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on the Future@Work

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How Companies Can Write More Inclusive Job Descriptions

FUTURE OF WORK CONVERSATIONS:

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The Potential of Undervalued Workers in Times of Talent Scarcity

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A note from our editor

Welcome back to Insights Magazine. In this fifth issue, we're talking about diversity, equity and inclusion. The business case for diversity, equity and inclusion – or, DE&I – is stronger than ever before in this shifting and talent-scarce world of work. In fact, workplaces that prioritize DE&I tend to be happier, safer, and more productive places for workers – key for talent retention.

But what often gets left behind when talking about DE&I is the full scope of the buzzword. For example: companies can be diverse, but are they forgetting to pay greater attention to building inclusive environments? How important are inclusive workplaces to candidates, and can we as organizations start this process from the start, when posting job ads? Is it time to tackle less-talked-about topics, like menopause or ageism in the workplace? Dive into our latest issue and explore new insights on how DE&I matters -- and the true breadth of the word. We'd love to hear from you and welcome your feedback and suggestions for future issues. Shoot me an email: maria.lsantamaria@adecgroup.com

María López Santamaría
Editor of Insights Magazine



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#TOP STORY

Diffability: The Potential of Undervalued Workers in Times of Talent Scarcity

In this candidate-driven market, employers are overlooking a capable pool of potential employees out of fear or ignorance.

This piece is authored by **Caroline Styr**,
Head of Thought Leadership Research
at The Adecco Group.

What if I told you a group of workers existed, that were not only motivated, but also have strong performance and are less likely to quit than other workers. You'd think, sure, but they're employed already, right?

Wrong! What if I told you they were unemployed and hungry for work?

71% of CEOs are concerned about the [impact of labour shortages](#) on their business strategy while the same percentage of workers are satisfied with their [sense of job security](#). It's clear that organisations are operating in a candidate-driven market. In this environment, it would be remiss of any business leader to overlook a capable pool of potential employees out of **fear or ignorance of their label**: disabled.

In this article, we'll address common misconceptions of hiring workers with disabilities, the stigma surrounding them and showcase the power of different abilities. The message is simple: hire and support disabled workers, not because you think you "should," but because it's good for business.

What's disability got to do with ability?

When [researchers](#) sent applications in response to over 6000 job advertisements, they found that job applicants with disabilities were significantly less likely to receive employer interest or call-backs for interviews. A very important feature of this research was that the disabilities in question were specifically chosen because they had no bearing whatsoever on the skillset required for the job - accounting.

Often the reason employers are reluctant to hire disabled workers is more complicated, and more deeply engrained. It has to do with beliefs that disabled people are "less than," the result of centuries of stigmatisation and discrimination. Consider for a moment (and, I promise, no-one will ever know the answer unless you tell them), have you ever snuck a second look at a person in a wheelchair, or an amputee? Have you ever felt nervous about "asking the wrong question" when interacting with someone with a disability? If you've answered yes to either, then it's possible you're identifying your own stigma.

Evidence demonstrates that workers with disabilities face [stigmatisation and discrimination](#) in the workplace

Why are employers reluctant to hire disabled workers, if they are capable of completing the activities and tasks required of the job role?

One obvious answer: money. There is a strong assumption that the accommodations required by disabled workers require investment on behalf of the employer, think wheelchair ramps or specialist technical equipment. In reality, [research shows](#) that the majority of accommodations (56%) cost absolutely nothing. The average cost of remaining accommodations is around \$500.

In fact, not hiring disabled people could be a financial risk. [Research from Accenture, in collaboration with Disability:IN and the American Association of People with Disabilities \(AAPD\)](#), revealed how companies that embrace best practices for employing and supporting people with disabilities are, on average, twice as likely to have higher total shareholder returns.

Source: Job Accommodation Network (JAN), '[Costs and Benefits of Accommodation](#),' October 2020



and, as such, are less likely to be [accepted by co-workers](#). This leads to adverse psychological impacts, including [stress and anxiety](#).

There are also negative organisational impacts. Low social acceptance [reduces collaboration and innovation](#) and can lead to lower productivity and performance.

Stigma is the primary reason that people with invisible disabilities (who make up [two thirds of the one billion people worldwide with disabilities](#)) choose not to disclose their condition to employers.

Understanding stigma against workers with disabilities

Stigmas are not evidence-based views. They are views that are upheld because the people around us believe them too; in other words, they are socially constructed. Stigmas are based on personal attributes (for example,

an amputated limb), that are considered flawed within a specific context (for example, a running track).

A popular model for understanding stigma towards people with disabilities highlights six dimensions of stigma:

Stigma dimension	Explanation
Concealability	Is the condition invisible or visible? To what extent are visible manifestations controllable?
Course	How does the condition change over time? Is the condition chronic?
Disruptiveness	Does the condition obstruct social interaction and communication?
Aesthetic qualities	To what extent do the visible manifestations of the condition make the individual unattractive or unpleasant to be around?
Origin	How did the condition first occur? Who or what is responsible for the origination of the condition?
Peril	To what extent does the individual pose a threat to others?



Source: *The six dimensions of [stigma for people with disabilities](#)*. Jones & Corrigan, 2014.

Different conditions trigger different types of stigma reactions. For example, research has shown that individuals with [HIV are more stigmatised](#) if they are perceived as responsible for contracting the condition ('origin'). [Mental illness](#) has been assumed to elicit higher threats to other people, which leads to more stigmatisation ('peril'). Some research suggests that [chronic illnesses](#) are the most highly stigmatised ('course'). Finally, in my own research, Irritable Bowel Disease (IBD) was more highly stigmatised on the 'aesthetic qualities' dimension, tapping into decades of cultural disgust with the subject of poop.

While models like this help make sense of the low employment rates of people with disabilities, they still force a laser-focus on the condition itself. By staring the supposed "problem" right in the face, we miss an opportunity to celebrate the unique qualities

of different people, with different bodies, different backgrounds and different abilities.

Diffability: A more inclusive way of understanding people with disabilities

The term diffability is gaining popularity as an alternative to disability, that removes the negative connotations around the prefix dis that literally means apart, deprived or excluded. (If you really want to get into it, check out Avesta Alani's book [Diffability](#)).

Showcasing individuals with diffability allows us to spotlight unique powers that are often overshadowed by stories that focus on disability. Stories of diffability help make the case for hiring workers with disabilities, not simply to meet inclusivity criteria or moral obligations, but because it brings unique skills and perspectives into the organisation that are simply good for business.

Diffability storytelling

Neurodiversity:

Shifting perceptions

Neurodiversity has gone through a bit of a re-brand lately. Neurodivergent individuals include those with dyslexia, ADHD and autism. Many famous names and highly successful professionals, such as Richard Branson and Bill Gates, have talked openly about their conditions, which floods the marketplace with positive stories that showcase the unique abilities of neurodivergent workers.

Although every individual is unique, **commonly attributed skills** include:

- *Visual thinking*
- *Attention to detail*
- *Pattern recognition*
- *Visual memory*
- *Creative thinking*

Research suggests that teams with neurodivergent professionals can be 30% more productive.

In an organisation that focuses on diffability over disability, disclosure conversations and accommodation requests might look a lot different. Taking one of the examples above, “email follow ups for clarity,” Why should this accommodation request focus on the disability over the adjustment? There are many reasons why an individual might require this accommodation, and there are many reasons why this could simply be considered good practice that benefits the organisation, especially in an industry that requires deliberate decision-making tracking, for example, investment banking.

By removing the label and shifting the focus away from disability towards ability, we can start to unpick deep-seated stigma and create a new story that celebrates difference.

Addressing stigma towards people with disabilities in your organisation

1. Encourage open conversations in your organisation, focusing on ability not disability.

Disability/ invisible illness communities and ERGs are a great place to start. For workers who are comfortable, champion their successes without over-indexing on their disability. Invite speakers into your organisation to talk about their strengths and achievements, without spending excessive time talking about the nature of their disability or the hurdles they've faced. Small storytelling adjustments like this can help to shift mindsets.

2. Get to know your disabled workforce better.

In order for colleagues to feel comfortable talking openly about their needs with their employers, colleagues and peers, a culture of absolute trust is vital. This starts with

an inclusive and empathetic hiring process and, crucially, ongoing support once a person with a disability is hired. As a starting point, consider **how candidates are invited to disclose their disability** – quite often this is an impersonal, highly unempathetic process.

3. Employers, challenge your own misconceptions.

Ensure that for every open job role, the skills and activities required are clearly stated. When considering a disabled applicant, ask yourself, “Am I making assumptions about their abilities based on my (likely limited) knowledge of their condition, or am I focusing above all else on the skills and tasks I need this person to do?”

4. Experiment with disability-agnostic accommodation requests. Can you separate the legalities from the accommodation request, and focus discussions about adjustments on empowering individuals instead of ‘dealing with’ their perceived limitations?

5. For workers with disabilities, consider the six dimensions of stigma when facing potential discrimination at work.

Eradicating centuries-long stigma doesn't happen overnight. Understanding the unconscious misconceptions, you might you be up against can be a source of strength. While it is not your job to educate every person you encounter who is underinformed, being able to address their biases concisely and directly is a useful approach to have in your back pocket.



Key Takeaways

In times of talent scarcity, overlooking an eager and available source of talent is entirely illogical. It's time for employers to dig deep and address the tough question of WHY stigmatisation towards workers with disabilities still exists in their organisation. By sharing stories of diffability, highlighting the unique capabilities of workers with disabilities, we can all start to shift the socially constructed narrative of "otherness," leading to more inclusive organisations that are good for people - and for business. ✕



#PODCAST



Future of work conversations



Why Menopause Should Be Discussed Across Organizations

Menopause is still a topic that is not widely spoken about in organisations, and certainly not frequently. Why is it necessary to discuss menopause across organisations and take action on that? During our conversation with Helen Tomlinson, Head of Talent Development, we discussed how to address menopause in organisations and why it is so important.

“80% of women who are going through menopause are in the workplace,” says Helen Tomlinson, Head of Talent Development. “That has changed over time and generations because we have to be economically active for a lot longer than we did in previous generations.”

Women also indicated that menopause has negatively impacted their workplace experiences in six out of ten

cases. About one in five women have left their jobs due to menopause, while empirical evidence indicates that these women are in senior roles. “So, the more senior role you're in, the more likely is that the symptoms of menopause will impact your ability to do your job.”

Ways to start the menopause conversation and drive policy creation

Tomlinson explained that last year when only 10% of UK organisations had menopause policies, they felt that as a large organisation they needed their own policy. Therefore, they launched one. Over the last year, that 10% has only grown incrementally to about 17% of large organisations.

The key is how you launch the policy into the business, and then how you embed it.

Here are a few things we did to ensure the success of our policy initiatives that other organisations might find useful:

Get the conversation going with podcasts, workshops and informal meetings.

The starting point is getting the conversation going.

“I did a number of podcasts with some senior people across the organisation talking about their experiences



and what that did was open up the floodgates, if you like, for other people to think, ‘if others feel comfortable talking about it, I can start to talk about it as well,’” Tomlinson said. “And we have used that technique and strategy for other topics since then. But that really got the conversation going.”

Another thing organisations can do is promote informal meetings, like Tomlinson’s inclusion coffee mornings. “I set one up last October called Hot Topics, with reference, obviously to one of the key symptoms of menopause being the hot flushes,” explains Tomlinson. They opened up hot topics and people

came and started to talk about their lived experiences. “We had people coming on talking about it from a male perspective about how it impacted on their relationships, and even people who, in their culture, don’t have the words to talk about it.” In some cultures, menopause isn’t a subject, and it was the first time people ever felt comfortable talking about it.

Create momentum.

Tomlinson’s organisation kicked the policy initiative off with a launch on world menopause day last year. This was a celebration of the fact that they had created a menopause policy. And then they did a series of manager workshops after that. These gave managers the tools to open up that conversation with their colleagues to be able to talk about menopause, the symptoms, and how it impacts their work life. They also gave managers the tools to support that, and just make it a more comfortable place for people transitioning through menopause to work.

Introduce new tools.

“One of the key things that we’ve introduced is the symptom checker, a really good tool to start off the conversation,” Tomlinson said. “People came up to me all the time and say, ‘I’ve got this symptom, do you think I’m in menopause?’” The symptom checker is an excellent tool to start the conversation, same as the colleague sessions, giving employees the tools to be able to start the conversation.

Get external help.

Having someone externally kick off the conversation makes it much more open and easier. “I’ve been really lucky that I’ve delivered the menopause policy workshop to over 125 clients since we launched the policy,” says Tomlinson. “From an internal perspective, in terms of our clients, I’ve had amazing opportunities to go out and help our clients to embed their policy, and get the conversation moving in their organisation.”

Tomlinson believes that often in SMEs, the HR community doesn’t feel comfortable having that conversation, so getting someone externally to talk about that and help get the conversation underway is a helpful starting point.

Lobbying government.

“I am actively lobbying the government to adopt menopause policies and legal requirements in workplaces with over 250 employees. We hosted a roundtable with governments in March of this year. And it was Carolyn Harris, who took the HRT bill to Parliament. That was our guest speaker on that. And we invited clients to come and watch the roundtable where we talked about having menopause allies, mineral mates, a bit like Mental Health First Aiders. And so we’re hosting another roundtable because that went so well.”



Key Takeaways

Having a group of supportive people in the organisation to listen to people’s challenges and issues and be able to share the tools and techniques with them to really support them through the menopause and other life issues is very important. “I think the internal piece is to keep that conversation going: the more open we are as an organisation, the more supportive of people through various life stages, that makes us more inclusive and a better place to work.” ✎

C-SUITE VOICE:

How Companies Can Write More Inclusive Job Descriptions



This article is authored by **Gordana Landen**,
CHRO of the Adecco Group.

The core promise of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is simple: fair treatment and opportunity for all. Yet so many organisations, still struggle to achieve full equity and inclusion in the workplace. Why? It helps to first understand each word individually:

Diversity is recognizing, respecting and celebrating each other's differences. Equity means fairness for all. It also means equality of opportunity within an organization. And inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Enhancing DEI in hiring requires more than seeking candidates of different races or genders. Inclusive hiring takes into account all variations of diversity from inherent to acquired, from visible to more elusive. Everyone is diverse.

It's time for companies to check in on their recruitment processes and review how they gather data on their people. Workers want to be a part of a truly inclusive and diverse company culture, and that starts at the source: the job description.

Language

The language used in job descriptions can play a big role in inclusive hiring. Existing descriptions should be assessed and corrected for unconscious bias resulting from:

1. Gender coding

Gender coding refers to signals, such as words, phrases, or traits, that have been historically associated with or attributed to either the male or female gender. Words such as 'outspoken' or 'individualistic', for example, connote masculinity. 'Assertive' or 'forthcoming' express the same qualities without such a male-leaning undertone. And 'empathetic' or 'considerate' suggest femininity while 'mindful' or 'emotionally intelligent' convey the same message.

Gender coding often occurs in recruiting messaging and can create a false impression as to who the ideal candidate is for a role. Tools such as the [Gender Decoder](#) can help identify such words used in job ads.

2. Gender-specific pronouns

Gendered pronouns exclude pools of candidates who may otherwise be qualified for the role. Using the pronoun 'You' instead of 'He' or 'She' avoids gender bias while also giving the impression that candidates are being directly spoken to.



Using 'you' is even more critical today with the changing nature of gender identity. Recent research shows not only the increasing numbers of people in the workforce who do not identify with either 'he' or 'she', but the growing acceptance of other gender identities by those who do. More and more individuals are finding the language and support to identify as something other than their assigned sex at birth, and are then entering the workforce empowered to identify as transgender or gender-non-conforming.

Alternatively, why not keep things in the third person and refer to the candidate as 'the candidate' or 'the applicant'? Referring to them as 'they' throughout the description will remove gendered language and minimise unconscious bias.

3. Exclusive wording

Certain phrasing can also have an impact. For example, to say "We are looking for a rock star" to describe a go-getter signals a male-dominated culture. And seemingly harmless words like 'ambitious' or 'competitive' can also alienate female candidates. Be cognizant of how language can implicate bias towards certain groups or genders.

Focusing job descriptions on skills and experience rather than personalities will go a long way in ironing out this kind of bias. Replace 'rock star' and 'go-getter' with 'someone with a keen desire to help the team' or 'a candidate with the ability to motivate themselves'.



Instead of depicting a 'competitive and high-octane' work environment, depict a 'culture where efforts are rewarded and skills welcomed'.

This includes candidates with physical and cognitive disabilities. For example, stating that a candidate "Must be able to lift 50 pounds" is exclusive, while "moves equipment up to 50 pounds" focuses instead on what needs to be accomplished in a role.

4. Jargon

Jargon (whether industry or company-specific) is problematic when sourcing talent from a broader candidate pool. Many industries have acronyms that are well-known on the inside, but can put off skilled candidates from different backgrounds. For example, a computer programmer who has worked in the entertainment industry for years could be a great fit for the financial sector until they encounter terms like CBDCs and GAAP.

Many candidates have transferable skills from other industries they may assume won't convert based on the language used. If jargon is required, such as a role that requires the use of specific tech or tool types, spell out acronyms or plainly describe the jargon.

Rethink what is critical

Forego requirements and 'must-haves'. The idea that there is a perfect, existing candidate for every role is outdated and disregards a person's ability to learn new skills, adapt to a new environment, and adopt

knowledge as they go. In reality, most 'must-haves' listed in job descriptions are nice-to-haves or skills that can be learned while in a role. In the case of inclusivity, relying too heavily on requirements or necessary skills/experience can alienate top candidates.

Instead, be explicit on the absolutely critical skills required to do the role and clearly identify the responsibilities. Expectations must be set but it must be abundantly clear why and how they impact the business. In general, women need to meet 100% of a requirements list whereas men are happy to only meet 60% (<https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/business/en-us/talent-solutions-iodestone/body/pdf/Gender-Insights-Report.pdf>) so any description of the ideal candidate should be as concise and bare-bones as possible.

Machines are biased too

As more and more recruiting functions become managed by software, keep in mind how artificial intelligence (AI) may hinder inclusivity. This is because machines are taught by humans and will reflect unconsciously biased inputs. For example, 'learning' for some of the most sophisticated AI programming today involves scouring language from the internet regardless of content.

The more AI approximates human behavior, the more the outputs should be overseen and reviewed by humans. For recruiters, that means not blindly trusting the results of AI-powered tools. The processes behind them must



be understood, as well as how data affects their behavior. With AI, never forget the adage “Garbage in, garbage out.” This is why good, reliable D&I data is essential.

At the Adecco Group, we measure a variety of D&I data points across the hiring process, to track the end-to-end career cycle of our talent and to ensure we are funnelling diverse talent into and up through our organisation. Our vision is to make the future work for everyone. Of course, this means that our data has to be fit for purpose. We ensure the data we collect is legally compliant country by country, fully optional and anonymised for the candidates. We are always crystal clear on why and how we are collecting and using this data.

This will be further built upon with the end goal of mapping exactly how and where we are providing equal opportunity to all. Diverse hiring doesn't just have a positive impact on business success, it also boosts the engagement of the workforce and underpins a positive company culture.

Start now

Reassessing job descriptions is great start to broadening diverse talent pools coming into recruitment pipelines. Full inclusive hiring goes well beyond job adverts, but that spirit of inclusivity can and should filter through the full recruitment pipeline. From accessibility of technology through to limiting unconscious bias in the assessments and interview processes, inclusivity should be front of mind. More inclusive hiring benefits both candidates and companies: candidates enjoy a hiring process that encourages them to showcase their skills and expertise, while recruiting teams get the information they need to extend an offer to the right person the first time.

The Adecco Group recently rang in its Inclusive Recruitment initiative which led to the re-design of its end-to-end global recruitment process. Everything from technology, protocols and people-related actions like training will be led with inclusion in mind. A specific example of this change in focus is the company's work with its own brand, Pontoon, which resulted in a Recruitment Experience Outsourcing solution (RXO). By expanding hiring practices to be inclusive of all, companies can attract a wider pool of candidates to best help them grow. Even better, the culture within the workplace will become more inclusive. In a time of talent scarcity and employees leaving their jobs in droves (otherwise know as the Great Resignation), being inclusive is no longer a choice for companies. It is a necessity. 🌟



#RESEARCH

Welcome the Chief Diversity Officer, At Last



Sometimes it takes a global pandemic to sort out a problem. Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs) around the planet might agree.

The diversity officer's *raison d'être* is to advance the core values of diversity and inclusion in their company. Seen for some years by cynics as little more than a box-ticking exercise, the often under-supported and misunderstood CDO now has a folder full of inspiring stats, thanks to the world-changing events of the past three years.

Back in 2019, the career ladder was uneven, unstable and, for some, pretty much unscalable. Here in 2022, there's been at least some progress in making its rungs easier to grasp, allowing companies to reap the well-documented benefits of a more diverse workforce.

Workers crave diverse companies

Our [Global Workforce of the Future 2022](#) report shows that workers want to work for companies

that have a diverse workforce. In fact, 58% of workers agree that in the future, as a candidate, they expect diversity and inclusion to be central to their company's values and business practices.

Likewise, 58% of workers are satisfied at the moment with their company's position on major societal issues like diversity and inclusion, sustainability or social responsibility.

And, our data shows, 13% of workers have chosen their current jobs because of their company's values and policies on diversity and inclusion.

No workplace like home?

What all the seminars, workshops and equal opportunities pledges were struggling to achieve may just have been turbocharged with the combination of a traumatic pandemic and tech.

Pre-pandemic, Silicon companies like Facebook were renowned for their tasty workplace extras - offering

everything from award-winning chefs in the staff restaurant, games rooms and gyms to tree-house break-out zones and meditation pods.

Today, there may be no need to skateboard over to the brainstorm room. [Meta's 2022 Diversity Report](#) states that around 75% of its teams are now working across multiple locations.

"For the first time," says Meta, "we're hiring individuals who are fully remote and working from locations where we don't have offices."

As a result, Meta has found its hiring pool suddenly much, much larger. With unprecedented access to talent around the globe, it's been much better able to accelerate its diversity quota. It has doubled its hire rate on two key targets - Black and Hispanic employees in the US, and women around the globe.

People with disabilities now make up 6.2% of the workforce, up from 4.7% in 2021. Along with 2.3% veterans and 10% LGBTQ+ identifiers, these

figures seem to back up Meta's statement that underrepresented people now make up 46.7% of its staff.

Remote works

Remote hiring has to be a key factor in this. Our [research](#) shows that workers are confident remote work is here to stay: 57% say that they are sure they will work for companies around the world, on a report basis. That same research found that 54% of workers say they will have more power and options to choose where they will work in the future.

But don't take our word for it: [Research by Future Forum in 2021](#) found that Black employees strongly prefer a remote or hybrid model of working. A staggering 97% of them, in fact. In the US only 3% wished to return to full-time in-person work, compared to 21% of white workers.

In 2021 the [UK government called for a national shift in favour of remote, hybrid and flexible working](#), after its Behavioural Insights Team found there was a 30% uptake of job applications for any role offering these options. Its then Minister for Women and Equalities, Liz Truss, called for employers to make flexible working a standard option to help level up the UK, boost opportunities for women and reduce geographic inequality.

Invisible restrictions, such as the need to live close to the office in a city where the cost of renting is too high, or a gruelling daily commute, evaporate when remote working is an option.

Parents with childcare commitments, home-based carers and people with disabilities are now on a much more level playing field. Age is less of a barrier. A tangibly youthful vibe in the office might once have disheartened a fifty-something job candidate, but virtual meetings help to showcase substance above

appearance. So-called "[silver workers](#)" are a [valuable resource](#) both on their own merits and as a smart solution to talent scarcity.

A promise, not a panacea

Savings at the employee end can be significant, another big factor in boosting diversity. Rail commuters can hang on to a hefty chunk of their salary when they no longer need to squeeze into rush hour carriages five days a week. Also, the cost of dressing for work shrinks to, well, the top half. In fact, estimated savings for remote workers in the [US are around \\$7,000](#).

Of course, for some - 16-24-year-olds in particular - escape is to the office, not from it. We have to remember that remote working is not a panacea. The three [biggest challenges are unplugging after work \(22%\), loneliness \(19%\), and communication / collaboration \(17%\)](#).

But going by the statistics and the global conversation, remote and hybrid working is part of a new employment landscape, where equality and inclusivity sit on the horizon. It's a CDO's dream. While many obstacles remain between where we are today and a truly equitable workplace, the huge changes of the last two years should help give CDOs the tools and support they need to move us further towards that goal. ✖

The numbers are compelling, too.

16%

of companies in the world (as at 2022) are now fully remote

3-10%

is the average rise in productivity among remote employees

19%

higher innovation revenues have been noted among diversely-staffed businesses

for more info click on numbers



#TRENDS

Top

**trends from
the world
of work**

#1

Say goodbye to pandemic-era lavish company perks.

Say goodbye to free catered meals, first-class travel and free coffee carts. Companies like [Goldman Sachs](#) and Salesforce are cutting back on employee perks, many of which were first introduced during the pandemic.

The perks were meant to draw top talent and [retain existing staffers](#). But those perks are slowly disappearing as workers are asked to return to the office. Read more [here](#).



#2



“An empty world is a sad world.” Most metaverse users don’t even make it a month.

Is the [Metaverse](#) dead in the water?

It’s been almost a year since Mark Zuckerberg rebranded Facebook as Meta Platforms. The head of Meta said it would take years to transition to the immersive online experience. Data shows the metaverse could grow up to [\\$5 trillion in value by 2030.](#)

But the company’s flagship metaverse offering for consumers, Horizon Worlds, is falling far short of performance

expectations. Those who can afford the \$400 price tag report glitch features and empty worlds. The platform has less than 200,000 active users, far short of the initial 500,000 goal.

Internal data shows that most users don’t return to the app after the first month. In fact, the user base has steadily declined since the spring. One internal document sums it up: “An empty world is a sad world.” Read more at the [Wall Street Journal.](#)

Demanding employees turn on their webcams is a human rights violation, Dutch court rules.

#3

A Dutch court has ruled that it is a human rights violation to force workers to turn on their webcams. The case stems from a lawsuit filed by a telemarketer employed by Florida-based Chetu. The company insisted the employee be monitored 9 hours per day, including screen sharing and streaming his webcam. When he refused, he was fired for “refusal to work” and “insubordination.”

“I don’t feel comfortable being monitored for 9 hours a day by a camera. This is an invasion of my privacy and

makes me feel really uncomfortable. That is the reason why my camera is not on,” the court document quotes the anonymous employee’s communication to Chetu. The employee suggests that the company was already monitoring him, “You can already monitor all activities on my laptop and I am sharing my screen.”

The Dutch court found that tracking via camera for eight or nine hours a day is not permitted in the Netherlands. Read more at [Tech Crunch](#).



#4

Workers with female bosses less inclined to work overtime, study shows.

In December 2019, luggage maker [Away](#) found itself in a scandal. Disgruntled workers at the company [complained about working conditions](#). An investigation found that workers were expected to work long hours, avoid taking time off, answer messages at all hours, and more. It's a common - although imperfect - norm at many start-ups.

"A startup is not a 9-to-5 job, period," Leslie Feinzaig, founder and chief executive officer of the women-focused venture firm Graham & Walker LLC, told [Bloomberg](#). "These companies move fast and grow fast, and anyone who goes to work at one should expect a quick-moving environment, and like a challenge."

A new study finds that employees do not expect female bosses - like Away's CEO - to insist on long hours. And they don't respond well when that extra work is requested. Read more at [Bloomberg](#).





IMF's economic outlook grows gloomier.

The International Monetary Fund is warning “the worst is yet to come” for the global economy. The organization predicts that growth will slow to 2.7% in 2023, a slight drop from their previous forecasts. It’s going to feel a lot like a recession, for many, the IMF warns. Behind the slowing in growth? Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, China’s economic slowdown, and more. Read more at [Barron’s](#).

#5

#EDITOR'S PICKS

AKKODIS

Women in Tech with SheDares





Technology has been the key enabler of the new hybrid and flexible normal. Consequently, workers' top expectations from companies going forward are good IT infrastructure & systems and investment in technology to facilitate better remote work outcomes.

However, we are seeing skill shortages across the tech sector in everything from Cyber Security, Software Engineering and Data Analysts across businesses and organisations nationwide. As the world becomes more and more remote, digital skills have continued improving for over 6 in 10 workers globally. But women are still under-represented across the board.

According to the Australian Technology Council, gender diversity remains a weakness for Australia's tech sector, with only around 1 in 4 workers being women. Further, women are most likely to enter the tech sector as an early/mid-career transition, between 25 and 30. Joining at this stage can help women accelerate their earnings, increase their superannuation and gain valuable new skills. Despite the relatively low share of women working in the industry, the gender pay gap in tech is half that of other highly paid sectors such as finance or professional services. This suggests an opportunity for more women to enter the sector, especially via reskilling, to help with the post-pandemic recovery.

There has never been a more important time for women to consider a career transition into the tech industry. If you're a woman who is currently considering transitioning into tech these five tips will help arm you with the confidence to take the first step on your journey.

Recognise your outsider advantage

When considering transitioning into a new industry, you might be thinking: "my last role was totally

different, I won't understand how things work". Yet if you reframe those doubts, you realise that different experiences drive innovation, enabling you to challenge assumptions and bring a fresh perspective that insiders might miss.

What many people may not realise is that their diverse experiences and backgrounds is one of the greatest values they can bring to a new role, team and organisation. Diversity of thought is extremely important in any role, and one that can help your team and your organisation to flourish.

Take inventory of your transferable skills and existing experience

Consider the industry you are transitioning from and how that intersects with the technology sector. For example, if your background is in retail, consider how you could position your existing skills to be attractive to an e-commerce company. Additionally, many departments in non-tech organisations can be found in the tech industry: Sales, Marketing and Human Resources to name a few. Many soft skills such as problem solving, leadership and communication are valuable in any industry, so highlight these strengths and complementary experience wherever possible.

Focus on what you do have

Did you know that men apply for a role when they meet about 60% of the job criteria, yet women tend not to apply unless they meet 100% of the criteria? This mindset holds women back from embracing opportunities that they are likely very capable of pursuing. So apply for the role - even if you don't meet 100% of the criteria. Once you've taken inventory of your complementary experience and transferable skills, leverage these in your application and interview.

Ask for referrals and be recommended

Don't be shy when it comes to seeking a referral. Focus on broadening your network and digital presence on channels like LinkedIn to develop connections that could lead to a referral or recommendation. Consider what value you can provide to the connection so that you feel more comfortable when approaching them with an ask.

Don't get stuck thinking it will be too technical

A common barrier that holds women back from considering a career in tech is that it will be "too technical" and that the learning curve to gain technical skills is too steep. Yet, [43% of roles](#) advertised by tech companies are non-technical. According to [The World Economic Forum \(WEF\)](#), it takes as little as one to six months to develop a level of literacy in new skills (both technical and non-technical), meaning growing your skill set is never unattainable." 🌟

Modis is collaborating with [The Dream Collective](#) and [Amazon Web Services](#) as part of their [SheDares](#) initiative - a free, online learning experience designed to equip women with the skills and knowledge needed to transition into the tech industry. This self-paced program features four modules focused on expanding participants' perspectives to the job opportunities that exist in the tech industry, aligning their current skill set with roles in tech, overcoming personal and systemic barriers to entry, and connecting them with job and further skill development opportunities.



A man with a beard and a dark cap is smiling and holding a walkie-talkie. He is in a warehouse setting, with blue metal shelving and wooden pallets visible in the background. The Adecco logo is in the top right corner.

Adecco

#EDITOR'S PICKS

The Many Ages of the Workforce: Mining Untapped Talent Pools for Permanent Hires

Mining untapped talent pools for great permanent hires

With the pandemic prompting people to re-evaluate their careers, employers must capitalise on the Great Resignation to reimagine the composition of their workforces. It's time to rethink outdated hiring processes, reach out to under-represented populations, and capture thousands of highly skilled and hitherto overlooked talents for permanent roles.

This article highlights the very real, long-term benefits that workers from underserved communities who might once have been excluded from work bring to companies.

In this paper, *The Many Ages of the Workforce*, we share our thinking on how workers from under-represented age groups

can help employers solve some of their toughest permanent hiring challenges. We offer our tips on recruiting and onboarding people from these demographics, and we explain how you can ensure that people of all ages can thrive at your company.

At Adecco, we believe in talent, not labels. We connect thousands of people who are at-risk in the labour market with purposeful jobs each year. It is our core mission to make the future work for everyone.

The impact of ageism on workers

Forward-thinking companies across the globe are trying to develop more diverse, inclusive workplaces. Much of the time, these efforts focus on factors such as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, but age is also an important aspect of

the overall diversity and inclusion picture: and one that is likely to grow in importance as the average age of workers rises across geographies.

This is partly a consequence of rising retirement ages. In the United States, [the Social Security retirement age is rising to 67 for everyone born after 1960](#); in the United Kingdom, [the state pension age is set to rise to 68 by 2046](#). Similar policies are being enacted across the world as developed economies grapple with falling birth rates.

So, older people are a growing proportion of the working population, and this growth is set to accelerate over the coming years and decades. But are recruiters and employers ready for this change? The data suggests there is still much work to do.

In the United States, the [proportion of workers aged over 55 doubled in the 25 years between 1992 and 2017. This cohort will account for](#)

25%

[of the American workforce by 2024.](#)

Almost half –

44%

[of applicants aged 45 and over admitted to altering their age on their CV to avoid being judged on their age.](#)

54%

[of older adults say they have seen or experienced ageism in the workplace.](#)

A full third –

33%

[of workers who expect to lose their job in the next 12 months cite their age as a factor.](#)

54%

[of older workers say they have limited access to training at work, but 85% are ready to learn new skills.](#)

Age correlates positively with worker engagement, with [workers aged](#)

50

[and over having the highest levels of engagement in the workplace.](#)



Although most people's thoughts turn to older demographics when the issue of ageism is raised, it's important to note that ageism affects everybody. It is telling that considerably less research exists on the impact of ageism on younger people, but that does not mean that employers and recruiters can ignore this dimension to the issue. The [WHO's 2021 global report on ageism](#) noted that "Although no reviews have systematically assessed how ageism affects younger populations in the workplace, a recent scoping review found increasing evidence that ageism towards this group manifests itself most markedly once they are employed, especially in terms of pay and benefits".

The media stereotype of "lazy, workshy millennials" is familiar to the point of cliché, and so widespread that it may be tempting to view it as harmless – but evidence suggests such stereotyping has a real-world impact in the workplace. [A study in 2021 by Stephané P. Francioli and Michael S. North for the Journal of Experimental Psychology](#) pointed out that "Beyond the negative image propagated in the media, young

adults report facing condescension in speech and unfair workplace treatment due to their age, suggesting that the social cognitions targeting this group may have deleterious, real-world implications for its members".

Attracting talent of all ages

The most pressing challenge for employers looking to build more age-inclusive workforces is knowing where to begin. The good news is that many of the measures you take to counter discrimination based on other factors can be applied to age-related discrimination too. The vital first step in all cases is to make sure your hiring process makes every qualified candidate feel encouraged – and empowered – to apply. You can achieve that by taking a customer-experience approach to candidates and new hires. Here's how to do it:

Build an age-inclusive employer brand

Your employee value proposition should be attractive to people of all ages. Ensure your candidate-facing materials and company imagery feature people of all ages. Make sure old and young employees

alike are included when sourcing staff testimonials, photographs, and quotes for these materials.

Consider the language and specifications in your job descriptions

The job description will give candidates an impression of what it's like to work for your organisation, so avoid language that can make your workplace seem to favour one demographic over another. Stating that a role is to be filled by a "rock star" worker is likely to make older candidates feel they won't be considered for the position.

Don't place limits on experience

Demanding "five years of experience in a similar role" will ensure that you miss out on candidates who may be a perfect fit in every other regard. If your onboarding and training are of a high enough standard, is five years of experience necessary? At the other end of the scale, older, more experienced candidates may feel they'll be dismissed as overqualified if they have significantly more than five years of experience. When such experience is genuinely necessary, you can simply ask for "experience

in a similar role” without specifying a number of years, and trust your recruitment, onboarding, and training processes to ensure a candidate is capable of doing the job.

Actively target underrepresented demographics

Think carefully about how and where you focus your recruitment efforts. For example, a social media campaign that prioritises Instagram and Tik-Tok is more likely to attract younger candidates, while older candidates are more likely to be using outlets such as LinkedIn and Facebook.

Implement “blind recruitment”

So-called “blind recruitment” processes, whereby personally identifying information is removed from candidates’ CVs before consideration, have proven to be an effective way of minimising the impact of implicit biases.

Make careful use of referrals from staff in underrepresented age groups

Referrals have to be handled carefully from a diversity and inclusion perspective, as most people will refer someone who is

similar to themselves. However, this can make referrals a powerful tool if you are aiming to increase the representation of a specific age group. Younger and older colleagues alike will be able to refer candidates from their age demographic.

Focus on skills and abilities, not software and technologies

Job descriptions often include a list of software and technologies that candidates should be familiar with, but in most cases, this is just a list of the technological tools currently in use at the organisation. Such lists can deter older candidates who have experience with different tools, as well as younger candidates who may not yet feel confident enough in their use. Most software and technological tools can be learnt in a matter of days, weeks, or months with the right training, so focus instead on candidates’ core skills, which can take years to develop.

Rethink the importance of “cultural fit”

The “cultural fit” metric, intended to judge whether a candidate shares the values and goals of the hiring organisation, is often a poorly defined one that ends up reinforcing

implicit biases. This is not to say that the company culture is unimportant, but rather that you should focus less on whether a candidate will conform with your existing company culture, and more on what they can add to it.

Set up a review panel

Review panels are a great way to build objectivity into what can be subjective decisions. Consider building a panel comprised of people from different departments, backgrounds, and ability levels to review candidate shortlists and selection processes for potential bias.

Defining ageism

Definitions of ageism vary between studies, often depending on the age groups the study covers. The WHO’s definition is among the most straightforward and universally applicable, and is the one used for the purposes of this paper:

Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age

Addressing ageism in the workplace

Recruitment is a key area in which you need to address ageism, but it





doesn't end there. Your efforts to tackle ageism in your recruitment processes will count for little if your workplace fails to be welcoming to people of all ages.

Here are some practical steps you can take to ensure people of all ages can thrive in your organisation:

Track age among your diversity metrics.

To identify and address ageism in your organisation, you need to track age as one of your diversity metrics – after all, you can't change something you don't measure. If you find you are struggling to retain employees in specific age groups, you can investigate further, adjust your policies as appropriate, and work to ensure everybody feels included and valued.

Include age in discrimination policies and awareness training.

As age is one of the less-discussed diversity metrics, it is often forgotten in discrimination policies and diversity and inclusion training programmes. Ensure that your relevant policies cover ageism alongside other forms of discrimination, and that all your relevant training includes a component on age-related discrimination. Employees may be discriminating against certain age groups without even realising it, and awareness training is a proven

and effective tool in reducing such unintentional discrimination.

Survey employees anonymously.

Anonymous staff surveys can serve as a kind of early warning system for a range of potential issues, and ageism is no exception. Create a space for employees to tell you if they have experienced or witnessed ageism in your organisation, and most importantly, act on what they have to say.

Offer home office options.

The pandemic has shown the world that working from home does not mean a loss of productivity, and for younger cohorts, it has established working-from-home as the norm. Failing to offer such an option when it is feasible to do so is a sure-fire way to miss out on the strongest young talent, but not only them: research from the United Kingdom shows that flexible working options are a “deal-breaker” for 39% of older workers.

Get management buy-in.

The WHO's 2021 global report on ageism referenced a study based on Japanese national survey data, which found that being subject to perceived age-related discrimination negatively affected job satisfaction among older men, but support from managers and colleagues decreased the impact of the perceived discrimination. Ensuring

that employees of all ages feel they have support should they face age-related discrimination is not just a moral imperative, but also a way to strengthen your employees' commitment to the organisation.

Rethink mentoring.

Most mentoring relationships at work take the form of an older, more established employee being tasked with supporting a younger, new colleague to “show them the ropes”. But this approach fails to take into account the most important factor – skills. Mentoring programmes should focus on ensuring any given employee has the skills needed to do their job as effectively as possible, regardless of age or length of tenure. The respective ages of a mentor and their mentee should not be a consideration.

Ensure training is accessible to all.

An employee's age should obviously never be a factor when making training available, but nor should the length of time they have been in their job. Even employees of many years' standing can benefit from training, even if some may be reluctant to pursue it. One way around this reluctance is to point out that less-established colleagues may benefit from the experience and knowledge of their longer-serving colleagues in a training setting. ☺

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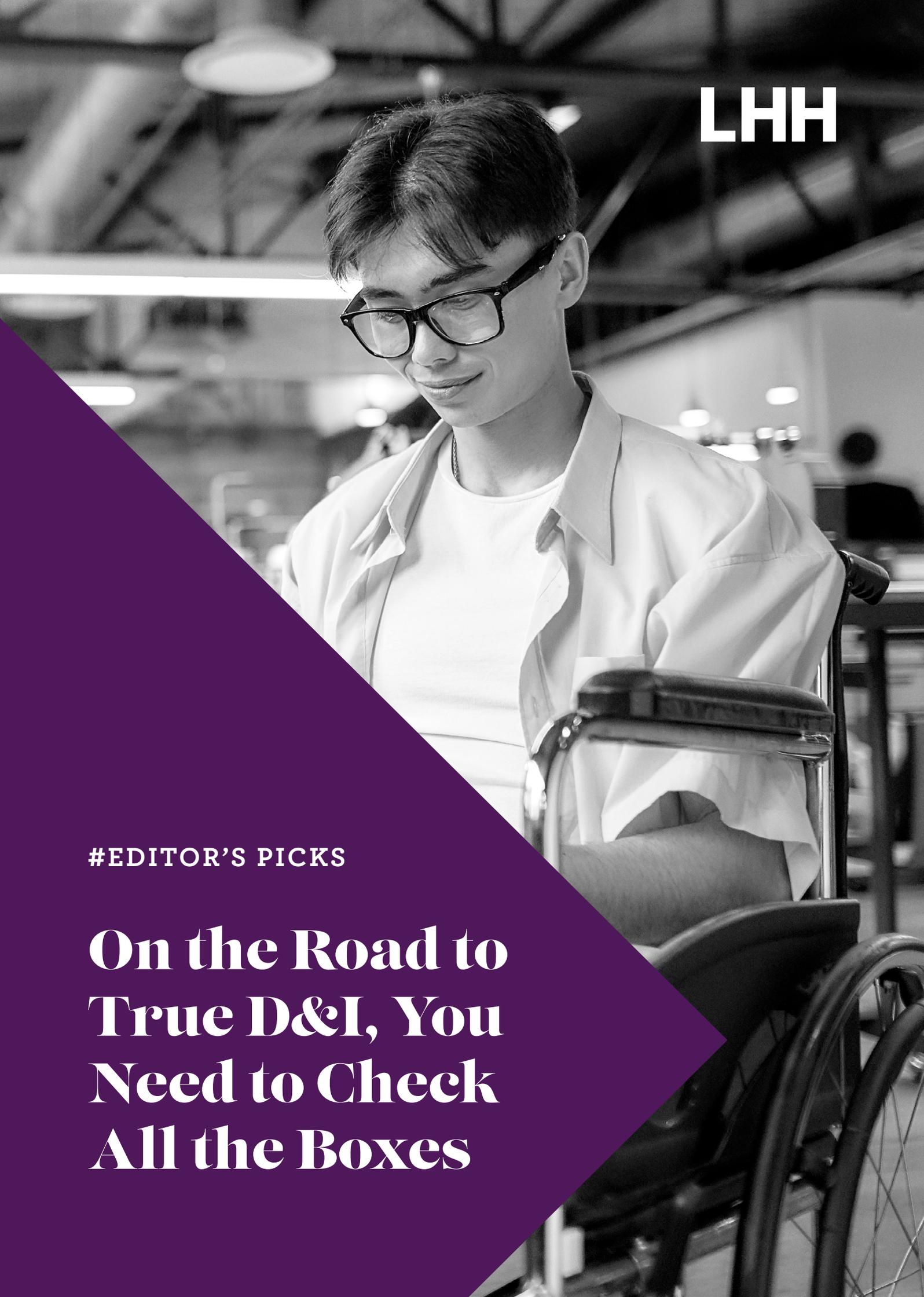
Whatever your permanent recruitment needs, Adecco is here to help.

- We see The Great Resignation as an opportunity to revitalise tired, homogeneous workforces with an injection of fresh-thinking talent.
- We embrace workers across the whole diversity spectrum – and mine untapped talent pools that others ignore.
- We develop programmes and pathways to reduce workforce barriers and strengthen employability through training.
- We reimagine outdated strategies across the entire recruitment process. We reject well-trodden paths.

People of all ages are capable of great work. Let Adecco's Permanent Recruitment service help you hire them.

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Our parent company, The Adecco Group, is part of [The Valuable 500](#) initiative, alongside companies like Apple, Google, EY, and the BBC. It's a growing global movement dedicated to placing disability on the business leadership agenda.



LHH

#EDITOR'S PICKS

**On the Road to
True D&I, You
Need to Check
All the Boxes**

A checklist that every organization should consider when attempting to address D&I goals at the recruitment and hiring level.

True diversity and inclusion cannot be achieved overnight. Still, it's fair to say that most HR professionals believe that organizations should be further along in accomplishing their D&I goals than they are right now.

In Canada, a [2019 D&I audit of public companies](#) found only 4.4 percent of TSX-listed companies had a female CEO and only 5.5 percent of board seats in companies governed by the Canadian Business Corporations Act were held by visible minorities. Only seven of those board positions were held by directors of Indigenous descent.

Those results mirrored other countries as well. Globally, there are only [37 women](#) running Fortune 500 companies which, lamentably, is an all-time high. Only four Black CEOs are [counted](#) among the United States' top 500 companies, and Black leaders account for only 3 percent of executive or senior-level leadership roles at U.S. companies of 100 or more employees.

Why are so many companies struggling to make sustainable progress in both diversity and inclusion? Some of the world's best thinkers in this area are still debating the nuts and bolts. But when you look at all the data, it seems that while most agree that D&I is a top priority, few make consistent efforts to achieve meaningful and lasting change.

In short, organizations are good at talking the D&I talk, but not so good at the walking part. A [benchmark D&I study](#) by PwC found that while three-quarters of respondents identified greater diversity and inclusion as a top goal, only one-third had specific programs dedicated to overcoming unconscious bias and only a quarter were actively training leaders in managing diverse populations.

Rebuild your approach to hiring

There are a lot of moving parts in a successful D&I program. In its broadest sense, it can refer to measures that help build a diversity of thought, a capacity for innovation and an environment of inclusion. These are capacities that are achieved by having a diversity of voices at all levels of an organization.

But as it applies to talent acquisition and development, D&I is often viewed as an effort to improve the overall racial and gender diversity of your hires. If you do not broaden diversity at that critical level of the talent

ecosystem, it will be hard to change the D&I profile of your organization.

However, many organizations employ screening tools to streamline the applicant review process that inadvertently result in under-represented candidates to self-select out. Others use language or tools that consciously or unconsciously trip up candidates from under-represented groups.

The following is a checklist that every organization should consider when attempting to address D&I goals at the recruitment and hiring level.

1 Define diversity goals. It's important to remember that within each organization, there are different offices, units, and teams that each have different D&I challenges and goals. You must define what increased diversity means for each distinct component before you can set goals for the larger organization. If you have built a diverse team in some areas, the focus must be on taking steps to galvanize it as part of organizational culture; in areas where there has been less progress, the strategy and tools must be different.

2 Describe the job and the work, not the person. By now, most progressive organizations understand that far too many job postings use language designed to describe a person and not the job that needs to be filled, or the type of work that is involved. When we unconsciously use words that are signals to certain kinds of candidates, we are ultimately limiting the diversity of the talent pool we attract. For example, studies have shown that the word "driven" in a job posting resonates a lot with men, but discourages women from applying. On the other hand, women tend to be drawn to applying for jobs when the word "inspiring" is included. It should be a top priority for all D&I programs to avoid terms or descriptions that only attract candidates who look and sound like hiring managers, or that discourage under-represented groups from applying.

3 Broaden the concept of candidate qualifications. Achieving D&I goals will require organizations to think outside the box when listing job qualifications. Holding too firmly to a specific list of qualifications or requiring someone to have held the exact same role in another company, drastically limits your talent pool and makes it much more likely that you will only draw candidates who look and sound a lot like the folks you already employ. Focus less on former job titles and focus more on compatible or complementary



skills that describe the qualities needed to fill a specific job, as opposed to rigid and specific qualifications.

4 Measure all stages of the process. You need to establish metrics for all stages of the recruitment and hiring process, from initial posting to screening and interviews. These metrics establish targets for increasing the number of under-represented groups in the slate of candidates as they move through the hiring process: identification, screening and the various iterations of interviews. Critically, it embeds accountability in the hiring manager and recruitment team throughout the process. This approach is much more successful in boosting the number of people from under-represented groups in final hiring decisions, which makes it more sustainable than simply slapping a quota on the final hiring result.

5 Ensure diversity is reflected in the hiring team. There is no getting around the fact that a lack of diversity in a group of hiring managers will ultimately frustrate attempts to increase hiring diversity. That is not a condemnation of hiring managers, per se. Decades of research has established that – consciously or unconsciously – we are much more likely to hire someone who looks and sounds like us. In fact, a lack of diversity among hiring managers is still considered one of the biggest barriers to increasing organizational diversity. So, if you want to see 20 percent of candidates from under-represented groups, you may need to ensure that 20 percent of hiring managers are from under-represented groups.

6 “Fit” has become the “f-word” in recruitment.

There was a time when the term “fit” was the buzzword for hiring managers. The theory was that it didn’t make sense to hire someone who didn’t align with an organization’s pre-established culture or philosophy. However, it didn’t take long for HR professionals to realize that “fit” also served as a huge barrier to both diversity and inclusion. If you have a set of pre-determined organizational values and qualities, then you’re going to be destined to hire people who are very similar to the people you already employ. Organizations need to challenge their preconceptions about culture and values to attract a more diverse talent pool. By definition, improving an organization’s approach to diversity and inclusion requires cultural change, and this is one of the best places to start.

7 Hiring is a two-way street. In terms of talent recruitment, it’s important to note that most people want to work in a place where they won’t be the only person who looks and sounds like them. Candidates who see themselves reflected in the senior leadership of an organization will have more faith that the organization will be inclusive of them and will see for themselves equal opportunity to pursue paths for development and promotion. Organizations that lack the obvious signs of progress on D&I may ultimately miss out on hiring top talent from under-represented groups.

Meaningful improvement in D&I starts with meaningful improvements in your recruitment and hiring process. As organizations face a long-overdue reckoning with the cultures and mechanisms that have excluded under-represented groups, many leaders have found themselves unsure where to start. In large part, the starting point is making a deliberate decision to transform words into actions and invest in change that will impact all aspects of a business.

The good news is that there are practical, immediate measures you can take to ensure, at a minimum, that you’re attracting a much more diverse talent pool. These measures won’t solve the problem, but it will help you make the first step towards real D&I progress. 📌

#EDITOR'S PICKS

Keeping Things Fair: Disability and Remote Work



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Very little is certain in a post-coronavirus reality but, if there's one thing we can rely on, it's that the "tele-everything" world is [here to stay](#). Prior to March 2020, the vast majority of employees did [little or no](#) regular [work from home](#). The pandemic forced us to make this new reality work, and it was [widely extolled](#) as a unifying and equalising force for many.

Particularly for [workers with disabilities](#). Frequently cited [benefits of flexible working for disabled workers](#) include increased flexibility in working schedules and [the ability to work in an environment better suited to a person's specific needs](#).

But the shift to remote working hasn't been universally positive. A [survey](#) conducted by TUC in 2021 found that 1 in 3 disabled workers in the UK had been treated unfairly at work during the pandemic, and the annual pay gap for disabled employees was [found to have](#)

[increased by £800 since 2018](#).

This raises the question: can remote working create equal opportunities for disabled employees? We spoke to Jess Markt, Disability Sport & Inclusion Specialist at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and a [long-time partner](#) of the [Innovation Foundation](#) (formerly the Adecco Group Foundation), to gain a better insight into the opportunities and challenges of remote working for disability inclusion.

Balance is key

"In my experience - both as a person with a disability and in working with people with disabilities in different parts of the world - I do think that the ability to work remotely can be a great enabling factor," says Jess. But it's not going to be as simple as telling everyone they can work from wherever, whenever: "the experience of the pandemic has caused a lot of employers to reevaluate the process through which they employ people and

how they structure that working environment for everyone, not just people with disabilities."

This reevaluation is going to be characterised by an ongoing challenge to balance the positive aspects of increased flexibility with the good points of more traditional ways of working. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; employers will have to figure out how they can allow disabled employees the flexibility to operate at their maximum potential without going so far that they are either: not supported adequately enough to get their jobs done; or have so little meaningful contact with their employers that they lose motivation. "It's very important for people to have a say over their working environment and the process through which they feel they're able to be most effective," says Jess. "But being most effective and being most comfortable are not always the same thing." Requirements to work remotely that are too rigid (for

example, enforcing a strict 'two days out, three days in' policy) can create disadvantages for certain people who are unable to meet them. But policies that are too loose or fluid risk employers being unable to make the most of the talent in their organisation.

There's always room for improvement

Implementing a flexible working policy is a great step on the road to becoming a disability inclusive employer, but it's only a first step. "No institution, no organisation, no company is as disability inclusive as they could be or should be. So, as soon as someone says 'we've got this figured out because we do X, Y and Z', that to me is an indication that they're not looking deeply enough," says Jess.

"I think it's too easy for organisations to assume that the sphere of inclusivity of which they're aware represents all of inclusivity." The process of becoming an inclusive employer is a continual exercise in change, self-reflection and analysis. Flexible working is just one tool out of many to ensure that disabled employees are treated equitably.

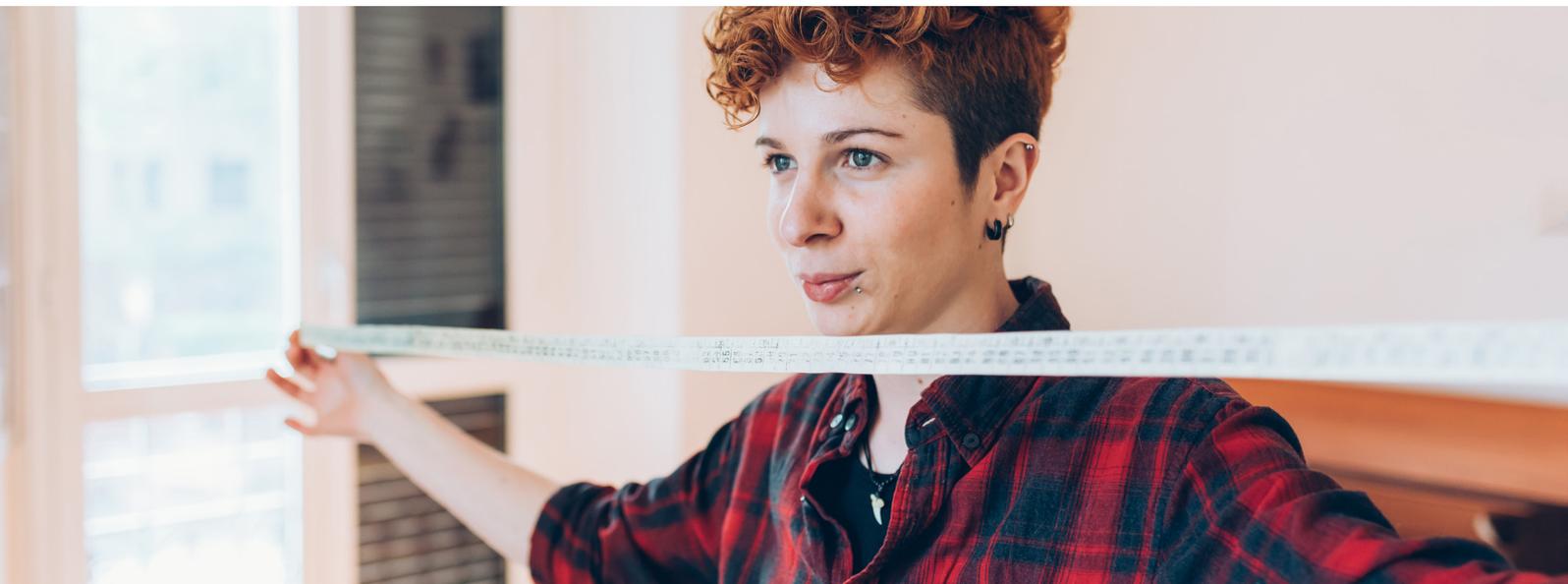
There's also a chance that flexible working done poorly could actually erode the positive intentions of inclusivity. Jess notes that encouraging disabled employees to work remotely could end up subverting the idea of including them in the intellectual, collaborative and strategic areas of work. Disabled employees have valuable personal and professional experiences, so employers must ensure that they are furnished with the necessary tools and processes to ensure that they can participate in all aspects of employment. Allowing disabled employees to work flexibly can have lasting and positive impacts, but only if employers implement it in a thoughtful and consistent manner. Choice is important, but not at the expense of support or motivation. And companies must hold themselves accountable for the continuous process of analysis and self-reflection required to ensure that employees with disabilities aren't left behind.

ICRC + The Adecco Group = Change

In 2017, The Adecco Group partnered with the ICRC to

support their physical rehabilitation programme and launch a new Career Development Programme (CDP) for people with disabilities. Jess was, and remains to this day, an instrumental actor and advocate in this field.

"At the beginning, we had a handful of countries doing wheelchair basketball programmes, and we were happy with the transformation that was starting to sew in those communities. But, when The Adecco Group came onboard and supported both financially and intellectually, we were able to expand the programme to be present in 26 countries." We're also signatories of the Valuable 500, a collective of 500 CEOs and their companies innovating for disability inclusion. The Adecco Group is proud to partner with organisations like the ICRC to empower disabled employees and promote their inclusion in all aspects of work, with the eventual goal of breaking down the stigma around disabilities and allowing people to achieve their full potential. 🌟



insights

on the Future@Work

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