



Inclusion Allies

Building an inclusive culture

Introduction

Our business success depends on becoming one of the most inspiring companies to work for, attracting, developing and retaining talented people to create high performing diverse teams that set us apart from our competitors. We must reflect our customer's diversity and we must do right by our colleagues.

We all have a responsibility to help AXA thrive and to support all our people in being the best they can be. Therefore, we invite you to join us by becoming an Inclusion Ally. As the majority, our Inclusion Allies play such a crucial role in helping us to develop an environment in which everyone can reach their true potential.



BETTER FINANCIAL RESULTS

Research from McKinsey has found that companies in the top quartile for gender and ethnic diversity are 15% and 35% respectively more likely to financially outperform their competitors (McKinsey, 2015).



INCREASED INNOVATION

Research from Deloitte has found that when employees believe their organisation is committed to diversity and they feel included, their ability to innovate increases by 83% (Deloitte, 2013).



MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO WORK

Nearly half (45% of men and 54% of women) surveyed by PwC said they researched if a company had diversity practices in place when deciding to accept a position (PwC, 2017).

PEOPLE MANAGER TIP:

If you are sceptical of the importance of diverse and inclusive environments, ask yourself how the achievement of your business objectives will be affected if you fail to be inclusive.

The business case for diversity and inclusion is clear: it helps organisations attract talent, innovate and provide a competitive advantage. Therefore, creating an inclusive environment is not only the right thing to do but it's also a business imperative.

However, it's clear that there's still some work to do to ensure that everyone can reach their true potential.

This guide introduces the concept of an Inclusion Ally and gives you the tools you need to get started. There are many ways in which you can be an Inclusion Ally. Some are more vocal, some are quieter supporters – all are valuable.

The current landscape

28.6%

the percentage of women in Executive Committee & Direct Report roles across the FTSE 100. There are also just six female chief executives in the FTSE 100 and in the FTSE 350, there's a staggering forty-four all-male Executive Committees (Hampton-Alexander Review, 2019).

99.5 years

the amount of time it will take to achieve gender parity if progress continues at its current rate. (World Economic Forum, 2019).

35%

of LGBT+ employees have hidden their gender identity or sexual orientation at work in fear of discrimination (Stonewall, 2018).

£24bn

the potential yearly benefit to the UK economy if BAME talent is fully utilised (The McGregor Smith Review, 2017).

12.2%

the percentage of people with disabilities who are paid less than their able-bodied colleagues (ONS, 2020).



What is an Inclusion Ally?

Put simply, an Inclusion Ally is a friend or supporter of diversity and inclusion. Allies take steps to improve the lives and experiences of diverse talent inside of work and beyond, so that everyone is able to be themselves and reach their full potential.

Being an Inclusion Ally has so many benefits for AXA, for diverse talent and for yourself!

EXAMPLES OF ALLIES INCLUDE:

- Non-disabled people show support to people with disabilities
- Straight and cisgender people who show support to the LGBT+ community – and those within the LGBT+ community can be allies to each other, e.g. gay men can be allies to bi women
- Men who show support to women and gender equality
- White people who show support for ethnic minorities

Whatever your role at AXA, however junior or senior you are, you can make a positive impact on the lives and experiences of diverse talent.

We invite you to make a conscious choice to become an Inclusion Ally and help everyone be themselves at work and reach their full potential.



Why are allies important?

To make progress on diversity and inclusion at AXA UK, we need everyone to be part of that conversation and be the driving force for positive change.

FOR AXA

- Allies will help us to attract, develop and retain diverse talent which is proven to be good for business
- Allies provide 'strength in numbers' which will help to move forward our efforts on diversity and inclusion more quickly
- Allies help us to embed diversity and inclusion into everything we do, which ensure we develop inclusive products and services to our people and customers

FOR YOU

- Being an ally can help you to live your personal values in the workplace
- Being an ally contributes to your own personal and professional development as well as those around you
- Being an ally can help you learn more about your colleagues as well as yourself
- Being an ally can help you build stronger and wider networks and relationships

FOR DIVERSE TALENT

- Allies can help diverse talent enjoy better working relationships
- Allies can help diverse talent feel confident to be themselves at work
- Allies can help diverse talent to overcome barriers they face at work



“For an organisation to be successful, I believe that a culture of empowerment, trust and respect needs to be embedded into its DNA. These values are crucial to attract, develop and retain diverse talent, which is the right thing to do for AXA to serve its people and customers. As Inclusion Allies it’s our responsibility to challenge ourselves and others when we can’t see these values alive.”

Claudio Gienal
Chief Executive Officer, AXA UK & Ireland



What do allies do?

The importance of allies can't be underestimated: statistically they are the majority and therefore, without their support, our plea for inclusion is merely a faint whisper. Whether it be helping someone to be out at work about their sexual orientation, to feeling able to talk about their mental health, allies help to bring about the inclusive environment in which we can all thrive.

STEP 1: BE INFORMED

Allies strive to be open minded. They are willing to listen as well as to talk, as well as to challenge their own biases.

You can help by:

- Following our [Diversity & Inclusion intranet site](#)
- Participating in activities run by our employee resource groups
- Listening to, and believing, the stories of different people from across our organisation, regardless of whether or not you can personally relate to their experience
- Completing digital training on diversity and inclusion which is available on [YES Learning](#)
- Asking questions – as long as you have the right intentions, don't be concerned about saying the wrong thing, just be honest about what you don't know and learn from your mistakes
- Understanding that everyone is different – not all members of diverse groups will share the same experiences.

STEP 2: BE VISIBLE

Allies use their personal platform to signal their support for diversity and inclusion. Their visible support sends a powerful message to colleagues.

You can help by:

- Sharing your story in the form of a blog for our [Diversity & Inclusion intranet site](#)
- Adopting our Inclusion Allies e-mail banner or filter to show your support for diversity and inclusion
- Sharing posts about diversity and inclusion on social media or the Diversity & Inclusion intranet site
- Inviting colleagues to attend diversity and inclusion events with you.

TOP TIP:

Remember that your colleagues are not responsible for educating you on all aspects of diversity and inclusion and that sometimes it can be difficult to answer or relive the same things over and over again. So, be sure to research, read and watch resources to self-educate yourself as much as possible. And, don't be offended if the person would rather not answer your questions.

STEP 3: BE VOCAL

Allies speak up when they encounter exclusive behaviour. By actively challenging their own biases, they set the tone of what is acceptable at AXA.

You can help by:

- Trying to use inclusive language – you can learn more about this in the [CII's Inclusive Language guide](#)
- Being an active bystander and challenging all forms of exclusive behaviour
- Making sure that everyone has the opportunity to have their voice heard in meetings
- Giving credit where it's due – celebrating the achievements of all talent, regardless of who they are
- Inviting a diverse range of speakers when organising meetings and events

STEP 4: BE ACTIVE

Allies live their values and take an active approach to build a more inclusive work environment.

You can help by:

- Becoming a taskforce member of one of our employee resource groups
- Mentoring allies and diverse talent in our business
- Encouraging colleagues to get involved and become allies
- If you know someone is having a tough time, inviting them for a chat over a cup of coffee
- Speaking to our [Diversity & Inclusion team](#) about how you can help to drive inclusion

STEP 5: BE YOURSELF!

Above all, allies try and bring their whole self to work. You can help show people through your personal example that we embrace human difference at AXA and that we all bring something different to work.



“It’s important to signal that you’re an ally, taking the time to understand the factors that might impact certain groups of people, and speaking up on issues that may not affect you directly.

By opening up these conversations and offering support, we can take proactive steps to bring others in, and recognise our own influence in situations we find ourselves in every day. We must choose to step up and step in as we steadily broaden perspectives and achieve greater inclusion.”

Tracy Garrad

Exec Sponsor for Diversity & Inclusion and Chief Executive Officer, AXA Health



Becoming an active bystander

There are four different types of intervention an individual can take when they are a bystander to exclusive behaviour: Direct, Delay, Delegation and Distraction. You may need to use more than one type of intervention, depending on the situation.

01. DIRECT

Directly intervene, for example, asking the individual to stop. Be sure to explain why this form of behaviour is not acceptable.

02. DELAY

Wait for the situation to pass and check in with the individual. Act at a later stage once you have had time to reflect.

03. DELEGATION

Inform someone else about the exclusive behaviour, for example HR, a leader, or someone else you think can influence the situation.

04. DISTRACTION

Indirectly intervene, for example by interrupting or changing the subject of focus.



IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

Allies are not experts. We don't expect allies to have ready made answers or to be trained counsellors.

How do I become an Inclusion Ally?

The first step couldn't be simpler. All you need to do is follow the home of our employee resource groups, the [Diversity & Inclusion intranet site](#). Here you'll be able to start engaging with the activities of our four employee resource groups.

Able

is our employee resource group representing disability.

Pride

is our employee resource group representing gender identity and sexual orientation.

Balance

is our employee resource group representing gender equality and working families.

REACH

is our employee resource group representing ethnicity.

These inclusive groups are run for and by our people with an interest in these areas.

If you wish to play a leading role in driving meaningful action in support of one of these areas, you can become a taskforce member. To find out more, do get in touch with the [Diversity & Inclusion team](#).



“Before joining Pride, I didn’t know anyone at AXA outside of my team. Since joining, I’ve built up a network of colleagues from across the country, who all work in different areas of our business, and at all levels of seniority.”

Carol Byrne
Business Insurance Advisor, AXA Insurance





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