

Global Inclusion Strategy

A foundational guide



Inclusive
Employers

Introduction

Many organisations now operate in a global environment or are seeking to expand internationally. This presents many challenges in relation to scale and complexity, but also opens up many opportunities in relation to creating and implementing inclusion strategies.

This guide will help to identify the challenges and the opportunities. It will also give practical tips, examples and useful resources which can lay the foundations for a strong Global Inclusion strategy.

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1. Definitions

It's important to be clear what we mean by global, and how that relates to global strategies and global inclusion requirements. Here are some definitions to help.

Understanding 'global'

While many organisations have been operating globally for decades, terms are often used interchangeably without too much thought. For this document, we are following the following application of word¹ :

- “International” has a smaller scope encompassing only two or more countries.
- “Global” is a word that is used to refer to issues and concerns of the entire world.

Throughout this guide, we will be using the term ‘global’ as opposed to ‘international’. This is because, even though an organisation may be ‘international’ as opposed to ‘global’, we see inclusion as a global issue that impacts everyone around the globe.

Global Inclusion is about how organisations provide inclusive environments where their workforce can flourish, regardless of where they are from. It is also about acknowledging the interconnected nature of the world we live in, where events like pandemics and conflicts have an impact on people and organisations worldwide, and where an organisation's commitment to inclusion and diversity will have an impact on their brand not only at a regional or local level, but also at a global level.

¹ Difference Between Global and International | Difference Between <http://www.differencebetween.net/language/words-language/difference-between-global-and-international/#ixzz7PZpegm3T>

The Global Inclusion mindset

While it may feel that inclusion and diversity as a practice has grown due to social and political events mainly in Europe and North America, it is essential that we expand our view beyond the Western world to address the needs of the global employee workforce. As the experiences of different cultures around the world become more visible, many global organisations now wish to create an inclusion and diversity strategy that resonates and works around the world, wherever they operate.

As the first step for any Global I&D strategy, consider having a mindset that is prepared to define or redefine what the words ‘inclusion’ and ‘diversity’ mean to a wider global audience (and that goes beyond Europe and North America). Different levels of understanding and education in this area in many countries may be the biggest barrier to creating an inclusive global organisation.

A helpful way to think about it is that diversity, from an organisational perspective, tends to be more about policies, processes, and compliance, particularly in the area of representation. Inclusion represents a more nuanced understanding of relational issues and how people engage with each other and in groups. Inclusion is much more focused on shifting mindsets and understanding that people want to be respected and valued for being their authentic selves, whilst at the same time helping them feel a sense of belonging.

Harvard Professor Borys Groysberg said: ‘Diversity is counting the numbers, inclusion is making the numbers count’.

In a global context, starting a conversation with inclusion first, as opposed to diversity, can be very effective. BCW, a global communications company, has approached their global strategy in this way. They have also created their own acronym that is used all around the world – IDEA, standing for **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accountability**. Carol Watson (Chief Inclusion Officer) said ‘I wanted to make sure we had a term and a concept that invited everyone to the conversation’.²

A typical misconception in the Global Inclusion strategy space is that due to the lack of legal protection in many countries, it is impossible to fully deliver on a global strategy.

However, this document highlights some useful examples where organisations do deliver global strategies and lay a powerful role in creating positive change.

² Carol Watson, What is IDEA https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RbzfG1lwVA (BCW, April 5, 2022)

2. Benefits

Many studies report on the general, social and commercial benefits of inclusion and diversity for organisations. These include greater financial returns, more innovation and creativity, higher employee engagement and other positive employee and organisational markers.

The rollout of a Global I&D strategy can benefit an organisation in potentially unexpected ways, including:

- It can help create an organisational design that is more effective and/or efficient.
- It can be a guiding light or 'North Star' if there is an organisational change or change transformation taking place.
- It provides an opportunity for internal and external marketing: improving current and future employee experience as well as attitudes to an organisation.
- By embracing inclusion globally, employees are more likely to stay if they feel they have mobility options that are safe and inclusive.
- A global organisation can eventually become an agent for change in society and a beacon for other companies to do the same.

3. Challenges and opportunities

The inclusion and diversity conversation in the West is often reflective of voices from North America and Europe, which makes it challenging for I&D initiatives to be replicated by every country across the globe. This means that multinationals have the challenge of staying tuned to I&D values from around the world whilst needing to acknowledge differences in local cultural contexts.

These perceived challenges can also be opportunities. It is also helpful to remember that any global organisation by its very nature is multicultural and therefore there is an opportunity to leverage the positive aspects of its global personality at the outset.

The following table outlines the key challenges and resulting opportunities:

Perceived challenges	Potential opportunities
Local laws vary greatly and can impact issues around employment such as paid maternity or paternity, harassment in the workplace, discrimination, or equal compensation.	<p>A global organisation can create internal standards or norms that can provide a safe space for employees from particular groups.</p> <p>As an example, some employee benefits can often remain global, and still be relevant locally even when it is not the expected norm in certain countries (for example partner health insurance, benefits for LGBTQ+ employees).</p> <p>Some organisations may call this set of standards a 'Code of Conduct' and others a softer 'Inclusive Standards' or similar equivalent.</p>

<p>Safety is likely to be a key consideration for some employees as it relates to any mobility programme in a multinational organisation.</p>	<p>Countries with stronger legislation in areas affecting employment³ (as highlighted above) can be leveraged as safer places for employees and places in which to launch new operations, offices or businesses.</p>
<p>The ‘Great Resignation’ is a now a global movement.⁴ Wellbeing has become even more important and local/in-country employment is increasing so overseas postings are shorter and cover a wider variety of destinations.</p>	<p>Changes in mobility and postings at a company area provide the opportunity to review existing processes on welcoming overseas employees and see whether they can be future proofed to be more inclusive.</p>
<p>People are still criminalised and subject to the death penalty in many countries for their identity (for example, over 71 jurisdictions criminalise private, consensual, same-sex sexual activity. 11 jurisdictions in which the death penalty is imposed or at least a possibility for private, consensual same-sex sexual activity.)⁵</p>	<p>Companies can take a public stance on issues which can make an impact. For example, in 2012 Barclays took a public stance, lobbying against the Ugandan bill to make homosexuality punishable by death and the bill passed with the death penalty provision removed.⁶</p> <p>A clear policy to help individuals opt-out of unsafe opportunities without penalty is key.</p>
<p>There will be great variation across markets in understanding the benefits of a good inclusion & diversity strategy or practice.</p>	<p>Continuous training and education around the world are important. Where possible, find examples that are ‘closer to home’ culturally or geographically.</p>

³ Nataly Kelly, Implementing Inclusive Policies Across a Global Organization (Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, March 2, 2021)

⁴ <https://www.hrreview.co.uk/hr-news/is-the-great-resignation-becoming-global>

⁵ <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/lgbt-the-law/map-of-criminalisation/>

⁶ Art Kleiner, Kenji Yoshino, Pro-LGBT Companies in Anti-LGBT Countries (Strategy + Business, August 2, 2016)

<p>There will be many countries where there is little to no dedicated resource that can focus on inclusion & diversity (and possibly no HR resource either).</p>	<p>Consider a mentor, buddy-system or coaching approach to alleviate the burden on workloads.</p>
<p>Dimensions and characteristics of diversity will be different in every country (and there may be some very specific to local culture). In addition, where there is less ethnic diversity there is a common misconception that I&D practices are less relevant.</p>	<p>Drive local leadership accountability by being open to understanding locally specific challenges which may vary greatly from perceived global challenges. Understand what constitutes 'minority' or 'marginalised' groups in each location and draw from local demographic data to build your business case.</p>
<p>If an organisation has huge scale and a complex structure this can be a barrier to setting and achieving I&D key performance indicators (KPIs).</p>	<p>Take the time to understand where the power and decision-making sits around the world to help solidify points of accountability.</p> <p>Engage global stakeholders in the decision-making process so that your KPIs feel relevant and authentic.</p> <p>Understand what elements you can control and where you can lead the way, even when other regions are lagging.</p>

4. Key elements of building a strategy

Building a plan requires time and effort, particularly in researching and assessing existing situations and contexts. The next section includes the key elements of building a Global Inclusion strategy and important considerations.

Assessment and data collection

Firstly, understand the current context in as much detail as possible for each market. You may need to assess the following (and ideally of them):

- Existing laws and protections for various communities.
- Organisational I&D practices assessment.
- Current diversity data.

As it relates to data collection, it could be beneficial to create a 'live' document on the legal implications of any data collection and diversity data collection, which will vary by country and that is constantly evolving and changing. Be patient with data collection efforts spanning multiple markets given the limited resources likely to be available in many countries as mentioned earlier.

It may be helpful to assign regional or local support where there are many countries to assess globally. Consider how you can engage with local stakeholders to include them in decision making and ensure their opinions are seen and heard. You could consider:

- Hosting focus groups in different markets to understand people's experience.
- Engaging with local employees that are already operating in I&D work locally.
- Meeting with local HR and relevant leadership to understand where they are in their inclusion journey.

A useful exercise could be to use the Inclusion Maturity Model, below, to understand which stage the different locations of your organisation are at. This exercise may also help you understand what ‘good’ looks like in each country and what is realistic to achieve depending on the context.

For example, it may not be realistic to expect the same speed of change and level of success in countries that are societally at very different stages of their inclusion journey.

The Inclusion Maturity Model



Goal-setting and value re-defining

Think ‘glocal’ throughout the process. ‘Glocal-isation’ is a combination of the words ‘globalisation’ and ‘localisation’. The term is used to describe a product or service that is developed and distributed globally but is also adjusted to accommodate the user or consumer in a local market.

When considering your I&D strategy, think globally, act locally. When starting your strategy plans, be clear on your short-term and long-term goals. It is important to consider what the short-term wins are, as they can be key in keeping momentum and motivation.

Considerations might be:

- What are the organisational values and are they inclusive? Will change be required?
- Who will ultimately be accountable for success? Ideally this needs to include leadership beyond People or HR functions.
- Will you be setting KPIs? And are these KPIs aligned with global objectives while answering to local needs?
- How are you taking local laws and legislations into consideration when setting these KPIs?

Consider running focus groups sessions and workshops that include key stakeholders by region as well as at least one senior business leader to clarify:

- Whether the organisational values are inclusive enough and relevant to a global workforce.
- The current reality, using the data and information from the assessments as much as possible.
- Visualise the future and define the organisational I&D goal(s) and the ultimate organisational impact (including what might be the trade-offs, if any).
- Consider options and priorities, bearing in mind possible barriers in terms of sphere of influence and assessments done.
- Get to a complete agreement on 'why' this is important.

Ensuring that the most senior leadership is involved is critical. In John Browne's book 'The Glass Closet' he talks about the function of D&I within BP, global oil and gas company, where he was CEO. He says:

'It is absolutely critical that leadership sets clear direction'... 'whilst Human Resources serve a core business function, it is not always viewed as critical to the mission of the corporation. In order to compel change, leaders must cast diversity and inclusion as a business issue, not as an ancillary function. At BP, I cared about diversity and inclusion on the human level. But I also saw its absence as a threat to productivity and creativity.'⁷

Understanding global models of operating

While many global organisations have a global voice and local operations, the reality is that depending on the organisation's environment, power and decision-making can happen in many different places. Therefore, support and accountability for rolling out an I&D strategy should consider the structures in place.

For example, some organisations can be highly centralised across all functions or highly decentralised with only a few support functions at the centre, or a blend of both. It is also more than likely that structures are constantly evolving. But keep in mind that it is important to understand these even at a top-line level because it will provide a sense of where power, autonomy, and accountability may lie and who needs to be influenced.

Examples of structures are:

- International division structure, where an independent international division is created to handle a company's international operations.
- A global functional division structure, where each function controls and monitors operations only for that function, i.e. finance, marketing.

⁷ John Browne, The Glass Closet, Why Coming Out is Good Business (Penguin Random House UK, 2014)

- A global product structure, where a product division is given worldwide responsibility for the product growth.
- A global geographic structure, where a firm's global operations will be organised on the basis of geographic regions.
- A global matrix structure, which will be a blend of different structures. An example might consist of product divisions intersecting with various geographical areas or functional divisions meaning there is joint control over various activities.
- A transnational network structure, which is an integrated structure that encompasses various factors while relying on a network arrangement to link worldwide subsidiaries.

In each of the above examples, consider where best to drive accountability and assess whether there are gaps that may require additional support. In addition, leveraging the current business or organisational operating model will improve the efficiency of delivery and can help to gain traction or 'buy-in' from the most senior executives across the business and around the world.

A Global Inclusion strategy framework

Building out a framework is an essential part of any global strategy, especially inclusion and diversity resources are limited centrally or locally. A framework is ultimately a template that can be adapted by other teams around the world who are appointed to be part of the process.

When creating a framework consider using the outputs of your focus groups or workshops (if these have taken place), the global models of operating (as described earlier) and cultural considerations, as a guide for the structure of the framework and how many adaptations you might need.

'Walk the talk' and behave inclusively when creating a framework: co-create, get feedback, and attribute new ideas correctly.

5. Launch and beyond

It is important to have a document with a clear structure or framework, but a Global Inclusion strategy document isn't the strategy. Remember that the document helps to guide an organisation and the people in it, but it alone does not create a more inclusive organisation. The considerations below are for both the strategic document and for its effective implementation.

Creating a document for your strategy

Create a document that inspires with authenticity and honesty, incorporating key elements of the organisational culture (its values or already expected behaviours), whilst being inclusive and understanding the perspective of varying countries around the world. Ensure you have linked your work back to business results or goals.

Here are key considerations:

- Include messages from global and local leaders on why this is important.
- Tell the story so far and be open and honest about challenges along the way.
- Show success stories from around the world to provide inspiration and guidance.
- Re-iterate organisational values and highlight the relationship with inclusivity and interpret for varying countries.
- Include agreed global inclusive norms and/or any local adaptations if they exist.
- Apply 'Culture Map' considerations to best understand how to communicate and influence.
- Take the time to 'step away from the document and discuss challenges. Consider regular strategy 'clinics' with your stakeholders.

- Stay focussed and specific on what can be achieved using a goal-setting model such as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

Key goal-setting considerations include:

- Break them down into realistic chunks if needed.
- Don't be afraid to push some things back: doing a few things well is better than many things badly.
- Have short-term and long-term goals and key touchpoints to help you measure success.
- Include clear responsibilities on how different parts of the organisation are expected to deliver on these promises.

In the assessments you will have done, you may have picked up on existing staff networks. Your Global Inclusion strategy is an opportunity to highlight their success stories, as well as collaborate on key initiatives.

- Ensure any employee activities to support communities, whether formal (Employee Resource Groups) or informal (social gatherings, team lunches etc) are included.
- Read the Inclusive Employers guide on Global Staff Networks for further guidance in this area.

Cross-cultural understanding

While many local I&D efforts tend to focus on inherent diversity, such as gender, race and sexual orientation, when working with a global workforce, the element of cross-cultural understanding becomes an essential part of that work.

The very interesting topic of cross-cultural understanding has, since the 1990s, relied on Hidalgo's three levels of culture from the chapter 'Multicultural Teacher Introspection'.⁸ This is very useful because it provides a broad understanding of the challenges when working with multiple cultures.⁹

It also provides a basic framework that has been used in different ways to train people to understand key concepts around culture. The three levels are:

- **The Concrete:** This is the most visible and tangible level of culture and includes the most surface-level dimensions such as clothes, music, food, festivals and celebrations.
- **The Behavioural:** The spoken and non-spoken social roles and behaviours, approaches to communication, and the language we speak. This also includes language, gender roles, family structure, political affiliation, and other items situate people in society.
- **The Symbolic:** Values and beliefs, which for many is the most important level of how individuals define themselves. It includes value systems, customs, spirituality, religion, worldview, beliefs, morals, and so on.

Another more recent resource is 'The Culture Map' by Erin Meyer.¹⁰ It is a ground-breaking piece of work based on a large amount of research that helps leaders navigate the complexities of cultural differences in a multicultural environment¹¹ by mapping different cultures against eight dimensions: **Communicating, Evaluating, Persuading, Leading, Deciding, Trusting, Disagreeing and Scheduling.**

It is not an inclusion strategy framework itself but using the tools of The Culture Map can provide a rich starting point. The mapping exercises can allow you to understand how individuals, teams or multiple teams in an organisation view the culture of an organisation and where there may be gaps or changes that need to be made so your Global Inclusion strategy can adjust for local cultures.

⁸ Nitza M. Hidalgo, Multicultural Teacher Introspection, Freedoms Plow (Routledge, 1993)

⁹ Adapted from: <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/multicultural.html>

¹⁰ Erin Meyer, The Culture Map, Decoding how people think, read, and get things done across cultures (Perseus Books Group, 2014)

¹¹ www.erinmeyer.com

Here are a few examples of how you can use a few of the eight dimensions to help you assess local and global cultures:

- **Communication:** Some cultures are high or low context. If they are low context, people may state everything exactly as they mean, and are more likely to be straight forward and explicit (the USA, for example). If they are high context, people are more likely to communicate in a more subtle, implicit and indirect way (some cultures in East Asia, for example). Some countries may have a medium context culture, like the UK. When assessing the different communication approaches to your strategies, consider the different context styles and how best to leverage them in the cultures you operate. Being respectful of cultural nuances will help you in getting stakeholder buy in.
- **Persuading:** Knowing how people best understand information in different countries will also help you to communicate your inclusion plans appropriately. For example, Asian countries' frame of references to contextualisation tend to differ from those of the Western world, as they generally take a more holistic view of issues and want to see the full picture. This may contrast to some Western cultures where inductive or deductive reasoning may be more common. In inductive reasoning, ¹²real-life examples, rather than theory, are used to persuade people of your message. Anglo-Saxon cultures like the US, Canada, Australia and the UK may prefer this style. In deductive reasoning, the theory comes before the practical situation, and people are more likely to be persuaded if taken through how you arrive at your conclusions. Countries like Italy, France, Spain and Russia. Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Sweden fall in the middle of the inductive and deductive reasoning. Understand the method that may better resonate with your market to get the better communicate your message.
- **Leading:** Imagine a scale of leadership that ranges from egalitarian (where the ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low) to hierarchical (where the ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high). And then try to understand where different countries exist in that scale. For example, in Denmark organisational structures tend to be very flat, and the best boss is a facilitator among equals. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Japan and Korea see the ideal bosses standing far above others in the hierarchy. Understanding where the power dynamics lie in the countries you operate may help your stakeholder influencing map.

It is highly recommended to understand the key concepts even if a Culture Mapping exercise is not possible.

¹² British Council, Influencing Across Cultures, <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/business-english/business-magazine/influencing-across-cultures>

As a global organisation it is also helpful to be aware of the broader differences between the cultural philosophies of the East and West. Understanding the differences in culture will help you to adapt your communications or Global Inclusion strategy document so that it really resonates across cultures.

The Eastern philosophy is that of collectivism, drawn much more into groups or society or people's actions and thoughts as one in order to find meaning in life. In contrast, the Western civilisation is that of individualism, trying to find the meaning of life here and now with self at the centre.¹³ For a practical example, some of the inclusion work about a particular group that resonates well in the Western culture may need to be adapted when transferred over to an Eastern context, establishing the link between the needs of any one individual group and the collective needs of society.

Launch and implementation

- **Launch:** Consider how you are going to present your strategy in an engaging way that is fully accessible by all global employees and don't forget to consider the time zone differences. Ensure that your launch is impactful, meaningful, and engaging. Perhaps a town hall or an employee conference that is already in place would be an environment that can build excitement?
- **Using storytelling:** Leverage the history of the organisation where possible to drive engagement. For example, if there is a country that has good anti-discrimination laws in place, or a diverse culture but is based outside the typical regions that lead in the inclusion area, consider launching programmes there. An example might be a country like Taiwan which is considered to have some of the most progressive laws for LGBTQ+ inclusion. Consider sharing stories from your employee workforce or from the region if they are happy for these to be shared. Storytelling is always a great way to capture hearts and minds.
- **Commitment and accountability:** remember how power structures may differ from country to country. Consider how you can drive commitment and accountability from different stakeholders within the organisation. You could have stakeholders leading on individual pillars or elements of your strategy to drive accountability. Work with these stakeholders to ensure their ideas, concerns and experiences are taken in consideration.

¹³ Differences Between Eastern and Western Philosophy | Difference Between <http://www.differencebetween.net/science/differences-between-eastern-and-western-philosophy/#ixzz7SKF6ajef>

- **Make it relevant to everyone:** Many organisations will have employees based in different locations – office, remote working, frontline. Ensure everyone is considered in your planning. If there is a particular way of working that is relevant for several frontline employees that could be used as a case study to improve inclusive behaviours for the benefit of the organisation, showcase it while presenting the strategy as well. It is also useful to think about creating spaces for feedback, collaboration and other alternative, less formal forms of communication to drive further engagement.

6. Evolve and evaluate

Like any plan, a Global Inclusion strategy benefits from having a measurement plan that allows you to evaluate what you have done and take it to the next level.

Whatever is measured should be related to the kind of strategy you have set, and anything measured should be used to help drive the next phase of your Global Inclusion strategy. Have milestones in your planner that you can use to evaluate what has been done and assess what needs to happen to move your inclusion plans forward. Understand ‘what good looks like’, and what needs to happen to get there. Continue relying on data to influence your decision-making. Create safe spaces for people to be able to debate, and discuss concerns respectfully without fear of recrimination.

Examples of what to measure (in each country or across countries):

- How inclusive do people perceive your organisation to be, and how many people tend to agree on the level of inclusion? This provides an idea of the climate of inclusivity. Consider surveys and focus groups to gather that information.
- Shifts in inclusion and diversity practices against benchmarks that have been set.
- Gather employee data, or changes in employee data disclosure rates.
- Changes or shifts in the actual representation of priority groups (across all levels, but in particular leadership positions), where it is possible to get the data.
- Changes in retention or turnover.
- Changes in incident reports.
- Changes in employee experience or engagement.
- Involvement in or launches of staff networks (whether global or local).

7. Case studies

The following case studies highlight organisations that have created global strategies to address the inclusion needs of their organisations and regions in where they operate.

These three case studies explore:

- 1) How Inclusive Employers and Focusrite worked together to create an inclusion strategy that felt authentic to the organisation's global population.
- 2) How BCW developed its inclusion programme IDEA globally.
- 3) How IBM made a global impact internally and externally.

1) Focusrite - creating a global I&D strategy that feels authentic

Focusrite is one of the leading manufacturers of audio interfaces and studio hardware, catering to both the seasoned professional and the home studio hobbyist with high quality, reasonably priced gear.

Focusrite, a member of Inclusive Employers, has shown commitment to inclusion and diversity through engagement with employees of all levels, delivery of training, engagement of leadership and the creation of an inclusion and diversity steering committee. To take this to the next level, Focusrite engaged with Inclusive Employers to create an inclusion and diversity strategy that would set out the short-term and long-term inclusion plans of the business, including metrics to measure success.

Inclusive Employers took a collaborative approach, working closely with HR and leadership as well as stakeholders of all levels at Focusrite, to create a strategy and mission that felt genuine, authentic, and responded to real needs of the business and employees.

For this to succeed, it was essential that we heard from and engaged as many voices as possible including the leadership team. To create a strategy that addressed all of this, we took the following steps:

- Hosted a series of focus groups with employees of all levels based in the UK, as well as some of Focusrite's international markets. We create a safe environment where employees could share their experience, views on the culture of the business, and ideas for improvement. The themes from these focus groups helped shape priorities for the strategy.
- Delivered workshops with the C-suite and leadership team and provided a space where they could voice ideas, concerns and submit ideas for the inclusion and diversity strategy.
- Hosted a strategy workshop with the D&I steering committee to discuss and agree on key strategic priorities and how to best address the needs of the business and employees.
- Finally, all the above was used by the Inclusive Employers Consultant to create an inclusion and diversity strategy outlining short-term and long-term objectives and commitments for the organisation.

Inclusive Employers and Focusrite created an inclusion and diversity strategy that felt authentic to the values and purpose of the business. The findings and ideas from the focus groups and workshops were key to help us decide on actions that felt genuine and would address real needs of the business and employees.

Based on the organisational values that employees are already familiar with, we created strategic pillars with specific and measurable goals and metrics for success. These actions and goals were centred around priorities such as retention and recruitment, learning and development, leadership engagement and inclusive cultures.

2) BCW driving IDEA globally

BCW is a global communications agency employing 4,000 people around the world. It sits under the holding company WPP which employs over 100,000 people. BCW has developed a global inclusion strategy that is visible in its communications and in how it presents its business services for clients.

BCW's approach to global inclusion involved developing a comprehensive programme called IDEA: for inclusion, diversity, equity and accountability. Under this umbrella, Carol Watson, who is the EVP/Managing Director leading inclusion and diversity, created a number of initiatives which are regularly published on the BCW website. Their approach is not to simply focus on people and HR practices, but also to focus on its core business of serving clients' communication needs.

As a result, they have developed the BCW Polycultural Consulting Unit, which helps to deploy campaigns that are 'culturally relevant and promote inclusion and diversity in the workplace and beyond'.

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BCW have also developed a global Inclusivity Pledge which outlines key inclusion commitments that are relevant globally. Some key examples include:

- Developing global Grow IDEA Network Think Tanks, which focus on client solutions, professional development, cultural insights, community/purpose, and recruiting to establish programmes and initiatives that are relevant to the growth and evolution of BCW's inclusive culture.
- Leveraging their Employee Resource Groups to lead initiatives that will have client, career, culture, and community impact across the organisation.

In addition, BCW are a great example of an organisation that keeps its content fresh and engaging on various inclusion and diversity topics from 'The Importance of Inclusive Marketing' to 'How to Reach Gen Z'. You can view their 'IDEA in Conversation' series on YouTube here. <https://www.bcw-global.com/insights/global/one-year-later-bcw-inclusion-diversity-equity-and-accountability-commitments>

¹⁴ <https://www.bcw-global.com/insights/global/one-year-later-bcw-inclusion-diversity-equity-andaccountability-commitments>

¹⁵ <https://www.bcw-global.com/p/our-inclusivity-pledge>

3) IBM – making global impact

Almost everyone knows the IBM brand - a global technology company that provides hardware, software, cloud-based services and cognitive computing. But not everyone knows that as a globally integrated enterprise it has a long history of driving global inclusion and diversity practices, creating change not only within the organisation but in the countries where it operates.

Previous IBM CEO Virginia Rometty said:

‘IBM thinks about diversity the way we think about innovation — both are essential to the success of our business. When we innovate, technology becomes smarter for clients and creates new opportunities for growth.

When we incorporate diversity into our business, we create better innovations and outcomes. IBM has embraced diversity, and it gives opportunities for IBMers and our clients to achieve their full potential.’¹⁶

Throughout its history, it has been a pioneer in valuing and appreciating its diverse workforce. For example, in 1935, almost 30 years before the Equal Pay Act guaranteed pay equality between the sexes, then IBM president Thomas Watson promised equal pay for equal work.¹⁷

In more recent years, IBM has been involved in supporting communities more widely in other countries it operates in. An example is when, in 2014, IBM sponsored talks together with other large corporations to discuss strategies to protect the LGBTQ+ community in India after the country outlawed gay sex.¹⁸ This eventually led to a supreme court ruling overturning the ban in 2018.

¹⁶ <https://www.thevaluable500.com/member/ibm>

¹⁷ <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-orgbehavior/chapter/2-5-managing-diversity-for-success-the-case-of-ibm/>

¹⁸ <https://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/content/news/ibm-leagds-talks-to-tackle-india-s-gay-sex-ban>

In the 1990s under the leadership of Louis Gerstner, the company created eight diversity task forces which looked deeply at the challenges of different demographic groups having perceived slow progress on increasing diversity at more senior levels. The company also reviews its recruitment programmes regularly to be more diverse.

IBM is also well known for putting its inclusion and diversity policies at the heart of its business. For example, the IBM's supplier guidelines state that their suppliers must not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and make it clear that the corporation will not tolerate any harassment or variations in pay, benefits or promotion for LGBT staff.¹⁹

IBM's inclusion and diversity programmes are tracked through global surveys which identify what has worked well and what has not worked so well.

¹⁹ <https://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/scpg-v2.0.pdf>