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In the first session we covered some of the basic terminology, now let's move on to look at "the business case" and how EDI can be impactful for organisations.

The broad arguments for EDI are well rehearsed:

1. Treating people fairly, with dignity, and respect clearly feels like the right thing: that's the moral case.
2. As a provider of products and services, and as an employer – you likely have responsibilities under the law (such as the Equality Act): this is the legal case.
3. But beyond those 'givens', there is also a strong 'business case' for diversity, and for creating an inclusive environment that allows diversity to flourish equally.

Here's a reminder of why diversity can be beneficial:

- It means you are attracting from a wider talent pool, potentially beating your competitors to the top talent.
- Different perspectives and life experiences lead to creative thinking and greater innovation.
- It elevates your service delivery by building connections, and helps you better understand and respond appropriately to the needs and expectations of diverse customers.
- It can help localise your offering for particular markets. For example when mobile phone technology was being developed to make the screen switch from horizontal to vertical, about 20% of users reported faults. It turns out 20% of people are left handed and the development team had no left handed people on it.
- It can challenge the status quo to improve decision making at all levels and reduce the risk of 'group-think'. For example, this was cited as one of the main causes of the financial crash of 2008. There were reports that teams who were more diverse in the banking sector weathered the storm better as they had a more balanced portfolio of risk.

And back to the benefits of equality and inclusion, which includes the legal and moral case:

- It supports the attraction and retention of talent. The employee lifecycle includes ongoing costs like wages, but also recruitment and onboarding. Most of you will have worked in teams where there is a gap for a little while, which stretches your workload, even while new people take time to

settle in. Harvard Business School estimates it takes an average of five months for people to perform at their best after joining a new organisation, so there is a strong financial case for efficiency here too.

- It supports development and progression because people are encouraged to grasp opportunities if they can see themselves reflected in more senior roles.
- It helps employees to be themselves at work, give their best, and thrive. For example, the LGBT+ organisation Stonewall estimates that someone who is not out at work is up to 20% less productive, because they spend mental effort concealing part of themselves. And if you work in an area where safety is important, not focussing 100% on the job could be a health and safety risk.
- It increases employee engagement, performance, and avoids litigation which comes with associated financial and reputational costs.
- If embraced, it can enhance the organisation's reputation among an increasing ethically-driven customer base, and create good PR opportunities, which feed into a broader Corporate Social Responsibility agenda.

Which of these resonate with you and your organisation? And where can value be added?

3.

How do we embed EDI?

It's vital that EDI priorities are aligned strategically to wider organisational values, vision, and corporate priorities. In turn, EDI Champions, whether individually or collectively, should have strategic alignment to both of these, if they want to prove that their actions are driving change and benefitting the whole organisation. You might view these strategies as existing in concentric circles, like the ones shown here.

All organisations need more than one approach which embeds EDI in a sustainable way. In this next example, dual work streams are distinct but vitally related, with project management running across both.

First of all, there's Policy and Process with Tactical Actions. This is about taking an evidence based (or data-driven) approach to action planning; identifying and removing barriers; targeted interventions; ensuring clear accountability; measuring and reporting progress with ongoing reviews.

Secondly, there's Cultural Change and Developmental Focus, which is about building understanding and cultural competence; listening to and validating lived experience; building consensus; facilitating bold conversations; self-reflection;

and learning from others.

Then to truly embed EDI we need expert communication. What are your priorities; your approach, and what is your progress? Agree on key messages and use them consistently. And as every great communicator knows, explaining why something is happening is usually more important than what is happening. So make sure you take time to do this clearly and reduce the risk of misunderstandings and backlash.

Think now about how your organisation's strategy is enhanced by your EDI strategy, and how you plan to embed it.

4.

What does EDI look like in practice?

The 'what' will obviously depend on your priorities, but even where you have already established priority areas of focus, it's important to properly understand the issues before rushing to solutions - data is key.

First you might consider a gap analysis. It may be helpful to use an assessment framework to provide a holistic view of where you need to focus - for example do you have higher churn of a particular demographic of employee, or more men in senior positions than women?

Secondly, stakeholder mapping - and by this we mean think carefully about who is, and who needs to be, involved. It's good to work openly and in collaboration, but also important for everyone to have a shared understanding of parameters, who has authority, accountability, and responsibility.

You'll need to agree what good looks like. You may take inspiration from best practice in other organisations, or think more about what success feels like to you. The more you consider this, the more it will help to shape your objectives

Which leads to a definition of outcomes needed to achieve that, and from where, you can work backwards to identify specific actions.

And as we said before, work with internal communications to agree and reiterate key messages.

Remember that in setting actions there are constraints and potential pitfalls such as budget and resource implications, and an awareness of the law in your location.

One such consideration is positive action v positive discrimination.

As a common example, positive action is permissible under the UK Equality Act, and positive discrimination is illegal. These are sometimes confused, and so let's spend a little while exploring what they mean:

Positive action is lawful if it is taken to enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to overcome a disadvantage connected to the characteristic; for example a reasonable adjustment for someone with a disability.

Action is lawful if it meets the needs of people who share a protected characteristic where those needs are different to those of people who do not have the characteristic; for example a returners program of training for someone coming back into work after a long period of absence due to ill health, which ensures they are as up to speed as they would have been if they hadn't had the gap.

It is also lawful to enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to participate in an activity in which their participation is disproportionately low. So targeted advertising of recruitment to increase applicants from a certain demographic group. However, this will still lead to the same recruitment decision making process for everyone.

As a top tip, a holistic programme will encompass work that is both tactical (systems focused) as well as developmental (culture change focused).

5.

How do we measure success?

As with any project, you need to agree and set performance measures depending on specific areas of focus. This can be simple or more complex, which will be dictated by access to good data and regular reporting.

Either way, first establish a baseline, take action, then monitor and report on progress using some or all of these examples.

Diversity - demographics and data

- Declaration rates of staff can take a while to get as it relies upon clear messaging as to why it's important. This is so that you can gain the trust of employees that it's going to be used for higher level trend reporting, and not on an individual basis for any reason.
- Support for data collection from these groups is essential. One of the key ways this can happen is through employee networks or ERGs, who may

already have the trust of their members, and can support your central EDI message.

What, then, can you measure? This may include:

- Overall representation, or demographics, cut by business unit and grade.
- Flow into the organisations, or recruitment, including an attrition rate analyses of different stages of the process.
- Flow up the organisation, or progression, including performance management rankings analyses.
- And joiners versus leavers.

Perhaps more difficult is the measurement of Equality & Inclusion - including employee insights and indicators.

- This can be direct, such as employee feedback via Trades unions, employee networks, or human resource business partners. And not forgetting, this includes you.
- Or it can be indirect, through staff surveys analyses; pulse surveys; focus groups, and so on.
- Disclosure rates of protected characteristics, and a willingness to help you gather information, can be just as important as the end results, because it indicates trust and an understanding of the need for data-driven change.
- If there are case management analyses of grievances, this can also be used to check that positive progress is being made around bias and non-discrimination for example, and that your organisation has not succumb to grievance backlash, which is unfortunately, more common than it should be.
- And finally, a lot of qualitative data can be gathered from exit interviews, where people often feel as though they can speak more freely than perhaps they would have during a regular appraisal.

6.

If you don't want to burn out from good intentions, then it's crucial to involve others.

Working with and supporting employee networks is one tried and tested option, and we know this because at Radius we work with a lot of networks. This is a good option because you can gain greater employee insights from diverse voices. We talk further about networks in your bonus module, if this is of interest.

Seeking out diversity of opinion, thought, and lived experience is beneficial to the

business, and to your customers who access your service. It also shows that as an EDI champion you take this aspect seriously by walking the talk of inclusion yourself and consulting a wider range of stakeholders.

We need to work to ensure equality and *be seen* to be working to ensure equality, by listening to and involving our people, and supporting them to support the organisation in return.

When operating effectively and with clear aims and purposes established early on, networks or maybe your EDI forum can:

- provide a constructive critical eye and hold a mirror up to the organisation
- be a consultative body, feeding back or helping to shape on relevant new or reviewed policies
- provide a safe, supportive space where employees who share certain characteristics or lived experiences can provide mutual support, advice and sign post to further support
- work in partnership with the organisation to develop interventions that target specific groups, like positive action programmes, or require their involvement, such as diverse panels
- promote key EDI messages and activity, finding support at a range of levels and locations
- encourage diversity disclosure and help to bust myths around data collection
- provide valuable customer insights
- flag emerging or bubbling issues as soon as possible so that HR and management can address and defuse situations before they escalate

7.

We realise that you all have day jobs, and EDI efforts can be a challenge to the time you have available to you. That's why it's even more important that you carefully consider your strategy, and what activities you feel will make the most difference with the time you have - because you can't do it all.

As a manager, leader, or role model, you can:

- Empower your team to make changes themselves
- Understand and recognise common biases, and how they impact decision making
- As an extension of that, consider your own behaviours in the context of things like micro-aggressions - those small but repetitive negative actions or words that "dig" at someone's confidence or sense of self. Instead we try to create micro-affirmations - acknowledgements and thanks, small

frequent positives that build stronger inclusive cultures.

- Ask for feedback from a range of colleagues, seeking out diverse perspectives.
- And be confident to constructively challenge with your own feedback to others, calling out behaviours that you feel exclude or marginalise, such as "banter", or people who hide behind "playing devil's advocate" to be confrontational.
- Ask respectful questions to better understand difference, but also realise when you can find out the answers for yourself with a bit of research.
- Draw out those who may not be first to speak up and emphasise the value of all contributions, coaching others to do the same.
- Reinforce the link between EDI, productivity, and business outcomes.
- And if you have or you build employee networks, then you could support them and ensure their voices are heard internally, becoming a conduit for the EDI message.
- However, it's important to know that you aren't a replacement for the due process that exists in HR. By all means role model inclusive behaviours, but if necessary think about signposting colleagues to the formal grievance procedures if it needs to be handled by HR professionals.