The Inclusive Employer

Building an inclusive society starts with your business

1 INTENT

2 IMPLEMENTATION

Recruitment

Outreach

Retention

3 IMPACT

SUCCESS
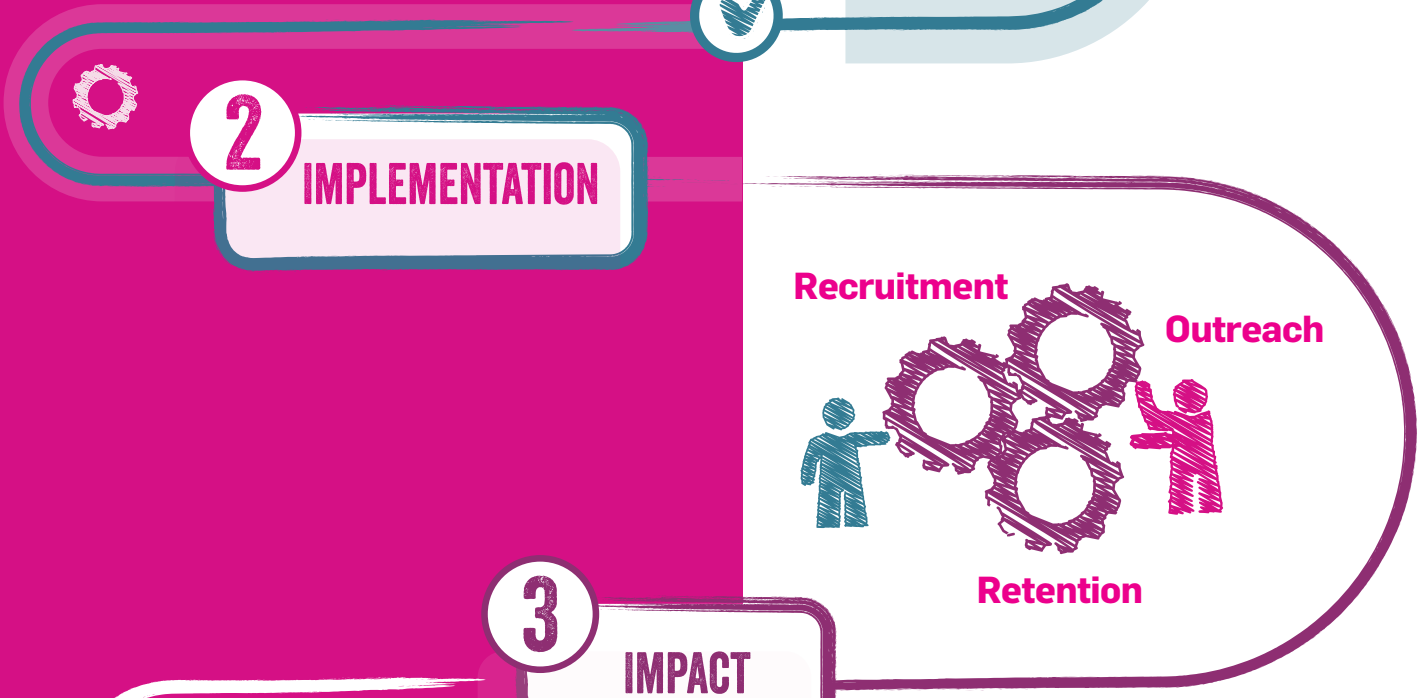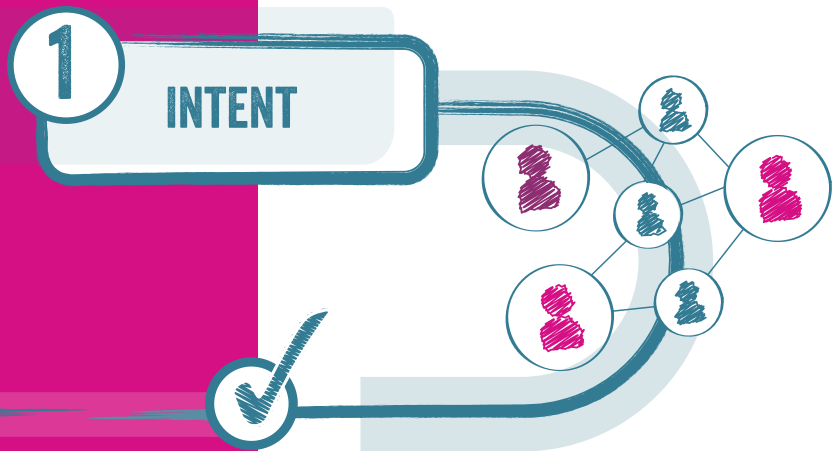
Contents

Business in the Community Ireland

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY IRELAND

Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI) is the network for CSR and sustainability. We inspire business with future-fit thinking, management systems, a forum for collective action and impact programmes to bring about social inclusion and a low carbon economy.

In 2016 BITCI founded The Leaders' Group on Sustainability, a coalition of Ireland's leading organisations that are striving to improve the sustainability of Irish business through sharing best practice and creating new ways of doing business. The Group is represented by CEOs of Ireland's top companies, from sectors including energy, telecoms, technology, finance, transport, professional services, pharma, retail and food. All companies in the Group have achieved the Business Working Responsibly mark, the independently audited standard for CSR and Sustainability based on ISO 26000.

Through a research and consultation process, three sustainability challenges were identified by the Leaders' Group as critical for Irish business: Transition to a Low Carbon Economy; Social Inclusion and Worker of the Future. Sub-groups were formed to examine a progressive business response to each challenge and thereby create a meaningful positive change. This publication is a result of the work of the Social Inclusion sub-group. The group comprised representatives from CRH, Dawn Meats, Deloitte, eir, M&S, SSE Ireland, Ulster Bank, Veolia and Vodafone as well as experts from BITCI's employment and education teams. The group was co-chaired by M&S and Veolia.

The priority for the Social Inclusion sub-group was to explore a business response to growing inequalities in Irish society. A major and systemic element of social exclusion is economic. As employers, businesses can play a significant role in creating change to support a more cohesive society. The Group's intention was to seek a step change in how business approaches its relationship with society, and in particular with groups and individuals who may be outside the mainstream.

Reducing inequalities and achieving a fully cohesive society is a complex task and Government, NGOs and business all have a role to play. The work of this Leaders' sub-group focused on the role that business can play. Employment offers the single biggest opportunity for vulnerable individuals to move out of a cycle of poverty and become active participants in society. Business is uniquely placed to impact on employability and as such the Group concentrated efforts on developing the concept of the Inclusive Employer.

Employment offers the single biggest opportunity for vulnerable individuals to move out of a cycle of poverty and become active participants in society.

Foreword

Ireland has made significant progress in recovering from the economic crash of 2008. For the first time in the last decade the government ended the year (2018) with a budget surplus. With unemployment rates at a little under 6% we are approaching full employment. Rising employment is indicative of a strong economy and is contributing to a trend for higher salaries and ultimately raising the standard of living for many.

However, despite positive indicators of economic growth, the country is experiencing an unprecedented housing crisis. Rates of long term unemployment and the number of jobless households remain amongst the highest in Europe. Latest poverty data from the CSO indicates the percentage of the population at risk of poverty exceeds 16%.

For many individuals and families disadvantage is inherited through the generations. The importance of parental income and level of education for children's life chances cannot be overstated. Children from jobless households are more likely to be unemployed creating a cycle of disadvantage and exclusion. Individuals who experience barriers to reaching their potential can get caught up in welfare systems and poverty traps. Individuals, their families and whole communities can get stuck in a vicious cycle of disadvantage which can be difficult to break.

We are living in a time when the gap between rich and poor continues to widen, in a world where divisive politics are splitting communities. A society that does not recognise and tackle inequalities leaves itself open to distrust, fear, negativity and suspicion. We all have a role to play in shaping the type of society we want to live in.

The cost of not tackling disadvantage and exclusion has both economic and social impacts. The companies active on the Social Inclusion sub-group came together to examine the role of business in building a more inclusive society. This publication is the result of extensive stakeholder consultation with business, NGOs, government, state agencies and academia. In leading the process, BITCI draws on over twenty years of experience designing and delivering acclaimed

social action programmes tackling disadvantage in education and employment. Through an examination of the business – society relationship through a lens of equality and from the perspective of individuals vulnerable to social exclusion, the Group developed a deep understanding of many of the barriers to social inclusion.

This blueprint will give any business the practical "how-to" to become an inclusive employer. It provides a step-by-step approach for any employer interested in building an inclusive society starting with their own organisation. For those employers already applying a social lens to their Diversity and Inclusion strategy this blueprint will complement existing activities.

I hope you find this publication both inspiring and practical and I would encourage you to share your experiences.

CEO, Business in the Community Ireland

The Role of Business in Social Inclusion

A powerful tool of business is the ability to provide greater access to employment for people vulnerable to social exclusion. Having a job is not the answer to all of society's inequalities; however it is one factor that can have multiple benefits not only for the job holder in terms of increased income, feelings of self-worth and belonging, but also for their family and local community.

A stable society is beneficial both for social cohesion and for business, allowing employers to uncover and nurture talent in all areas and supporting Ireland as an open, inclusive and attractive economy. Being proactive on the social inclusion agenda allows for recruitment from non-traditional sources, and access to more diverse talent pools. Initiatives also allow for the development of life skills and learning, supporting workers in adapting to the future needs of business.

The business case for diversity has been very well documented and there are countless reports highlighting the benefits of successfully managing a diverse employee base. As such, more and more companies are investing in diversity and inclusion strategies. For employers already thinking in these terms, extending such strategies to encompass a social inclusion aspect will help to enhance the benefits and, as well as contributing to a stronger business culture, will also have impacts beyond the business for individuals and the wider community.

There are many examples of business having great impact in local communities by engaging in education and employment initiatives for marginalised or vulnerable groups. Whilst strategic programmes are essential in reducing inequalities it is not enough for a business to simply engage in outreach activities in order to break cycles of disadvantage. Employers need to have a coherent strategy that connects their community based activities to their recruitment and retention practices.

By actively implementing a multi-layered approach centred on Community Outreach, Recruitment and Retention, employers will not only empower individuals but also strengthen their own business and contribute to more cohesive communities. The child that is supported to develop skills and encouraged to finish their education or the job seeker that is helped to prepare for interview should aspire to work for that same business and have every chance of getting a suitable role.

As with any strategic project there is groundwork that needs to be completed and building blocks put in place in order to prepare for a successful outcome. The blueprint presented on the following pages outlines a practical approach to developing a comprehensive strategy for social inclusion.

The Business Case for Diversity

2014: Deloitte -From Diversity to Inclusion

2015: McKinsey – Why Diversity Matters

2018: McKinsey – Delivering Through Diversity

The Case for Diversity and Inclusion

Business
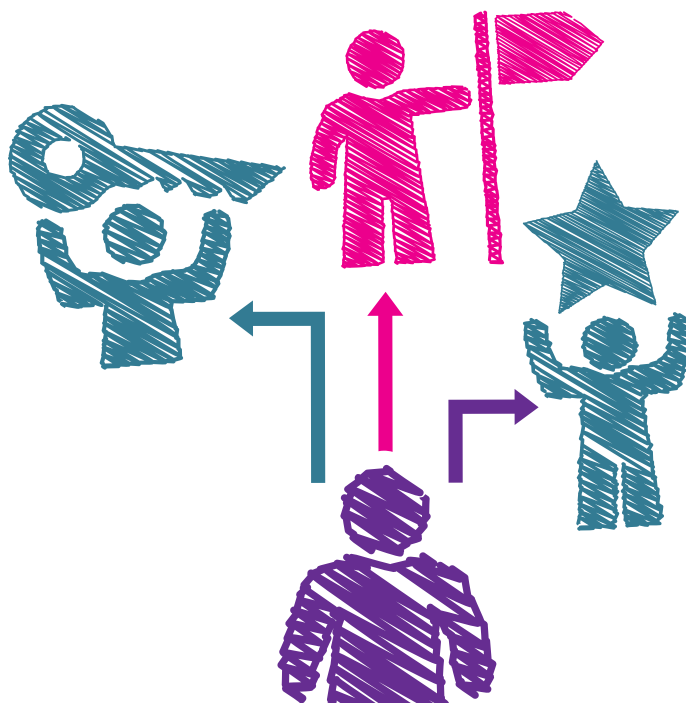- More customers
- Bigger profits
- Wider talent pool
- Greater creativity
- Better reputation
- Happier employees

Society
- Reduced poverty
- Less inequality
- Better participation
- Fairer society
- More opportunities
- Greater dignity

Individual
- Increased confidence
- New skills
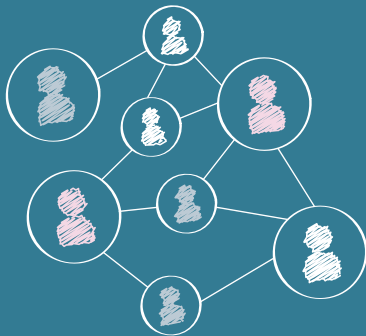- Financial wellbeing
- Self-esteem

THE INCLUSIVE

1 INTENT

Clear articulation of the company vision with respect to being an Inclusive Employer. Backed up by strategy and resources.

Leadership

Build governance and accountability structures into every level of the organisation.

Targeted Initiatives

Choose a group that is underrepresented within your workplace and specify a vision for future engagement.

Partnerships

For the greatest impact build strong relationships with community based organisations working with the target group you have identified.

2 IMPLEMENTATION

An action plan based on detailed data, with measurable activities, commitment to resource and agreements with strategic partners.

Activities that Support Inclusion

Outreach

Strategic focus to enhance education & employment opportunities for marginalised groups

- Assess talent needs
- Critically assess current community engagement
- Align resources to education and employmen
- Engage with Community Organisations
- Empower employees to volunteer
- Create new pathways to employment
- Partner with disadvantaged schools
- Work with supply chain
- Collaborate with other employers

Employers can choose as many or as few activities as make sense for their business and fit within allocated resources

EMPLOYER

Recruitment

Commit to recruitment practices that ensure meaningful opportunities for all including under-represented, marginalised & vulnerable groups

- Explore diversity insights
- Review recruitment practices
- Write inclusive job descriptions
- Tackle unconscious bias
- Turn job descriptions into skills lists
- Insist on diverse shortlists
- Train employees on inclusion
- Structure interviews for inclusion
- Set inclusion KPIs
- Work with supply chain
- Build in space for success

Retention

Build a workplace culture based on inclusion and trust

- Gather diversity data
- Conduct a policy review
- Introduce equality proofing
- Promote employee support networks
- Appoint sponsors and champions
- Support friendship and inclusion
- Develop talent
- Train employees on diversity and inclusion
- Support flexible working
- Promote workplace wellbeing
- Facilitate reasonable accommodations
- Introduce employee volunteering
- Safeguard for changing circumstances

SUCCESS

3 IMPACT

Ongoing monitoring and review of the action plan against SMART targets

Agree measurable goals and assign accountability

Example of goals

Recruitment

- Number of job descriptions appraised for inclusion
- Percentage of new hires meeting the social inclusion agenda

Retention

- Percentage of employees availing of flexible working
- Number of policies reviewed for inclusion

Outreach

- Level of improvement in skills
- Number of individuals moving into jobs, education or training

Review and incorporate improvements

Communicate on successes and challenges

Encourage and inspire others

1 INTENT

Clear articulation of the company vision
with respect to being an Inclusive Employer.
Backed up by strategy and resources.

The first step in becoming an Inclusive Employer comes from the top and is a desire to build inclusion into every level of the business. It requires a commitment to examine internal policies and to identify practices that may contribute to social exclusion. Furthermore it will require a willingness to implement systemic change should this be warranted.

Leadership

Strong, visible and consistent leadership sets the tone for organisational culture. Whilst it has to start from the top it needs to permeate every level of the company. Consider how best to design a governance structure that will develop a culture that values and supports inclusion. Think about appointing a senior lead with overall responsibility for delivering on the social inclusion agenda but also for ensuring it is closely aligned to the core business strategy.

To effect change, buy-in across all business units and at every tier of the organisation is needed. Appointing a steering group or taskforce to represent the views of different business areas and teams is a good way to build a strategy informed by the particular challenges facing your business. Think carefully about the representation of the steering group. Whilst it will be useful to include self-selected diversity champions, bringing diversity sceptics on board will help to highlight internal barriers that will have to be addressed if a strategy is to be successful.

Adding another layer to the governance structure by nominating social inclusion champions to act as a grassroots network can provide different perspectives to the strategy. This type of bottom-up feedback channel can help drive initiatives in local teams. A support network of champions will help with the visibility and communication of the social inclusion strategy to all employees. It can also be a useful tool in employee engagement.

Ultimately the aim is to mainstream social inclusion so that it becomes part of organisational culture where the need for a leadership or governance structure will eventually disappear. However to get started and to drive the agenda forward it is important to assign responsibility and make people accountable for the success of your social inclusion strategy.
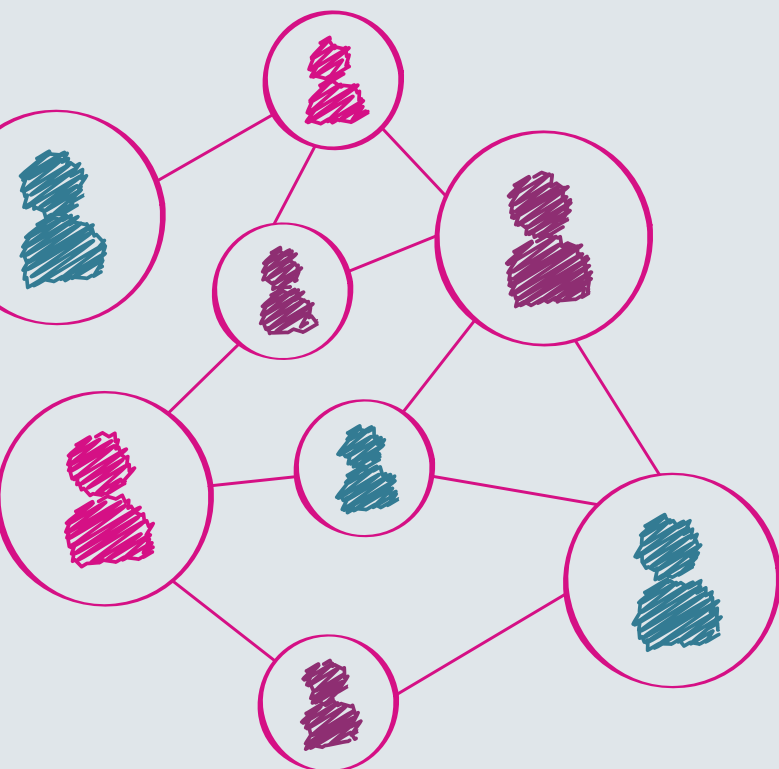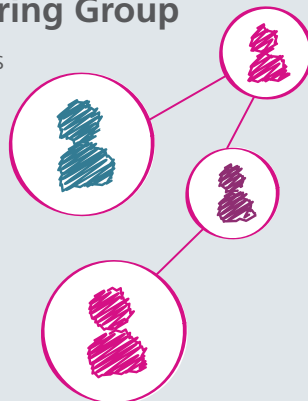
Social Inclusion Sponsor

- Reports to CEO
- Champions social inclusion from top of the company
- Aligns social inclusion strategy to business strategy
- Accountable for strategy performance

## Social Inclusion Steering Group

- Mid to senior level employees
- Represent the views of a cross section of business units
- Actively contribute to social inclusion strategy
- Drive strategy across the business units

Social Inclusion Champions

- Grass roots network of employees interested in social inclusion
- Participate in working groups to contribute to and feedback on strategy
- Drive initiatives in own team or business unit
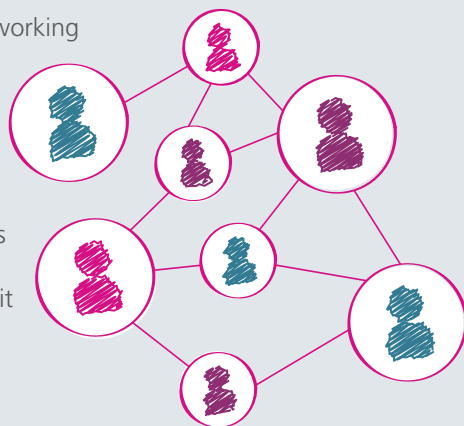
Tip

- Line managers are essential to making a social inclusion strategy work. Ensure their voices are heard, their concerns addressed and that they are recognised for effort.

Case Study – ESB

With over 90 years of heritage since its founding in 1927 ESB has always had a strong sense of Social Purpose and a commitment to playing a role in addressing some of the key social issues facing society. We believe that opportunities for employment are critical to driving social cohesion and inclusion, and the significance of this in addressing key societal challenges. For this to happen, employers need to provide entry points for employment for those in society that have limited or no access to third level qualification. We have successfully managed our Electrical Craft Apprenticeship programme for many decades and through this employed, trained and developed the majority of the 1,550 Network Technicians currently employed in ESB Networks. Most of these employees entered this programme as school leavers and they work in every community across the country.
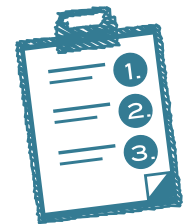
Our ambition is to extend the apprenticeship approach to other disciplines and we have started this with an apprenticeship programme in IT. In 2019 we will build on this by recruitment into apprenticeship programmes in accountancy, insurance, HR and legal.

Providing employment through apprenticeships will enable individuals to access employment with ESB who otherwise would not have been able to. This in turn enables them to earn an income while they learn, developing and acquiring skills to ensure their ongoing employability. Apart from the positive impact providing apprenticeships can have for individuals, their families and communities, it also enables an important aspect of diversity in organisations.

This approach to providing ongoing resource assurance within our business is borne from an understanding of the role business can play in shaping an inclusive society and ultimately changing lives.

Targeted Initiatives

If an employer has built a culture based on inclusion, any person with the required level of skill will have a fair and equal chance to gain employment regardless of their background or diversity status. All employees will feel valued and supported in the workplace. The approach and actions suggested in this blueprint are designed to be widely applicable. The actions are drawn from best practice in diversity and inclusion strategies that encompass gender, ethnicity, ability etc. However they are applicable to any business and can be implemented to impact on any under-represented group identified within an organisation.

Ultimately building a culture of inclusion will have benefits beyond any single group for which initiatives are initially designed to support. However, as a starting point, employers will do well to focus their strategy and take a targeted approach to becoming more inclusive.

When planning for inclusion it can make sense to choose a specific group to focus on. Rather than trying to go broad from the outset, deciding on an area of focus will help in the identification of strategic social partners and in the design of suitable interventions.

In a report published by the ESRI in 2018 five groups were identified as facing the greatest barriers to employment and as most vulnerable to social exclusion. These groups include: jobless households, lone parents, homeless or affected by housing exclusion, those with disabilities and ethnic minorities. Most workplaces in the country have employees who fall into one or more of these categories. However how they recruit and then support and develop these employees will vary greatly depending on the workplace culture.

Choosing a group to focus on should link back to business needs. If retention is an issue, assessing how the current culture supports or hinders vulnerable people from fully engaging in the workplace could yield interesting insights. Depending on the make-up of the workforce it might make sense to focus in the first instance on vulnerable groups within the existing employee base. Alternatively employers actively recruiting might decide to focus on groups that are currently under-represented in their workplace. Organisations located in areas of disadvantage might choose to specifically target individuals from their local community.

BITCI supports employers to define a vision for their social inclusion strategy that is linked to business priorities.

Groups facing the greatest barriers to employment and most vulnerable to social exclusion

❯ Jobless households

❯ Lone parents

❯ Homeless or affected by housing exclusion

❯ Disability

❯ Ethnic minorities

Source: Profiling Barriers to Social Inclusion in Ireland

Once an employer decides on the initial focus and direction of their social inclusion strategy articulating an overarching goal will help to guide strategy and plan initiatives. This goal should align back to core business objectives. For example, if a company is in a growth phase and has an active hiring campaign then an objective to hire from designated vulnerable groups within the context of an overall hiring objective would make sense. Employers concerned about the long term talent pipeline might look at how a community outreach initiative could address skills shortages.

Sample Objectives:

Hire at least **5 Long Term Unemployed individuals** across the business within the next two years (as part of a larger plan to hire 50 new workers total over the next two years)

Focus **70% of Community Budget** on Education Initiatives in local DEIS Schools over the next three years.

Improve the **representation of Ethnic Minorities** at middle and senior management

Be **recognised by peers** as a leader on Inclusive Employment within the next 5 years

Retention of 100% of employees with an acquired disability who want to continue to work

Achieve 0% attrition of vulnerable employees due to workplace culture

Recruit at least **20% of new apprentices** from areas of high unemployment

Setting a high level goal and actively communicating it across the business will help provide focus to the strategy as well as engage employees.

Case Study – Accenture

At Accenture, we are committed to becoming a truly human and inclusive organisation. As part of this ambition we wanted to change and challenge the face of employment opportunities for people with autism. Through our Accent on Enablement network we ran a pilot Internship programme in 2018 to enable Accenture to be considered as an employer of choice for people on the Autism Spectrum, while also enabling us to access an untapped talent pool. We partnered with Specialisterne who are dedicated to assisting people with a neurodiversity to find meaningful employment to utilise their expertise in preparing us for recruitment within this field. We also engaged with ASiAM to host several key events aimed at creating a culture of awareness within Accenture and an understanding of the value these candidates can bring to our business. We recruited two interns into the pilot programme which involved a six month paid work placement providing an opportunity to gain experience working on complex problems and solutions with an extremely innovative organisation. To date one of the interns has successfully secured a full time position on the graduate programme.

"The Autism Internship programme is helping us further build the diversity of our Irish business. It is also a wonderful example of where doing the right thing also has a clear business case. This programme is helping us access a new stream of Data Scientists in an incredibly hot market. I am already seeing this new talent make a significant contribution to the practice and deliver better outcomes for our clients. It is therefore an easy decision to continue and expand the internship programme in 2019 and beyond."

Paul Pierotti, Managing Director and Head of Applied Intelligence Ireland, Accenture

Tip

❯ Choose a specific group to focus initial efforts on but be mindful not to set selection criteria that are so rigid as to create unnecessary barriers for already vulnerable individuals.

Strategic Partnerships

Developing a social inclusion strategy demands that employers get out of their comfort zone – at least temporarily. Once inclusion is mainstreamed, targeted initiatives will no longer be required. However, there is still a long way to go before most businesses can boast a fully inclusive culture. Employers are the experts when it comes to their own business, however they may struggle to understand the issues that contribute to social exclusion and the barriers, either real or perceived, that exist within their business.

Taking a shared approach to social inclusion with local communities, government agencies and other business will yield the greatest impact. Strong initiatives are built on partnerships that actively engage community organisations, leveraging their expertise of working on the ground with vulnerable or marginalised communities.

Once an overall focus has been agreed for a social inclusion strategy it makes sense to link with potential partners to help identify individuals in the target group and to support the design of engagement initiatives. Think about partnerships with designated disadvantaged schools, training and learning centres, employment support groups, youth services etc.

Organisations on the ground have the experience and first-hand knowledge of the barriers faced by the individuals they work with. This experience will help to guide the direction of support or interventions employers can provide that can have real social impact. From helping to roll out education initiatives to sourcing candidates for recruitment the right partner is a critical component in the overall success of any social inclusion strategy.

Case Study – SSE Ireland

In 2017 SSE Ireland partnered with Business in the Community Ireland to introduce pathways to employment initiative called SSE Works based on the Barnardo's Works model in the UK. This pilot employability programme provided a six-month paid work placement to individuals who experienced various long-term barriers to accessing the workplace. Seven participants were selected to join the pilot programme. Five completed it, with three going on to accept full-time permanent contracts with SSE Ireland and progressing onto various roles.

Of those that aren't still with the company, one went onto full-time employment elsewhere and the remainder are engaging with other programmes. The SSE Works model provides a highly valuable precedent for SSE Ireland and other businesses. The programme has: offered quality experiences of work and a career path for participants; it has opened up a new recruitment stream to the company; it has demonstrated commitment to the local community; and has provided a way of instilling pride in the company and a personal sense of fulfilment for existing employees.

SSE Ireland and Business in the Community Ireland are following the successful pilot with a second programme which commenced in October of 2018 and now has three full-time employees on board.

Case Study – Boots

At Boots we introduce the idea of social cohesion at an early stage in our leaders' careers and a way of doing this is through the Schools Business Partnership programme run in conjunction with Business in the Community Ireland. We have been working on this programme since 2012 and we currently support eight disadvantaged secondary schools around the country, positively impacting on over 150 secondary students. The programme involves a series of workshops throughout the academic year delivered by our intern pharmacists and future line leaders to showcase careers within the retail sector and culminates in mock interviews for the students who come from a variety of backgrounds, providing additional skills for their next step upon leaving school. As well as the students, our employees also benefit by acquiring new skills as well as gaining an understanding of the advantages of working in an inclusive society.

BITCI can help identify suitable community based partners to support a strategic social inclusion programme

Tip

◆ Strong initiatives are built on partnerships that actively engage community organisations, leveraging their expertise of working on the ground with vulnerable or marginalised communities.
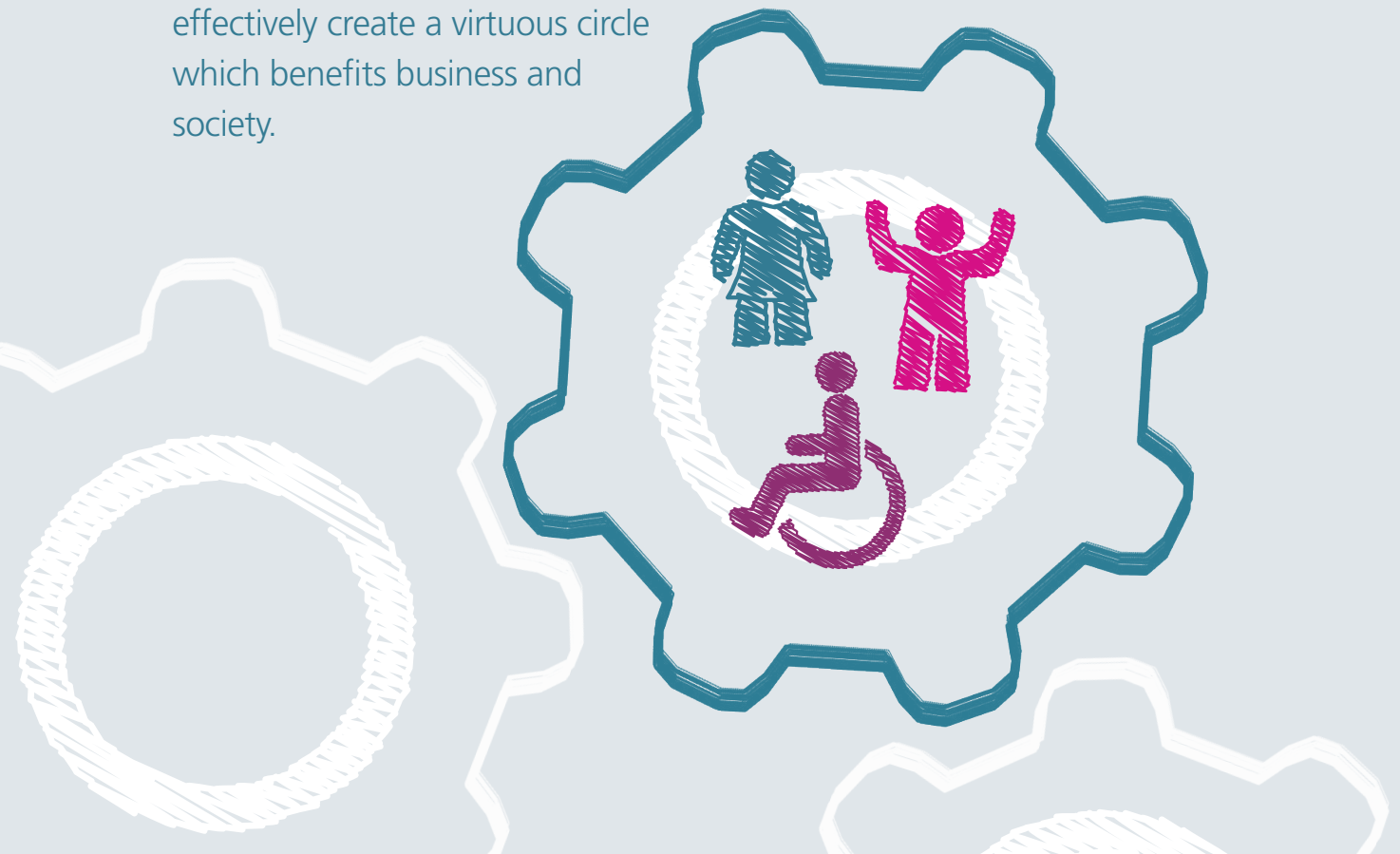
2 IMPLEMENTATION

2 IMPLEMENTATION

An action plan based on detailed data, with measurable activities, commitment to resource and agreement with strategic partners

Many companies address the issue of social inclusion through outreach activities and there are lots of great examples of high impact education and employability programmes. However to truly embrace the concept of the Inclusive Employer, business must be able to connect community Outreach activities to Recruitment and on to Retention. Policies and practices in each of these three core areas should complement each other and effectively create a virtuous circle which benefits business and society.

Recruitment

Achieving a diverse and inclusive workforce is dependent on helping all potential applicants to realise that a career in your business is possible, regardless of personal circumstances or background. Very often employers rely solely on established recruitment activities and channels that are likely to deliver candidates from backgrounds very similar to those of present employees.

Actively reviewing current recruitment practices can provide opportunities to introduce initiatives and approaches to complement tried and tested methods whilst ensuring employers have the widest and most diverse range of candidates to choose from.

Activities that support inclusion:

Planning for Inclusion	
Explore diversity insights	❯ Analyse the profile of candidates who have applied for positions ❯ Identify groups which are under or over-represented ❯ Identify priority groups to target ❯ Set hiring targets

Sourcing Candidates	
Review recruitment practices	❯ Recruit for aptitude and attitude ❯ Remove unnecessary requirements which restrict the pool of applicants e.g. number of years' experience ❯ Review all company materials to ensure diversity is represented to potential candidates ❯ Analyse existing channels of recruitment ❯ Where are job vacancies advertised? What is their reach? ❯ Recruit outside family networks. Incentives for existing staff to refer new candidates can be an effective tool for reaching potential employees. They can also serve to support employee morale. However, they are likely to deliver candidates from similar backgrounds. Consider alternative channels to extend reach to under-represented groups. ❯ Build accountability into service level agreements with recruitment partners to deliver a greater diversity of candidates
Write inclusive job descriptions	❯ Review job descriptions for un-intentional bias. Proofing tools can identify language in job adverts or job descriptions which may discourage applicants from certain groups.
Tackle unconscious bias	❯ Remove identifying personal information from applications ❯ Have a range of stakeholders assess applications ❯ Include unconscious bias training into the annual training plan ❯ Use technology and other methodologies in conducting assessments
	❯ Post a job along with a challenge designed to assess the skills required for the position. Encourage applicants to take the challenge. Review submissions without identifying information

Tip

❯ Build an action plan for inclusion by choosing as many or as few activities as make sense for business and fit within allocated resources

2 IMPLEMENTATION

Agree measurable goals and assign accountability

Develop an action plan on recruitment based on a selection of the activities suggested above. For every activity set clear measurable goals and assign accountability.

Sample goals

❯ Number of new employees recruited through Social Inclusion Initiatives

❯ Number of job descriptions appraised for inclusion

❯ Number of recruitment practices audited for inclusion

❯ Number of new job seekers reached

❯ Percentage of hires meeting diversity agenda

Activities that support inclusion (continued):

Interviewing	
Insist on diverse shortlists	❯ Commit to interviewing applicants from under-represented groups once they have met key requirements for the position ❯ Set targets e.g. every shortlist must include at least one candidate from an under-represented group
Train employees on inclusion	❯ Introduce mandatory unconscious bias training for all hiring and line managers ❯ Train all interview panel members in inclusive interviewing
Structure interviews for inclusion	❯ Ensure a diverse representation on interview panels ❯ Develop competency-based interview questions ❯ Introduce standardised scoring templates

Leadership	
Set inclusion KPIs	❯ Incorporate social inclusion hiring goals as part of performance management for recruitment teams and hiring line managers ❯ Set targets for recruiters ❯ Reward successful recruitments
Work with supply chain	❯ Work with companies in your supply chain to support recruitment for inclusion ❯ Host regular meetings with key suppliers to update them on diversity and inclusion and provide opportunities for them to share their own practices ❯ Ask suppliers for evidence of diversity and inclusion in relation to their workforce ❯ Include diversity and inclusion criteria in decision making about awarding supplier contracts
Build in space for success	❯ Hiring managers and line managers will be under pressure to meet targets. Build in targets that support the social inclusion strategy and acknowledge that some additional resources or changes to business as usual may be required.

Case Study – Fujitsu

Fujitsu's commitment to inclusion is championed by four employee support groups - Women's Business Network @ Fujitsu, Shine LGBT+, SEED (Supporting & Engaging Employees with Disabilities) and Cultural Diversity Network. Changes to our recruitment practices which are resulting in positive impact include diversity in shortlists, re-writing job descriptions as skills lists and shifting focus from experience to role requirements. We are in the early stages of this initiative but are already seeing the benefits for our Sales and Project Management teams.

Case Study – PwC

Unconscious bias awareness is an integral part of our Diversity and Inclusion strategy. In order to lead by example, our executive team participated in an intense session focused on unconscious bias in the workplace. Additionally, every Partner within PwC Ireland has completed unconscious bias training, through a combination of online training session and in person training with Diversity and Inclusion experts. We have two online products available to all staff and the level of interest, debate and positive feedback on this training was unprecedented. Whilst this training is optional, we have started to introduce mandatory training. For example, every person that conducts an interview for potential PwC graduate joiners must complete unconscious bias training. This ensures that they are aware of their own unconscious bias and provides tools to ensure that they can mitigate the impact on fairly assessing a candidate. Additionally we use a combination of online and classroom based training on unconscious bias training that all our interns must complete.

Other initiatives we have introduced to eliminate bias include use of an IT system that reviews all advertised job specifications for inclusive language to increase the likelihood of a diverse group of candidates applying. In 2018, we implemented a gamified psychometric testing system for our graduate recruitment; this system aids us in removing unconscious bias from our process after a candidate is called to interview. This increases fairness in graduate recruitment and reduces opportunities for unconscious bias at this stage of the process.

 "Diversity and Inclusion are key to our people strategy. We need the best available talent to create value for our clients, people and communities. We hire people with a variety of approaches to problem solving, who are willing to challenge the status quo, who think differently from one another, and who come from many different backgrounds and places. To solve important problems we need diverse talent."

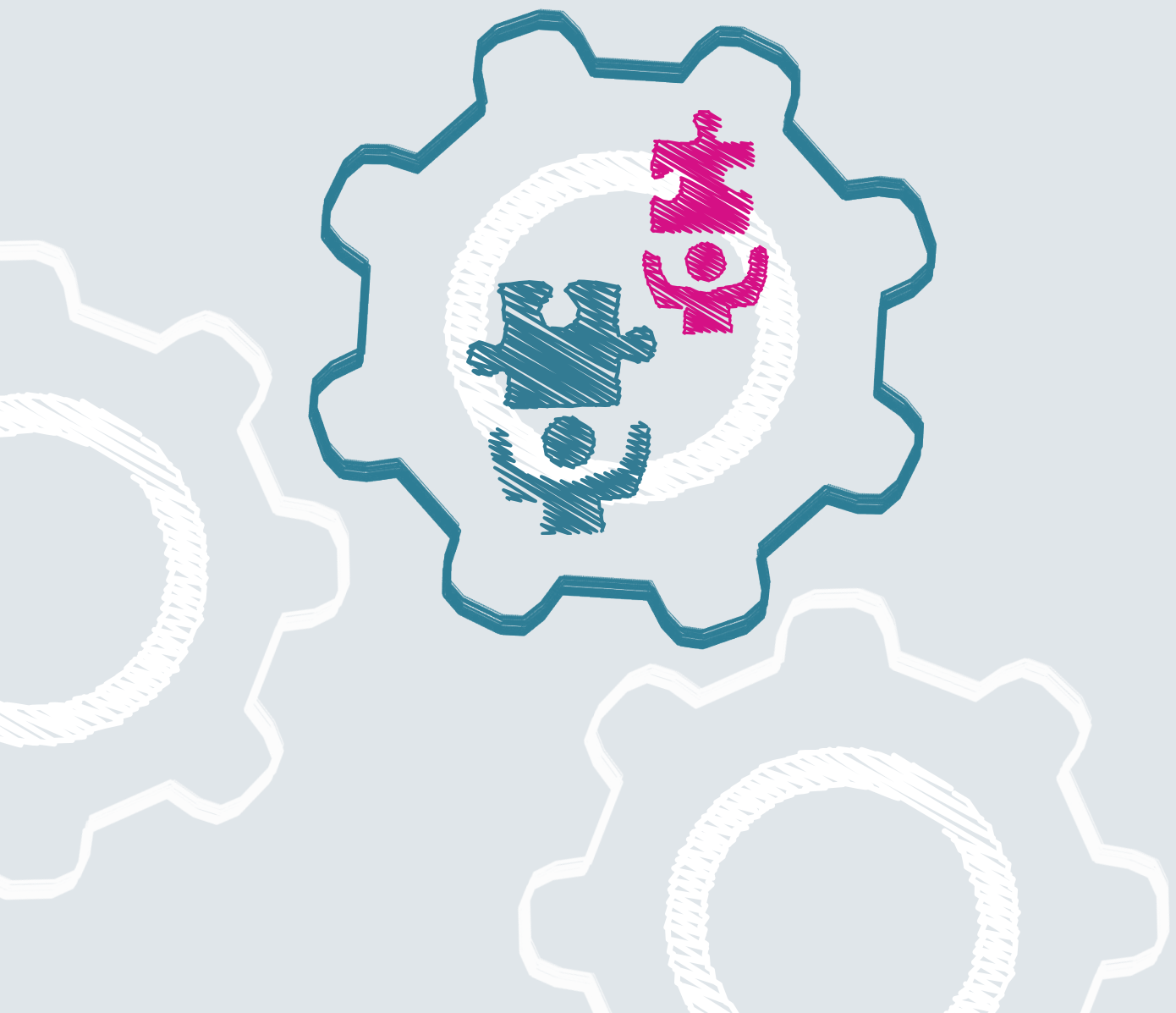**Feargal O'Rourke,** Managing Partner, PwC

Tip

❯ It is human nature to instinctively categorise people and we are all subject to unconscious bias. Acknowledging this and participating in practical training really helps in developing an inclusive culture.

Retention

Building a workplace culture based on inclusion and trust benefits everyone. Employees who feel valued, have the necessary supports to do their best work and are afforded opportunities to develop will generally thrive. This will impact positively on productivity, innovation and business performance. Taking a proactive approach to retention can highlight good practices that can be extended across the business as well as present opportunities to introduce initiatives focused on supporting vulnerable employees.

Activities that support inclusion:

Planning for Inclusion	
Gather diversity data	❯ Include diversity and inclusion related questions in employee surveys ❯ Host employee focus groups to explore views on diversity and inclusion
Conduct a policy review	There are many policies that will impact on diversity and inclusion. Reviewing these will identify good practices as well as gaps. These include: ❯ Diversity ❯ Respect at Work ❯ Disability ❯ Disclosure ❯ How to deal with racial abuse of staff or customers ❯ Performance Reviews ❯ Appraisal Process ❯ Flexible Working ❯ Promotion ❯ Learning and Development ❯ Employment Termination/Retirement
Introduce equality proofing	❯ Examine policies and practices across the business to ensure that the needs and interests of all employees and in particular the target group are served

Peer Support	
Develop talent	❯ Provide visible backing and support for retention, progression and engagement of distinct groups ❯ Facilitate and support employee resource groups covering issues such as parenting, caring, mental health and wellbeing, workplace accommodations, money management, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion and flexible working
Appoint sponsors and champions	❯ Provide informal access to role models and mentors ❯ Formalise buddy/mentor/coach/sponsor initiatives
Support friendship and inclusion	❯ Promote a culture of open communication and collaboration ❯ Encourage people to get to know one another ❯ Promote and participate in social activities ❯ Celebrate diversity special observance days

Tip

❯ The existence of formal networks can help change the culture and provide visible backing and support for retention, progression and engagement of distinct groups.

2 IMPLEMENTATION

Agree measurable goals and assign accountability

Develop an action plan on recruitment based on a selection of the activities suggested above. For every activity set clear measurable goals and assign accountability.

Sample goals

- Number of employees engaged in social inclusion programmes
- Number of policies reviewed
- Champion appointed
- Number of employees trained in diversity and inclusion
- Percentage of diverse employees at different levels
- Percentage of employees availing of flexible working
- Participation in wellbeing programmes

Activities that support inclusion (continued):

	Learning & Development
Develop talent	❯ Provide access to development activities to support underrepresented groups in both personal and professional development ❯ Introduce on the job coaching ❯ Nominate senior sponsors to help identify career opportunities, offer guidance, etc.
Train employees on diversity and inclusion	❯ Provide training for all employees on the social inclusion vision for the company as well as specific diversity and inclusion training to eliminate fears and create a welcoming workplace
Introduce equality proofing	❯ Examine policies and practices across the business to ensure that the needs and interests of all employees and in particular the target group are served

	Workplace Practices
Introduce flexible working	❯ Consider roles and ways of working that are suitable for flexibility ❯ Ask employees what flexibility would better support their personal circumstances
Promote workplace wellbeing	❯ Ensure fair terms of working and conditions across all grades ❯ Highlight opportunities for work life balance and wellbeing
Facilitate reasonable accommodations	❯ Work with individual employees to identify which workplace accommodations will help remove barriers, enhance performance and increase engagement ❯ Make it easy to request reasonable accommodations ❯ Encourage line managers to find out more about the employee's learning style, preferred working environment, interpersonal communications etc.
Introduce employee volunteering	❯ Most people like to feel they are making a difference and companies that actively engage employees in volunteering programmes consistently report engagement and motivation benefits

	Leadership
Safeguard for changing circumstances	The concept of the working poor is becoming increasingly evident. Employers can support their workforce to achieve and maintain a minimum essential standard of living. For example: ❯ Eliminate precarious work arrangements ❯ Pay a living wage ❯ Support employee saving schemes ❯ Ensure fair working terms and conditions ❯ Future-proof employees' skill levels

Case Study – Ulster Bank

At Ulster Bank our people are our most important asset therefore providing an Inclusive culture & work environment where they can bring the best of themselves to work is the primary aim of our Diversity & Inclusion strategy. Within this Strategy we have 5 pillars: Inclusive Culture, Gender Balanced, Disability Smart, Ethnically Aware & LGBT Innovative.

To embed this strategy we have an Executive Steering Group, Employee-Led networks and a Champions program in place where colleagues are encouraged to promote Diversity & Inclusion by becoming a Mentor, Sponsor, Role Model or Ally. We have also developed Inclusive policies, guidelines and training that we use to increase awareness and understanding amongst our employees. Some examples of this include: unconscious bias training for all employees, resourcing practices that drive inclusive candidate pipelines and interview panels and Moments that Matter guidelines for line managers to support employees coming out at work.
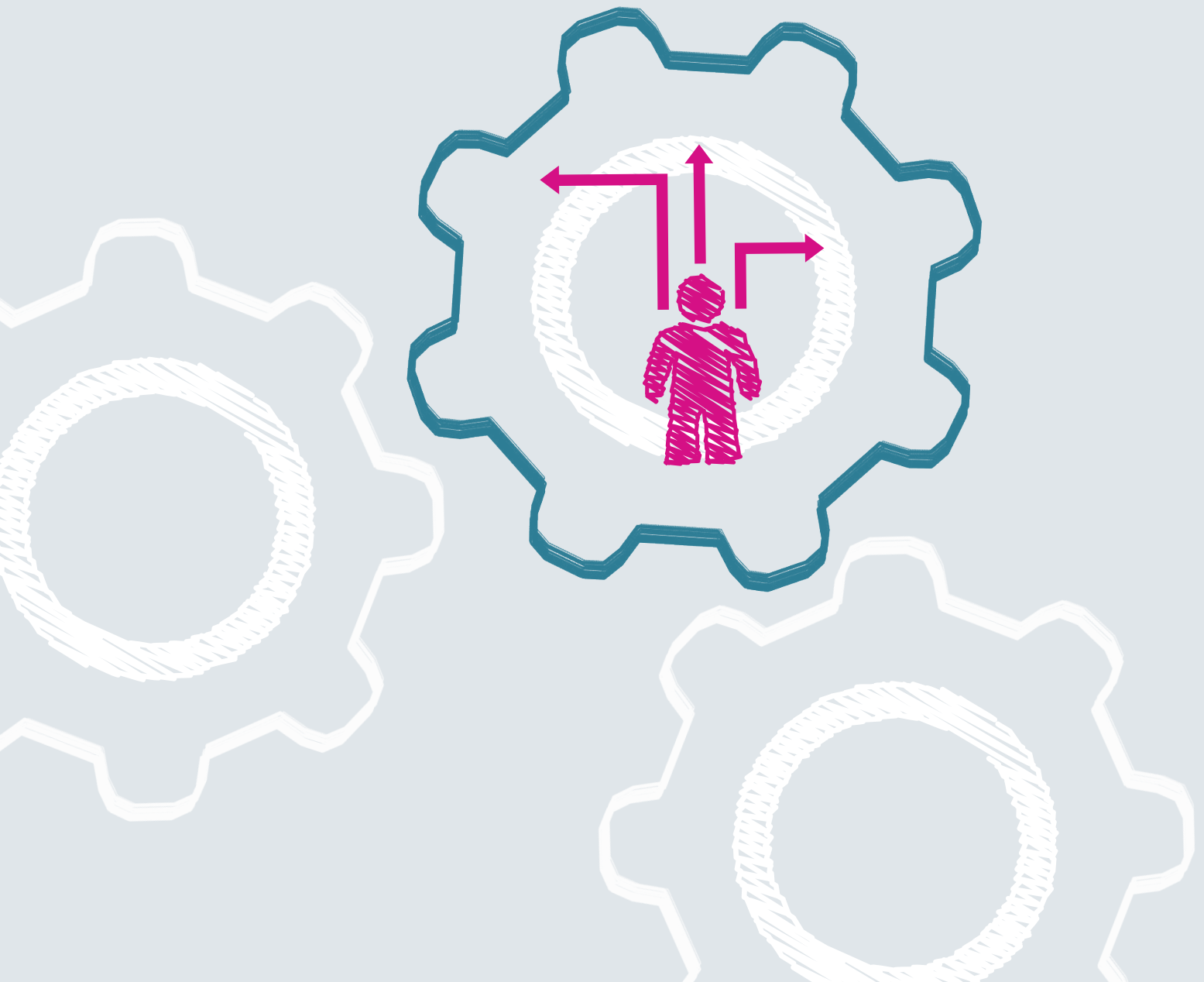
The Employee-led networks are an integral part of Ulster Bank's inclusive workplace. They provide peer to peer support and build awareness and understanding of what being diverse and inclusive means. By supporting the establishment and running of these networks, we are ensuring that all of our colleagues feel listened to, included and welcome in Ulster Bank. There are currently three in place, these are UB Women's Network, UB Rainbow Network and UB Enable, our disability network. These networks influence policy and training as well as organise events to role model inclusive ways of working.

Case Study - Deloitte

To signal the priority given to inclusion by the firm's leaders and to send a clear message that we strongly value everyone's perspective and contribution, Deloitte designed an innovative PhotoVoice project. Using PhotoVoice's participatory photography methodology we gave our overseas colleagues a voice and a platform to share their experiences of working at Deloitte in Ireland. The outcomes of this project enabled people to see beyond the "otherness" of colleagues from overseas and to spark a greater personal connection with them. The findings from this research have been used to shape inclusive leadership training for our leaders, to review our onboarding supports for all new joiners and our approaches to team building and social activities to ensure they are as inclusive as possible to all our people. As a result of this project we have a new Cultural Diversity Network. We have also noticed a big change in awareness amongst our leaders in terms of ensuring all cultures are fairly represented and included across formal and informal activities within the firm.

Outreach

Increasingly business is taking a strategic approach to community engagement. There are countless examples the length and breadth of the country of business impact on social issues through excellent community programmes. In the context of the Inclusive Employer, business can make a very significant difference to marginalised individuals and communities by actively engaging in structured programmes focused on education and employability.

Activities that support inclusion:

Planning for Inclusion	
Assess talent needs	➤ Identify critical skills needed for your organisation's success ➤ Consider how you could fill the gaps for these skills by providing opportunities for training and work experience ➤ Work in partnership with community based organisations
Critically assess current community engagement	➤ Review existing community initiatives and partnerships and assess which projects fit with social inclusion ➤ Identify the impact of these programmes ➤ Review how they support the social inclusion vision ➤ Identify gaps and opportunities for social cohesion. Put a strategic focus on community outreach and align with business priorities to tap into innovative solutions to business challenges
Align resources to education and employment	Education and employment are key social issues which business can impact. Through transfer of skills, pathways to employment, exposure to the world of work there are countless ways to support vulnerable groups to develop their potential and increase their job-readiness. ➤ Identify areas of education and employment most aligned to business and develop programmes to support your target group ➤ Identify unique aspects of your business that could impact on key social issues

Community Engagement	
Engage with community organisations	➤ Build strategic partnerships with community organisations working with your target group
Empower employees to volunteer	➤ People want to live and work in a fair and just society. Employees value working for organisations that want to make an impact on key societal issues
Create new pathways to employment	➤ Consider a transitional work placement programme as a potential pipeline into the company
Partner with disadvantaged schools	➤ There are many programmes supporting students in DEIS (Designated Disadvantaged) schools. Choose one that aligns with business priorities ➤ Extend existing school initiatives to DEIS schools. Many companies offer Transition Year work placements to family members of employees. Consider extending the programme to include students from local DEIS schools who may not have access to as many opportunities

Leadership	
Work with supply chain	➤ Prioritise suppliers that intentionally hire and provide career opportunities to people who otherwise have limited prospects for formal employment ➤ Help build diversity in your supply chain through supporting minority-owned businesses as potential suppliers and/or through business mentoring schemes
Collaborate with other employers	➤ Consider opportunities for a sectoral or geographical response to skills gaps ➤ Share examples of initiatives that have worked for you to inspire other employers to take action ➤ Become an advocate for inclusive employment

Agree measurable goals and assign accountability

Develop an action plan on community outreach based on a selection of the activities suggested above. For every activity set clear measurable goals and assign accountability.

Sample goals

➤ Number of community organisations partnered with

➤ Number of marginalised individuals in receipt of support

➤ Number of new hires from target groups

➤ Number of Transition Year work placements considering a career with your company

➤ Number of work placements offered/completed

➤ Attainment of new skills

Case Study – Veolia

Veolia partners with two DEIS schools in Dublin and Kilkenny with employees delivering workshops to provide an insight into the world of work for students in fifth year. Students are exposed to a selection of career opportunities from across the business from engineering to IT, sales and marketing to finance. Additionally the HR team provides practical tips and training related to job applications and interview preparation. The aim of this programme is twofold. In the first instance we wanted to make a positive and tangible contribution to our local communities. Secondly, we wanted to provide an opportunity for our employees to develop their own skills and work in cross-functional teams on an issue of social importance. Thanks to the success of the programme in the four years since we've been doing this in Dublin, we extended it to Kilkenny last year. In both schools, participating students have reported an increase in self-belief and confidence, raised career aspirations and new skill sets. Our employees that participate are highly motivated and engaged and have cited the programme as a valuable tool in developing both interpersonal and presentation skills.

Case Study – M&S

At M&S Ireland we are committed to an active Equal Opportunities Policy. This doesn't just cover our recruitment and selection procedures, but runs right through learning and development, appraisal, and promotion opportunities. We work hard to cultivate an environment where everyone can achieve their full potential.

The Marks & Start programme, which has been running in Ireland for the past 15 years, is an employability programme to help disadvantaged people into work. The three key groups the programme is aimed at are: single parents; people with disabilities or health conditions; people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

M&S work with Business in the Community Ireland's Ready for Work, to identify participants who then get offered a two- or four-week placement in an M&S store. Participants team up with a buddy as they learn more about the role, get a real insight into the job and get plenty of support. Participants can even be put forward for a permanent role. For many participants it has helped change their lives and given them the confidence to get back to work, training or education. In Ireland, the Marks and Start programme has supported over 250 individuals in achieving this.

Case Study - Janssen Supply Chain Ireland

As Ireland reaches a position of almost full employment it is important to ensure that the pool of talent we can draw from is growing. For example, our current expansion in Ringaskiddy, will need another 200 people over the coming year. This means we must think about our recruitment strategies in the long term.

The Bridge to Employment (BTE) scheme has been one of our long-standing responses to that challenge. BTE involved working with students over a two year period in school and staying in touch with them during their third level education. Not only are we recruiting new colleagues to help us deliver our medicines but the programme involves existing staff in the happy role of helping to develop the next generation of scientists from the communities around our plants. And it means that communities can take confidence in the future and have greater employment options as they grow.

"Not only has the BTE programme helped me to progress onto college and to the course I wanted to do, it has made me more confident in myself. The BTE programme provides so much to the students such as site tours, guest lectures and academic workshops. All of these and more have benefited me massively. As well as this, the people you meet along the way, are not only friendly and accommodating, but they motivate and support you in your career path. The BTE programme is hugely beneficial and I hope more students benefit from it as much as I did." Kain Caulfield, on placement from Cork Institute of Technology with Janssen Biologics in Ringaskiddy.

3 IMPACT

Ongoing monitoring and review of the action plan against SMART targets

This publication provides a blueprint for organisational change. As with any programme for change, accountability structures and performance measures aligned with core business should be built in from the outset. These measures should sit side by side with indicators of social change so that employers can assess both the internal benefits associated with becoming an Inclusive Employer as well as the difference they are making to local communities and to wider society.

Measure and Review

The previous section outlined a range of possible activities and lists of sample key performance indicators in the three key areas of Recruitment, Retention and Outreach. These actions can make a real difference in tackling social exclusion. Each of the suggested actions should be considered in the context of the overall vision for social inclusion and a suitable action plan developed to deliver on the social inclusion vision. For each activity agree measurable goals within a designated timeframe and assign responsibility.

The action plan should be a live document and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure progress or address challenges as they arise. Changes can be incorporated dynamically to create a cycle of continuous improvement.

Communicate

Inclusive employers cultivate a workplace culture that is open and transparent, built on trust and actively receptive to employee participation. A comprehensive communications plan will underpin this culture and greatly boost the chance of a successful roll out of a social inclusion strategy and generate pride in the organisation. Communicating on the vision of the programme, what it is achieving and offering regular opportunities for employees to have a say, contribute to strong engagement and motivation across the workforce.

Evaluate current communications through a social inclusion lens	❯ Review all marketing material, website, job adverts, customer information etc. for diverse imaging, wording, colour schemes ❯ Ensure websites are adaptable for different abilities ❯ Engage key stakeholders to uncover insights
Involve employees	❯ Promote the vision for social inclusion and share the high level goals ❯ Create active channels for employees to get involved with the social inclusion strategy ❯ Appoint grassroots champions ❯ Line managers are essential to making a social inclusion strategy work. Ensure their voices are heard, their concerns addressed and that they are recognised for their effort
Get the message out	❯ Publicise diversity awards received ❯ Highlight internal metrics and progress against them ❯ Speak at diversity and inclusion events ❯ Include inclusion messages at every opportunity ❯ Publicise workplace practices that support inclusion ❯ Call on other businesses and key stakeholders to embrace this agenda

Case study – Vodafone Ireland

In 2012, Vodafone Ireland started delivering Unconscious Bias classroom training sessions to our people. Initially it was rolled out by an external agency to our leadership community, and following the success of that programme, we developed an in-house led 1.5 hour session, which was made available across the business.
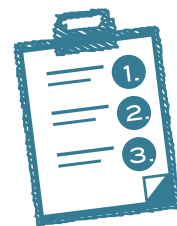
In terms of content, each session outlines a business case for why Diversity and Inclusion is an important part of our workplace culture, how unconscious bias can show up in the workplace, and how we limit its impact. Videos of scenarios and storytelling are used to engage the participants. The style of each of these sessions is informal and non-judgemental with a strong emphasis on open and honest discussion. Unconscious Bias classroom training was also integrated into our company induction for all new starters, and our Licence to Hire training for all hiring people managers. Culture change can be a challenge to measure, however our annual engagement survey shows consistently high results under the diversity indices, with 91% answering positively to questions regarding being treated with respect and fairness. Anecdotally our people manager community tell us that they have been influenced in their hiring practices by their new found awareness of the invisible biases that may be present.

Together with leadership buy in, and consistent measurement, for Vodafone Ireland education is a key enabler of Diversity and Inclusion in workplace culture.

Inspire

The approach to becoming an Inclusive Employer as outlined in this publication is designed to be adapted to suit individual businesses and customised to fit with existing strategic priorities. The process will be ongoing; there will be successes and challenges on the way. The primary aim of this document is to support employers to develop their own internal strategy on social inclusion. However to maximise the social impact we encourage employers to share their experiences of working on this agenda to encourage and inspire more businesses to actively work towards a more inclusive society.

Case study – Dawn Meats

Dawn Meats is proud to be one of 14 founding companies of the Open Doors Initiative. We have signed a pledge which commits us to provide training, apprenticeships, placements, community supports and job opportunities to marginalised groups. As a family company we recognise the role work plays in enhancing family life and the communities where we operate. We employ more than 40 different nationalities across the company, offering equality of opportunity through fair and transparent recruitment practices and supported with training to enhance career prospects. We look forward to working with the other Open Doors member companies on this important initiative...

Niall Browne, CEO of Dawn Meats

BITCI will host regular Business to Business workshops to share employers' experiences implementing this blueprint.

To participate contact us at info@bitc.ie

Become an Inclusive Employer

Employment offers the single biggest opportunity for vulnerable individuals to move out of a cycle of poverty and become active participants in society.

BITCI has 20 years of experience working with business to design, develop and deliver strategic initiatives for social impact. We are expertly placed to help business to fully embrace social inclusion and become an Inclusive Employer.

Our team of experts can help you to:

❯ **Customise this blueprint** to suit your business

❯ Devise your **social inclusion strategy**

❯ **Review policies** and provide best practice examples

❯ Choose **strategic partners**

❯ Prepare an **action plan**

❯ Roll out programmes that deliver **real benefits** to individuals and communities

❯ Measure and review **progress**

❯ Build a **communications plan**

❯ Share your **case studies** and **learnings** with other organisations

For more information contact - **info@bitc.ie**

The Leaders' Group on Sustainability -
Accenture, A&L Goodbody, Arup,
Bank of Ireland, Boots, CRH, Dawn Meats,
Deloitte, eir, EirGrid, ESB, Fujitsu,
Gas Networks Ireland, Janssen, KBC,
M&S, Musgrave, Northern Trust,
PM Group, PwC, SSE Ireland, Sodexo,
Transdev, Ulster Bank, Veolia and
Vodafone.

This publication supports the following
UN Sustainable Development Goals

| 1 NO POVERTY | 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS |