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## Real diversity 2017

*Businesses worldwide are stepping up their commitment to diversity and inclusion. But barriers remain. How can they be overcome?*

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# ***No holding back:*** Breaking down the barriers to diversity



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# Introduction

*Welcome to No holding back: Breaking down the barriers to diversity.*

The report looks at why diversity in all its forms – from gender, generation, ethnicity, sexuality and disability to people with a broader range of skills, backgrounds and experiences – are increasingly important to business success and how your organisation can harness the full competitive potential.

The report draws on research looking at the state of diversity in different industries worldwide, which shows that most businesses still have some way to go in making diversity a reality and realising the benefits. The priorities include creating a culture and environment in which everyone can thrive. It also includes rooting out entrenched biases, many of them unconscious, which hold back women, people from ethnic minorities and other groups under-represented in senior management.

## What we mean by diversity and inclusion

### **Diversity**

Individuals of all backgrounds, life experiences, preferences and beliefs are recognised and respected as individuals and valued for the different perspectives they bring.

### **Inclusion**

All people are given equal opportunity to contribute to business success and be their true selves, regardless of background.

# How diversity and inclusion can give you an edge

*The business case for diversity and inclusion has never been more compelling.*

## 1 Broadening your talent pool

More than three-quarters of the business leaders taking part in our latest Global CEO Survey see the limited availability of key skills as a threat to their growth prospects<sup>1</sup>, up from just over 50% when we asked the same question five years ago. Promoting diversity can help to broaden the pool from which talent is chosen.

## 2 Magnet for talent

Promoting diversity will make your business more attractive to work for. In a survey of more than 10,000 millennials (people born between 1980 and 1995), over 80% said that an employer's policy on diversity, equality and workforce inclusion is an important factor when deciding whether or not to work for them<sup>2</sup>. This reflects people's desire to be part of a business that not only offers them opportunities to develop their individual careers, but also has values which are aligned to their own. When this policy resonates with the brand, it can form a key component of the employee value proposition (EVP) – why people would want to work for the organisation.

## 3 Reputational risk and opportunity

Transparency is critical. Many workers now look closely at your record on diversity when judging whether it's worth putting in a job application or accepting an offer. For example, nearly 60% of the participants in a recent PwC survey looked at the diversity of the leadership team when deciding to accept a position with their most recent employer<sup>3</sup>. This scrutiny was even higher among women working in some of the industries that are often seen as being relatively male-dominated – 79% of women working in engineering and construction, 76% of women working in asset management and 71% working in industrial manufacturing, for example.

The spotlight could be heightened by regulation requiring your business to publicise its record on diversity. In the UK, for example, companies with more than 250 employees will from this year be required to publish information about the gender pay gap within their organisations<sup>4</sup>. Comparisons with peers are inevitable and could be uncomfortable. The risks of a poor rating include deterring the best candidates from joining your business. This could also act as a catalyst for existing employees to become disengaged and leave. Beyond the talent considerations, bad publicity about diversity and inclusion could put off customers or impair your ability to tender successfully for business.

<sup>1</sup> '20th CEO Survey: 20 years in the mind of the CEO – what next?', PwC ([ceosurvey.pwc](http://ceosurvey.pwc))

<sup>2</sup> PwC Millennial Survey 2015. For more on the cross-industry findings see 'The female millennial: A new era of talent' ([http://www.pwc.com/jg/en/publications/the-female-millennial\\_a-new-era-of-talent.pdf](http://www.pwc.com/jg/en/publications/the-female-millennial_a-new-era-of-talent.pdf))

<sup>3</sup> 'Winning the fight for female talent', PwC, March 2017 (<http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/about/diversity/iwd/iwd-female-talent-report-web.pdf>)

<sup>4</sup> 'Gender pay reporting is here, make the most of it', PwC, April 2017 (<https://www.pwc.co.uk/services/human-resource-services/gender-pay.html>)



#### 4 Boosting the bottom line

More than 80% of the CEOs whose organisations have a diversity and inclusion strategy believe it has enhanced business performance<sup>5</sup>. Specific benefits include bringing in people with the fresh ideas and experiences needed to foster innovation. Your workforce would also better reflect, understand and engage with the increasingly diverse set of clients you serve.

#### 5 Realising untapped economic potential

Enabling more people to actively participate in the economy and realise their potential can bring huge gains. Sweden has one of the highest rates of female participation in the workforce in the world (74%), just behind the rate for men in the country. Our analysis shows that bringing the female participation rate up to the level of Sweden's would boost GDP in the OECD by \$6 trillion<sup>6</sup>.

Further untapped potential lies in women returning to work. A study we carried out in the UK found that two-thirds of professional women go into lower-skilled or lower-paid roles or work fewer hours than they prefer when they go back to work after a career break. Fully utilising returning female professionals would boost UK GDP by £1.7 billion<sup>7</sup>.

Globally, 1.3 billion people with disabilities and their families – a market the size of China – control some \$8 trillion in disposable income<sup>8</sup>. Greater representation of people with disabilities within your workforce would help your business to engage with this powerful consumer group.

#### 6 It's the right thing to do

Ultimately, this is the right thing to do. Diversity forms part of the growing focus on fairness and inclusion within society, which are increasingly important elements of how businesses are expected to operate and how they are judged.



### Questions for your organisation

*How well placed is your organisation to find, attract and retain the workforce you need in a fast-changing marketplace?*

*How does diversity and inclusion contribute to the delivery of business goals?*

*Do you have the talent structures in place to enable a diverse workforce to thrive?*



<sup>5</sup> 'A marketplace without boundaries? Responding to disruption, PwC 18th Annual Global CEO Survey' (<http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-survey/2015/assets/pwc-18th-annual-global-ceo-survey-jan-2015.pdf>)

<sup>6</sup> Women in Work Index 2017, PwC (<http://www.pwc.co.uk/services/economics-policy/insights/women-in-work-index.html>)

<sup>7</sup> 'The £1 billion potential of women returners', PwC, in conjunction with Women Returners and 30% Club, 2016 (<http://www.pwc.co.uk/womenreturners>)

<sup>8</sup> Sustainable value creation through disability, Fifth Quadrant Analytics, 2013

## Diversity strategies aren't delivering

*The commitment to diversity and inclusion is there. But the reality falls short.*

Nearly nine out of ten business leaders taking part in our latest CEO Survey (87%) promote diversity and inclusion within their organisations<sup>9</sup>. The commitment is even higher in some sectors, notably insurance (94%), healthcare (91%) and power and utilities (90%).

Yet, the experiences of many women and people from minority groups don't reflect the publicly-stated aims of their employers. In a survey of more than 4,000 people from around the world we carried out earlier in the year, 52% of the women taking part and 39% of the men said that organisations talk about diversity, but opportunities are not equal for all<sup>10</sup>. When asked whether diversity (e.g. gender, ethnicity or age) can be a barrier to progression within their organisation, 38% of women and 28% of men said yes.

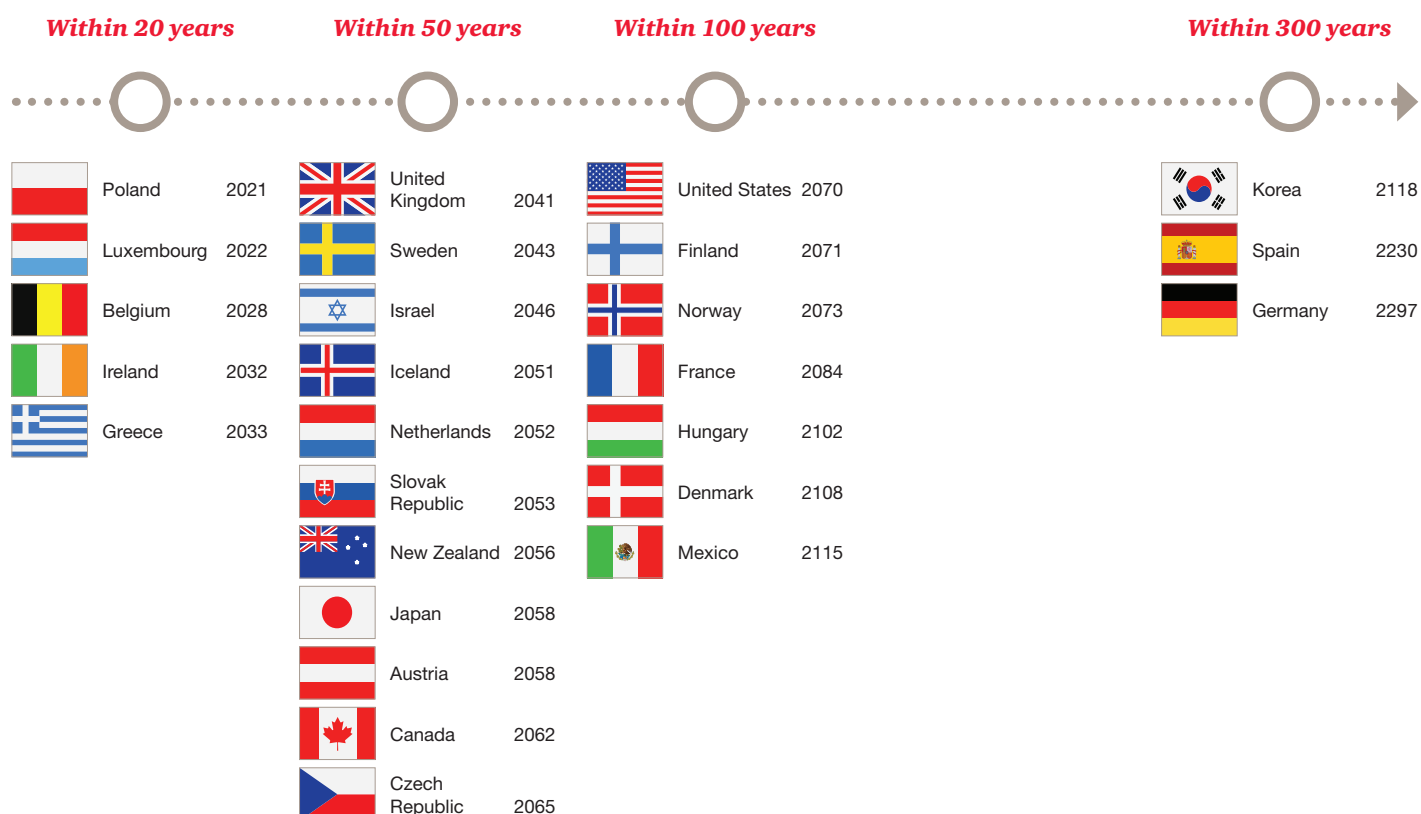
*Do you believe an employee's diversity (for example, gender/ethnicity/age) can be a barrier to employee progression in your current organisation?*



Source: 4,792 employees and 328 employers participating in PwC Inclusive Recruitment Survey 2017

<sup>9</sup> 20th CEO Survey, PwC (ceosurvey.pwc)

<sup>10</sup> 'Winning the fight for female talent', PwC, March 2017 (<http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/about/diversity/iwd/iwd-female-talent-report-web.pdf>)

**Figure 1 Time to close the gender pay gap**

Source: Women in Work Index 2017, PwC

### **Gulf in opportunities and rewards**

These barriers are reflected in the relatively low proportion of women and people from ethnic minorities within boards. In the US, for example, women make up 48% of the workforce, but hold only 30% of executive and senior management positions. African Americans make up 15% of the workforce, but hold only 3% of executive and senior management positions<sup>11</sup>.

If women and people from ethnic minorities are under-represented in senior management on the one side, they make up a disproportionate amount of the workforce in low-skilled and

low-paid areas such as labouring, catering and cleaning on the other. This combination of occupational segregation and disparities within senior positions contributes to a glaring gulf in average pay between different genders and ethnic groups within the workforce. Taking gender as a case in point, our analysis shows that the average pay gap between women and men within OECD countries is 16%, though some such as Germany (22%) are much higher<sup>12</sup>. At current rates of progress, the time needed to close the gap in most OECD economies would be at least 50 years, though Korea, Germany and Spain would take much longer (see Figure 1).

11 Job patterns for minorities and women in private industry, 2015, US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ([https://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/employment/jobpat-eeo1/2015/index.cfm#select\\_label](https://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/employment/jobpat-eeo1/2015/index.cfm#select_label))

12 Women in Work Index 2017, PwC (<http://www.pwc.co.uk/services/economics-policy/insights/women-in-work-index.html>)

**Figure 2 Barriers to increasing proportion of experienced female hires**

What do you feel are the most significant barriers to increased levels of female experienced hires?

	Employer	Male	Female
Lack of sufficient candidate pool	38% (1)	26% (4)	15%
Our industry sector is not viewed as attractive to women	24% (2)	22% (5)	14%
Women do not pursue career opportunities as aggressively as men do	21% (3)	30% (3)	29% (3)
Lack of adequate skills/experience	20% (4)	16%	14%
The impact of gender stereotypes/assumptions in the recruitment process	18% (5)	35% (1)	45% (1)
Concerns over cost and impact of maternity leave	16%	33% (2)	42% (2)
Interviewers have a tendency to select candidates that are similar to themselves	15%	21%	26% (4)
Organisational diversity policies are not sufficiently effective	13%	14%	16% (5)
Recruitment/Headhunter agencies do not refer enough female candidates	13%	7%	10%
My organisation is not actively doing enough to attract and recruit women	12%	6%	8%
Other	7%	8%	3%

Source: 4,792 employees and 328 employers participating in PwC Inclusive Recruitment Survey 2017

### **Lingering biases**

Yet the disparities within senior management aren't the only reason for the gulfs in pay. Our research reveals that nearly half of female workers (49%) believe that experienced women aren't paid as much as equally qualified men<sup>13</sup>. Three out of ten believe that recruitment is biased in favour of men. Asked about what they see as the most significant barriers to increasing recruitment of experienced women, women put lingering assumptions and stereotypes (e.g. that female candidates will have more family demands than male candidates/men are more committed to their careers than women) at the top of their list (see Figure 2). There won't be substantial progress on diversity and inclusion until such biases are rooted out.

### **Poor return**

Interestingly, when employers were asked the same question they blamed a lack of sufficient candidates (see Figure 2), highlighting the disconnect between them and their employees. It's also telling that despite all the time and effort being devoted to diversity and inclusion within many organisations, only 27% of the businesses in our survey had seen a resulting increase in recruitment of experienced women and only 15% been able to hire more experienced people from minority groups. When added to the high numbers of workers who believe that diversity is more talk than reality, these findings underline the need for a rethink of current diversity and wider talent management strategies within many organisations.

<sup>13</sup> 'Winning the fight for female talent', PwC, March 2017 (<http://www.pwc.com/gx/en/about/diversity/iwd/iwd-female-talent-report-web.pdf>)





### ***Questions for your organisation***

*What is the representation of women and other groups in senior management positions?*

*To what extent does the culture and attitudes within your business reflect your vision for diversity and inclusion?*

*What mechanisms are in place to monitor and respond to what is working – and what is not?*

## What's holding up progress?

*Key obstacles need to be cleared away before there can be real progress on diversity and inclusion.*

### **1 Occupational segregation**

Much of the clustering of women and people from minority groups within certain occupations is rooted in cultural factors that begin at a young age.

In relation to women, for example, these include narrow perspectives on what are deemed to be 'suitable' and 'unsuitable' careers for women. In a case in point, when we asked over 2,000 high school and university students in the UK whether they would consider a career in technology, only 27% of female students said yes, compared to 61% of males<sup>14</sup>. Technology was the first choice career for only 3% of the female students.

These stereotypes and assumptions can be compounded by concerns over the likelihood of being hired or fitting in within industries that are perceived to be male-dominated or the preserve of people from a particular ethnic group or social class.

Clearly, schools, the media and society as a whole need to do more to challenge these perceptions. Your business can also play a key role by reaching out to people who may not have considered a career in your industry and expanding recruitment drives to a broader range of schools and universities. In turn, publicly demonstrating your commitment to diversity would help to

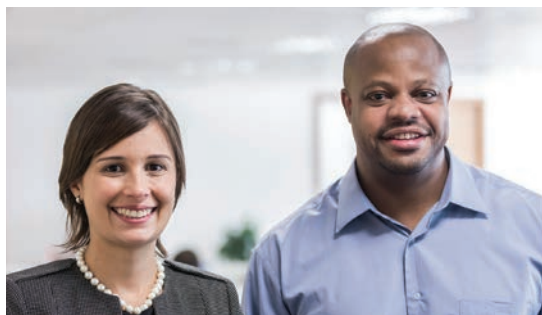
convince people that yours is a business where they will be welcomed as an equal and can realise their full potential.

### **2 Unconscious bias**

Among the biggest barriers to progress on diversity and inclusion are preferences and prejudices that people may not even be aware of – unconscious bias.

We're all susceptible to unconscious bias. First impressions do indeed count. We're also more likely to trust people of a similar age, appearance and background to ourselves. These responses are just one of the shortcuts our brains use to speed up decision making in a complex world. But in business, unconscious bias can be a blind spot, encouraging management to favour people like themselves when picking out candidates for hiring, promotion and projects. As a result, your organisation could be missing out on the opportunity to recruit people with fresh talents, innovative new ideas and a broader range of personal and professional experience. Many of the people who've traditionally been under-represented in senior management, including women, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minorities, suffer as a result.

<sup>14</sup> 'Women in Tech: Time to close the gender gap', PwC, (<http://www.pwc.co.uk/who-we-are/women-in-technology.html>)



### **3 Lack of integration into business management**

There is still a tendency to see diversity and inclusion as the responsibility of HR or a specialist team, rather than integrating them into wider business management. But real progress requires full business buy-in across areas such as selection and career progression. And as diversity and inclusion become increasingly crucial in determining how your organisation is perceived by customers, as well as talent, it's important to recognise this as a reputational risk, rather than just an HR issue. Priorities for managing the risk include gauging how your organisation is perceived on diversity and inclusion, and what risks and opportunities these perceptions open up<sup>15</sup>.

Putting business management in the driving seat on diversity and inclusion is an opportunity to engage more closely with a broad range of communities and tailor products and services more effectively. In turn, managing diversity and inclusion as a reputational and risk priority can help to identify and cement these connections by winning community trust and responding in ways that make lives better.



### **Questions for your organisation**

*How do you deliver visible diversity action and results?*

*How are you reaching out to talent that may not have considered a job in your business or industry?*

*How are diversity and inclusion considerations incorporated into business decisions on key topics such as customers, products and location?*

<sup>15</sup> We explore the reputational risks surrounding diversity and inclusion and how to manage them, with particular reference to financial services, in 'Opening up on diversity: Getting to grips with the reputational risks' (<http://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/financial-services/insights/opening-up-on-diversity.html>)

## Making diversity a reality

*Through an employee's career, there are milestones during which an employer's interaction with them is vital in fostering a culture of diversity (see Figure 3). Here we look at the enablers of change through this career journey and how you can make a real difference within your business.*

Leaders set the tone for the organisation as a whole. Clear articulation and consistent support for your diversity and inclusion policies from your leadership team is the surest way to foster the organisation-wide buy-in for diversity and the culture and behaviour you want to promote.

Engaging line management can be difficult, especially if they don't see diversity as directly relevant to them. But, when diversity is put in the context of engaging with customers, many of whom will be women and people from ethnic minorities, diversity is likely to have more resonance.

A key part of the board-level direction is developing a compelling business case for diversity and inclusion that articulates the bottom line benefits and ensures management at all levels of the organisation understand and promote the objectives and associated policies. You can then provide momentum for the realisation of these objectives by setting targets and tracking them against internal goals and peer organisations.

Experience indicates that there are two key components to making the most effective use of targets. The first is being able to monitor and analyse workforce data (such as employee demographics and discrepancies in promotion) in order to identify areas requiring additional attention and to effectively set and measure progress against targets. Second, targets tend to have greater urgency and impact when management is individually accountable and progress against diversity goals is incorporated into performance objectives and rewards. Our research reveals considerable differences between sectors in both data monitoring and executive accountability for the results<sup>16</sup>. Retail and consumer goods, healthcare and pharmaceuticals are leading the way in dedicating a C-Suite position to diversity and inclusion. Under the leadership of a senior executive, the diversity and inclusion agenda is aligned to corporate strategy and has greater visibility to employees. The starting point for getting up to speed would be investing in appropriate data systems and implementing a governance structure around them.

<sup>16</sup> 'Global diversity and inclusion survey', PwC 2016 (<https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/services/people-organisation/global-diversity-and-inclusion-survey.html>)

Figure 3 The interactions that shape diversity



Throughout an employee's career, we can consider there to be milestones during which an employer's interaction with an employee is vital to fostering a diverse culture.


**1**   
**Leadership and tone from the top**  
 Creating a leadership team that sets a positive influence

**2**   
**Recruitment processes**  
 Ensuring that the firm's recruitment process aims to identify strong candidates irrespective of factors such as age, gender or ethnicity and provides the necessary foundation for a diverse talent pipeline.

**3**   
**Learning and development**  
 Ensuring employees have equal opportunities to participate in learning and development programmes will help ensure that they are able to develop their careers.

**4**   
**Talent identification**  
 As an employee gains experience and knowledge through their employment, the firm should be able to recognise talent on an ongoing basis.

**5**   
**Promotion**  
 Opportunities to progress should be communicated to employees regularly, along with the competencies required to do so.

**6**   
**Flexibility in workstyle**  
 Balancing family and work life can become an increasing struggle as an employee progresses through their career, with flexible working policies crucial in maintaining employee wellbeing.

**7**   
**Reputation and communication**  
 Creating a leadership team that sets a positive tone and drives change.





## Reverse mentoring

Understanding is the key to engaging with a more diverse workforce. To help leaders get a better idea of what life is like from a different perspective, some businesses are creating opportunities for senior management to be mentored by junior staff, from either a different gender or ethnic background.

### 2 and 5 Recruitment processes and promotion

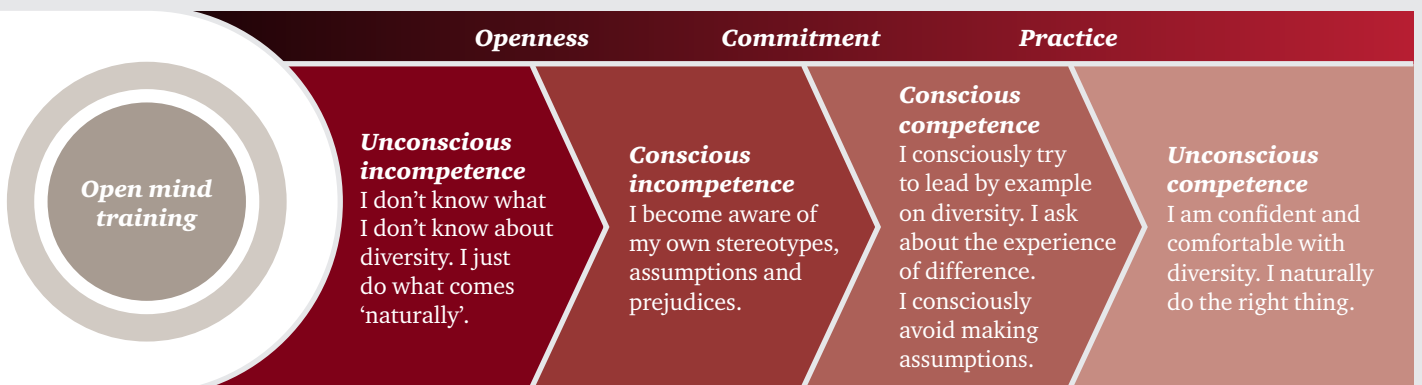
The organisations that have made most progress on diversity and inclusion have adopted a more systematic approach to identifying and tackling biases. A key part of this is tracking whether hiring and promotion are equal and, if not, identifying what biases may be at play. If 70% of promotions are going to men, for example, why is this, can it be justified and, if not, how can career advancement be put on a more equal level?

With women seeing gender stereotypes as the biggest barrier they face, it's important to develop ways to make interviewers more conscious

of unconscious bias and its impact. Within recruitment, a number of companies are going further by introducing 'blind CVs', which strip out names, universities and other such potential sources of bias. Some have also begun to use electronic screening tools and carry out initial interviews on a pre-recorded video platform to further eliminate human biases and help ensure that skills and experiences more closely align to what they've identified as being key criteria for success. While follow-up interviews are face-to-face, the questions are structured to help increase consistency and objectivity.

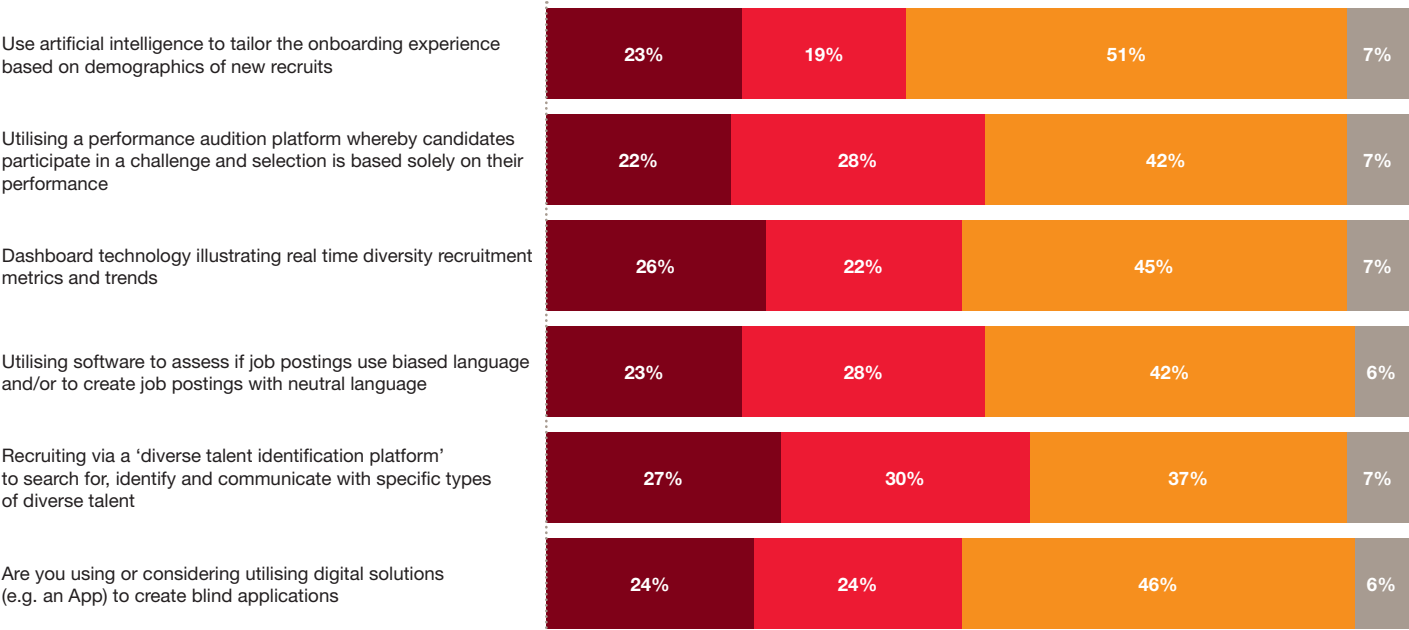
### Open mind training

One way to identify and overcome unconscious biases is open mind training, which helps people to become mindful of these potential blind spots in their thinking and the impact on their decisions.



**Figure 4 Harnessing technology**

Are you using or considering using any of these technology solutions in your efforts to draw more women and minority job candidates to your organisation?



■ Yes, currently exploring ■ Yes, currently using ■ No ■ Don't know

Source: 328 employers participating in PwC Inclusive Recruitment Survey 2017

As Figure 4 highlights, the use of artificial intelligence to target and screen candidates is now widespread. The potential benefits include offering a more accurate match between position and candidate, while cutting out a lot of the unconscious biases.

**3 and 4 Learning, development and talent identification**

Access to effective learning and development opportunities is important in the development of leadership. Regular reviews of who is taking part in learning and development and the criteria for selection can help to ensure that access to such opportunities is fair.

Performance management and the resulting criteria for identifying people with leadership potential can be subject to unconscious bias. It's therefore important to ensure appraisals are genuinely relevant and objective. In our experience, this is most successful when it looks at what people do and how they do it, rather than just performance against financial goals.

These evaluations can provide a valuable catalyst for determining what behaviours and capabilities are needed across the workforce and how to promote them. This includes dealings with customers and colleagues, the relevance of performance measures and who is picked out for mentoring and leadership.



## Talent watcher

One way to promote fairer identification of people with leadership potential is to appoint a dedicated ‘talent watcher’ from within the executive team, who has the influence to ensure that the people being watched have access to appropriate assignments and barriers to progression are removed. The talent watcher should also take the lead in investigating why a high potential employee might choose to leave the organisation and addressing the underlying issues.

### 6 Flexibility in workstyle

Our 2015 survey of female millennials found that while more than half (51%) say that flexibility and work-life balance programmes exist in their organisation, they are not readily available to them in practice. Forty five per cent believe that taking advantage of flexibility and work-life balance programmes would have negative consequences for their careers.

It’s therefore important to make flexibility a real part of women/all staff’s working lives rather than a just a passive policy. This includes identifying why women think taking advantage of flexibility policies could harm their careers and seeking to address this. Some organisations are looking to adopt a more proactive approach to flexibility, which gives people much greater say in how they meet work demands (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5** The flexibility strategy – attacking from four angles





## **7 Reputation and communication**

The brightest and best candidates will actively seek out organisations that have a strong reputation for diversity and inclusion.

It's therefore important to ensure that diversity and inclusion are at the core of your employer brand. It's also important to spotlight senior role models, who can encourage their younger counterparts to aspire to greater heights professionally, and help give them confidence that their ambitions can be realised within your organisation.

Even if your organisation is behind the curve on diversity and inclusion now, there are opportunities to get on the front foot by using your communications to acknowledge that there are issues that need to be addressed and setting out your plans for accelerating progress. Such openness and resolve can make a favourable public impression.



## **Questions for your organisation**

*How are leaders within your organisation held accountable for diversity and inclusion results?*

*What are you doing to identify and tackle unconscious bias?*

*How effectively do you communicate your approach to diversity and inclusion, targets and progress against them?*



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## **Conclusion:** Raising the level of urgency

*Your board wants greater diversity. Your customers and employees expect it. But, while progress is being made, it may feel painfully slow.*

You can chart your own progress by gauging whether you fully agree, partially agree or disagree with the following statements:

- 1 We can articulate a clear case for diversity in recruitment, promotion, decision making and client relations.
- 2 The framework for talent assessment, promotion and access to training/key assignments has been updated to enhance awareness of potential biases and ensure people from under-represented groups can and do reach their potential.
- 3 We have clearly defined succession plans and leadership programmes for people from under-represented groups.

- 4 We have procedures for understanding why people from under-presented groups may not reach their potential or leave, and how this can be addressed.
- 5 We regularly review promotion rates and other key indices to test for fairness and identify potential biases.
- 6 We gauge and communicate progress on achieving diversity, both internally and externally.

Developing these systematic frameworks, challenging your organisation on progress and actively tackling identified barriers will turn diversity strategies from high level statements of intent to policies that can make a real difference, not just to your workforce, but your ability to succeed in a fast-changing marketplace.



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If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this report in more detail, please get in touch with your usual PwC representative or one of the contacts listed below:

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