

VirtualOffice™

12 Acts of Inclusion - Clue Card



Fostering Inclusion is a shared global value at Deloitte and as a firm, we are increasingly operating across borders, countries and cultures. This means our people need to be aware of their own biases and further, be fully equipped to be inclusive more than ever before.

Deloitte.

The six signature traits of inclusive leadership were developed by Deloitte Human Capital and outline the qualities of inclusivity that help to foster diversity of thought – delivering better outcomes for people, clients and communities.

In the wake of COVID-19 many organisations have had to quickly pivot to virtual ways of working so it is important for us to remind ourselves how to be inclusive of our colleagues and clients in virtual settings – to make sure we get the most out of our online interactions. Without deliberately thinking about inclusivity, we might miss the emergence of new barriers to diversity, for example a bias towards digital presenteeism which can be challenging for those who are juggling work and care.

Working virtually is qualitatively different to working onsite, and this means that standard ways of working that rely on high levels of visibility to sense engagement and activity must be revised.



SIX SIGNATURE TRAITS OF VIRTUAL INCLUSIVITY

1. COMMITMENT

Highly inclusive leaders are committed to diversity and inclusion because these objectives align with their personal values and because they believe in the business case. They speak up and challenge the status quo.

Acts of Inclusion

Agile, always - Proactively commit and agree to agile work practices and protocols – this could include meeting time flexibility, using webcam technology (having agreement on when to switch on versus off) how and when to use mute, as well as use of digital collaboration tools.

Call it out – Hold others to account for non-inclusive behaviours such as speaking over others, as well as looking for ways to ensure all participants can share their voice – introverts may not naturally take to sharing verbally, however the chat function or use of polling technology can be a great way to obtain further inputs.

4. CURIOSITY

Highly inclusive leaders have an open mindset, a desire to understand how others view and experience the world and show a tolerance for ambiguity.

Acts of Inclusion

Tell me more – In virtual meetings, create more space in the conversation to discover the other person's perspective and keep an open-minded frame – listen actively, suspend judgement, respect all perspectives and speak your voice. Know when to use an agenda for team meetings but also plan for 'unplanned' interactions too to mirror water-cooler conversations ("agenda-less" gatherings).

Rewind... playback – Sometimes when we're interacting via technology, certain helpful indicators can be lost e.g. body language. Check-in more and re-affirm that you 'get it' using paraphrasing: "So is this what you're saying..." Accept that ambiguity is OK.

2. COURAGE

Highly inclusive leaders are courageously humble about their strengths and weaknesses.

Acts of Inclusion

Admit mistakes – Own it that you too are learning to be more inclusive in a virtual context, nobody expects you to be perfect.

Don't be all high and mighty – You might be more adept at working flexibly and remotely, others might not. Don't act as if your way of working virtually is the only or best way.

5. CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Highly inclusive leaders are confident and effective in cross cultural interactions.

Acts of Inclusion

Cultural traveller – Working virtually often means remotely interacting with others based interstate or even overseas. Take an interest in learning about other cultures, in particular seek information on the local context, for example, politics and local business customs/ways of working. Start conversations with queries about local contexts: "How is it in X today?"

When in Rome – Talk to people, find the stories and broaden your horizons and knowledge, then adapt to suit the culture you're in. Remote workers need to be skilled at working with others from different cultural backgrounds and change their style appropriately when cross-cultural encounters require it.

3. COGNISANCE OF BIAS

Highly inclusive leaders are mindful of personal and organisational blind spots and self-regulate to help ensure fair play.

Acts of Inclusion

Check yourself – Have awareness of and know your biases – self regulate your behaviour and seek feedback from others, for example favouring those co-located with air time and information vs those working remotely.

Rewire the system – Treat shared time as a precious resource and enable time for rest and recovery between video-conferencing. This is likely to require transparent discussions about when and how teams work online together. Other areas of consideration include length of meetings and empowering team members to make decisions as to how they might break up their day with intermittent breaks.

6. COLLABORATION

Highly inclusive leaders empower individuals as well as create and leverage the thinking of diverse groups.

Acts of Inclusion

Create the space – Use digital collaboration tools and applications that create an environment where people are equally able and feel comfortable to speak up, whilst providing all team members with transparency in relation to work load and ownership of items. Ask your team to agree on a set of collaborative tools that work well for them.

Empower, uplift – Foster an agile working environment where team members are given the freedom and power to handle difficult situations that may arise and to be able to make decisions on issues that impact their work.