

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP



WHAT IS INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP?

Inclusive Leadership: the capacity to efficiently manage and lead a heterogeneous group of people while respecting their uniqueness in an empathetic, bias-free way.

It's an authentic leadership style that rules out discrimination, bias, and favor based on color, race, and other protected characteristics and allows employees to feel valued for their input.



WHY IS INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?

We live in a diverse business world. There's not just variability in our workforce. There is also diversity in the customers we want to attract, the messages we share or consume via various platforms, and the markets we plan to expand to.

Inclusive leadership helps balance all these elements – inclusive leaders adapt quickly to diverse scenarios and alternate perspectives with an open, non-judgmental mind to bring the best results possible. Research shows that, when done right, there are many benefits; teams perform better and more collaboratively and make better overall decisions.

With businesses increasingly optimizing their diversity and inclusion activities, inclusive leadership is more relevant now than ever. No matter how great your company's diversity metrics get – be that in new hires you make or deals you close – if you don't have an inclusive environment that embraces all these differences and creates a workspace where everyone can bring their authentic selves to work, your D&I initiatives will fail.



TOP QUALITIES OF INCLUSIVE LEADERS

According to Deloitte, these are the top strengths inclusive leaders possess:

1. They're loyal ambassadors of diversity and inclusion – they never miss a chance to spread the word of D&I significance at work.
2. They accept that they're vulnerable and show it.
3. They combat old-fashioned paternalistic leadership styles.
4. They're aware of their own biases and challenge their habitual patterns.
5. They're excellent communicators – i.e., they're curious and great listeners.
6. They understand and adapt to various cultural norms.
7. They're team players, eager to help and do what's best for the team.



TIPS TO BOOST INCLUSION AT WORK

When recruiting for a senior role or promoting someone to a managerial position, it's good to keep these traits in mind. There are also ways to reinforce these characteristics over time. Here are some best practices for inclusive leaders:

- **Attend inclusive leadership training:** Through certain activities (e.g., storytelling), you can learn what the most triggering biases are for you and ways to overcome them. You can recall and practice them regularly to stay bias-free.
- **Find a mentor:** Talk to someone with more experience in the area and who has excelled in managing diverse teams. It doesn't have to be your own manager – it can be an external source you trust and look up to for their inclusive leadership behaviors and skills.
- **Ask for feedback:** You can use your 1:1 meetings to openly discuss how inclusive your managerial approach is with your teammates. Do they feel valued as a member of their team? Do they feel like they can ping you when something is wrong? Leaders should not take all these for granted – it's easy to get lost in translation when talking about biases.





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You

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