

PRACTICUS™

ONE+MANY

PRACTICAL LESSONS IN DIVERSITY + INCLUSION

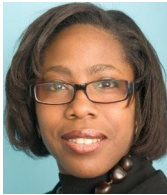
Pioneering New Approaches to
Attraction, Promotion + Retention

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 27TH, 2020
WHITECHAPEL GALLERY



PRACTICAL LESSONS IN DIVERSITY + INCLUSION

On Thursday 27th February, 20 HR leaders from across industry met at an event hosted by Practicus. The topic for the workshop and panel discussion was drawing practical lessons in Diversity + Inclusion from their collected experience. The event was co-chaired by four subject matter experts, Yvonne Howard, Jessica Peacock, Louise McCarthy-Teague and Frankie Tipton.



YVONNE HOWARD

Diversity and Inclusion Specialist, Business Transformation

Yvonne has over 15 years of creating, leading and implementing complex diversity and inclusion strategies to effect cultural change within large, complex, political organisations including TfL, Essex County Council and Crossrail, Hillingdon Hospital, City University, High Speed 2, financial companies and property developers. She is currently a facilitator on the Women into Construction's Moving on Up Programme, a positive action programme to advance women within the construction industry, with a focus on retention and cultural change.



JESSICA PEACOCK

Group Inclusion Manager, Arriva Group

Jessica is the Inclusion Manager for Arriva, one of the largest passenger transport companies across 14 countries. Jessica has been working at Arriva to help to create a culture of psychological safety, presenting a myriad of exciting challenges, from legal compliance to ensuring each decision around inclusion has a basis in evidence and behavioural science. Prior to this role Jessica was a global consultant and interim working with many FTSE 500 organisations.



LOUISE MCCARTHY-TEAGUE

Human Resources Leader, Ambassador Women in the Law UK & Inclusive Companies (D&I Leaders Consortium Member)

Louise is a leading figure in Diversity & Inclusion, recognised by the Recruiter Awards for Excellence for her work galvanizing the recruitment industry to respond to the business and ethical challenges of the legislation changes to flexible workers. As an HR Director, Louise recognises the real challenges that HR Professionals face when encouraging a D&I agenda while remaining commercial, realistic and reporting to the board an ROI.



FRANKIE TIPTON

Culture, Inclusion & Engagement Team, Thames Water

Frankie has done fantastic work at Thames Water. He came to our rescue when we realised we needed a new Chair for our extra table to hold more attendees. He leads the Thames Water award winning GSAS (Give Someone a Start) work experience scheme for those not in employment, education or training and those with physical and mental disabilities. He is a man of many talents – a qualified climbing instructor and sailing instructor who has visited every continent other than Antarctica. He is also completely blind.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES WAS RIDDA MICHAIL, PRACTICUS, WHO OPENED:



“We are so happy to welcome such a mix of familiar and new faces. The response to the event exceeded our expectations so much so that we moved into a bigger room and had to reluctantly put people on a standby list. I think the theme, the quality of our Co Chairs and the format appealed to many.

“SO WHY ARE WE HERE TODAY?”

We wanted to address a problem that others would be happy to discuss regardless of their position, progress and direction. A problem that had enough time to surface, manifest itself and impact a wide demographic of people in the workplace. A problem that has been out there a long time but one that has not been adequately solved. A problem that felt right to share in terms experiences, scars and lessons, where we can all share our hindsight so that it can inform our future. It was a problem that kept coming up again and again within both our community and our clients.

“It was the ‘how’ of D&I.

“We all know there are benefits in promoting better diversity and inclusion in the workplace. It helps boost morale, motivation, productivity, attraction, retention, greater innovation and creativity. It’s about relating to your customers and also boosting your brand.... and it just feels right.

“So with the support of my colleagues I put my hand up to take the lead on this. Oh how naive was I! Little did I know how huge this topic is. How complicated, how broad, how many rabbit holes it took me down. For some it’s uncomfortable. For others it even challenges their beliefs. But for most it’s a good thing and that’s why we are here.

“Given how big the subject matter is we (the Co-Chairs and I) knew we wouldn’t be able to solve all the D&I problems in one morning so we discussed how best to narrow down the topics.

“I thought logically that the beginning of the D&I journey would mean starting with the hiring process at attraction and selection but I now know there is no real beginning or end as without the inclusive environment your attraction strategy will unravel when those you attract realise the reality is not the same. So inclusion will be intertwined in today’s conversation but we had to start somewhere. Which brings onto our subtopics and of today’s session:

- Attraction
- Selection
- Wins on a limited budget

“In keeping with the Practicus ethos we were keen to go beyond the theory and take advantage of others hindsight. To share and understand the challenges organisations are facing, and to share positive examples of what good looks like.

“So our format for today will be to encourage dialogue, speak frankly and without fear. Please share your challenges, ask your questions and share your experiences.

“To make this a safe and constructive environment, we all agree to Chatham House Rules during the table discussions. So feel free talk freely and make notes, we will be too, but the important thing is that nothing will be attributed to any particular person. Please don't feel that you have to step on eggshells here. We want to encourage an open and collaborative environment without judgment.

“To help us today we are fortunate to some of the most knowledgeable and talented subject matter experts in this space to help us navigate through this morning's discussion. Between them they have worked with some well-known names across rail, engineering, financial services, energy and utilities to name a few.”

INSIGHT FROM THE DIFFERENT TABLES

“HOW BEST TO ADVERTISE JOBS AND ATTRACT A MORE DIVERSE WORKFORCE?”

- Being clear when recruiting, what is it you're we're looking for and how should they demonstrate competence.
- Being as minimal as possible on 'essential' skills on job descriptions can help attract more diverse sets of applicants.
- Purpose and values should be clear – inclusion is part of social purpose
- Social media e.g. Glassdoor – does have an impact so be aware of this

“IT'S NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE FOR SHORTLISTS TO BE AS DIVERSE AS YOU WANT AS IT'S OFTEN TOUGH TO ATTRACT PEOPLE TO APPLY IN THE FIRST PLACE, E.G. WOMEN GETTING INTO CONSTRUCTION JOBS OR AS TRAIN DRIVERS.”

- Focusing some effort on younger generations and building pipeline will help this in 3/5/10 years' time.
- This can be done by going to university job fairs, working with schools and colleges, apprenticeship programmes, etc.
- Important to look at whether you can change perceptions of a culture (like construction) now, so that you can improve attraction in the future.

INSIGHT FROM THE DIFFERENT TABLES

“HOW BEST TO MANAGE SELECTION?”

- Recognising that people from different backgrounds work differently when working on numerical and verbal reasoning.
- Changing the mindset around competency – thinking a bit broader when hiring. Avoid hiring managers talking about fit – whether team or culture. Be clear about what ‘fit’ means. It should be fitness for the job. Being clear about what ‘fit’ means? We’re talking about fitness for the job and a different way of seeing the problem.
- Avoid the fit and don’t fit conversation – broaden fit and recognise and go after people who will look at the problem through a different lens, rebel Ideas.
- Avoiding bias during interviews.
- Interviewing in pairs to ensure there is a richer experience for all. Sometimes 3 works
- Give people the chance to show what they can bring in the best way.
- To ensure it’s a level playing field g set questions for all – ensuring it’s a level playing field.
- Separating managers after the interview and asking them to justify their answers.
- Using customers in the interviews process.
- Co-interviewing with employee networks
- Keep in mind, you may not have the luxury of choice – there may only be one candidate for your role
- “Blind selection” can be useful – separating CVs from data. Independent review of interview notes & CV can be useful – looking for bias
- Don’t be put off by one previous mistake. If someone who wasn’t the norm didn’t work out – learn from it and adapt. Don’t go back to what you did before.



INSIGHT FROM THE DIFFERENT TABLES

"WHEN INTERVIEWING, SOME MANAGERS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY CAN AND CAN'T SAY OR ASK. THIS CAN LEAD TO THEM SAYING NOTHING AT ALL AND INTERVIEWEES NOT GETTING A GOOD EXPERIENCE OR A FAIR CHANCE TO HAVE A GOOD CONVERSATION."

- Training for managers to feel more comfortable when interviewing can really help this.

"WHEN PEOPLE TALK ABOUT DIVERSITY THEY TALK ABOUT GENDER AND THEN IT STOPS. NOT BROAD ENOUGH IN THEIR THINKING. WHAT CAN WE DO?"

- Use the good news stories from within the organisation. Example: senior leaders talking about personal mental health stories. Sometimes you don't see diversity, it will get people talking and thinking about inclusivity.
- Find relevant examples of D&I success of people at different levels, e.g. a factory worker going to be different to a Sales Director and nurse different to a surgeon
- Brand messaging – 'feel at home' – talking about what it means to feel at home ensuring people are able to bring their whole self at work. Very powerful.
- Referrals are great but ensure they're not working in the same team as the referee and they have to go through the same process as other hires – avoid unconscious bias.
- If people don't understand the WHY behind D&I then they're less likely to engage with it and make it last.
- Leadership buy-in is vital to getting changes in place.
- Unconscious Bias training. Online is a good starting point but will raise awareness only. It won't change behaviours – classroom-based training is needed for that.
- Bring inclusion issues to life – e.g. example of where you didn't feel included. Make it real – how did you feel?
- Inclusion targets reflecting the specific business, set by the business unit & measured against this – creates ownership (internal only) but be careful because it can also lead to poor hiring/promotion decisions if not understood properly
- Mentoring/reverse mentoring can work well
- Empowering people to feel safe and make a stand against discrimination is really important in changing culture.
- Environment of psychological safety.
- Identifying & supporting champions across the business can be powerful – creating an opportunity for those people to make a difference.

INSIGHT FROM THE DIFFERENT TABLES

"HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE THAT WE'RE NOT DIVERSE RIGHT NOW BUT WE ARE CHANGING?"

- Tell the story, we're changing be part of the change. More compelling than an org with the gloss.
- Use awards to help to demonstrate journey you're on- nominations show that you're making an effort to be on the journey.
- We sponsor Rugby, loads of pictures of men, we've included more pictures with the women's rugby team
- Use social media to help people to align with the company and journey you're on and share what you're posting on social media. Highlighting what you're posting and the journey you're posting. It gives a good feel to the company.
- Story telling through social media talking about the employees within the organisation (their stories are very powerful) professionally and mentally. Linking this with the wider national picture (I.E international women's day)
- Be creative in the ways you recruit, don't stick to the same profile, don't go for the same sector. Promote diverse thinking with your recruitment partner.
- Experimenting with small things around language and policy can be really effective rather than making big, sweeping changes or initiatives.
- Website – Needs to be inclusive e.g. pictures, avoid jargon, real people, real events.

"HOW DO I GET THE BUDGET AND 'BOY IN' FROM SENIOR LEADERS?"

"Getting leadership buy-in is one of the hardest things to do."

"D&I often seen as a cost-centre rather than a revenue generator and therefore is often put on the backburner."

- Increase board diversity. Having a senior leadership team which is representative of the workforce or the service users.
- Having users of the service sit on the board to reflect the customer base as well.
- Language don't label things as initiatives, projects, etc.
- Glassdoor – what are people saying about the organisation.
- Working with the board to identify what type of organisation we want to be. Take for instance gender pay, yes we need to do it but why and are we doing the right thing for our staff?
- Collecting data on recruitment processes etc and creating a story can be your best tool. Having evidence behind you massively helps with getting people on board.

INSIGHT FROM THE DIFFERENT TABLES

“Overcoming the feeling left out”

- Recognise managers may find it difficult to manage someone who is different to them or the team and support them in doing so. Work with managers to support them in managing rebels and different people.
- Ensuring that there isn't a culture of exclusion, challenge is to not alienate certain groups.
- Valuing difference within an organisation. Recognise that everyone has diversity to bring
- Making people feel bad or guilty about how people acted in the past, or making them feel like a bad person, is not as productive at changing behaviours than putting in place constructive, positive building blocks for improving practices.
- Leadership needs to understand how minority groups may feel coming into an organisation

“WHAT'S NOT WORKED?”

- Setting targets for diversity – 50/50 women and men – takes a while to hit but you need to be realistic, can you get 30-40%?

“FRONTLINE WORKFORCE ENVIRONMENTS DIFFER TO HEAD-OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS. CONSTRUCTION / FACTORY WORKERS WILL EXPERIENCE A DIFFERENT WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND CHALLENGES TO THOSE IN THE OFFICE.”

- D&I initiatives should not therefore be one-size-fits-all across a company like this.

“SOME HIRING MANAGERS ARE PREJUDICED AS THEY OFTEN KNOW LOTS OF PEOPLE IN THE INDUSTRY AND THEREFORE MAY REJECT OR PROGRESS CERTAIN PEOPLE WITHOUT EVEN LOOKING AT AN APPLICATION OR CV. THEREFORE, OTHER APPLICANTS MAY NOT BE GETTING A LOOK IN.”

- Explain why you're doing it and accepting some people may not like it.
- Separating D&I into its own area can be a great downfall as people sometime put a wall up to it. Including elements of it in areas they already engage in can be a great way to train people without them realising it. Including mental health / inclusion / D&I etc into things like Health and Safety training can get people more skilled up without them being put into specific D&I training.

INSIGHT FROM THE DIFFERENT TABLES

- Scenario based interviewing – case study type questions – testing based on their ability to do the job – briefing the candidates before the interview not assuming everyone wants to work/interview in the same way. Ensuring they're prepared.
- Link hiring to the overall D&I framework
- Is there any incentive to do things differently/better? What are the barriers to this e.g. middle-managers are squeezed and afraid to make hiring mistakes e.g. – a candidate of out of the ordinary

"FINDING COMMERCIAL VALUE IN D&I CAN REALLY HELP GET LEADERSHIP BUY-IN. BUT HOW DO YOU DO IT?"

- Penalties for non-compliance to the law
- Personnel cost of losing people through mental health and unhappiness at work
- Missing out on revenue because external perceptions of your culture or company demographics don't reflect those of your target customer base
- Are you facing a retirement cliff in any key skill or leadership areas?

"THERE CAN BE SOME FEAR THAT PULLING ON ONE THREAD, E.G. FLEXIBLE WORKING, COULD OPEN A CAN OF WORMS THE BUSINESS IS NOT YET EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH ON A COMPANY-WIDE SCALE."

- Running pilots can be a great way to test things and insulate yourself from whole-business disruption. You can see how much impact it will have and you can go back to the business with data on what really works.

"HOW BEST TO CONSTITUTE 'ENFORCED DIVERSITY'/'REFLECTIVE PANELS'?"

- Mix of race, gender and other attributes is a good idea on a panel – everyone shouldn't be the same.

"DOES THE GENDER PAY REVIEW HAVE AN IMPACT?"

- Some say 'yes' and 'others' no, certainly it's highlighted questions that need to be answered, what are men getting bigger bonuses than women for, for example?
- It's definitely helpful but also challenging

INSIGHT FROM THE DIFFERENT TABLES

"ANY OTHER ADVICE?"

- Make whatever you do bespoke to your business – Water, Standards/ Engineering/Property/Looking after animal
- Cultural integration of D+I can start at the top and the bottom. Top – to get senior leaders understanding and aware and bottom with young talent who are more aware, more diverse – driven via social media
- Do you have processes in place to facilitate your D+I strategy – website – interview process – to culture (50 percent attrition in 12 months because culture not aligned)
- It is a journey not 'an initiative'
- Continue to raise awareness – Frankie's cards [more on this in the panel discussion], #beyourself branding
- Don't make it a tick box exercise
- Journey is not going to be perfect (old / embedded language) – okay to make mistakes, keep learning from others

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUICK WINS ON A LIMITED BUDGET?



Jessica:

Until very recently, I've had to deliver everything from a £0 budget. I expect many of you have so don't be disheartened. A good place to start in unlocking support is listening to colleagues, write down their stories. That's pretty much free and not much time needed. I put those stories up around a room for the leadership team to look at but I didn't say they were stories from people in their business and asked them what they thought of each story. I then revealed at the end that they were stories from their own staff. They were quite shocked. I then told them what it would have cost the company if those members of staff had taken legal action, adding up to well over £1m. That's easy enough to calculate and it gets the message across to any leader. Leaders often haven't worked in their own business so it helps to overcome that leadership detachment.



Louise:

You have got to get the leadership involved. Who is LGBT? Who is a single mum? Who has mental health challenges? Diversity is often the easy bit, the intention to include, that's the hard bit. Set D+I objectives in leadership appraisals. It doesn't happen overnight. You have got to give people the opportunity to do something and it doesn't have to be expensive. But don't over complicate it. Many organisations start an initiative for each of the nine protected characteristics and try to run them in tandem. Instead, just focus on two to three initiatives that you can do for all and do them really well.

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUICK WINS ON A LIMITED BUDGET?



Frankie

I agree with that, managing nine initiatives can be like herding cats. In my experience, most of the budget goes to accreditation with stonewall. But there are relatively cheap things you can do that have a big impact. I was showing these to my table earlier, in fact, could you pass them around? Thank you. These are inclusion cards and we produce new ones each year. They contain a question, usually around a situation, and at the beginning of every meeting, someone picks a card out of the pack and everyone discusses the right answer. Simple idea like this that help change pre-conceived ideas helped get us from 350th on the Stonewall index up to 150th. Implementing competitions for charities is good too.



Yvonne:

Look at the opportunities and take them when you can see them, e.g. review your values and purpose. Focus groups don't need to cost lots of time and money. With the exception of TfL, I've never really worked anywhere with a budget. Highlight the disconnect between leadership, middle management and the front line. Personally, I don't often use the language of D+I, just good sound management and that's the language I use to couch the changes we need to make. Link it in with health and safety messages: my colleague is on Ramadan, look out for him on site because he might be dehydrated. Get real basic practical examples that everyone can understand and drive those out into the organisation. Highlight the day to day challenges. Highlight the skills shortage. Build a network around you of people you can trust. Network like crazy.



Q + A

Question.

Jess, you mention the data record but what am I collating and why? My colleagues just aren't interested and it's hard to make them care.

JESSICA:

Collection for collection's sake is pointless. But you need to be able to evidence what you're doing and experiment rather than make it up. Data is critical for that. You need a baseline to know you're making a difference.

YVONNE:

In my experience, what gets measured is what gets done.

JESSICA:

Your measures will depend on your organisation and its situation. I'll give you an example, if an organisation is in a particularly bad place, your simple goal might be, let's stop breaking the law, so let's start measuring how often we do that and get that number down. If the organisation is in a much better place, the measures will change. On the colleague side, we ask ourselves what are the different parts of the business and is there someone there who thinks about this kind of thing? Who are they? How can we recruit them into this?

LOUISE:

Other measures can be things like, no more than 70% of team can be any one combination of characteristics, e.g. straight, white, middle-aged, male.

Question.

What about non-protected characteristics?

- Engagement surveys are a good way forward.
- Questions could be specific to your organisation.
- Look at qualitative as well as quantitative data.

Q + A

Question.

What are the measures of engagement around D+I?

JESSICA:

Belonging and respect. In some places, like the UK, these directly correlate but in other countries they don't, you find that some people might feel very strongly that they belong but not at all that they are respected.

LOUISE:

For my work, it's: Do people feel the environment is safe enough to share how they're feeling and thinking? There's no questionnaire in the world that will capture everything. Often, it's about the feeling on the ground.

YVONNE:

You get what people really feel when they leave. Exit interviews are really important.

Question.

How do you change the culture?

YVONNE:

Start with the premise: we can! Do this and see how far you can go. I've done a lot of work in construction and you can imagine the culture. But in many ways, these are vulnerable workers. If you look at the hours they work, it's very difficult for them to make GP appointments – as a result, most of them don't. It has the second highest suicide rate after farming. It's men. But they can benefit also from a more caring and inclusive culture. People don't often roll back a pilot that everyone likes that reduces absenteeism. In fact, good Diversity + Inclusion is often good management practice. Approach it the same way you would approach improving management practices.

JESSICA:

Countries often compete. If you get one onboard, you'll get their rival too and they will be one upping each other to be best.