

# Shaping culture as a leader



'The culture of any organisation is shaped by the worst behaviour the leader is willing to tolerate.'

Steve Gruenert and Todd Whitaker, *School culture rewired*

We are all responsible for the culture of an organisation, but it is the leaders who shape it by their example.

Culture in the workplace is created through sharing values, beliefs and behaviours that in turn set out how people interact and work together. Through intentionally influencing the workplace culture, leaders can create inclusive environments that foster productivity and innovation as well as employee satisfaction.

Leaders and decision-makers should be held accountable not only for shaping culture but also for the impact of an organisation's DEI strategy on outcomes for both the business and individuals.

Diversity and inclusion should form a part of individual's – and the wider business's – performance evaluations. Efforts to promote diverse talent should be recognised across the workforce.

## Tools



RICS Podcast #71: Enabling D&I through inclusive business culture with Chanelle Gray & Marsha Ramroop. [Spotify](#); [Apple Podcasts](#); [Google Podcasts](#)



CIPD: [Beyond diversity training: What works in making workplaces more inclusive?](#)



RICS Journals: [How to develop an inclusive workplace](#)

# How leaders can create an inclusive culture

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## Engaging

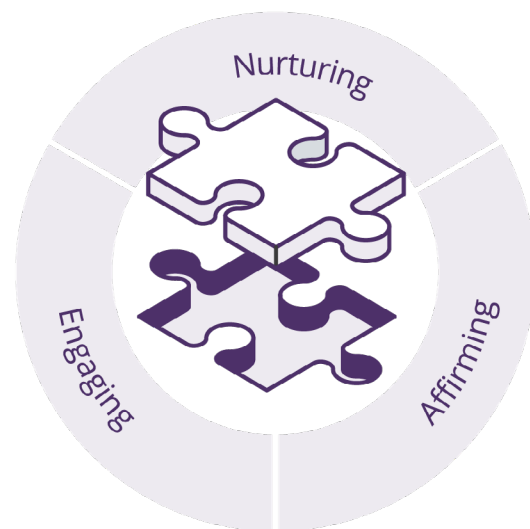
- Lead by example
- Continuously learn and improve
- Manage change and encourage teamwork

## Nurturing

- Foster psychological safety
- Provide mentorship and sponsorship

## Affirming

- Address and respond to bias
- Actively seek out diverse perspectives and experiences
- Encourage representation
- Avoid tokenism



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## Engaging

### Lead by example

Actions and behaviours set the tone for an organisation. Inclusive leaders have a responsibility to demonstrate these by respectful, transparent and accountable interactions. Ask for feedback from your staff about your leadership style and respond without defensiveness. Welcome new staff with a personalised email to show you value each new starter and outlining the behaviours you expect from them.

### Continuously learn and improve

Foster a culture of continuous learning and development. Fund training and set aside

time for your managers to learn and lead an inclusive culture. Stay updated on best practices and emerging research in this area and share with your staff. Stress-test your policies to ensure they don't discriminate against particular groups, and seek feedback from employees and use it to refine strategies and initiatives.

### Manage change and encourage teamwork

Cultivate a culture that is adaptable to change and where collaboration across departments and hierarchies is positively encouraged. Breaking down silos will help foster a culture of cross-functional cooperation and inclusion. Emphasise the importance of collective success and create opportunities for teams to work together on projects.

## Nurturing

### Foster psychological safety

Create an environment where individuals feel safe to express their thoughts, opinions, and ideas without fear of judgement or retribution. Encourage open dialogue and address any issues or concerns promptly and fairly.

### Provide mentorship and sponsorship

Establish mentorship and sponsorship programmes that support the development and advancement of underrepresented individuals. Encourage leaders to serve as mentors or sponsors for employees from diverse backgrounds, providing guidance and support. Try reverse mentoring – those at the start of their careers can be hugely valuable in helping leaders to become more effective and responsive.

## Affirming

### Address and respond to bias

Implement strategies to minimise unconscious bias in decision-making processes. Provide channels for reporting and addressing incidents of bias or discrimination and ensure appropriate actions are taken. Use structured interviews and diverse hiring panels.

### Actively seek out diverse perspectives and experiences

Create opportunities for cross-functional collaboration and ensure that diverse voices are included in decision-making processes. Do you know the diversity of decision-makers in the organisation? Are you ensuring those who are affected by decisions are involved in them appropriately?

### Encourage representation

Only commit to speaking at events where the panels are diverse. Promote representation and diversity in visual and written communications by featuring individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures and identities.

### Avoid tokenism

Strive for authentic representation by including a variety of perspectives, experiences and voices. Ensure that stock images, illustrations or other visual elements reflect diversity and avoid stereotypes or biases.



Deloitte sets out [six signature traits of inclusive leadership](#).



# Evaluation and continuous improvement

DEI isn't just a destination. Like financial profitability, any business risks its success by becoming complacent. DEI is an ongoing process where leaders continue to respond to their needs of the employees and the organisation, measuring and taking stock of what has been achieved and what's still to come.

## Regular assessment of diversity and inclusion initiatives

As the culture of an organisation changes so will the impact of the programme. Review the initiatives to measure their effectiveness and where progress has slowed or halted, or where change is not happening as anticipated in your strategy.

## Analysis of workforce demographics and representation

Review and understand the breakdown of the workforce. What trends are there for leavers? Are any groups disproportionately represented? Is there more or less diversity in different teams?

## Benchmarking and accreditation

Publish your diversity data so prospective employees can compare your performance against other organisations in the industry. Consider making public commitments using recognised accreditations.

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## Assessment tools

There are numerous organisations that offer tools and resources to help measure and track progress, whether overall or focused in a specific priority area of need.

In an effort to align more closely and build a stronger benchmark for the built environment sector, we encourage our firms and wider stakeholders in the UK to participate in Action Sustainability's annual [DEI survey](#). It is free for our members to participate and helps improve and refine the industry's largest [benchmarking dataset](#).

This then helps your organisation measure progress against the wider industry and set more accurate and impactful objectives.

UK employers should also be aware of [gender pay gap](#) and [ethnicity pay gap](#) guidance.

For our global members, there is a [global real estate DEI survey](#) that can be used to benchmark and track progress as well, though the focus is limited to gender and ethnicity depending on the region in which you are operating.

## Delivering confidence

We are RICS. As a member-led chartered professional body working in the public interest, we uphold the highest technical and ethical standards.

We inspire professionalism, advance knowledge and support our members across global markets to make an effective contribution for the benefit of society. We independently regulate our members in the management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our work with others supports their professional practice and pioneers a natural and built environment that is sustainable, resilient and inclusive for all.

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