



What's the real story behind the lack of diversity and inclusion in the workplace?



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We hear a great deal about unconscious bias in the news, social media and during training programmes but whilst bias inevitably contributes, can changing individual behaviours be anywhere near the whole solution? Does a lack of opportunity or perceived opportunity for people with different needs and talents restrict ambition and participation? Are we still in the situation where, despite directives and regulation, a lack of infrastructure to support different physical and mental capabilities restricts employment?

Structural discrimination is another area we need to consider. Christianity-based annual holidays, woman only paternity leave and many other outdated concepts are still reflected in how companies are structured and run.

It could be that too many people feel unwelcome or uninspired due to a lack of successful role models. Stories of an easy and fulfilling working life don't grab the attention that a struggle against the odds does. We can look at leadership, as we do in every difficult situation, and it must have an impact. What does the data show us? How many people are affected, what talents are missing, what can they add to a company's success? How good are we at learning from the actions our companies, and the individuals within them, have taken in the past and continue to replicate. Are we curious enough to seek out ways to adapt to individual needs and preferences?

Perhaps the issues are more human and straightforward. Some people find many of these subjects difficult to engage on or are afraid to say the wrong thing. Are we seeing a backlash from the extreme positions and debates covered by news outlets and debated in different social channels?

An over-passionate defence of subjects, such as self-identification and neurodiversity, are adding to an uncomfortable feeling that restricts easy respectful debate. It seems to me that diversity will only thrive in a mutually respectful environment where all participants can ask any question and receive an honest answer. Then we can reframe the debate, so it thrives on real knowledge, understanding and curiosity.

Please add your thoughts to the comments or join our live debates at [FRB.buzz/diversity](https://frb.buzz/diversity)

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