

pontoon i n s t i n c t

HOW TO MAKE THE BEST
“BUSINESS CASE”
FOR DE&I?

DON'T. MAKE IT PART OF YOUR DNA.



2023

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1. OVERVIEW

DISCOVER OUR GROUNDBREAKING APPROACH TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN OUR LATEST WHITEPAPER.

Recent research by Harvard Business Review¹ has shown that unrepresented job candidates are less interested in working for companies that claim to invest in DE&I to “improve their bottom line” instead of favouring those who commit to it. This white paper explores how you can forget the traditional business case – and transform DE&I into the core fabric of your organisation.

DIVE INTO OUR EXPERT INSIGHTS ON:

- Culture: Understand, communicate, and foster an inclusive environment that celebrates differences.
- Programs: Empower employees with internships, training, re/upskilling, and inclusive C&B initiatives.
- Processes: Revolutionise talent acquisition, leverage technology, and boost your supply chain support.

TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF
THIS GAME-
CHANGING
PERSPECTIVE.



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¹Harvard Business Review, Stop Making the Business Case for Diversity - June 2022

2. INTRODUCTION

AT PONTOON INSTINCT, OUR MISSION IS TO CREATE IMPACTFUL SOLUTIONS THAT CREATE BETTER WORKPLACES.

Whether they are industry trailblazers looking to redefine their approach to human capital, or companies seeking to navigate ever-evolving territories, the desire to embrace change is a defining quality of outstanding businesses.

As we embark on this new era of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) initiatives, we recognise that now, more than ever, organisations must evolve to reflect the changing world around them. We pride ourselves on our dedicated team, our commitment to delivering top-notch advisory services with sincerity and integrity, and our unique drive to ensure our partners' success. This entrepreneurial spirit fosters deep, personal relationships that enrich our understanding of each business's dynamic needs.

RECENT RESEARCH¹ BY HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW STATES THAT 80% OF FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES USE A BUSINESS CASE TO JUSTIFY DIVERSITY.

Still, this approach makes underrepresented job candidates less interested in working for such an organisation, because the messaging around 'business cases' sends a message that hiring these people is a "means to an end". This creates a sense within this group of potential stereotyping, undermining their sense of belonging.

The research concludes that not making a case for diversity removes the implication that valuing diversity is up for discussion, treating it like other core values such as innovation, resilience, or integrity¹.

¹Harvard Business Review, Stop Making the Business Case for Diversity - June 2022

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To that end, this whitepaper delves into a more holistic and intrinsic approach to DE&I, as opposed to the need for creating a traditional "business case".

By making DE&I an integral part of a company's DNA, we explore how adjustments to Culture, Programs, and Processes can lead to a more authentic and meaningful commitment to diversity.

DRAWING ON THE INSIGHTS OF OUR SEASONED TEAM, THIS PAPER INVESTIGATES THE PRACTICAL STEPS BUSINESSES CAN TAKE TO ADOPT THIS INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO DE&I:

- We examine how nurturing an inclusive culture, implementing robust DE&I programs, and integrating diversity into business processes can establish a more natural and effective DE&I strategy.
- By reimagining how we discuss and approach diversity, businesses can not only achieve their diversity goals but also cultivate a more inclusive, innovative, and successful organisation.

In conclusion, the traditional "business case" for DE&I has proven to be inadequate and even detrimental to achieving genuine diversity in the workplace. Pontoon Instinct champions a more comprehensive and sincere approach in which DE&I is treated as a fundamental component of an organisation's DNA.

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3. CULTURE

AT THE HEART OF A TRULY DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION LIES A CULTURE THAT FOSTERS A SENSE OF BELONGING AND EQUALITY FOR ALL EMPLOYEES. THIS CHAPTER DELVES INTO THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE, FOCUSING ON THREE KEY ASPECTS:

- UNDERSTANDING
- LANGUAGE
- BEHAVIOUR.



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UNDERSTANDING: PERFORM A DE&I AUDIT TO UNDERSTAND THE DEMOGRAPHICS AND CULTURE OF YOUR WORKFORCE.

WHAT:

Understanding the current state of your organisation's diversity and inclusion landscape is the first critical step. By conducting a comprehensive DE&I audit, you will gain valuable insights into your workforce's demographics and cultural dynamics, which will serve as a foundation for developing targeted interventions and strategies.

WHY:

A thorough understanding of your organisation's demographics and culture enables you to identify gaps and areas for improvement. It also allows you to set realistic goals and tailor your DE&I initiatives to address the specific needs of your workforce, thereby ensuring maximum impact and effectiveness.



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HOW:

- Conduct a demographic analysis: Analyse the demographic composition of your workforce across various levels and functions, considering factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, and disability.
- Assess the current state of your DE&I policies: Review your existing policies, practices, and programs related to diversity and inclusion, and evaluate their effectiveness in promoting an inclusive culture.
- Gather employee feedback: Conduct surveys, focus groups, and interviews to gather feedback from employees about their perceptions of the company's culture, inclusiveness, and areas where improvement is needed.
- Identify key areas for improvement: Based on your findings, pinpoint the areas where your organisation needs to focus its DE&I efforts, and develop a clear roadmap for implementing changes.

A COMPREHENSIVE DE&I AUDIT PROVIDES INVALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO THE DEMOGRAPHICS AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS WITHIN YOUR WORKFORCE, SERVING AS A FOUNDATION FOR TARGETED INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES.

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LANGUAGE:

IMPROVE HOW YOU DISCUSS AND COMMUNICATE DE&I, INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

WHAT:

The language used to communicate DE&I is crucial in shaping your organisation's culture and employee perceptions. Effective communication on this subject, both internally and externally, sets the tone for how your organisation values and promotes diversity and inclusion.

WHY:

Improving how you discuss and communicate DE&I can foster a more inclusive environment by challenging stereotypes and biases, encouraging open dialogue, and promoting a shared understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion. It also helps to demonstrate your organisation's commitment to DE&I, enhancing its reputation among potential employees, clients, and partners.

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HOW:

- Develop clear messaging: Establish consistent messaging around DE&I, emphasising the intrinsic value of diversity and inclusion without relying on the "business case" argument.
- Promote open dialogue: Encourage open and respectful conversations about DE&I within your organisation, providing opportunities for employees to share their experiences and perspectives.
- Train leaders and managers: Provide training for leaders and managers on effective communication strategies related to DE&I, empowering them to champion diversity and inclusion within their teams.
- Review external communications: Ensure that your organisation's commitment is reflected in external communications, such as your website, marketing materials, and social media.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION ON DE&I SETS THE TONE FOR HOW YOUR ORGANISATION VALUES AND PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, FOSTERING A MORE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT.

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BEHAVIOUR:

IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS SPECIFIC BEHAVIOURS THAT WILL CREATE A MORE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION.

WHAT:

Behavior plays a crucial role in fostering an inclusive culture. It is essential to identify and address specific behaviours that hinder diversity and inclusion within the organisation, such as microaggressions, unconscious bias, and exclusionary practices. By focusing on these behaviours, you can promote a more inclusive environment that encourages collaboration, innovation, and employee well-being.

WHY:

Addressing specific behaviours that negatively impact diversity and inclusion is vital to creating a truly inclusive organisation. By tackling these behaviours, you demonstrate your commitment to fostering an environment where all employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives and skills. This not only improves employee engagement and satisfaction but also drives better business outcomes.



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HOW:

- Raise awareness: Educate employees about the different types of behaviours that can undermine diversity and inclusion, such as microaggressions, unconscious bias, and exclusionary practices. Use workshops, training sessions, and communication campaigns to raise awareness and encourage reflection on personal behaviours.
- Establish clear expectations: Set clear behavioural expectations for all employees, emphasising the importance of treating one another with respect and empathy. Incorporate these expectations into performance reviews and promotion criteria to reinforce their significance.
- Encourage allyship: Promote a culture of allyship, where employees actively support and advocate for one another, particularly for those from underrepresented groups. Provide resources and guidance on how to be an effective ally, and recognise employees who demonstrate strong allyship.
- Monitor progress: Regularly assess the impact of your efforts to address specific behaviours through employee surveys, focus groups, and other feedback mechanisms. Use this data to identify areas for improvement and adjust your strategies as needed.

FOCUSING ON SPECIFIC BEHAVIOURS THAT HINDER DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IS ESSENTIAL TO CREATING A TRULY INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION THAT DRIVES BETTER BUSINESS OUTCOMES.

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4. PROGRAMS

IN THE PURSUIT OF A TRULY DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION, IT IS IMPERATIVE TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS THAT ACTIVELY PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THESE VALUES. THIS CHAPTER DELVES INTO THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ECOSYSTEM, FOCUSING ON FOUR KEY PILLARS:

- INTERNSHIPS & ACADEMIES
- DE&I TRAINING
- RE- AND UPSKILLING
- COMPENSATION & BENEFITS.



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INTERNSHIPS & ACADEMIES: CREATE ACADEMY AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS TO CREATE FULLY EXCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES.

WHAT:

Internships and academy programs create opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to gain valuable experience, develop skills, and establish professional networks. Partnering with public and private organisations to support training initiatives and engage with the local community can further enhance these opportunities and contribute to a more inclusive organisational culture.

WHY:

Inclusive internship and academy programs help broaden the talent pipeline and promote diversity within the organisation. By offering equal opportunities and collaborating with local communities, businesses can enhance their reputation, foster innovation, and improve their understanding of diverse markets and customer needs.

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HOW:

- Design inclusive programs: Ensure that internship and academy programs are designed to accommodate individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those with different educational backgrounds, experiences, and abilities.
- Engage with community partners: Collaborate with local schools, universities, and community organisations to promote your programs and attract a diverse pool of candidates.
- Provide mentorship and support: Pair participants with experienced professionals who can offer guidance, share insights, and facilitate networking opportunities.
- Offer financial assistance: Provide stipends, scholarships, or other financial support to remove barriers to participation for individuals from underrepresented groups.
- Track outcomes: Measure the success of your internship and academy programs by tracking participant retention, promotions, and overall satisfaction with the experience.

INCLUSIVE INTERNSHIP & ACADEMY PROGRAMS BROADEN THE TALENT PIPELINE & PROMOTE DIVERSITY WITHIN THE ORGANISATION, CONTRIBUTING TO INNOVATION & A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSE MARKETS & CUSTOMER NEEDS.

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DE&I TRAINING: PROVIDING TRAINING THROUGHOUT THE BUSINESS TO CONTINUALLY EDUCATE AND IMPROVE BEHAVIOURS.

WHAT:

Diversity and inclusion (DE&I) training is designed to help employees understand the importance of diversity in the workplace, recognise and address unconscious biases, and develop inclusive management styles.

WHY:

DE&I training is crucial for fostering a more inclusive work environment where all employees feel valued and respected. By equipping employees with the skills and knowledge necessary to embrace diversity, businesses can improve employee engagement, drive innovation, and reduce the potential for discrimination and bias.

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HOW:

- Assess training needs: Conduct a thorough assessment of your organisation's DE&I training needs, taking into account current levels of understanding and any existing gaps.
- Tailor content: Customise training content to address the specific needs and priorities of your organisation and its employees.
- Utilise various formats: Offer training through multiple formats, such as workshops, webinars, and e-learning, to accommodate diverse learning preferences and schedules.
- Reinforce learning: Encourage managers to facilitate discussions and apply the lessons learned from DE&I training in their daily interactions and decision-making processes.
- Evaluate effectiveness: Regularly assess the impact of your DE&I training efforts, using metrics such as employee feedback, changes in behaviour, and progress toward diversity goals.

DE&I TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL FOR CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT, IMPROVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, DRIVING INNOVATION & REDUCING THE POTENTIAL FOR DISCRIMINATION & BIAS.

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RE-AND UPSKILLING: SUPPORT EMPLOYEE GROWTH THROUGH RE- AND UPSKILLING TO IMPROVE AND DIVERSIFY THEIR CAREERS.

WHAT:

Re- and upskilling programs provide employees with the opportunity to develop new skills or enhance existing ones to meet the current and future needs of the business, while also improving their career prospects.

WHY:

Investing in re- and upskilling programs is essential for maintaining a competitive edge, fostering employee loyalty, and ensuring that your workforce is prepared to navigate the evolving business landscape. Moreover, by promoting career development opportunities for all employees, businesses can help to reduce disparities and promote a more inclusive work environment.

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HOW:

- Identify skill gaps: Analyse your organisation's current and future skill requirements and identify areas where re- and upskilling initiatives can provide the most value.
- Develop tailored programs: Create training and development programs that address the identified skill gaps, and cater to the diverse learning preferences and needs of your employees.
- Foster a culture of learning: Encourage a growth mindset within your organisation by promoting continuous learning and development as an essential aspect of career progression.
- Offer flexible learning options: Provide employees with access to a variety of learning resources, such as online courses, workshops, and mentoring programs, to support their re- and upskilling efforts.
- Track progress and outcomes: Monitor employee participation in re- and upskilling initiatives and evaluate the impact on their performance, job satisfaction, and career development.

INVESTING IN RE- AND UPSKILLING PROGRAMS FOSTERS EMPLOYEE LOYALTY, ENSURES YOUR WORKFORCE IS PREPARED TO NAVIGATE THE EVOLVING BUSINESS LANDSCAPE, & PROMOTES A MORE INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT.

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COMPENSATION & BENEFITS: CREATE A FULLY INCLUSIVE C&B PROGRAM THAT INCORPORATES THE NEEDS OF AN INCLUSIVE, MODERN WORKFORCE.

WHAT:

Inclusive compensation and benefits (C&B) programs ensure that all employees are rewarded fairly and equitably, taking into account their diverse needs and preferences. These programs may include flexible work arrangements, parental leave, health and wellness initiatives, and benefits that cater to the unique requirements of different employee groups.

WHY:

Creating inclusive C&B programs is essential for attracting and retaining a diverse workforce, as well as promoting a sense of fairness and equity within the organisation. By recognising and accommodating the diverse needs of employees, businesses can improve job satisfaction, enhance employee engagement, and create a more inclusive work environment.



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HOW:

- Conduct a pay equity audit: Analyse your organisation's compensation practices to identify and address any disparities based on factors such as gender, race, and age.
- Offer flexible work arrangements: Provide employees with options for remote work, flexible hours, and job sharing to accommodate their diverse needs and preferences.
- Implement inclusive benefit programs: Design benefits packages that cater to the unique requirements of different employee groups, such as comprehensive health coverage, parental leave, and employee assistance programs.
- Seek employee feedback: Regularly solicit input from employees on their needs and preferences regarding C&B programs, and adjust your offerings accordingly.
- Communicate C&B programs effectively: Clearly and consistently communicate the details of your C&B programs to all employees, ensuring that they understand the value and availability of these offerings.

INCLUSIVE COMPENSATION & BENEFITS PROGRAMS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ATTRACTING & RETAINING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE, IMPROVING JOB SATISFACTION, & PROMOTING A SENSE OF FAIRNESS & EQUITY WITHIN THE ORGANISATION.

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5. PROCESS

TO ENSURE THAT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ARE TRULY INGRAINED IN AN ORGANISATION'S DNA, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ESTABLISH PROCESSES THAT REFLECT THESE VALUES AT EVERY LEVEL. THIS CHAPTER EXPLORES THE KEY ASPECTS OF BUILDING INCLUSIVE PROCESSES, FOCUSING ON THREE CRITICAL AREAS:

- TALENT ACQUISITION
- TECHNOLOGIES
- SUPPLY BASE SUPPORT.



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TALENT ACQUISITION: REDESIGN YOUR HIRING APPROACH TO SUPPORT FULLY INCLUSIVE HIRING.

WHAT:

Inclusive talent acquisition processes involve redesigning hiring approaches to attract and engage diverse talent, coaching line managers to support inclusive practices, and modifying process logistics to ensure a fair and equitable recruitment experience for all candidates.

WHY:

An inclusive talent acquisition process is essential for attracting a diverse pool of candidates, fostering a more inclusive workforce, and enhancing the organisation's reputation as an employer of choice. It helps businesses tap into a broader range of skills, experiences, and perspectives, ultimately driving innovation and performance.

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HOW:

- Review job descriptions and requirements: Assess the language, tone, and criteria used in job postings to ensure they are inclusive and do not inadvertently deter diverse candidates from applying.
- Leverage diverse sourcing channels: Utilise a range of sourcing methods, such as job boards, social media, and community-based organisations, to reach diverse talent pools.
- Train line managers: Equip hiring managers with the skills and knowledge to support inclusive hiring practices, such as recognising unconscious bias and conducting inclusive interviews.
- Implement structured interviews: Standardise the interview process by using consistent questions and evaluation criteria for all candidates to minimise bias and ensure a fair assessment.
- Monitor and analyse hiring data: Collect and review data on the diversity of applicants and new hires to identify trends, measure progress, and inform future talent acquisition strategies.

INCLUSIVE TALENT ACQUISITION PROCESSES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ATTRACTING DIVERSE TALENT, FOSTERING A MORE INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE, & ENHANCING THE ORGANISATION'S REPUTATION AS AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE.

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TECHNOLOGIES:

IMPLEMENT ADVANCED AND INTUITIVE TECHNOLOGIES TO SUPPORT THE ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF TALENT.

WHAT:

Inclusive technologies in talent acquisition involve the implementation of AI and automated tools to assist in talent search, messaging, and management. These technologies have the potential to help eliminate biases, streamline the recruitment process, and ensure a more equitable experience for all candidates. However, it is important to recognise that AI can also be vulnerable to bias, depending on its development and application.

WHY:

Leveraging technology to support inclusive talent acquisition enables businesses to broaden their reach, minimise human biases, and create a more efficient and equitable hiring process. With a careful and balanced approach, organisations can benefit from the potential of AI and automation, while remaining vigilant about the risks.



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HOW:

- Research and select appropriate tools: Evaluate AI and automated tools available in the market, and choose those that align with your organisation's diversity and inclusion goals.
- Implement AI-driven job posting tools: Utilise AI-powered platforms to create inclusive job postings by identifying and eliminating biased language when used correctly.
- Leverage AI for candidate screening: Employ AI-driven screening tools to assess candidate qualifications and fit, ensuring a consistent and objective evaluation process.
- Utilise automated messaging and communication: Implement automated communication tools to keep candidates informed throughout the recruitment process, promoting transparency and fairness.
- Continuously monitor and refine: Regularly assess the effectiveness of the implemented technologies, making adjustments as needed to optimise their impact on diversity and inclusion efforts. Stay close to advancements in the field and remain alert to emerging risks and opportunities.

BY LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY, BUSINESSES CAN SUPPORT INCLUSIVE TALENT ACQUISITION, BROADEN THEIR REACH, & MINIMISE HUMAN BIASES. BE AWARE OF TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENTS TO CONTINUOUSLY MONITOR & REFINE THE TECHNOLOGIES USED.

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SUPPLY BASE SUPPORT: UNDERSTAND AND IMPROVE YOUR SUPPLIER BASE TO ENSURE IT'S BOTH INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE.

WHAT:

Supply base support involves assessing and understanding your organisation's current supplier base, then implementing impact assessments, Service Level Agreements (SLAs), and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to promote diversity and inclusion within your supply chain.

WHY:

A diverse and inclusive supply base is essential for driving innovation, mitigating risks, and fostering sustainable growth. By working with a diverse range of suppliers, businesses can access new markets, ideas, and perspectives, ultimately enhancing their competitive advantage.



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HOW:

- Assess current supplier base: Review your organisation's existing suppliers to identify areas of underrepresentation or potential bias in your procurement practices.
- Set diversity and inclusion goals: Establish clear objectives and goals for improving diversity and inclusion within your supply base, aligned with your organisation's overall DE&I strategy.
- Develop supplier diversity policies: Create policies and guidelines that outline your organisation's commitment to supplier diversity and the steps it will take to achieve its goals.
- Implement impact assessments: Conduct regular assessments of your suppliers' diversity and inclusion practices to evaluate their performance and identify areas for improvement.
- Incorporate DE&I criteria into SLAs and KPIs: Integrate diversity and inclusion metrics into your supplier SLAs and KPIs to ensure suppliers are held accountable for their DE&I performance.
- Provide support and resources: Offer guidance, training, and resources to help suppliers understand the importance of diversity and inclusion and how they can contribute to your organisation's DE&I goals.
- Monitor and report on progress: Regularly review your supplier base's performance against your DE&I objectives, and communicate results to internal and external stakeholders.
- Foster partnerships with diverse suppliers: Actively seek out and engage with suppliers from diverse backgrounds, including minority-owned, women-owned, and LGBTQ+-owned businesses, to create a more inclusive supply chain.

A DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE SUPPLY BASE IS ESSENTIAL FOR DRIVING INNOVATION, MITIGATING RISKS, & FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH. BY WORKING WITH A DIVERSE RANGE OF SUPPLIERS, BUSINESSES CAN ACCESS NEW MARKETS, IDEAS, & PERSPECTIVES, ULTIMATELY ENHANCING THEIR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.

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6. CONCLUSION

A CLOSING STATEMENT

I am thrilled to introduce Pontoon Instinct, our new advisory service, built on the foundation of our extensive experience and deep understanding of the global workforce, with a passion for supporting our clients in navigating today's ever-changing landscape.

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is ingrained in our core values, and we recognise the tremendous impact it has on driving innovation, fostering growth, and strengthening the fabric of our organisation and the businesses we serve.

We have always believed in the transformative power of a diverse and inclusive workforce, and with the launch of Pontoon Instinct, we are taking a significant step in amplifying our mission. By leveraging the expertise of our most experienced, astute, and curious minds, we aim to provide tailored solutions to help businesses improve their workforce strategy, work environment, and overall impact.

The name "Pontoon Instinct" reflects our unique approach, which transcends traditional knowledge, networks, and processes. Our instinctive perspective allows us to reframe challenges, apply learning, and create innovative solutions that set us apart.

As we embark on this exciting new journey, we are eager to share our insights and expertise in diversity and inclusion with our clients and partners. Our goal is to foster a global business community that embraces the value of diverse perspectives and cultivates an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

Together, let us create a world where 2+2 equals more, where we unlock the untapped potential within our organisations, and where we make a lasting impact on the future of our workforce.

With gratitude and anticipation,

Lee Baldwin
Global Head of Pontoon Instinct



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IF YOU'D LIKE TO HEAR MORE ABOUT THE
SERVICES PROVIDED BY PONTOON INSTINCT,
PLEASE GET IN TOUCH:



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