the team plans its work stream and deliverables; seek to respect those requests.⁷² Be organised, plan holidays, have clear agendas, set “own time” in your own calendar for focused individual work and help people in the team to do so.


⁷² Be Inclusive Every Day. Catalyst (2016).

If you plan on sending emails to colleagues at off-hours, add a line to your signature that lets people know you are working at that time because it is most convenient for you, but it does not mean you expect people to respond when they otherwise would not be working.⁷³

 **Agree deadlines and checkpoints.** Being inclusive means accounting for differences but also making it work for everyone. Some rules are required to manage asynchronous work schedules. You need to work out what has to happen in or out-of-office, for example decide on some set days for team meetings, or agree what “Close of Business” (COB) means when talking of deadlines to review shared projects.

Track outcomes between remote/hybrid employees and those at the office


 **Put safeguards in place** to make sure employees who take advantage of remote and hybrid work options aren’t disadvantaged in performance reviews or suffering from flexibility stigma or distance bias. It is important to evaluate employees based on measurable results—not when or where they work.


 **Closely track performance ratings and promotions for remote, hybrid, and on-site employees;** compare them and check for discrepancies. If there any, there may be bias at play, and you will need to review your training, career development, and evaluation practices to make sure remote and hybrid employees are not being unfairly penalised.


⁷³ Be Inclusive Every Day. Catalyst (2016).


⁷⁴ Three inclusive team norms that drive success. Catalyst (2022)

Foster team-bonding to ensure inclusive company culture in the hybrid world

 **Foster a team coaching experience.** Have regular virtual team check-in where socialising is the primary goal and intentionally a lot time for team-building. Take a remote-first approach to coaching so all team members benefit in the same way regardless of location.⁷⁴

 **Keep employees engaged** with a mix of "air game" (think top down, company-wide email blasts) and "ground game" (think one-on-one or one-to-few interactions). To build a successful hybrid work culture, managers will need support and training to double down on the ground game.

 **Organise regular events at the office or retreats.** To compensate for lack of social interaction and continue to ensure that employees stay connected, organisations are developing more social experiences: contact days, live social engagement, ‘away days’, organisation-wide meetings, awards ceremonies, and other occasional mass gatherings. This informal team building and networking stimulates collaboration and team productivity and contributes to developing a shared experience of the company culture.

 **Encourage different types of connexions to compensate for informal office networking.** Adopt a buddy system to ensure on-boarding of new-comers. Adapt the mentoring programme to the hybrid workplace. Encourage informal meetings such as walking-meetings or virtual coffees. Establish communication preferences that account for different profiles (introverts, extroverts, neurodiverse, etc).

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

How to manage parenthood in the hybrid workplace



Natalie Wilkins

Co-CEO of Thriving Talent, experts in holistic solutions to foster inclusive workplaces, enable caring & career and accelerate gender equality

Since the pandemic, parents are no longer expected to work as though they weren't a parent, nor to parent as though they didn't have to work. Most current hybrid work models however have been formed reactively during a crisis. Evolving these models with policies and practices to be more responsive and inclusive to the needs of working parents requires an intentional shift.

Hybrid working focuses primarily on "where" the work is being done. To be more inclusive, the hybrid working model should also consider the preferences of people on "when you work" and "how you work" - allowing flexibility to best suit needs and drive productivity.

When shaping policies, organisations must consider the benefits and risks for working parents:

Benefits of flexible working for parents

- Flexibility rather than forced presenteeism allows parents to manage their work more effectively, with a big impact on performance and engagement.
- More time with family and home demands with less guilt or fear of reprisal.
- A more active role for fathers to participate in activities with their children.

Risks of flexible work for parents

- Flexibility stigma and distance bias: A negative impact on perception and career progression of parents when not in the office.
- Difficulty setting boundaries between work and home demands. Women especially have seen the burden of the “double shift” growing because of remote work: mothers are twice as likely than fathers to spend five or more hours a day on chores when remote working.
- One in three mothers may downshift their career or leave the workforce altogether – higher risk for single mothers and women of colour.

What managers can do

- ✔ Measure achievement on clear goals and objectives, not time in office.
- ✔ Ensure inclusive and flexible working is equally available to all employees regardless of parental status to avoid creating a hierarchy of needs.
- ✔ Revisit and agree upon at least quarterly the preferred dates, locations and working styles of all team members.
- ✔ Educate themselves on being an ally for parents and mothers.
- ✔ Role model hybrid policies in action - especially senior level executive parents.
- ✔ Address the extra burden of remote working on mothers with intersectional approaches, such as flexible caregiver leave, and mental well-being support.

What HR practioners can do

- ✔ Create tailored inclusive policies based on trust, not line of sight management.
- ✔ Create training and resources for managers on how to support and encourage parental and caregiving leave at various life stages.
- ✔ Support ERGs for parents and offer coaching for parents.
- ✔ Actively promote paternity leave as well as maternity leave, to ensure that flexible working is not only adopted by women, with the risk of perpetuating inequalities at home as well as at work.



GUIDELINES FOR HR & DEI PROFESSIONALS

Support and train employees in inclusive hybrid team work practices

The pandemic offers a unique opportunity to progress on diversity & inclusion and gender equity by deliberately reworking policies and practices to nudge in new inclusive practices in the new way of working — ones that are designed for men and women, ones that account for parenthood, ones that ensure all under-represented groups are included.



Don't adopt a "one-size fits all" approach to flexible working



Even more in the new way of working, HR management must be adapted to the individuals, and an approach of "mass career customisation" will be required.

Claire McCartney, senior policy adviser for resourcing and inclusion at the CIPD, advises: "We shouldn't assume that because people are working from home they have flexibility." She advocates **empowering teams to decide rotas between them**, if this works in terms of roles and tasks. "Rather than imposing arrangements centrally, this builds trust and people are more committed to making it work".

Support and train managers in inclusive hybrid team management



As we have seen, people's social and emotional needs are no longer being met in today's new way of working. Managers are in the best position to tackle this problem because of the personal relationships they have with each member of their team. But they themselves need more support.

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

Develop your approach using single mums' experience as a baseline⁷⁵



Laetitia Vitaud

Author and speaker on the future of work

Design specialists use the principle of designing a product or experience to meet the needs of the most complicated target group. That way, the design that works for them will work for all.

Similarly, to build an inclusive approach to your hybrid workplace, Laetitia recommends organising work practices that work for single mums. Single mums struggle permanently to balance work and family demands and are usually the first to pay the price when work pressure and constraints steps up.

Planning collective work time, when to come into the office, parental leave according to the needs of a single mum will help ensure a more inclusive hybrid workplace. **"A company that would take them as the "default" target of any work practices would be more virtuous for everyone."**

⁷⁵ Quand les mères solos rendent votre entreprise plus innovante. Laetitia Vitaud, Welcome to the Jungle (2022)

Company leaders and HR teams can support managers with specialised onboarding, training, metrics, and ready-to-use FAQs and playbooks. Once managers have the support they need, they can take steps to foster emotional connection, team bonding, and fun to compensate for the loss or reduction in office interactions.⁷⁶

Educate managers to mitigate biases linked to flexible work models

HR's role is to educate managers and leaders about these biases. Awareness is half the battle. When you become aware of it, you can act more intentionally.



Be aware of the flexibility stigma.

Tackle the myth that part time cannot work at senior levels by showcasing senior people who work less or flexibly. Encourage men to openly prioritise their own commitments to partners and children. This can be done when working remotely by announcing in the chat that you're logging off to take your child to the doctor or pick up the children from school. Normalising leaving work to meet family obligations means that others – especially

mothers – will not be perceived in a negative light when they do the same, or feel they need to cover up such activities.



Help managers better manage proximity bias.

Make sure "out of sight" is not "out of mind". Encourage managers to reach out to their teams and to schedule more frequent, informal check-ins and open conversations, instead of formal annual reviews. They should also be asked to gather feedback to understand the challenges they face. This might not be natural to all managers and may require training in emotional intelligence and inclusive management.⁷⁷

Rethink Learning & Development especially for newcomers



Learning & Development (L&D) must be part of the rethink to create the right kinds of socialised learning opportunities and the right kinds of hybrid learning, to ensure both remote workers and office workers are included in the same way. A 'one-size fits all' approach is no longer viable in this area too, and it will be important to move beyond content

and provide more complex, personalised learning paths.

L&D programmes must be far more agile and require more digital technologies to enable employees to top up their skills on a regular basis and learn around their busy schedules, whether in the office or at home. To accommodate this and to maximise engagement, content and training should be presented in a variety of formats, including classroom-based sessions, interactive webinars, e-learning and videos.



On-boarding of newcomers

must be inclusive too, and here too companies can provide a mix of formats adapted to all profiles – whether working from home or at the office. This could include for example a catalog of short videos or e-learning followed by a session that brings new employees together to ask questions.

The balance of online and in-person training for new graduate recruits is all the more critical, and should include elements around culture and workplace norms that they would usually learn in the office, by sharing or emulating more experienced colleagues.

⁷⁶ Preventing Proximity Bias in a Hybrid Workplace. Arlene Hirsch, SHRM (2022)

⁷⁷ Keeping Hybrid Employees Engaged. C. Shih, Harvard Business Review (2022)

Buddy programmes are a good way of tackling this, with some companies even exploring 'work-buddies' for on-the-job learning and 'culture buddies' for helping you navigate the organisational norms.

Adapt your support programmes like employee networks or mentoring programmes



Employee networks are voluntary groups of employees that come together based on shared characteristics, such as under-represented groups based on ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, working parents, disability, etc. They are usually a valuable forum for sharing ideas, networking and providing peer support – but how do they work when some employees are at the office and others are not? You need to rethink how they are promoted towards employees and what type of events or support they will provide.



Mentoring programme too are all the more important for inclusion in a hybrid workplace. Strong mentorship has two important outcomes: it builds team connection

and reinforces clarity of purpose, positively impacting employee retention – and this is critical when remote employees are more likely to disconnect than those in the office.

While building relationships is trickier in a hybrid workplace, it's not impossible. Build your mentoring programme with clear frameworks for virtual meetings, conversation starters, guidelines for engagement of both parties. Be more intentional in your programme promotion efforts – minorities may be more invisible in the remote workplace and you will need to go and recruit them more actively, both as mentors and as mentees.

Encourage at the start of the relationship an in-person meeting to build a strong connection between mentees and mentors. While communication online is important, having face time with mentees is a great way to get to know them on a more personal level, understand their goals and determine what they want to get out of the relationship. In addition, it's essential to open up casual methods of communication critical for the relationship afterwards.

Consider setting up a working-from-home (WFH) charter



A WFH charter is the first step to formalising a clear and precise professional framework that applies to everyone. It is a form of collective agreement that provides guidelines for employees, managers and the employer in the case of hybrid working. All that contributes to transparency will help promote inclusive practices and avoid misunderstandings and possible discrimination.

One of the major success factors behind a remote working charter is **co-construction**. Survey your employees and listen to their needs, include the trade unions and social and economic committees.

This will ensure they are on board and improves their sense of belonging at the company. Integrate their feedback, and ensure once it is published it is **well communicated** towards all. Remember we are still in the learning stages of what works and what doesn't in the new way of work, so **review** your charter regularly to update it.

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

The Great Break-Up - How to retain your female talent⁷⁸



Dorothy Dalton

Talent strategist and Founder
3Plus International

It's not just front line workers doing career pivots out of low paid jobs. It's across all

levels. Most people, but especially women, are looking for flexibility and autonomy, remote work, recognition and a real commitment to DEI.

Working with women this year in international organisations, the message is consistent.

They feel like the cheese in the pandemic sandwich pushed from above and below. They have focused on taking care of their teams, and yet feel their own bosses (frequently male) are not looking after them.



*"There will be an exodus of leaders – and women will be the first out the door."*⁷⁹

Companies need to make serious investments in D&I and tackle biases, or we are in danger of losing decades of progress towards women's equality. The time to act is now.

If you don't want your female talent to leave, it's important to do the following:

❑ **Build a workplace culture based on dignity, respect and belonging** supported by a zero-tolerance policy towards inappropriate behaviour.

❑ **Carry out stay interviews** - what makes them stay? Then do more of that. It's great for employer branding.

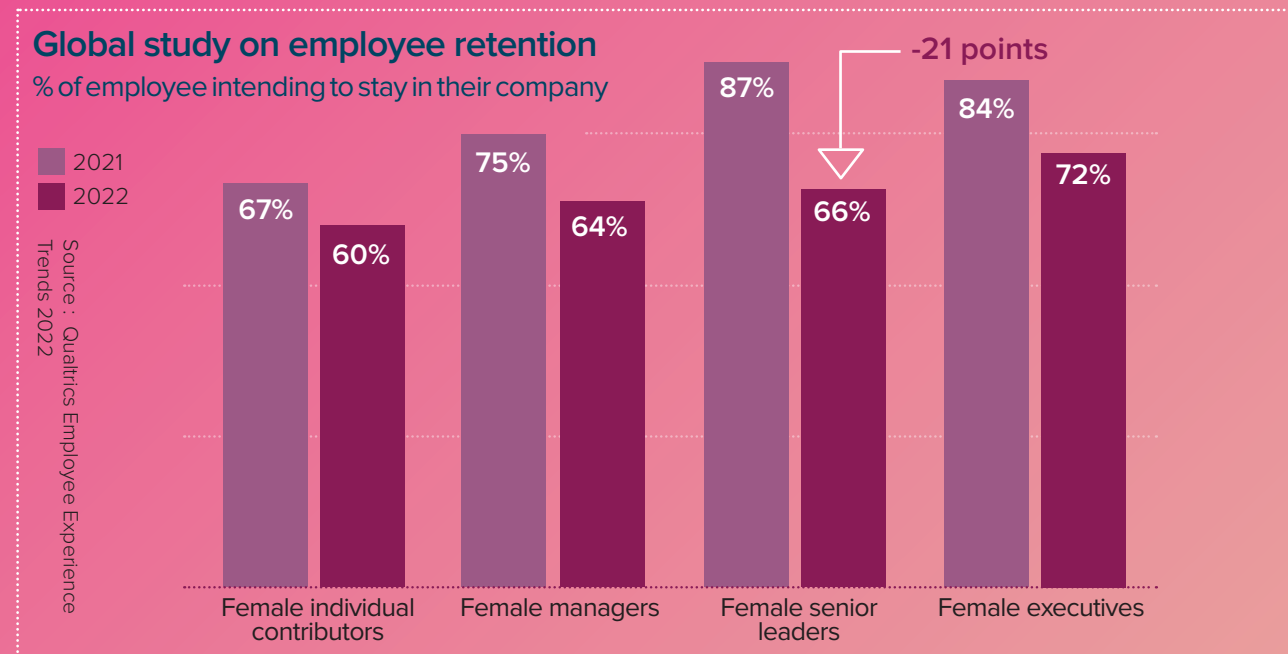
❑ **Have intentional conversations about their needs.** How can we support you to be successful?

❑ **Provide wellness support.** This is a growing sector but needs to be more fully embraced especially by SMEs.

❑ **Look at your gender pay gap.** Make the changes you need to. Research shows it doesn't pay to stay and those who switch jobs increase their compensation levels more than those who are loyal.

❑ **Offer growth opportunities.** This could mean managing the biases in your hiring and promotion system to promote women internally.

❑ **Accept Boomerangs** - if a woman left your organisation because of the pandemic, make it easy for her to return.



⁷⁸ The Great Stay or Love the One You're With. Dorothy Dalton, 3Plus International

⁷⁹ Women in the Workplace 2022. McKinsey & Lean In

CASE STUDY

How Sodexo BeLux used measuring and “corrective actions for inequalities” for more inclusion in the hybrid workplace



Greg Renders
Responsibility Manager at
Sodexo Benefits and Rewards
Services, Sodexo Belgium

Equity vs inclusion

After almost two years of forced working from home, we could have given into the temptation to just continue the system we’d put in place, namely that people can now work where they want, whenever they want. This would be inclusion.

However, one issue remains: that of equity. Because we may be mistaken on the starting point. By considering that people can work wherever they want, we do not account for situations of constraint and social inequalities. **In reality, it is above all about being able to work where you can, and not always where you want.** Not everyone is in the same boat when it comes to choosing where to work. And this is why the issue of equity must be tackled. Because for many of people, the only solution lies in part-time work.

The company alone cannot be responsible for resolving these inequalities. However, it can decide to act at its own level, by implementing what the president of Sodexo BeLux calls “corrective actions for inequalities”.

A survey to measure the different needs

In June, we consulted our employees on an anonymous basis to learn about their mindsets, their needs, their expectations in terms of mobility and work organisation.

If 82% of our employees said they prefer to work mostly from home, it was interesting to note that:



men among the 17.6% who prefer to work at least 60% of their time in the office



men among those who prefer to work at least 80% of their time at the office

This is exactly in the same proportion as internal mobility. Indeed, we noticed last year that 70% of the positions opened internally had been filled

by men (while our employees are close to 50-50 in terms of women and men).

The risks of “free choice” in remote work

Remote working by “free choice” risks increasing further inequalities between men and women in the workplace.

Informal power circles are not on Zoom or Teams. They are on site, in the office, between two elevators, at the coffee machine, at the leaving drink for colleagues, at customer or partner receptions, after-work drinks, etc. Therefore, if remote working by free choice may constitutes a step forward in inclusion policies (for people with disabilities, people on the autism spectrum, caregivers, etc.), **this inclusion may actually conflict with equity.** Because the most privileged people will continue to monopolise the informal circles of power, and this will inevitably impact the career progression and **keep the glass ceiling in place for people for whom remote working is in fact never a “free choice” but a constraint linked to a personal, social, economic or family reality.**

By allowing freedom of choice in terms of where you work, we risk amplifying what already existed despite an almost general indifference: a hierarchical pyramid of mainly male, able-bodied people with a high socio-economic status. **When individuals come together in a framework of power relations – and the company is one of them – freedom benefits the already dominant categories.** They are the ones who set the rules, not always fully aware of their privileges. And they are the ones who really have the freedom of choice. We therefore cannot hope to reduce inequalities or hope for greater diversity at management level if we do not begin a process of corporate responsibility to allow all under-represented groups to access the different levels of the company.

To this end, at Sodexo Benefits & Rewards Services in Belgium, we decided that the work arrangements would change to two days of mandatory presence in the office on average per week. And, as before the pandemic, we continue to not allow work meetings before 9 a.m. and after 5 p.m. So that no one has to apologise for having a life and constraints outside of work, or has to make a choice

between his or her career and family.

In this way, everyone may have access to chance encounters and informal circles of power, while retaining the ability to organise the rest of their day and week according to their needs and constraints. Team meetings can also be decentralised in coworking spaces if the geographical position of team members requires it.

It's not an ideal world. We will not reduce all inequalities with this framework. If inequalities find their source outside our walls, let our walls serve as a bulwark. We take the responsibility of laying this small stone in the complex building of a fairer and more prosperous society, that will benefit everyone - including the business world.

We accept the limits of our approach and the debates it generates. Finding the balance between equity, diversity and inclusion is not easy. But we are thinking about it. And we are working on it at our level. Because it all starts every day.



IN SUMMARY

An opportunity to reframe your DEI approach

The pandemic has magnified a demand that was already there: one for more agile and flexible working, and it has accelerated the need to meet these demands. As companies work to rethink existing workplace models, they face a classic risk/reward choice. Hybrid work has the potential to offer a higher level of flexibility, a better worklife balance, and a more tailored employee experience. This can have a hugely positive impact on DEI efforts, as well as on performance.

However, hybrid work also has the potential to create an unequal playing field and to amplify in-group versus out-group dynamics, to the detriment of diversity & inclusion.



“Make no mistake: tapping the benefits of a more inclusive hybrid work culture is difficult, delicate work. (...) Finding the sweet spot between hybrid work and strong inclusion can make an organisation a highly attractive place to work but requires leaders, at all levels, to listen, to coach, and to think of flexibility not as an end point but as a set of evolving expectations, with regular adjustments, perhaps down to the level of individual employees.”⁸⁰

McKinsey (2022)

With an intentional D&I approach, this will be a unique opportunity to ensure the benefits outweigh the risks.

⁸⁰ Hybrid work: Making it fit with your diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy. McKinsey (2022)



LEARN MORE: USEFUL RESOURCES

Referenced articles and books

INTRODUCTION: Creating an inclusive culture in your organisation

How to build an inclusive workplace: Your handbook for a culture of trust, respect and inclusion. JUMP (2020)

Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People. M. Banaji and A. Greenwald (2013)

Be Inclusive Every Day. Catalyst (2016)

Lean In - Allyship

Educate Everyone About Second-Generation Gender Bias. H. Ibarra, R. Ely and D. Kolb. Harvard Business Review (2013)

PART 1 : How the pandemic impacted people, women and minorities in the workplace

Covid-19 : Menaces sur les femmes dans le monde. Marlène Schiappa, Fondation Jean-Jaurès (2020)

Covid-19 cost women globally over \$800 billion in lost income in one year. Oxfam International (2021)

L'impact du Covid-19 sur l'emploi des femmes. Fondation des Femmes (2021)

Italie : l'emploi des femmes gravement fragilisé à cause de la pandémie. Caroline Bordecq, Axelle (2021)

L'impact du COVID-19 sur les inégalités entre les femmes et les hommes à Bruxelles. Conseil Bruxellois de l'Égalité Femmes-Hommes (2021)

L'expansion du télétravail et son impact sur les femmes. Conseil des Femmes Francophones de Belgique (2021)

Indice de situation sociale de la Wallonie (iss-8e exercice). Focus sur les impacts de la crise de la covid-19 sur les conditions de vie et les inégalités sociales en Wallonie. IWEPS (2021)

Covid-19: Women, Equity, and Inclusion in the Future of Work. Catalyst (2020)

Crise de la COVID-19 : un retour en arrière pour la parité hommes-femmes au travail? BCG and IPSOS (2021)

Femmes et télétravail en période de Covid-19 : quels enseignements tirer pour la mise en place d'un télétravail structurel. Laudine Lahaye, Femmes Prévoyantes Socialistes (2021)

Understanding the pandemic's impact on working women. Global survey, Deloitte (2020)

Seven charts that show COVID-19's impact on women's employment. McKinsey (2021)

Lutte pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes : 30 ans de perdus en 1 an de crise. Flora Sauvage, Public Sénat (2021)

Towards gender-inclusive recovery. OECD (2021)

Advancing Gender Equality: The role and situation for gender equality mechanisms in the context of COVID-19. Council of Europe conference (2020)

The gendered impact of the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period. Clare Wenham, European Parliament (2020)

Les moteurs d'engagement des salariés dans l'entre deux vagues de la Covid-19. Jeremie Sicsic (2020)

Belonging in a time of crisis. Matthieu Etchegaray, Deloitte (2020)

How Covid-19 Has Impacted Different Generations of Workers, Dan Schawbel, Workplace Intelligence (2020)

It's time for leaders to get real about hybrid. McKinsey Quarterly

The Great Resignation is not over: A fifth of workers plan to quit in 2022. World Economic Forum (2022)

Inflexible return-to-office policies are hammering employee experience scores. Future Forum (2022)

Grosse fatigue et épidémie de flemme: quand une partie des français a mis les pouces. Survey by Fondation Jean-Jaurès (2022)

La génération Z est-elle davantage susceptible de se désengager au travail? Peoplesphere (2022)

Défi recrutement : une recette miracle pour captiver et capturer les talents? Jean-Paul Erhard, Peoplesphere (2022)

PART 2: The inclusion challenge of the post-pandemic new way of working

"La relance doit être paritaire" : l'appel à Macron de 120 responsables de réseaux féminins et entrepreneurs. Le Journal du Dimanche (2021)

L'impact sous l'angle du genre du plan pour la reprise et la résilience. Institut pour l'Égalité des Femmes et des Hommes (2021)

Les femmes, une clé du monde d'après (carte blanche). Signed by women of the Belgian cdH party. Le Vif (2021)

The evolution of the workplace: Europe & Middle East. Poly study (2021)

How hybrid organisations can get the benefits of diversity. Lydia Watson, Qlearsite

The Good Work Framework: A new business agenda for the future of work. World Economic Forum (2022)

The inclusion challenge of post-pandemic hybrid working. Paul Brady, Consultancy.co.uk (2021)

Women in the Workplace. Lean In & McKinsey (2022)

Coronavirus : le télétravail, bonne ou mauvaise nouvelle pour les femmes ? Johanna Bouquet, RTBF.be (2020)

The complete guide to the future of the workplace. Qlearsite (2021)

Hybrid work is just not working well for most women. Megan Leonhardt, Forbes (2022)

Women @ Work. Deloitte (2022)

For mothers in the workplace, a year (and counting) like no other. McKinsey (2021)

Bosses tell women to be 'sexier' on video meetings. Slater Gordon (2020)

Who won't shut up in meetings? Men say it's women. It's not. Adam Grant, Washington Post (2021)

Is hybrid working opening businesses up to discrimination claims? Caitlin Powell, People Management (2021)

Remote-work options can boost productivity and curb burnout. Tara Van Bommel, Catalyst (2021)

Télétravail: nouveau levier d'inclusion? Laetitia Vitaud, Welcome to the Jungle (2020)

Enquête relative au télétravail au sein des institutions de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale. Idea Consult pour talent.brussels (2020)

PART 3 : How to ensure inclusion in the new way of work

D&I Leaders' Guide to the new era of working (2021)

Three Inclusive Team Norms That Drive Success. S. Brassel, T. Van Bommel, K. Robotham. Catalyst (2022)

5 Practices to Make Your Hybrid Workplace Inclusive. Grace Lordan, Teresa Almeida, and Lindsay Kohler, Harvard Business Review (2021)

Women Are the X-Factor in New Ways of Working. BCG (2020)

From survive to thrive : the future of work in a post-pandemic world. Deloitte (2021)

The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth. Amy Edmondson (2019)

What Psychological Safety Looks Like in a Hybrid Workplace. Amy C. Edmondson and Mark Mortensen, Harvard Business Review (2021)

The importance of psychological safety in the workplace. McKinsey

The five keys to a successful Google team - Guide: Understand team effectiveness, by reWork

How can we ensure flexible working is inclusive of all genders? Sarah Jackson (2021)

How to manage a scattered team. Laetitia Vitaud, Welcome to the Jungle (2020)

Hybrid work: Making it fit with your diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy. McKinsey (2022)

5 Challenges of Hybrid Work — and How to Overcome Them. Martine Haas, Harvard Business Review (2022)

3 Ways to Advance Gender Equity as We Return to the Office. David G. Smith and W. Brad Johnson, Harvard Business Review (2020)

Keeping Hybrid Employees Engaged. C. Shih, Harvard Business Review (2022)

8 Dos and Don'ts for Hybrid Working. Dan Schawbel, Workplace Intelligence (2022)

The importance of inclusive workplace design. Jo Faragher (2022)

Effectively managing your remote workers – different approaches for different people! By Jaluch

How leaders can overcome the challenges of online meetings. Sankalp Chaturvedi, People Management (2022)

Should Employees Be Required to Turn On Cameras During Virtual Meetings? Kylie Ora Lobell, SHRM (2022)

Research: Cameras On or Off? Allison S. Gabriel, Daron Robertson, and Kristen Shockley, Harvard Business Review (2021)

Preventing Proximity Bias in a Hybrid Workplace. Arlene Hirsch, SHRM (2022)

Quand les mères solos rendent votre entreprise plus innovante. Laetitia Vitaud, Welcome to the Jungle (2022)

Social Distancing Doesn't Have to Disrupt Mentorship. David G. Smith and W. Brad Johnson, Harvard Business Review (2020)

The Great Stay or Love the One You're With. Dorothy Dalton, LinkedIn (2021)

Le travail nomade, quand l'inclusion reproduit les inégalités. G. Renders, LinkedIn (2022)

FREE RESOURCES FROM JUMP

JUMP provides surveys, reports, best practices, videos, posters...

www.jump.eu.com/resources

JUMP annual societal studies



JUMP's societal studies are in-depth researches on norms and trends on gender equality in organisations and in society. They get a wide echo in the press and on social media.

Toolboxes



Useful readings on critical topics for gender equality at work.

Best practices



- European-wide best practices on promoting equal access to decision-making positions
- Gender and Career transitions
- 100 initiatives by social partners in the workplace (Europe)
- Corporate gender equality best practices in Belgium

Our solutions to free companies from sexism

www.jump.eu.com/resources/sexism

Publication

JUMP published a toolkit in French and Dutch on « How to free your organisation from sexism » to help managers and HR understand and fight sexism in their organisations.



Poster campaign



JUMP created a poster campaign that you can use for free within your organisation. Each of the posters can be customised with your company's logo and a personalised message.

Other resources



Video tutorial



Conferences and trainings



website stopausexisme.eu

Our solutions to build an inclusive work culture

www.jump.eu.com/resources/inclusion

Publications

JUMP's handbook
« **How to build an inclusive workplace** »



Diagnostic and consultancy

- **Diversity & Inclusion data audit and gap analysis**, looking at diversity data (representation, reward, recruitment etc.) and inclusion data (people surveys, exit interviews, employee engagement etc.)
- **Survey of the level of inclusiveness of your corporate culture** as perceived by your employees and of the perceived differences in career opportunities between women and men
- **Consulting and working sessions** to build your expertise and an action plan tailored to your needs

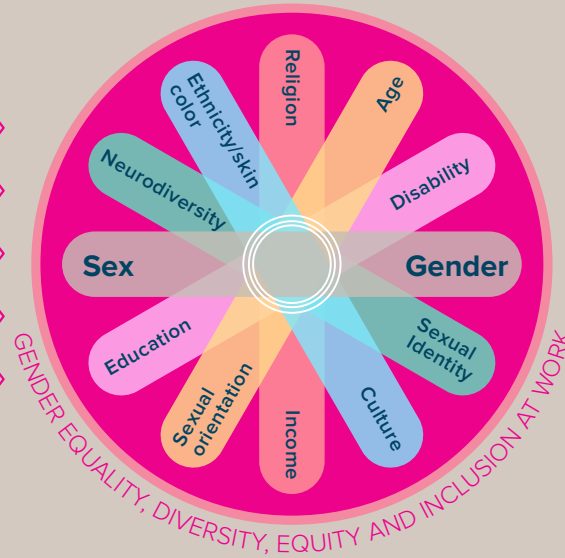
Workshops & Conferences



- Raise awareness in your organisation with a conference by Isabella Lenarduzzi “**The power of inclusive organisations**”
- Train your top leadership team on “**Inclusive leadership**” with our international inclusion experts
- Run a working session to establish your plan to build a culture of trust, respect and inclusion
- Workshops for all on “**How to build an inclusive workplace**”

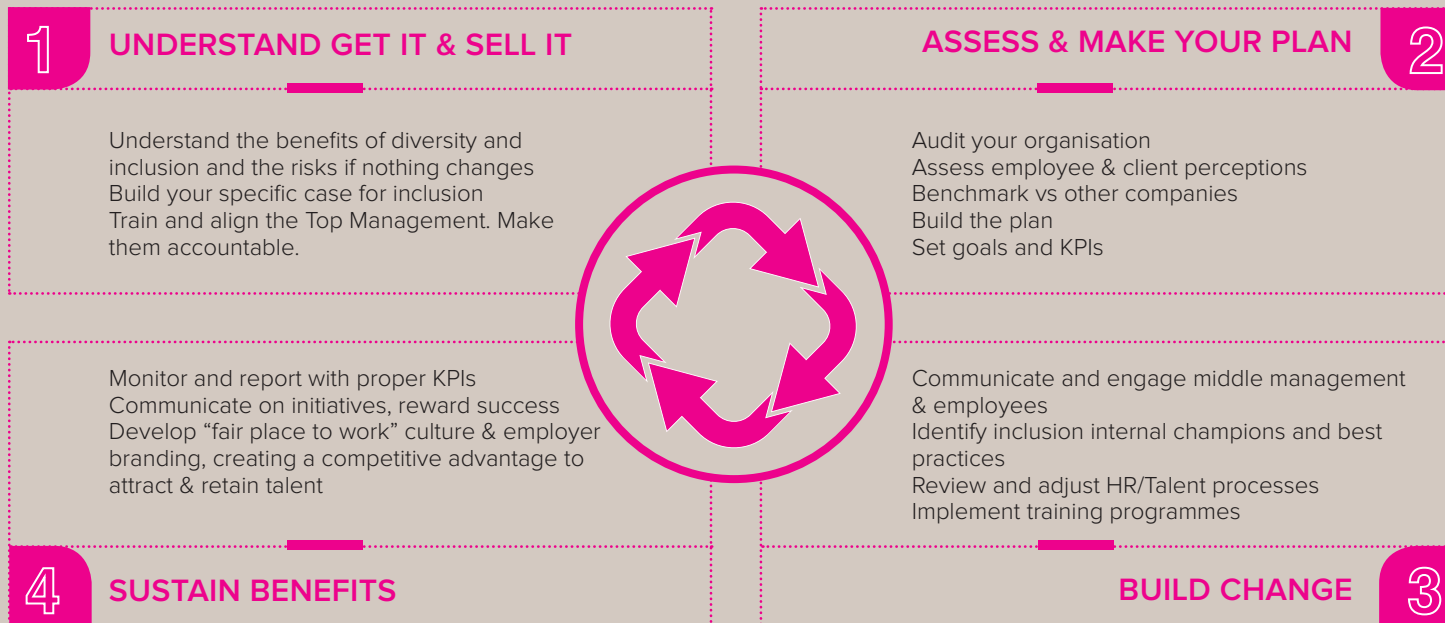
Unique Selling Proposition

- Training, talks and e-learning
- Knowledge platform with free content
- International and multilingual dimension
- Opinion leader
- Community of committed companies



- Consultancy
- Societal Studies
- Diagnostic & Corporate Surveys
- D&I Network
- Communication & Events

JUMP accompanies organisations in their journey to DEI with a proven methodology



JUMP

SOLUTIONS FOR EQUITY AT WORK



JUMP aims to create a more equitable and inclusive society by working with organisations to achieve gender equality and fair representation of diversity

Our mission is to help change the world and change companies. We work for a fairer society and for more inclusive organisations.

JUMP puts equality between women and men at the heart of its work because we believe that, by addressing 50% of the population, gender equality is the most powerful lever for building the basics of inclusion and tackling all other inequalities and under representations.

To achieve our goals, we share our reflections widely, we offer numerous studies and tools free of charge and we provide a wide range of solutions to public and private organisations.



Our founder Isabella Lenarduzzi is a Ashoka Fellow. Ashoka Fellows are social entrepreneurs who are recognised to have innovative solutions to social problems and the potential to change patterns across society.

© JUMP Forum srl

Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged, the original meaning is not distorted and JUMP is not liable for any damage caused by that use.

Please mention "Resources shared by JUMP, solutions for Equity at Work"

Some of our work is inspired by or incorporates the developments of other people and organisations. We are not able to grant the same rights in this case and will attribute their materials so that you are aware and can follow their license guidelines.

WWW.JUMP.EU.COM

JUMP Brussels
Chaussée de la Hulpe 21
B-1180 Brussels

+32 (0)2 346 32 00
+32 (0)2 346 38 00
contact@jump.eu.com

JUMP Paris
40 Rue Damrémont
F-75018 Paris

+33 06 08 18 46 76
paris@jump.eu.com