

Inklusiv
for Business

How to lead inclusive meetings?

Members' event

April 21st, 2022

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**Inclusion is the behaviours that
welcome and embrace diversity.**

Without inclusive culture and practice, diversity can be difficult

- Different backgrounds and viewpoints can create friction; interactions can be less comfortable
- Higher chance of conflicting working styles and expectations of workplace behaviour
- Possibility of slower decision making due to multiple points of view
- Higher chance of miscommunication (verbal and nonverbal)
- Higher chance of individuals feeling unheard or left out
- Forces people to challenge their assumptions

Psychological safety is core to
successful diverse teams.

Psychological safety is core to building high performing teams

In psychologically safe teams individuals feel:

1. A strong sense of belonging
2. A safety to continue learning
3. That they can participate and contribute
4. That they are able to positively challenge ways of thinking and doing without fear of negative consequences

“The presence of fear in an organization is the first sign of weak leadership”

What is and what is not psychological safety

This is Psychological Safety

Freedom to share thoughts.

Expressing concerns.

Allocating tasks and coaching when needed.

A space where people feel a sense of ease and support.

Taking measured risks after considering possible scenarios.

Everything is considered.

This is NOT Psychological Safety

Saying anything you want.

Letting your emotions go as you please.

Leadership taking a Laissez-faire approach.

A space free of any inner discomfort.

Taking risks and hoping for the best.

Everything is tolerated.

Psychological safety is achieved only when it is experienced by everyone in the workplace community.

How to foster psychological safety in meetings

- ❖ **Be present** (e.g. close laptop during meetings, make eye contact)
- ❖ **Show you're listening** and ask questions with the intention of learning from your teammates
- ❖ **Validate comments** verbally ('I understand', 'I see what you're saying'), nod your head to demonstrate understanding
- ❖ **Clearly communicate** the purpose & goal of the meeting
- ❖ **Share meeting notes** & key takeaways after the meeting to include those who could not participate
- ❖ **Don't interrupt** or allow interruptions. Take action if someone is dominating the discussion.

**Language
choice is often
a default which
can lead to
unintentional
exclusion**

Consider the following:

- What's the official language of the organization?
- What language do you use in informal discussions?
- Is there a chance someone might feel excluded from certain discussions and situations due to language barriers?

Common challenges in a multi-language team & meetings

- ❖ People are **not comfortable** with using English at work, even if they had sufficient skills. Using English is seen as a burden.
- ❖ **Different levels of language skills** in the team make communication difficult. Native speakers might use terms and language that non-native speakers don't understand.
- ❖ Language skills or lack of them might be **a sensitive topic** to bring up.
- ❖ Non-native or second language speakers **can be excluded** from informal conversations and social interactions.

It's not about personal language skills.

It's about a community's ability to be conscious about language choices and create inclusive language policies.

How to ensure inclusive meetings in multi-language working environments

- ❖ **Open discussion** in teams / workplaces about language policies and how this connects to equal opportunities & employee wellbeing
- ❖ Language skills is considered as **a personal qualification** and that is why it is a sensitive and difficult topic to bring up. Taking the discussion from the personal level to organisational/policy level can help.
- ❖ Create **clear rules and guidelines** for meetings.
- ❖ Make sure that everyone in the meeting follows these rules (interrupt if someone changes the conversation to Finnish, create ways to share if participants feel uncomfortable to use English)

What have you found challenging when it comes to leading meetings in multi-language or diverse working environments?



4 tips to hold inclusive meetings

1. Create an environment and rules where all feel comfortable and able to participate - also in hybrid & remote environments

- ❖ Set **ground rules** for meetings & use same rules for all meetings in the organisation.
- ❖ Encourage participation - especially in remote and hybrid environments.
- ❖ Use an exercise or have a casual chat in the beginning of the meeting when possible to foster the **sense of belonging** among participants.
- ❖ Pay attention to **language choices**. Is everyone able to participate?
- ❖ Make sure **no one dominates** the meeting.
- ❖ Rotate both the **exciting tasks** and **taking notes**. Always arrange for someone to take notes, especially if important decisions are being discussed.

A HBR study found that only 35% of employees surveyed felt consistently comfortable contributing in meetings.

In meetings of five to ten people, that's only two to three people who feel empowered to contribute.

2. Acknowledge the different styles of the participants

- ❖ **Respect different communication styles** and preferences. Encourage team members to share about their personal work style & preferences.
- ❖ If you want input from people in the meeting, consider **circulating materials beforehand** as people have different ways of processing information and not everyone can respond on the spot.
- ❖ Think about ways that you can **welcome everyone to give their input into conversation**. Encourage people to share their thoughts in the chat (or in a written format) if they prefer.
- ❖ Use hand-raising feature to give the floor to people. Communicate these rules before each meeting.
- ❖ Don't put people "on the spot" or call out people randomly.

3. Create a safe space to share thoughts & ideas

- ❖ Pay attention to **who is attending** the meetings and who is **doing the talking**.
- ❖ Consider having **a round of updates** in the beginning/end of a meeting to ensure that everyone has a space to share what they have in mind.
- ❖ In virtual meetings, use breakout rooms to provide space for **deeper conversations** and sharing.
- ❖ Encourage **open and respectful discussion** and create space for different opinions.
- ❖ Share the spotlight.

4. Practice what you preach

- ❖ Show and model **vulnerability**.
- ❖ **Be present** and listen actively.
- ❖ Ask questions, **show genuine interest** when someone is speaking.
- ❖ Show **courageous behaviour** and always speak up if someone is being disrespectful - even when it makes you uncomfortable.
- ❖ When someone proposes a good idea, repeat it and **give them credit**.

Spotify: Meeting on Equal Ground

Meeting on Equal Ground

We go out of our way to make all meeting participants equal.

At Spotify we advocate for Meeting On Equal Ground. Every participant in a meeting should feel like their input is on equal footing. We know it's hard to track conversations both visually (trying to see who's talking) and audibly (with varying distances from the microphone) for those not in the room. So here are some tips to succeed:

- Maintain your camera on at all times unless there are special circumstances
- If one is distributed, all should use your device's camera to level the playing field
- Make sure everyone is heard and respect virtual 'raised hands'
- Appoint a moderator to help steer the conversation, and a scribe if applicable
- Maintain an active body language - emulate a physical environment
- Don't continue discussions with people colocated with you after the meeting be inclusive and set a new one or do it asynchronously!



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Find out more: inklusiiv.com

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