

# The State of Inclusion in European Tech 2025

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## European Tech at a Crossroads

A special editorial report  
by Diverse Leaders in Tech  
(DLiT) based on insights  
from 97 tech companies  
across Europe

**“Inclusion is no longer an  
initiative. It’s infrastructure.”**

Ingrid Tappin, Founder and CEO Diverse Leaders in Tech

# Inclusion by Design, Not by Default

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Across Europe, tech stands at a crossroads. The data tells a story of progress – more women in leadership, more DEI policies in place, more leaders speaking the language of inclusion. But beneath the dashboards lies a harder truth: inclusion is still too often an initiative, not an infrastructure.

2025 also brought unprecedented scrutiny of DEI worldwide. It was put under a global spotlight – tested, questioned, and misunderstood. For some, this created hesitation. For others, it became the moment to clarify their purpose and prove their ROI. The companies in our scan chose the latter – moving from declarations to design, and from intent to measurable impact.

In our annual report, we analysed data from 97 European tech companies.

The patterns are clear

## + **Intent is rising.**

The narrative of inclusion has entered boardrooms.

## + **Structure is emerging.**

Dedicated teams, policies, and reporting lines are forming.

## + **Accountability is lagging.**

Few can show measurable change in trust, belonging, or equitable access to opportunity.

# “True innovation happens when diverse voices are heard and empowered.”

– Gillian Tans

At this point in the journey, the question should no longer be why inclusion matters – it’s how we design for it. Real progress will come from moving beyond awareness towards systems that are human-centred by design, transparently measured, and predictably fair.

The companies leading this shift treat inclusion as an engine of competitiveness and innovation – not as a compliance metric. They are building cultures where difference is not managed but leveraged; where identity is not flattened but recognised as a driver of insight and creativity.

We invite you to see inclusion not as a moral add-on but as a design discipline. One that shapes how products are built, teams are led, and futures are imagined.

The data shows where we are.  
The design will determine where we go next.



**Ingrid Tappin**  
Founder and CEO  
Diverse Leaders in Tech



**Gillian Tans**  
Chair Advisory  
Committee  
Diverse Leaders in Tech



# Progress is Real. But It's Not Yet Reliable.

15%

of companies hit all  
2024 inclusion goals.

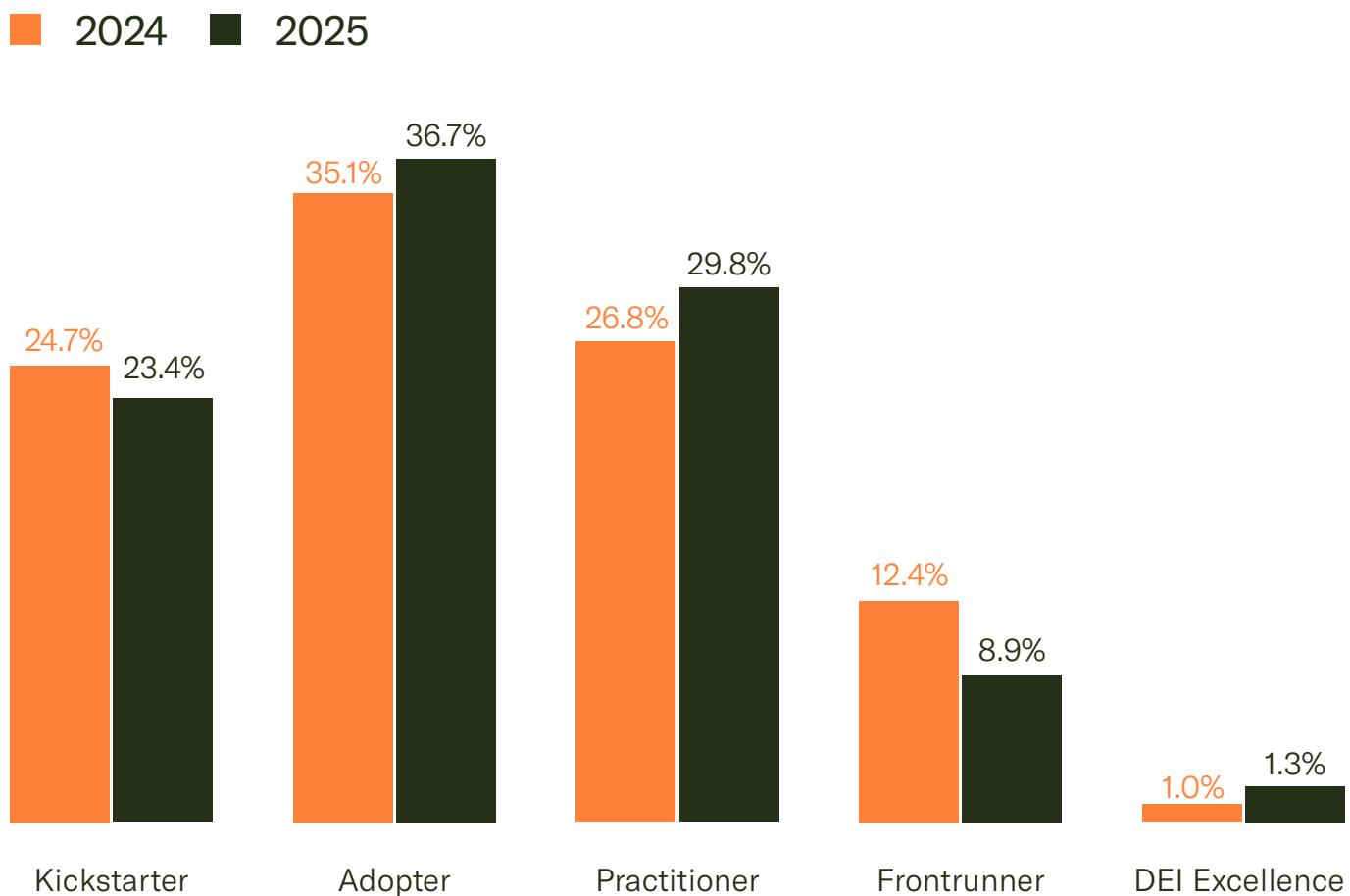
8%

link DEI outcomes to  
leadership reviews or  
promotions.

13%

use demographic  
data to drive DEI  
decisions.

## DEI Maturity Distribution



# Progress Needs Design

Europe's tech sector is evolving fast – but inclusion is still running on good intentions, not good infrastructure. The data shows progress in awareness, yet too few companies have redesigned the systems that shape who gets seen, heard, and promoted. Progress isn't just about more initiatives; it's about developing the intelligence to leverage complexity – in ourselves, in teams, and in the system as a whole.

Leaders must move from programmes to patterns.



“Real inclusion isn't a campaign. It's a design choice that determines whether your company scales or stalls.”

Ingrid Tappin  
Founder and CEO  
Diverse Leaders in Tech

## Our Advice

- + **Hardwire inclusion into performance architecture.**

Make it part of how leaders are measured, rewarded, and trusted.

- + **Use data to reveal what identity already knows.** Let lived experience and demographic insight inform better design, not just reporting.

- + **Treat inclusion as innovation.** The same curiosity that fuels product breakthroughs should power cultural ones.

It's time to shift from progress as momentum to progress as mechanism – to build the feedback loops that turn awareness into intelligence, and intelligence into impact.

Real inclusion isn't a campaign. It's a design choice that determines whether your company scales or stalls.



Ingrid Tappin  
Founder and CEO  
Diverse Leaders in Tech

## Strategic Area 1: Business Strategy

# From Aspiration to Accountability

## The Reality Check

Only

# 8%

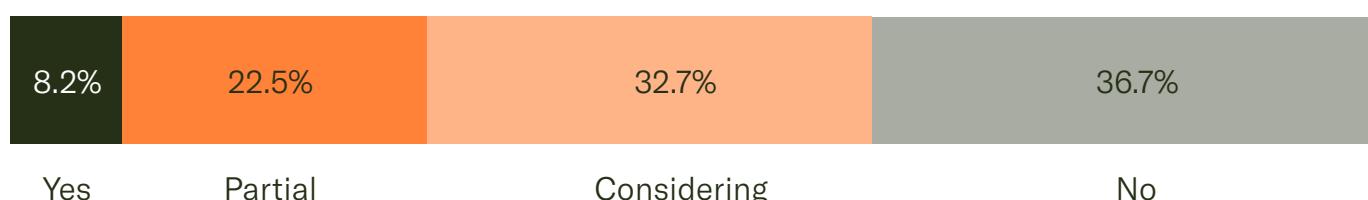
of tech companies link DEI outcomes to leadership reviews and promotions.

The good news?

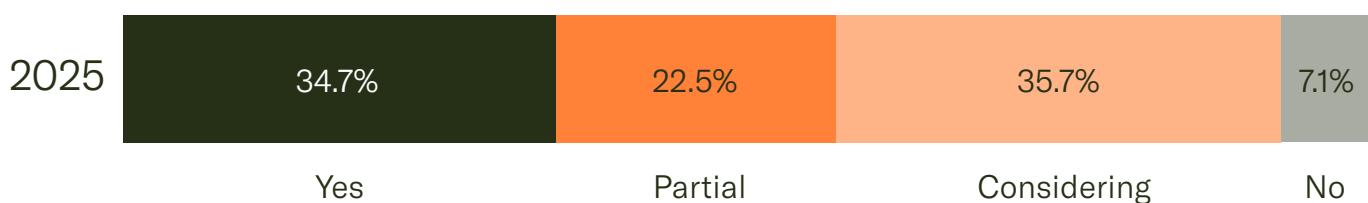
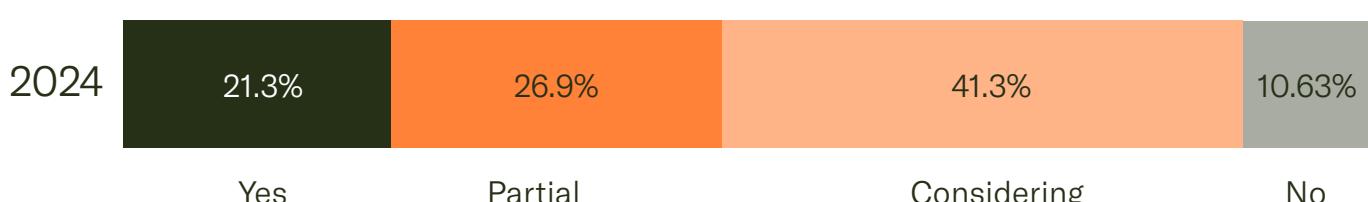
The number of Frontrunners has doubled in a year.

# 9% → 19%

% of companies tying their leaders' and managers' reviews and promotions to performance on DEI goals



% of companies having a formal DEI strategy





“Design for scale:  
embed simple,  
non-negotiable  
checkpoints in  
existing business  
gates.”

Terence Guiamo  
Global Director Culture, Wellbeing, Inclusion, Diversity  
and Belonging, Just Eat Takeaway.com

# Leader's Insight

## How Just Eat Takeaway.com Builds Belonging at Scale

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At Just Eat Takeaway.com, a Dutch multinational online food ordering and delivery company, treating inclusion as 'business' means building it into the strategic fabric of the organisation, how leaders plan, decide and are held to account. With teams across 17 markets and colleagues from more than 100 nationalities, our Inclusion, Diversity & Belonging (ID&B) mission is to create a culture where diverse perspectives fuel better choices for our people, partners and customers.

### Three Shifts Stood Out in 2024–2025

**1. Governance at the top.** Senior leaders sponsor ID&B pillars, track progress with data, and use the results to adjust strategy—just as they would with growth or risk. This accountability helped launch an ambitious gender diversity strategy, already improving leadership balance across levels.

**2. Capabilities at scale.** A Global Inclusive Leadership programme builds skills like managing diverse teams, surfacing bias, and setting respectful debate as the norm. Hiring practices now embed inclusion as a gate in the process, not an optional extra.

**3. Community power.** More than 6,500 employees are active in groups ranging from Women in Tech and JET & Proud to Neurodiversity and Parents & Carers. A Global Belonging Calendar and moments like International Women's Day and Black History Month keep inclusion visible all year.

## The Impact

When leaders have clear expectations and real tools, the talk shifts from ‘why’ to ‘how we do it here.’ Inclusion shows up earlier in product, marketing, and people decisions. More voices. Stronger allyship. Safer day-to-day. Our Communities amplify wins and flag friction fast, while the leadership program bakes inclusive habits into everyday management.

## The Challenge

In a fast-moving global business, great practice risks fragmentation. The solution? Design for scale. Embed simple, non-negotiable checkpoints in existing business gates and use one story and set of pillars so people recognise what ‘good’ looks like everywhere.

## Advice to Peers

Start where decisions are made. Tie inclusion outcomes to leader ownership. Keep your playbook small and repeatable. Share progress openly. And above all, link inclusion to customer and partner impact—because only then does it earn its place alongside growth and risk on the business agenda.



Terence Guiamo  
Global Director Culture, Wellbeing, Inclusion,  
Diversity and Belonging,  
Just Eat Takeaway.com

# Expert Take Embedding DEI into Business Objectives

## Why It Matters

The business benefits of DEI are well-proven. When done well, DEI programmes lead to the diverse perspectives and sense of inclusion that are critical for innovation and growth. Fortunately, while DEI is facing challenges in other parts of the world, in Europe, leaders have continued to see it as a strategic business imperative. With strong foundations in place, the most forward-thinking organisations are now focusing on how they can directly tie DEI efforts to other key business success metrics.

## How to Act

As we look to 2026, there are three key areas we're advising companies on right now:

- + Quantifying the impact of DEI and culture efforts on core business metrics like employee performance, retention, customer satisfaction, and even financial performance.
- + Structural efforts to embed DEI best practices throughout the business, as opposed to positioning it as a siloed effort.
- + Navigating the role AI will play. This includes everything from helping CHROs identify AI-powered solutions that will help them be more effective in their DEI efforts to empowering individual employees to successfully adopt tools without furthering bias and inequities.

## Pitfalls to Avoid

For companies with an international footprint, it's important to consider that regulations around DEI differ by country and programmes need to be adaptable. Within Europe, organisations also want to avoid treating DEI as a side project or reducing it to compliance data. When it isn't tied to measurable business outcomes—like employee performance, innovation speed, or product adoption—momentum fades. DEI must be managed with the same data discipline as any other strategic goal.

## Priority for 2025

In 2025, the top priority should be embedding DEI outcomes into business goals and performance frameworks. What gets measured—and rewarded—gets done. When inclusive behaviours and results drive growth metrics, DEI becomes a true engine of business success.

Bottom Line

When DEI drives business goals, it stops being a value and becomes a growth engine.



Rachael Ogden Wilson  
Head of UK Expansion, Paradigm

## Strategic Area 2: Culture

# Behaviour over Branding

## The Reality Check

Fewer employees feel their companies create true safe spaces

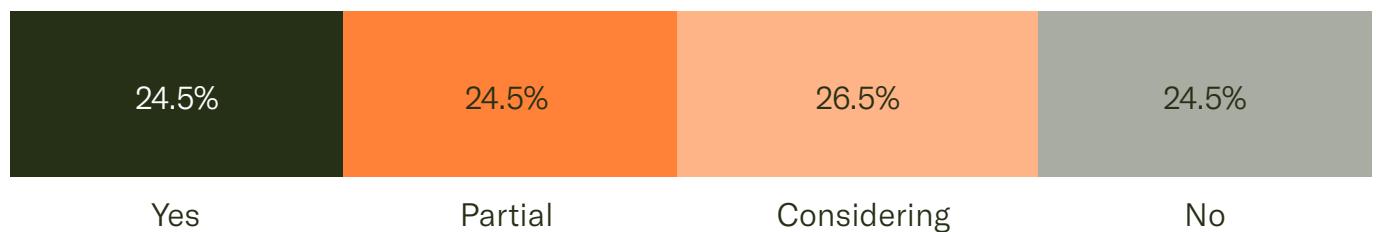
60% → 55%

Year-on-Year.

1 in 4

companies address behaviours misaligned with DEI values.

% of companies addressing behaviours misaligned with DEI values

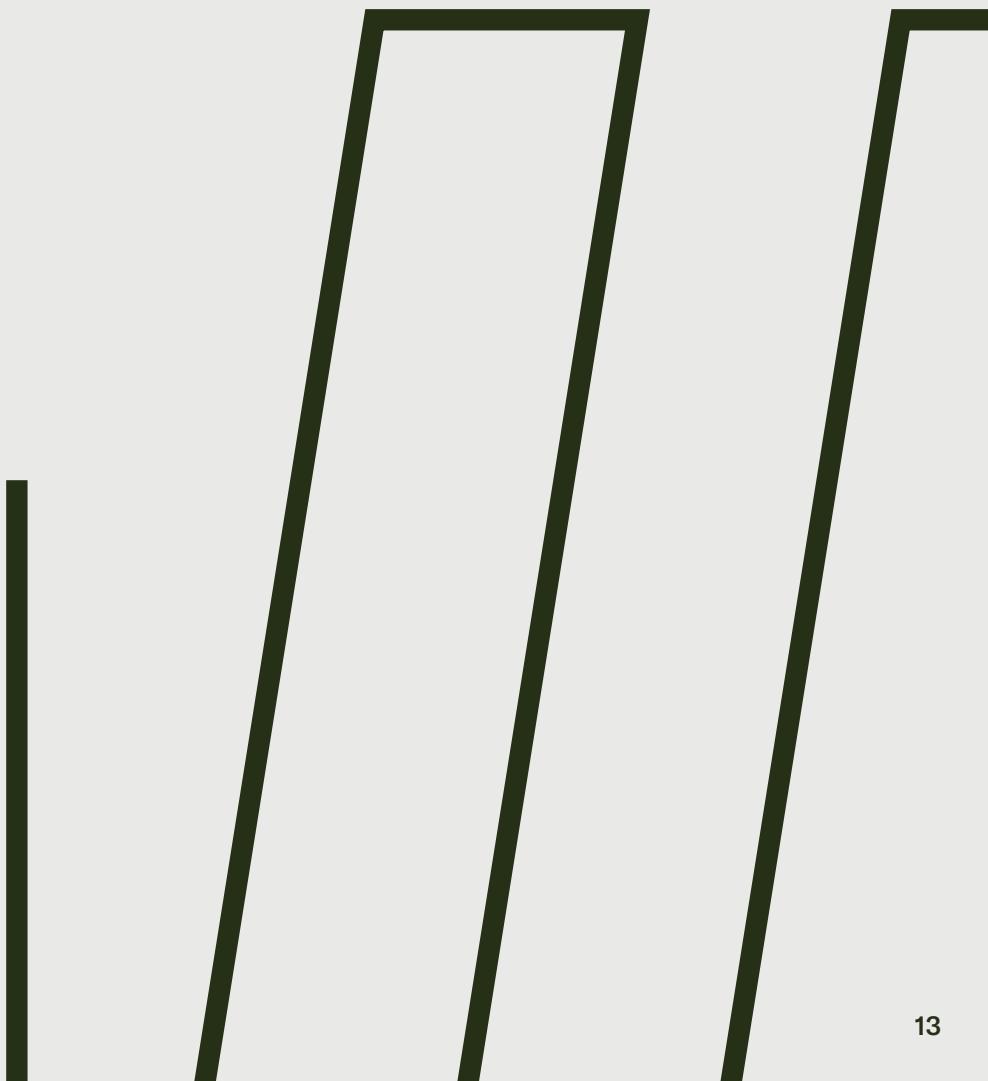


% of companies creating safe spaces to encourage employees to be their authentic selves



“Culture without clarity creates confusion.”

Hans Scheffer  
CEO, HelloPrint



# Leader's Insight

## How HelloPrint Made Culture the Engine of AI Transformation

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At HelloPrint, a platform for printed products, culture isn't a perk – it's the strategy. It's how we build, scale, and recover when times get tough. Inclusion means creating conditions where people from all backgrounds can be their full selves and be stretched to perform at their best – because diverse leaders build better tech.

## One Bold Move



In 2024–2025, we made AI-First Thinking a cultural pillar by giving everyone – regardless of role or seniority – the opportunity to learn to build AI agents and integrate them into everyday workflows. We launched company-wide agent-building trainings, hands-on labs, and resources, then wired this into our operating rhythm (agent reviews, shared libraries, and roll-out playbooks). This wasn't just 'using AI'; it was co-creating agents so every voice could contribute to how we work.

# The Outcomes

Because participation was universal and practical (build → ship → iterate), we saw:

- + More voices shaping product and process as people proposed and shipped agents from every function.
- + Flatter decision loops and clearer ownership, which boosted performance and accountability.
- + Higher belonging, support, and psychological safety in surveys – linking inclusion directly to how we perform, not just how we feel.

## The Lesson

Assumptions don't scale. In a diverse, international environment, clarity beats folklore. We made our culture statements explicit – what each value is and isn't. For example, 'Do it Together' doesn't mean hiding behind the team; it means showing up for each other and owning your part.

## Advice to Peers

Start with clarity: give people behaviours and build rituals they can act on. Don't copy-paste culture – make it true to your DNA. Embed inclusion in feedback loops and operating cadences, not just employer branding. Listen, iterate, and keep showing up.

The future of inclusion isn't soft – it's bold, structured, and co-owned. That's how we're building it at HelloPrint.



Hans Scheffer  
CEO, HelloPrint

# Expert Take Culture by Design, Not by Accident

## Why Culture Matters

In tech, innovation is survival—and innovation only happens when people feel safe to share ideas, take risks, and challenge the status quo. Psychological safety is the cornerstone: without it, diverse voices go unheard and conversations stay surface-level. Next to that, leaders need to model accountability and consistency.

## How to Act

- + **Model inclusion.** Leaders should show vulnerability, invite feedback, and make space for quieter voices. Simple habits—like rotating speaking order—can make inclusion visible every day.
- + **Lead from the top.** Diversity and inclusion must be a strategic priority, not an HR task. Measure culture through performance reviews that assess both results and inclusive behaviours.
- + **Keep learning.** Culture change needs consistency. Regular training embeds psychological safety and inclusion into everyday learning and growth.

## Pitfalls to Avoid

Many treat culture as a one-off project, yet it must evolve with teams and change. Mistaking ‘niceness’ for inclusion limits growth—psychological safety means enabling constructive challenge. Recruiting for diversity while demanding ‘fit’ hinders true collaboration. Other traps: diversity only at junior levels or optics over real inclusion.

## Priority for 2025

If you do one thing this year, make leadership directly accountable for culture. Make them understand why this is key for business success and train them well, embed inclusion into strategy and reviews, and ensure it’s never treated as optional.

### Bottom Line

Inclusion can’t survive on representation alone. It has to be wired into daily culture: how people speak up, disagree, learn, and lead. That’s what unlocks innovation.



Veroniek Vermeulen  
Founder, SILATHA

## Strategic Area 3: Data

# Collecting ≠ Acting

## The Reality Check

# 13%

of companies use demographic data to shape their DEI strategy.

Self-ID capture is improving – up to

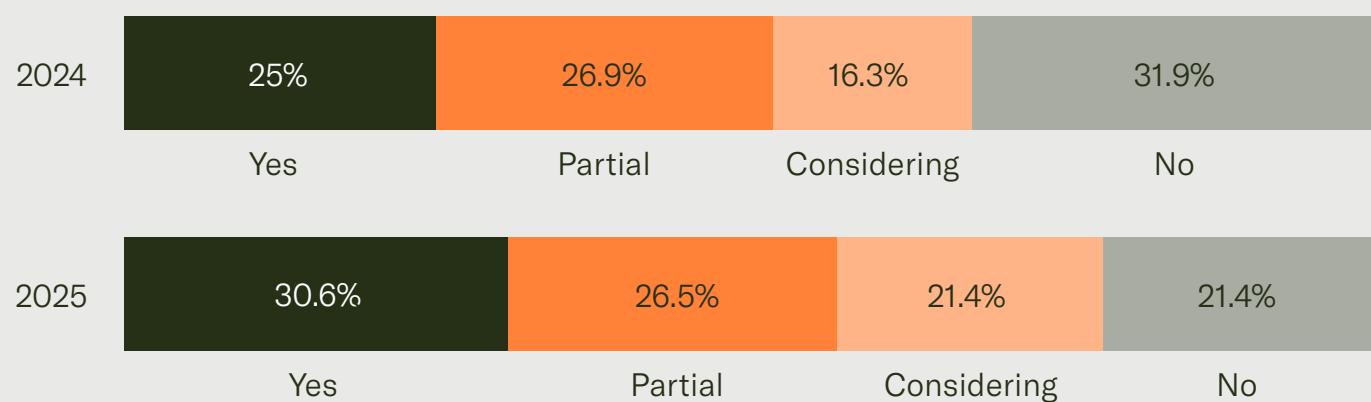
# 30.6%

in 2025 – but still leaves big gaps.

% of companies using demographic data to inform DEI strategy



% of companies capturing self-ID demographic data



“Data is not the destination, but the essential engine that helps transform well-intended commitments into measurable, systemic progress.”

Olivia McEvoy  
Global Head of Inclusion,  
Booking.com



# Leader's Insight Using Data to Evolve Inclusion at Booking.com

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As a travel technology company and data-driven organisation, Booking.com recognises the value of using evidence to inform decision-making. Our mission is to make it easier for everyone to experience the world. And everyone means *everyone*. But what does that really mean and how does data play a role?

## One Bold Move



In 2023, we started capturing demographic data (across twelve identity characteristics) on a voluntary basis in three of our biggest employee hubs, including the Netherlands. A year later, we took the first steps to overlay annual employee engagement results with this demographic data, to better understand how different communities experience the workplace.

## The Impact

Understanding the interplay between identity and engagement in the workplace means that initiatives can be more intentionally designed to ensure they are both relevant and impactful for diverse communities.

Access to demographic data enables leaders to discuss inclusion with the same rigour as product strategy. Data provides a shared language for these conversations, allowing us to move from good intentions to evidence-based decisions. It helps us see where our efforts are paying off and where we still have work to do.

## The Biggest Challenge

Trust. Inviting people to share their personal identity requires it in spades. Employees must feel confident that the data they share is used responsibly and for their benefit. We address this through being transparent about our purpose, ensuring data is used to drive progressive change, while upholding strict privacy standards.

## Advice to Peers

Data is not the destination, but the essential engine that helps transform well-intended commitments into measurable, systemic progress. Integrate demographic data into existing processes and ensure each inclusion initiative is anchored by success metrics and milestones. This is not just about the numbers; it's about using that vital insight to challenge assumptions, address gaps, and drive accountability for systemic change.



Olivia McEvoy  
Global Head of Inclusion,  
Booking.com

# Expert Take Decisions, not Dashboards

## Why Data Matters

Data is not just about dashboards – it's the bridge between intention and action. When companies understand what they're measuring, they know where to focus and how to intervene. Without it, inclusion remains an aspiration instead of a business choice.

Consider the hiring funnel: analysing drop-off points can reveal exactly where bias creeps in. I've seen a simple change in job ad language lead to **a 60% increase in women applicants**. Data doesn't just describe reality – it rewrites it.

## How to Act

- + **Set clear success metrics.** Define measurable DEI goals – such as leadership representation, retention of under-represented talent, and inclusive employee experience – and align them with business priorities.
- + **Collect with care.** Gather self-identified data respectfully: always voluntary, privacy-conscious, and transparent about its purpose.
- + **Audit annually.** Review hiring, promotion, retention, and pay equity at least once a year to identify gaps and guide action.
- + **Listen to the 'why'.** Pair data with focus groups, interviews, and exit insights to understand the lived experiences behind the numbers.
- + **Make it a business rhythm.** Embed DEI metrics into leadership reviews, talent planning, budgets, and quarterly business discussions to drive accountability and sustained progress.

## Pitfalls to Avoid

- +
- Collecting data without purpose.** Gathering numbers no one acts on turns DEI into a reporting exercise, not a change driver.
- +
- Focusing only on gender.** Narrow metrics overlook other vital dimensions like race, disability, or sexuality.
- +
- Treating DEI data as an HR task.** When data isn't tied to strategy, its impact stays limited.
- +
- Lack of transparency.** If people don't know why data is collected or how it's used, trust and participation drop.
- +
- Hiding results.** Without openness and visible progress, even good data loses credibility.

## Priority for 2025

Institutionalise quarterly reviews of hiring, promotions, pay, and attrition by demographics. When leaders see these numbers regularly, accountability becomes part of the rhythm – and change accelerates.

Bottom Line

What you measure shapes what you achieve. Data isn't the goal – it's the engine of progress.



Lotus Smits  
Founder,  
The INK DEI Agency

## Strategic Area 4: Stakeholder Involvement

# From Feedback to Co-Creation

## The Reality Check

More than

# 1 in 3

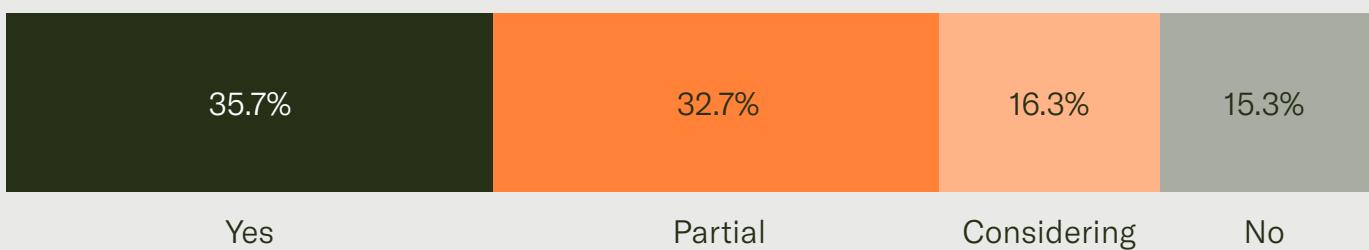
companies now involve under-represented groups in shaping their DEI strategy.

Consulting external DEI experts is down almost

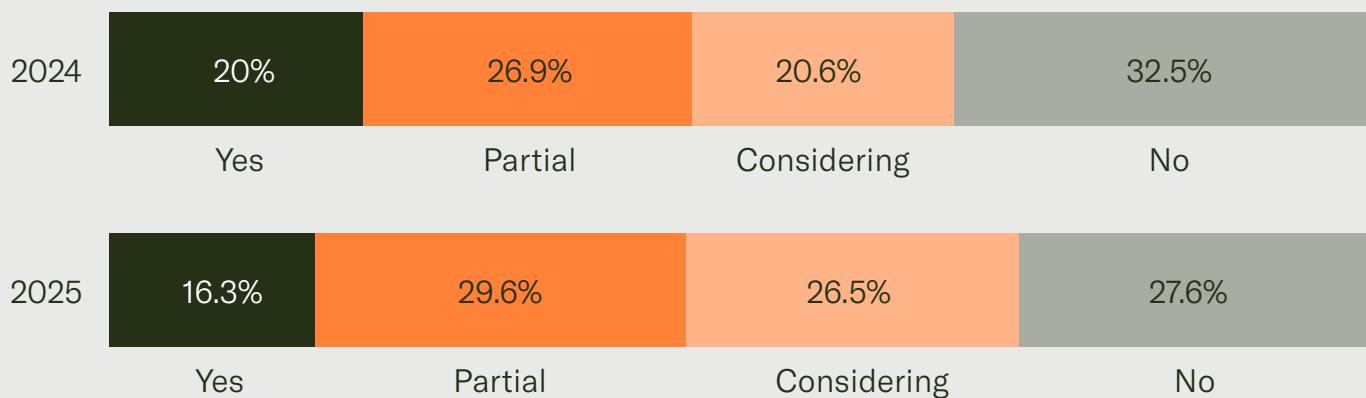
# 4%

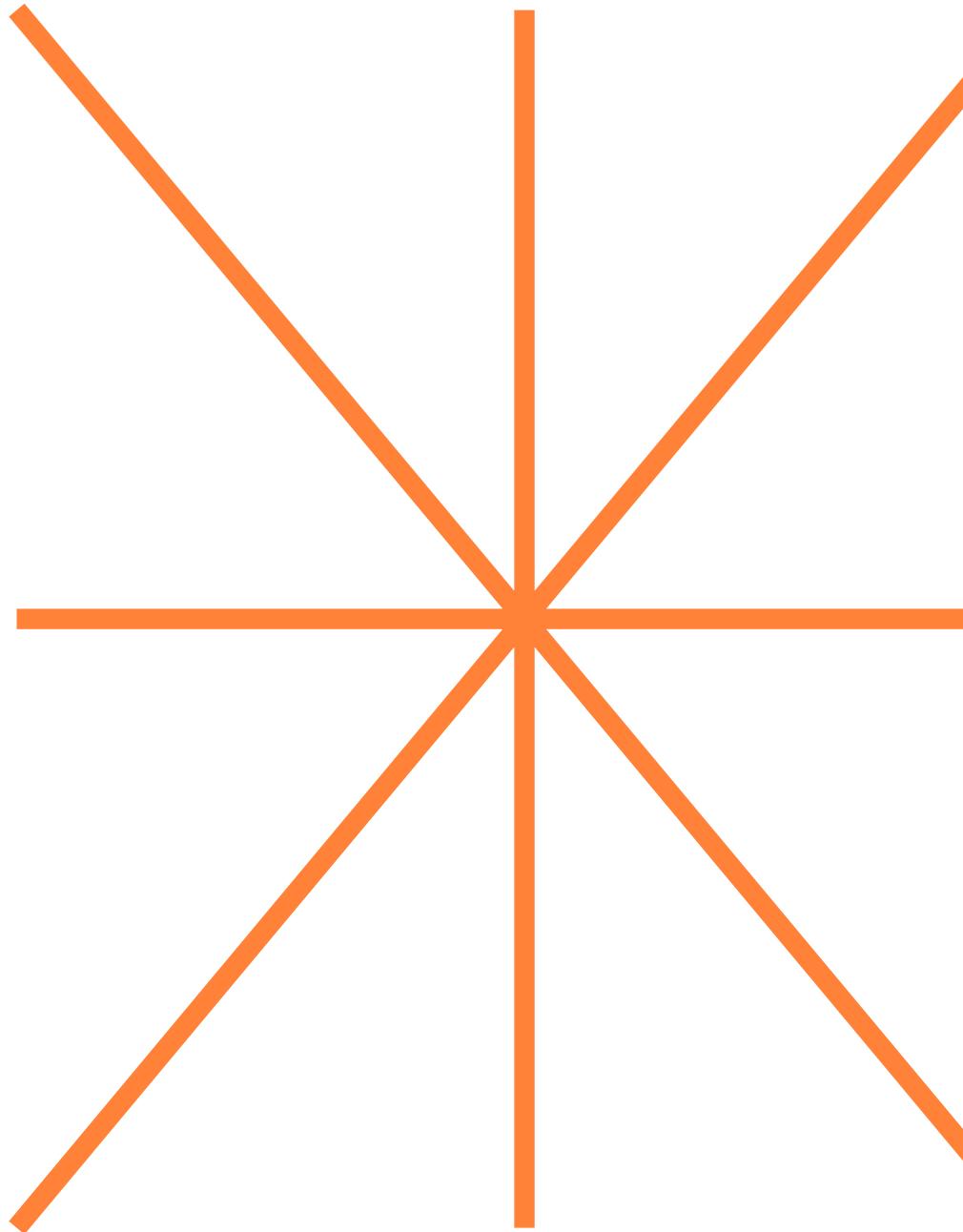
Year-on-Year.

% of companies involving underrepresented communities in shaping their DEI strategy



% of companies regularly consulting DEI experts





“Real transformation  
happens when it’s  
co-created, not  
handed down.”

Marieke van Iperen  
CEO and Co-founder,  
Settly

# Leader's Insight

## How Settly turns Inclusion into Shared Ownership

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At Settly, a Dutch software company that simplifies international relocations, DE&I isn't a checkbox – it's the foundation of our mission: creating a world where everyone feels at home. Inclusion means every stakeholder – team, partners, clients, community – helps shape how we build, decide, and serve.

### What We Did

1. **Employee journey, end to end:** Embedded inclusive practices from hiring to performance and recognition – celebrating difference and encouraging challenge.
2. **Values in the supply chain:** Applied a DE&I lens to vendors and clients – proactively choosing aligned partners and walking away when values don't match.
3. **Inclusive-by-design product:** Built inclusivity into our product so every user's journey is recognised and supported fairly – across countries, beliefs, and genders.

## Impact

Co-creating with stakeholders drove shared accountability:

- + Employees felt heard and stayed longer, as co-creation built ownership and strengthened collaboration.
- + Clients and partners recognised our DEI commitment, deepening trust and reinforcing our reputation.
- + Diverse perspectives exposed bias and elevated decision-making, fuelling a high-performance culture that drove us beyond our business targets.

## Challenge and Learning

We declined a high-value customer whose values didn't align. Hard call, clear signal: belonging and integrity aren't negotiable – and protecting them strengthens culture and brand.



Marieke van Iperen  
CEO and Co-founder,  
Settly

## Forward Look

Involve people early and often. Build DE&I into strategy and operating rhythms, not side projects. Hold partners to your standards. Give teams clear behaviours, not slogans – and keep listening and iterating.

# Expert Take Intercultural Competence as Core Stakeholder Skill

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## Why It Matters

Structures like ERGs, public updates, and supplier programmes are valuable, but they don't create inclusion on their own. Their impact depends on competence – the capability to recognise, respect, and collaborate across differences. Intercultural competence turns stakeholder involvement from symbolic participation into systemic inclusion, ensuring every voice can influence how organisations grow and make decisions.

## How to Act

- + **Integrate intercultural competence into leadership development.** Not just awareness, but skills: listening across communication norms, adapting decision-making, and creating safety for hesitant voices.
- + **Make it practical.** Embed this into everyday routines: ERG consultations, product roadmap reviews, vendor decisions, and customer councils.
- + **Upskill managers.** Help them recognise how their own cultural defaults shape interactions and negotiations.

## Pitfalls to Avoid

- + Copy-pasting US-centric DEI models into European contexts, overlooking how nationality, migration background, and language shape inclusion just as much as race or gender.
- + Treating stakeholder involvement as a checklist of meetings or reports instead of a genuine practice of co-creation and shared ownership.

## Priority for 2025

Make intercultural competence a non-negotiable part of leadership growth. When leaders can engage effectively across differences, every stakeholder mechanism – ERGs, supplier dialogues, investor briefings – becomes more than structure. It becomes a lived co-creation.

### Bottom Line

Inclusion scales when stakeholders don't just give feedback but shape decisions. Co-creation builds trust, accountability, and stronger business outcomes.



Magdalena Szumna  
Founder,  
INDIGO Diversity Consulting

## Strategic Area 5: Systematic Change

# Equity Isn't a Mood. It's a Mechanism.

## The Reality Check

# 31%

of companies run regular pay-equity audits.

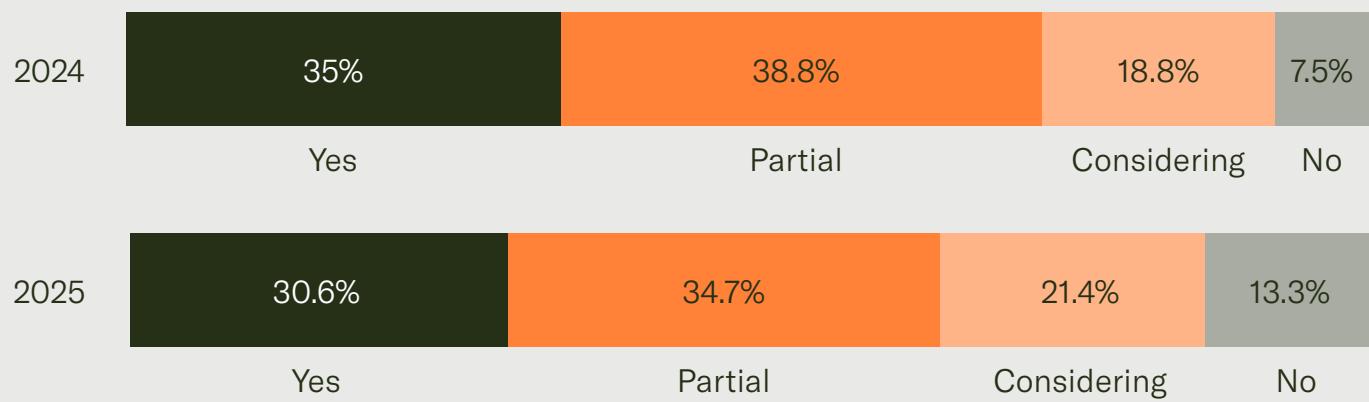
Structured performance reviews are slipping Year-on-Year.

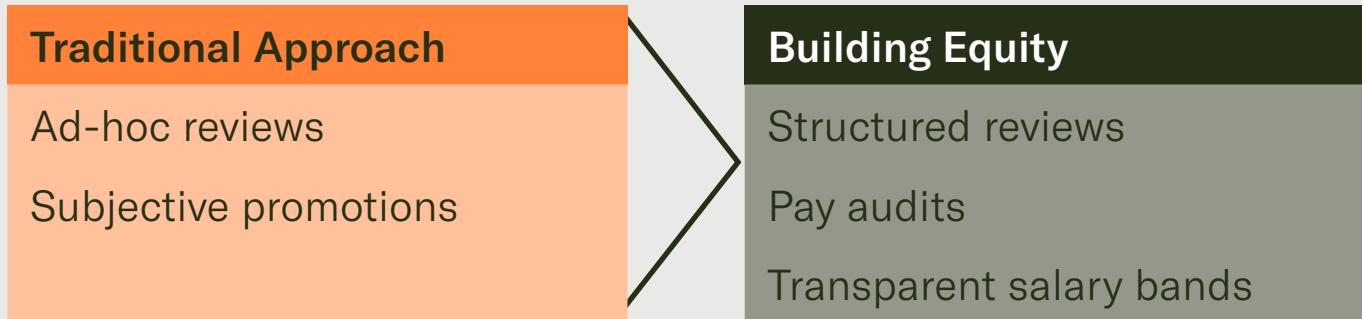
# 35% → 31%

% of companies regularly auditing pay equity across demographics



% of companies having structured performance reviews





“Don’t treat inclusion as a project; treat it as a principle. Projects can stall; principles endure.”

Matthijs Welle  
CEO, Mews



# Leader's Insight

## How Mews Hardwired Inclusion into Its System

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Mews, a global cloud software company offering property-management solutions for hospitality, moved beyond 'values on a wall' to mechanisms that drive daily decisions.

### What We Did



1. **Codified a Mews 'Constitution'** that translates beliefs into observable behaviours.
2. **Rebuilt entry-talent pathways:** redesigned GenMews, a graduate program, to attract talent from broader backgrounds; piloted TalentPilot (AI-enabled hiring platform); tied People OKRs to diversifying pipelines via referrals and ERG partnerships.
3. **Laid pay-transparency foundations:** job levelling and salary bands visible to every employee; preparing to publish ranges on job ads; focus on equitable salaries.
4. **Elevated ERGs as culture-shapers:** rewarded ERG leaders with long-term equity; extended impact beyond the company via an employee-led Disaster Relief Fund.

# Impact

The shift from values to mechanisms is changing outcomes: belonging consistently scores above 9/10; the Constitution and ERG equity make inclusion accountable, not optional; and transparent bands and clear levelling have strengthened trust and widened the talent pool. Visibility has surfaced inequities early, driving targeted pay adjustments and fairer progression – especially for women entering senior roles. And while we've identified lower sentiment among colleagues with accessibility needs, that insight is powering new interventions. In short, the mechanisms are working: clearer decisions, fairer outcomes, stronger performance.

## Our Biggest Challenge

Our biggest challenge: aligning ambition with limited data. Beyond gender, demographic gaps blunt measurement precision. Progress isn't linear – upgrading our Human Resources Information System slowed us short-term, but it builds the foundation for truly data-driven DEI.



Matthijs Welle  
CEO, Mews

## Advice to Peers

Don't treat inclusion as a project, treat it as a principle. Projects can stall; principles endure. For us, the road ahead is about embedding equity into leadership development, closing our gender pay gap, and using data to get sharper about the lived experience of every group in our company.

# Expert Take Equity by Architecture

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## Why It Matters

Systemic change happens when inclusion becomes part of how an organisation works, not an act of goodwill. In Europe's fast-moving tech sector, fairness needs structure – clear standards for hiring, growth, and pay that make equity measurable and bias harder to hide.

## How to Act

- + **Make selection and progression structural.** Use role-based criteria, structured interviews, and diverse panels where possible. Keep tools simple – scorecards, decision logs – and ensure they're applied consistently and auditable.
- + **Make access visible and inclusive.** Embed accessibility and inclusion into learning and talent programmes through flexible formats, assistive tech, and transparent sponsorship criteria so underrepresented employees can access high-impact opportunities.
- + **Make reward fair and accountable.** Conduct regular pay-equity reviews across demographics, align bands and levelling to market benchmarks, and document all exceptions. Share results internally to build trust and reinforce fairness.
- + **Own and govern equity.** Give business leaders – not just HR – accountability. Use light but regular governance and one shared data source to ensure consistency across all markets.

## Pitfalls to Avoid

- + **Frameworks without co-creation** – built in theory, ignored in practice.
- + **One-off equity checks** – fixes don't last without ongoing maintenance.
- + **Access programmes without removing barriers** – ERGs can't offset biased systems.
- + **Data without clarity or trust** – unclear purpose or privacy kills participation.

## Priority for 2025

Institutionalise a quarterly 'progression & pay fairness' cycle: review hiring outcomes, performance distributions, promotions, and pay movements with demographics; explain variances vs role criteria; assign corrective actions with owners and dates; publish a concise internal summary.

Bottom Line

Equity scales when mechanisms – not moods – govern how decisions are made.



Gwen Kolader  
Global People and  
Culture Leader

Tactical Area: Workspaces

# Flexibility Without Access is Decoration

## The Reality Check

# 73%

of companies now offer flexible hours and work from home options.

Almost half,

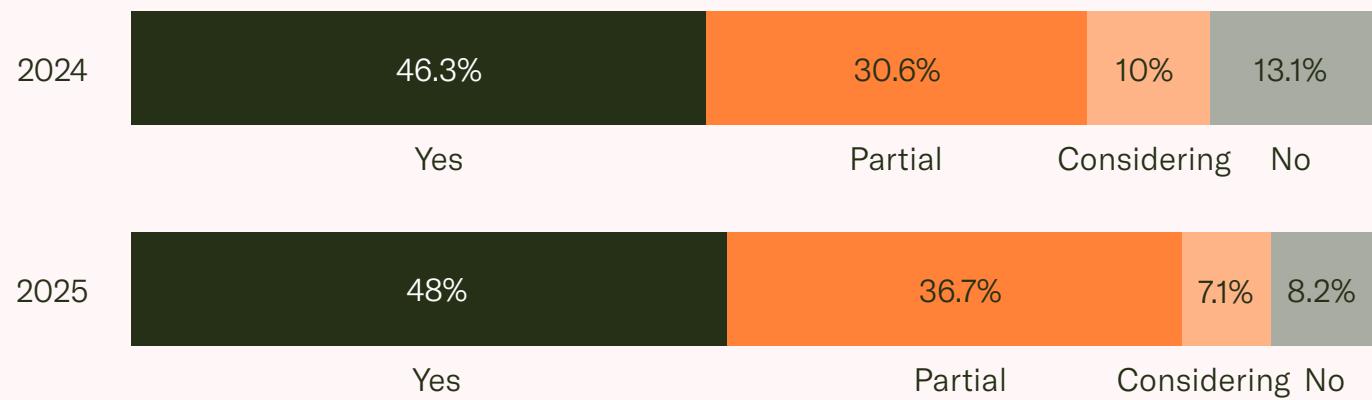
# 48%

design accessible workplaces.

% of companies allowing employees to adjust sensory input or work location



% of companies designing locations, buildings and facilities to be accessible by people with all types of disability



## Checklist



- flexible hours
- accessible facilities
- sensory options
- inclusive benefits

“Progress works best when it is deliberate, employee-led, and designed to grow with the business.”

Job van der Voort  
CEO, Remote

# Leader's Insight

## How Remote Designs Inclusion into the Global Workspace

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At Remote, an HR platform for global payroll and compliance for distributed teams and contractors, inclusion isn't a programme – it's the product. Our mission to remove barriers to global employment extends to how it builds its own team. By operating without geographic limits, we demonstrate what a high-performing, distributed company can look like when diversity, equity, and inclusion are embedded in daily practice.

## What We Did



- 1. Hired for values, not sameness.** We removed degree and experience requirements to focus on skills, potential, and alignment with company values.
- 2. Designed inclusion into work rhythms.** Asynchronous collaboration allows flexibility across time zones; no single holiday calendar ensures every culture is respected.
- 3. Fostered belonging through community.** Remote-led culture groups, global celebrations, and ongoing learning keep a sense of connection alive across continents.
- 4. Extended inclusion to customers.** Our platform enables equitable hiring, pay, and benefits worldwide – removing logistical and legal barriers to diverse recruitment.

## Impact

Remote's model proves that equitable access and high performance can coexist. The company attracts broader talent pools, improves retention, and helps clients hire inclusively across borders – turning diversity from a challenge into a competitive advantage.

## Learning and Advice

As our team has grown, one of the challenges has been to ensure the same depth of inclusion is built into the foundation of the business in a sustainable way. What we have learned is that progress works best when it is deliberate, employee-led, and designed to grow with the business. Looking ahead, we will keep expanding opportunities in new regions, refining our own practices, and helping other companies remove barriers so they can access a broader range of talent to build stronger teams.



Job van der Voort  
CEO, Remote

# Expert Take Safe to Speak, Built to Perform

## Why It Matters

Workspaces shape how inclusion is lived day to day. In tech, the drive for outcomes can eclipse the *how* of work – leaving people burned out, unheard, or invisible. Without psychological safety, the innovation companies depend on quickly erodes. An inclusive workspace isn't a perk; it's a performance necessity.

## How to Act

- + **Start with safety.** Use tools like the Fearless Organisation Scan to measure psychological safety at team and organisational levels.
- + **Close the loop.** Inclusion isn't about guessing what people need; it's about asking, listening, validating, and acting.
- + **Adapt intentionally and in alignment with your culture.** Offer flexibility, inclusive benefits, and targeted support that meet diverse needs while reinforcing the values and ways of working that drive your business.
- + **Build rituals of trust.** When people speak up, their input must lead to visible action.

## Pitfalls to Avoid

- + **Bias often goes unnoticed.** Quick mental shortcuts can unintentionally shape decisions and leave some voices unheard.
- + **Good intent isn't enough.** Many leaders overestimate their inclusiveness without regular reflection or feedback.
- + **Lacking curiosity and humility.** True inclusion requires humility, active listening, and a willingness to keep learning from others' experiences.

## Priority for 2025

Measure psychological safety. It reveals how people experience team dynamics—the foundation upon which culture and performance are built. Without measurement, even the best intentions risk falling short, because it's impossible to improve what isn't understood. Psychological safety is the foundation – everything else builds on it.

### Bottom Line

True inclusion comes when safety, accessibility, respect, and trust are baked into how work gets done every day.



Ania Hajdrowska  
Founder, EngagedLab

Tactical Area: Enablers

# Credibility Lives in the Follow-Through

## The Reality Check

More than half,

**56%**

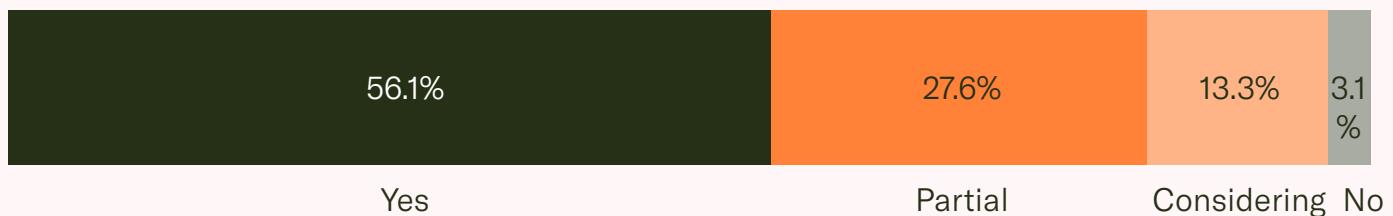
of companies provide safe speak-up channels for employees.

Fewer than

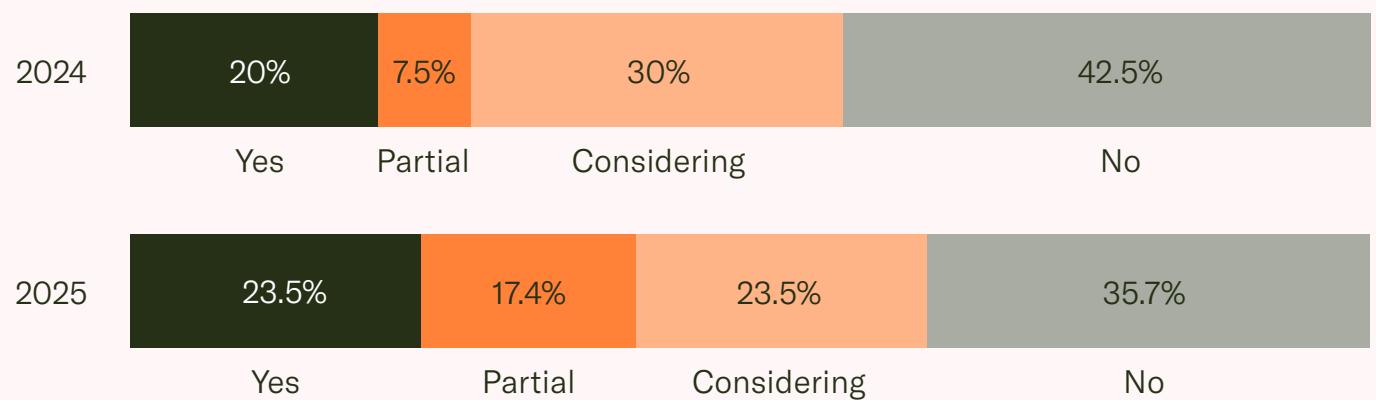
**1 in 4**

have Diversity Councils or Employee Resource Groups in place to guide strategy.

% of companies with safe speak-up channels



% of companies having a Diversity Council and/or Employee Resource Groups to guide DEI initiatives





“The key is balancing centralized standards with brand-level autonomy while navigating a complex global landscape.”

Olivia McEvoy  
Global Head of Inclusion, Booking.com

# Leader's Insight Driving Cross-Brand Inclusion Through Governance and Leadership

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Booking.com is part of Booking Holding's Inclusion Steering Committee (SteerCo), a collaborative body spanning our five global brandssister companies. It brings together Senior Executives and Inclusion professionals from each brand to create a unified approach, share insights, and explore emergent themes.

## One Bold Move



The SteerCo created and oversees shared 'Inclusion standards' to ensure a consistent, high-impact approach to inclusion. This helped to create a unified framework that guides each brand's strategy without dictating specific initiatives. These standards establish a common direction, allowing individual brands the autonomy to design programs relevant to their unique business needs, ensuring the entire enterprise moves forward together on key priorities.

# Impact

This collaborative council model fosters a consistent and cohesive inclusion strategy across all brands. It provides a shared framework that guides implementation and, crucially, allows us to learn from each other's experiences. The structure ensures our commitment to inclusion is unified and amplified across the entire Booking Holdings enterprise.

## The Biggest Challenge

A one-size-fits-all model can be difficult to apply successfully, as each company has unique business objectives and resources and is potentially differently sized. The key is balancing centralized standards with brand-level autonomy while navigating a complex global landscape with different legal and cultural contexts.

## Advice to Peers

For a cross-brand council to be effective, it requires strong governance and unwavering executive support.

- + **Secure Executive Sponsorship:** The council must be a decision-making body with active participation from senior executives who can enact change, allocate resources, and hold the business accountable.
- + **Establish Clear Governance:** A formal charter with a well-defined mandate and measurable goals is non-negotiable to ensure alignment and legitimacy.
- + **Empower with Real Authority:** Leadership must empower the council to make meaningful recommendations that influence business strategy, integrating its insights into core operations.



Olivia McEvoy  
Global Head of Inclusion,  
Booking.com

# Expert Take ERGs Drive the Dialogue

## Why It Matters

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) aren't side projects – they're lifelines. Employees who engage in ERGs consistently report higher belonging, stronger connection to company purpose, and higher retention. In tech, where diverse perspectives fuel innovation, ERGs provide a safe structure for underrepresented voices and their allies to shape solutions with leadership.

## How to Act

- + **Back ERGs with resources.** Provide real budgets and executive sponsorship, not just goodwill.
- + **Take inspiration.** At Microsoft, Blacks@Microsoft has influenced recruitment, retention, and board-level culture decisions for decades, while also running mentorship, branding workshops, and mental health support.
- + **Make ERGs strategic.** Position them as trusted insight partners – not just social groups.

## Pitfalls to Avoid

A common mistake is treating ERGs as symbolic or ‘nice-to-have.’ When ERGs are underfunded or ignored, their leaders can experience burnout, and the groups lose credibility. It’s crucial to avoid this, as it undermines their potential.

## Priority for 2025

Formalise a direct line of communication between ERGs and senior leadership. Leaders should continue to give ERGs executive sponsorship, real budgets, and a clear role in shaping company strategy. When fully engaged and valued, ERGs become a trusted feedback loop and a vital vehicle for stakeholder involvement.

### Bottom Line

Credibility comes from what happens after the listening. ERGs and speak-up channels only work when they lead to visible action and systemic change.



Kimberly Fuqua  
Director of Customer  
Experience,  
Microsoft EMEA | Founder,  
Luminous Leaders

**Impact Area:** Where's the proof?

# Goals Set ≠ Goals Met

## The Reality Check

Only

**15%**

of companies hit all 2024 inclusion goals.

Around

**50%**

made partial progress.

More than

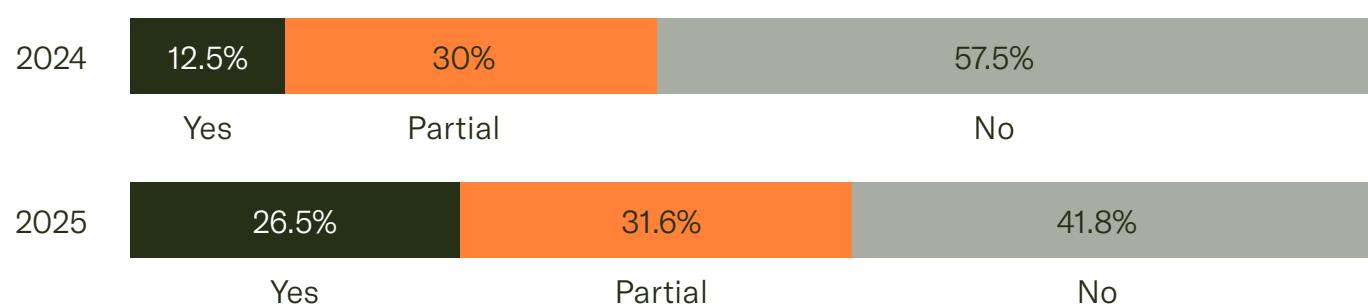
**1 in 3**

fell short.

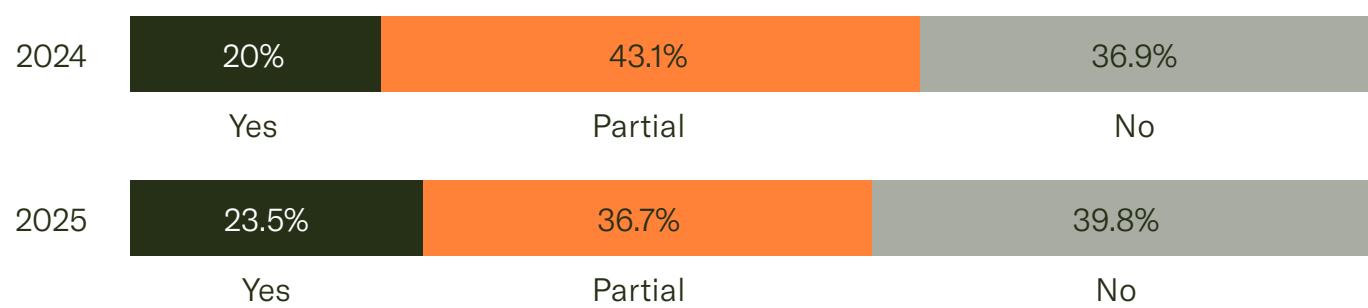
% of companies that achieved their DEI goals



% of companies having measurable proof that their external stakeholders are more than satisfied with their DEI efforts



% of companies having measurable proof that their employees are more than satisfied with their DEI efforts



“We’re co-building a roadmap with employees that embeds fairness, shared responsibility, and equitable workload.”

Vanessa Monsequeira  
VP of People,  
Gorilla – Energy Data Applications



# Leader's Insight Change that Lasts Begins with Leadership at Gorilla

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At Gorilla, an energy data platform for energy retailers – covering pricing, forecasting, and portfolio analysis, DEIB isn't programs or checklists – it's how we work, so a globally diverse team truly belongs. With people across five countries, three continents, and many nationalities, intercultural empathy sits at the core. We want every voice heard and valued. We started with humility: partnering with DLiT for a DEI Scan and external guidance. At our January 2025 offsite, employees surfaced fatigue from carrying DEI work and called for visible, authentic leadership commitment.

## One Bold Move



We began with the executive team: every leader trained with Hustle Crew, a diversity and inclusion consultancy, on bias, privilege, and practical DEIB – making DEIB a shared leadership responsibility, not a delegated task.

## Impact and Next Steps

We're co-building a roadmap with employees that embeds fairness, shared responsibility, and equitable ways of working— aiming for change that's authentic, sustainable, and non-tokenistic. Our ongoing partnership with DLiT includes mentoring for the People Team to weave DEIB into daily practice. We'll navigate wins and setbacks with our value of curiosity.

## Learning

We resisted moving fast for optics. Launching ERGs or a public DEI strategy at our size would have been premature and potentially tokenistic. Our aim is to listen and work slowly and intentionally to build trust and a stronger foundation.

## Advice and Forward Look

Start with leadership alignment. DEIB cannot rest on underrepresented groups or symbolic initiatives. By aligning leaders, we've created shared accountability; next, we'll co-build a roadmap defining fairness, equitable workload, and meaningful action – progress that's steady, authentic, and built to last.



Vanessa Monsequeira  
VP of People,  
Gorilla – Energy Data  
Applications

# Expert Take

## Proof, not Promises

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### Why It Matters

Impact is the real test of any inclusion strategy. Many companies set bold DEI goals, but far fewer can prove they reach them. Employees and partners want to see results, not promises. In Europe's tech scene, where talent and stakeholders actively compare companies on inclusion, proof of impact is crucial for trust, reputation, and competitiveness.

### How to Act

Leaders should measure impact in three connected ways:

- + **Results against DEI goals:** Go beyond reporting activities. Show outcomes. For example, don't just say you ran a mentoring program, show that diverse talent actually progressed in their careers.
- + **Employee experience:** Track how people feel. Do they see real changes in fairness, belonging, and opportunity in their day-to-day work?
- + **Stakeholder confidence:** Involve clients, investors, and partners. Ask if they see your company's DEI commitments in your products, partnerships, and broader impact.

## Pitfalls to Avoid

Using DEI and impact as a PR exercise without evidence and announcing new initiatives instead of tracking whether previous/current ones truly changed outcomes.

## Priority for 2025

Set up a simple 'proof of impact' framework. Review DEI goals, employee experience, and stakeholder confidence together at least once a year, and share the results openly. This builds accountability, trust, and long-term credibility, not just the intent to be inclusive, but the evidence that it works.

### Bottom Line

**Credibility comes from proof, not promises. Show the link between what you set out to do, what people experienced, and what the market recognises.**



Ingeborg van Harten  
Founder, 7 People

# Three Moves That Redefine Progress

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- 1. Power and Pay**
- 2. Visible and Verifiable**
- 3. Design and Lived Experience**

## 1. Hardwire Inclusion into Power and Pay

European tech has matured past promises. Now, credibility depends on design. Inclusion isn't accountability until it reaches the bonus structure. Linking inclusion outcomes to executive KPIs and compensation turns DEI from a value statement into a business discipline. When leadership diversity, pay parity, and inclusion scores influence how leaders are rewarded, inclusion stops being optional — it becomes operational.

### **Design principle**

What's built into performance architecture becomes culture.

## 2. Make Impact Visible and Verifiable

In a market built on trust and transparency, silence looks like avoidance.

The most credible companies are publishing progress — not perfection — showing where gaps exist and what's being done to close them. Annual inclusion reports, public dashboards, and independent audits are becoming the new governance standard.

This move changes the game — because credibility grows not from perfection, but from evidence and honesty.

### **Design principle**

Visibility creates accountability; honesty creates influence.

## 3. Redesign Decisions with Lived Experience

Europe's innovation edge lies in the diversity of thought. But insight only becomes impact when diverse voices help make decisions, not just join the conversation.

From hiring and promotion to product design and AI ethics, bring lived experience into the review process. Fund ERGs as strategic partners and embed intercultural competence in every leadership layer. This way, bias turns into foresight and diversity becomes a strategic edge.

### **Design principle**

When power is co-designed, systems evolve faster.

# Appendix

## Methodology

### Participation

A total of 97 companies took part in the DEI Scan, sharing insights about their DEI practices and how advanced they are in these areas.

### DEI Scan Format

The DEI Scan featured 45 questions, all mandatory to ensure a thorough assessment. These questions were designed to cover a wide range of DEI practices and strategies used by the companies.

For each question, respondents could choose from four options:

- + Yes
- + Yes, to a certain extent
- + No
- + No, not right now, but considering it for the future.

These choices allowed companies to indicate how far along they were in implementing or considering various DEI practices.

### External Data

To enhance the DEI Scan responses, we've included external data on the participating companies. We categorized companies based on their growth phase determined by employee count:

- + Start-ups: 0- 49 employees
- + Scale-ups: 50 - 199 employees
- + Grown-ups: 200+ employees

### Organizing the DEI Scan

We structured the DEI Scan questions to give a clear picture of where companies stand with their DEI practices. This method helped identify both overarching strategic commitments and specific actions companies are taking to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## Our Framework

To provide you with a clear picture of a company's DEI practices, we structured our assessment around both strategic and tactical areas, as well as the overall impact of their DEI practices. These areas are used to determine their current DEI maturity level.

### Strategic Areas

Based on extensive research, we have identified DEI practices yielding the greatest impact in the workplace. When these practices are prioritized collectively, they represent crucial steps toward achieving DEI Excellence.

- + **Business:** Creates business alignment, identifies gaps in DEI strategies, links intentions to performance, driving improvements for innovation and success.
- + **Culture:** Ensures DEI plays a role in your company's DNA. Establishing desired behaviors and mindsets across all levels through learning, policies and leadership development.
- + **Data:** Offers a deep understanding of your current state of DEI, and the measurability of its impact, creating space for effective and strategic improvements.
- + **Stakeholder Engagement:** Emphasize the importance of involving both internal and external stakeholders to mitigate leadership bias and create equity in decision making processes.
- + **Systemic Change:** Sets organizational standards and processes in place to ensure fair opportunities for all. Unbiased hiring, career growth, and bringing an end to discrimination stand at its core.

## Tactical Areas

Sets organizational standards and processes in place to ensure fair opportunities for all. Unbiased hiring, career growth, and bringing an end to discrimination stand at its core.

- **Workspace:** These DEI practices ensure the adaptability of your physical and operational environment to support diverse needs and promote an inclusive work environment.
- **DEI Enablers:** Implementing enablers like employee groups and codes of conduct are supportive practices that facilitate efforts to build safe and inclusive cultures.

## Impact

To validate the self- assessment of DEI maturity and mitigate leadership bias, this area creates accountability and measures tangible proof of DEI impact.

- **DEI Strategy:** Companies should have measurable proof that they have successfully achieved their strategic objectives.
- **Employee Feedback:** Capturing qualitative and quantitative employee feedback is essential to ensure DEI objectives are reached and perceived as such.
- **External Stakeholders:** Industry recognition and data that demonstrate positive change in relation to stakeholders, such as communities and suppliers are proof of DEI impact.

## DEI Maturity Levels

We have defined five levels to assess DEI maturity for the respondents of the DEI Benchmark Scan. These levels represent where companies currently stand on their DEI Excellence Journey and serve as milestones for the path ahead.

### **Level 1 - Kickstarter**

Kickstarters are aware of DEI's importance and its impact on business success. They have started to consider how DEI can be part of growth and are taking initial steps.

### **Level 2 - Adopter**

Adopters are establishing the basics and beginning to build a DEI-conscious environment. This includes putting DEI policies, training, and tools into place.

### **Level 3 - Practitioner**

DEI is connected to business initiatives and outcomes within certain areas. It indicates that pockets of the company are engaging with DEI practices and starting to see the benefits.

### **Level 4 - Frontrunner**

Frontrunners have made DEI part of the business strategy across the organization. DEI informs decisions internally and externally. Impact is measured and communicated regularly.

### **Level 5 - DEI Excellence**

DEI Excellence demonstrates best-in-class DEI efforts that are deeply embedded and continuously improved upon. DEI drives innovation and business growth.

# From Progress to Partnership

Becoming a DLiT Member connects you to a European community of leaders who are redesigning how tech grows — more trusted, more equitable, and built for the future.

If your company is ready to move from statements to systems, let's talk.

Receive:

- + A tailored view of how your company benchmarks against Europe's inclusion leaders.
- + Clarity on which DLiT membership pathway best fits your goals and maturity stage.
- + A preview of the insights, partnerships, and visibility that come with joining the network.

**Schedule a  
Discovery Call**



## Join Our Frontrunners

**Booking.com**

**Google**

**gORILLA**

**HelloPrint**

 **JUST EAT  
Takeaway.com**

**M E W S**

 **remote**

 **Settly**



**Take the DEI Scan** — the same assessment behind this report — to see where you stand and get a tailored roadmap for progress. It's free, confidential, and delivers your personalised report within minutes.