

Advocating diversity: Your role in shaping a more inclusive workplace

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Diversity in the workplace is not just a buzzword; it's a fundamental aspect of fostering innovation, improving performance, and creating a more inclusive environment.

To truly embrace diversity, we must look beyond policies and statistics. It rests upon individuals taking responsibility and acting as role models within organisations.



In this article, we'll explore the crucial role of role modeling and offer practical steps to implement diversity in your daily work life.

1. Role modeling for diversity

Role modeling is pivotal in embedding diversity in an organisation. It challenges traditional stereotypes and encourages individuals to venture into roles not typically associated with their gender or background. Whether it's a man excelling in nursing or a woman thriving in engineering, role models pave the way for change.

2. Taking action: Rejecting discrimination

To advocate for diversity, you must confront discrimination head-on. Challenge inappropriate behavior, defend individuals' rights, and refer to your organisation's values and legal framework when necessary. Silence only perpetuates discrimination, but role models take a stand.

3. Linking diversity to performance

Recognise the tangible benefits of diversity for your organisation, from increased motivation and innovation to improved sales. Familiarize yourself with your organisation's diversity policy and communicate these benefits to your colleagues. By doing so, you become a persuasive advocate for change.

4. Pushing for more diversity

Promote diversity within your team by actively seeking differences when recruiting new staff. Encourage diversity in your team's partners and suppliers. Remind your colleagues to acknowledge and value the unique needs and differences of each individual. This approach fosters a culture of true integration.

5. Implementing diversity daily

- *Widening your circle:*
Step out of your comfort zone by engaging with colleagues outside your usual group. Say hello to everyone, have lunch with new acquaintances, and expand your professional network.
- *Being open-minded:*
Be willing to share information about yourself, challenge your assumptions, and acknowledge that everyone perceives reality differently.
- *Listening actively:*
Practice active listening by being patient, attentive, and validating others' points of view. This fosters understanding and inclusivity.
- *Controlling your communication:*
Ensure your communication is inclusive, positive, and respectful. Avoid negative signals and focus on facts while using "I" statements to express your feelings.
- *Valuing contributions:*
Promote a hierarchy-free environment where everyone's input is valued. Encourage quieter individuals to participate and provide feedback on all contributions.
- *Tackling exclusion:*
Be vigilant for signs of exclusion in your colleagues. Reach out to those at risk, use active listening techniques, and include them in various activities.

As a role model, your actions have a profound impact on creating a diverse and inclusive workplace. By actively advocating for diversity, linking it to performance, pushing for change, and implementing inclusive practices daily, you can be a catalyst for transformation. Embrace your role in shaping a brighter, more inclusive future for your organisation.

Let's **take action!** Together, we can make a difference in our workplaces and beyond.

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