



WIG

The Whitehall & Industry Group
connecting the sectors



'People' Series

An Intersectional Approach to D&I

19 January 2021

Expert Insight



We were joined by Sarah Churchman OBE, Chief Inclusion, Community & Wellbeing Officer, PwC to discuss best practice for building an understanding of intersectionality in an organisation and the main challenges that organisations face in creating a culture of intersectionality. Some of the areas that were touched upon included:

- Intersectionality as a concept is a useful bridge between early D&I efforts which focus on differences relative to a more mature approach which seeks to include those differences - no person is defined by one aspect of their personality and intersectionality acknowledges this.
- All organisations believe they are compliant with legislation but a simple compliance approach doesn't reap the benefits and the results that are needed to make true progress.
- Data has its pros and its cons. Whilst quantitative data is important it has to be equally balanced by qualitative insights - what are people really saying? Qualitative data insights engage people emotionally and we need to engage people both in their heads and in their hearts if people are going to commit to unpicking some of their thought processes and behaviours.
- Until people understand the science of decision making and how they may have made decisions in the past, particularly when it comes to people and talent, we are not going to move forwards.
- Most people believe that they are inclusive, but people don't know what they don't know - we only know our own experience - we need to understand the experience of others and that requires curiosity.
- The pandemic has proven that we need to improve our listening skills. Listening skills have been honed and this will be good for inclusion in the long term.

Time horizon					
Short term					Long term
Managing regulatory and reputational risk	Making the case for change	Leadership commitment	Diagnostic	Targets & goals	Shifting mindsets and behaviours
Ensuring that businesses are compliant with the relevant regulation and that the reported figures provide a true and fair view of the business.	Making the business case for Inclusion & Diversity and ensuring that it is understood and accepted by all.	Commitment of leadership to achieving better I&D as a business imperative with clear accountability for achieving it.	Diagnostic to identify the issues and areas where the most work is required and to understand the root causes. This includes a detailed inclusive culture assessment.	Setting both long-term targets and specific, short-term, achievable goals.	Removing institutional biases in processes and putting in place behavioural nudges.

Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Examples and guidance on how to undertake cultural assessments.
- Moving leaders away from tick box and data-only approach.
- Identifying and addressing gaps in financial/commercial literacy and cultural capital to make more inclusive hiring decisions.
- Unconscious bias training and how to improve its delivery.
- The use of supply chain management to drive diversity and inclusion, what works well and what is less successful.

WIG members can listen to this panel discussion [here](#)
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