II. Foundation for Managers and Employers



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2.1. Understanding Generation Z

Understanding different generations in the workplace can provide useful insights into how expectations, behaviours, and relationships with work evolve over time. However, generational perspectives should not be used as fixed categories or assumptions about individuals. Every employee is shaped by personal experiences, values, personality, and professional context.

A generational approach is valuable because it helps organizations understand broader social, economic, and technological influences that may shape workplace expectations. The goal is not to define employees by their generation, but to recognize changing workplace realities and create environments where different people can contribute, develop, and thrive.[1]

Who Are Generation Z?

Generation Z, generally referring to people born from the late 1990s onwards, is becoming an increasingly important part of the workforce. Like every generation, they have been shaped by the social, economic, and technological environment in which they grew up.

Many members of Generation Z have grown up with digital technology as a natural part of everyday life. At the same time, they entered adulthood during a period marked by significant events, including economic uncertainty, the COVID-19 pandemic, and growing environmental concerns.

These experiences can influence how Generation Z approaches work, what they expect from employers, and what helps them feel engaged and supported. Recent workforce research highlights the importance of meaningful work, work-life balance, learning opportunities and supportive management for many Generation Z employees, while also emphasizing that individual preferences should not be reduced to generational stereotypes.[2]

- *What tends to characterize Generation Z at work?*

Meaning and purpose matter.
Many Generation Z employees want to understand not only what they are expected to do, but also why their work matters. They often value a connection between their individual contribution and a broader purpose and may pay attention to whether an organization's values are reflected in its actions.

[1] McKinsey & Company. Gen what? Debunking age-based myths about worker preferences, https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organization/our-insights/gen-what-debunking-age-based-myths-about-worker-preferences?utm_source=chatgpt.com
[2] Deloitte Global. (2025). 2025 Gen Z and Millennial Survey. https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/2025-gen-z-millennial-survey.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com

For this reason, the sense of impact and alignment between personal values and workplace values can influence how they perceive an employer.

Work should fit into life, not replace it.
Work-life balance is often an important consideration for Generation Z. Professional development and achievement remain important, but work is less likely to be viewed as the only central aspect of life.

Expectations around flexibility, personal boundaries, and wellbeing can therefore influence how they evaluate a workplace and their long-term relationship with an employer.

Clarity and transparency build confidence.
Employees entering the workplace need to understand expectations, responsibilities, and ways of working. Generation Z may particularly value clear objectives, transparent communication, and explicit guidance rather than relying on assumptions or unwritten rules.

A clear framework helps reduce uncertainty and allows employees to understand how they can contribute effectively.

Autonomy works best with support.
Generation Z often values independence and the opportunity to take ownership of their work. However, autonomy does not mean being left without guidance.

Clear expectations, accessible support, and constructive feedback can help employees develop confidence and gradually become more independent.

Feedback is part of learning.
Many Generation Z employees are comfortable with regular feedback as part of everyday development rather than only through formal performance reviews.

Timely and constructive feedback helps employees understand what is working, where improvement is needed, and how they can continue to develop.

Digital fluency is a natural strength.
Having grown up surrounded by digital technology, many Generation Z employees are comfortable learning new tools, adapting to changing platforms, and exploring new ways of working.

This familiarity can bring valuable perspectives to organizations that are adapting to technological change.

The employment relationship can be more pragmatic.
Generation Z may approach the relationship with an employer with a strong awareness of

mutual expectations. Engagement and commitment can be high when employees experience purpose, development opportunities, fair treatment, and supportive management.

However, when these elements are consistently missing, they may be more willing to explore other opportunities rather than remain in a workplace that no longer feels aligned with their needs.

Important:

These characteristics should be understood as general tendencies, not fixed traits. Individuals within the same generation can have very different personalities, experiences, values, and expectations. The purpose is not to define employees by their generation, but to provide useful reference points for understanding how workplace expectations continue to evolve.

Why Is It Relevant for Employers?

Understanding Generation Z is becoming increasingly important as this generation represents a growing part of the workforce. As more young people enter employment, organizations need to understand the expectations and experiences that influence how they engage with work.

However, this is not only about attracting younger employees. Generation Z also reflects broader changes in the workplace and highlights questions that are increasingly relevant for organizations of all generations: How do employees find meaning in their work? How do they experience communication, support, flexibility, and development opportunities?

A Changing Workforce and Changing Expectations

Generation Z is becoming an increasingly important source of new talent across industries. As their presence in organizations grows, employers who understand their expectations are better positioned to attract, engage, and retain employees.

Many of the expectations associated with Generation Z — such as the desire for clarity, meaningful work, regular feedback, supportive leadership, and respect for wellbeing — reflect wider changes in the modern workplace.

These expectations can influence how employees experience their work. When people understand their role, see the value of their contribution, receive constructive feedback, and feel supported, they are more likely to develop a stronger connection with their organization.

Why Workplace Practices Matter

Generation Z can make certain workplace challenges more visible because they often place strong emphasis on factors that influence engagement and commitment.

Engagement and connection.

Employees are more likely to remain engaged when they understand the purpose of their work, feel valued, and experience a supportive environment. When expectations are unclear or employees feel disconnected from the organization, motivation and involvement can decrease.

Quality and contribution.

People tend to perform at their best when they understand what is expected of them and how their work contributes to a larger goal. Clear communication, meaningful responsibilities, and appropriate support create conditions where employees can use their skills effectively.

Innovation and adaptability.

Generation Z brings familiarity with digital tools, comfort with rapid change, and new perspectives on how work can be organized. When organizations recognize and encourage these strengths, they can support innovation and continuous improvement.

At the same time, failing to understand changing expectations can create misunderstandings between employees and managers. Differences in communication styles, expectations, or approaches to work may be interpreted negatively when they are not properly understood.

A Catalyst for Better Workplaces

Paying attention to Generation Z does not mean creating a separate workplace for one generation.

Many of the things younger employees value — clarity, transparency, meaningful work, constructive feedback, supportive leadership, flexibility, and respect for wellbeing — can benefit employees across generations.

In this sense, Generation Z can act as a catalyst for organizations to reflect on their existing practices. Understanding what helps younger employees succeed can encourage organizations to create workplaces that are more inclusive, supportive, and sustainable for everyone.

The goal is not to manage Generation Z differently simply because they belong to a different generation. The goal is to understand changing expectations and create workplaces where people can contribute, develop, and stay well.

This understanding provides the foundation for the next step: exploring how inclusive leadership and management practices can translate these insights into everyday workplace actions.

Manager's Toolkit: Practical Ways to Work Effectively with Generation Z

The principles above become meaningful when they are translated into everyday management behaviours. The following practices can help managers turn clarity, trust, feedback, and purpose into concrete routines.

1. Give Meaning from Day One

The first weeks in a new role are an opportunity to establish context and purpose, not simply to explain tasks.

During onboarding, set aside 30–60 minutes to discuss:

- the purpose of the employee's role;
- how their work contributes to the team;
- who benefits from their work;
- how their contribution connects to wider organizational goals.

For example, instead of saying "You handle the reporting." try: "Your reports help the sales team make faster and better-informed decisions."

The second explanation gives the employee a reason to care about the task, not just an instruction to complete it.

2. Establish a Short, Regular Feedback Ritual

Feedback does not need to be formal or time-consuming to be effective. A regular 15–20-minute weekly check-in can provide a simple structure for communication and development.

A manager can ask:

- **What worked well this week?**
- **What could have gone better?**
- **What support do you need?**
- **What are the priorities for next week?**

Regular conversations help prevent misunderstandings, identify obstacles early, and make feedback part of normal work rather than something that happens only during an annual review.

3. Make Expectations Explicit

Managers often communicate expectations without realizing that some of them remain implicit. Employees, particularly those new to professional environments, may not know what "good work" looks like unless it is explained.

Clarify:

4. Build Autonomy Gradually

Autonomy is a skill that develops with experience. Rather than expecting a new employee to operate independently immediately, managers can gradually transfer responsibility.

A simple progression is:

- deadlines and milestones;
- expected quality standards;
- level of detail required;
- responsibilities and decision-making boundaries;
- preferred communication channels;
- when and how progress should be reported.

For example: “When I assign you a task, I expect a first update within 48 hours, even if the work is still in progress.”
This does not restrict autonomy. It provides a clear framework within which autonomy can work.

1. Observe → 2. Practise with support → 3. Work independently

For example:

- **Week 1:** “I’ll show you how I approach this.”
- **Week 2:** “Let’s do it together.”
- **Week 3:** “You take the lead and I’ll review the result.”

The exact timeframe will vary depending on the task and the employee. The principle is to provide enough support to build competence without creating unnecessary dependence.

5. Give Prompt and Specific Recognition

Recognition is most useful when it tells employees *what* they did well and *why* it mattered.

Instead of: “Good job.”, try:

“Your client email was very clear and well structured. It answered the client’s questions directly and made the next steps easy to understand.“

Specific recognition reinforces effective behavior and helps employees understand what good performance looks like.

6. Explain the “Rules of the Game”

Every organization has formal rules, but it also has informal norms that experienced employees often learn without being explicitly told.

New employees may need help understanding:

- how decisions are made;
- when to use email versus instant messaging;
- how openly people are expected to challenge ideas;
- who needs to be consulted;
- how urgent issues are communicated;
- what behaviours are valued within the team.

For example: “In this team, we prefer direct conversations for small issues rather than long email exchanges.”

Making these norms visible helps employees navigate the workplace with greater confidence.

7. Encourage Questions and Initiative

Questions should not automatically be interpreted as a lack of competence. For someone who is learning a new role, asking early can prevent mistakes later.

Managers can actively create this culture by saying: “If you’re unsure, I’d rather you ask than remain stuck.”

At the same time, managers can encourage employees to bring possible solutions along with their questions: “Tell me what you think the options are, and then we can look at them together.”

This gradually moves the employee from seeking answers to developing independent judgement.

8. Adapt Communication to the Situation

Generation Z is generally comfortable with fast, digital communication, but this does not mean that every conversation should happen through instant messaging.

Managers should match the communication method to the purpose:

- short updates → instant message;
- complex feedback → conversation;
- important decisions → written confirmation;
- sensitive issues → private discussion.

The principle is simple: **use the clearest channel for the message, rather than relying on one communication style for everything.**

9. Make Progress and Development Visible

Younger employees may benefit from having a clearer view of how their current work connects to future opportunities.

Managers can regularly discuss:

- skills the employee is developing;
- areas for improvement;
- possible future responsibilities;
- learning opportunities;
- potential career pathways.

For example: “If you continue developing this skill, you could take on this type of assignment independently within the next six months.”

This creates a connection between today's work and tomorrow's possibilities.

10. Make Sure Words and Actions Match

Trust is built through consistency.

If a manager says they value autonomy but checks every small decision, employees will notice the contradiction. If an organization promotes work-life balance but rewards people for being constantly available, the message becomes equally confusing.

Managers should therefore regularly ask themselves:

Are my everyday behaviors consistent with the values and expectations I communicate?

This is particularly important for Generation Z, who may pay close attention to whether an organization's stated values are reflected in actual workplace experiences.

Illustrative Case Example

The following fictional example illustrates how a relatively simple change in management approach can influence the experience and performance of a young employee.

Adapting Management to Better Engage a Young Employee

The Situation:
A manager hires a recent graduate who appears motivated but shows limited initiative during the first few months. The employee completes assigned tasks but rarely goes beyond what has been requested. They also ask frequent questions, including about issues the manager considers obvious.

The Challenge:
The manager's initial reaction is understandable: perhaps the employee lacks autonomy, confidence, or professional maturity.
Before reaching that conclusion, however, the manager takes a closer look at how the work is being managed. They realize that many expectations have been assumed rather than explained, and that tasks are often assigned without much context.
The manager decides to test whether changing the management approach can change the outcome.

The Management Actions:

1. **Explain the purpose behind tasks**

Previously, the manager mainly assigned tasks and expected the employee to understand what needed to be done. The manager now takes a few minutes to explain the objective, the expected outcome, and how the task contributes to the wider work.
Instead of simply saying: “Prepare this presentation.”, the manager explains what the presentation will be used for, who will see it, and what decision it is intended to support.

2. **Introduce a structured weekly check-in**

The manager establishes a 20-minute weekly conversation.
The employee uses the time to share what has been completed, raise difficulties, and ask questions. The manager provides feedback, clarifies priorities, and identifies where additional support is needed.
The regularity of the conversation makes communication more predictable and reduces the need for ad hoc clarification throughout the week.

3. **Clarify expectations**

The manager also realizes that expectations around deadlines, quality, level of detail, and progress updates were never clearly communicated.

These are now discussed explicitly.
The employee knows what a completed task should look like, when an update is expected, and when they are free to make decisions independently.

The Observed Results:
Within a few weeks, the manager notices several changes:

- greater engagement with assigned work;
- more initiative;
- clearer communication;
- fewer unnecessary misunderstandings; and
- increased confidence in completing tasks independently.

Key Learning
The situation was not necessarily a question of motivation or ability. Part of the difficulty came from a mismatch between what the manager assumed was obvious and what the employee understood.

The experience demonstrates an important management principle:

Employees do not always need less management. They may need a different kind of management — one that combines clear expectations with context, feedback, support, and gradually increasing autonomy.

Adapting management practices does not mean lowering expectations. It means creating conditions that allow employees to understand those expectations and perform at their best.

The same principles can benefit employees beyond Generation Z. Clarity, constructive feedback, psychological safety, meaningful work, and respect for work-life balance are increasingly relevant to a healthy workplace across generations.

2.2. Inclusive Leadership and Management Practices

Understanding Generation Z is only the first step. The next step is understanding the role managers play in creating the conditions in which young employees can contribute, develop, and thrive.

Inclusive leadership is not about applying a fixed set of rules to a particular generation. It is about adapting everyday leadership practices to different needs, perspectives, and ways of working while maintaining fairness, trust, and clear expectations.

This chapter moves from role to principles, from principles to everyday behaviour, and from behaviour to practical tools, helping managers translate inclusive leadership into actions that support engagement, wellbeing, and a sense of belonging.

What Is Inclusive Leadership? The Role of Managers

Inclusive leadership is a management approach that recognizes, values, and integrates the diversity of individuals within an organization. This diversity may relate to age, culture, gender, experience, abilities, perspectives, or ways of working.

However, recognizing diversity is not the same as creating inclusion. Inclusion requires intentional management practices that ensure employees have fair opportunities to participate, contribute their ideas, develop their potential, and feel respected and valued.

Managers play an important role in shaping employees' everyday experience at work. Through their daily decisions and interactions, they influence how people are treated, whether different perspectives are heard, and whether employees feel respected, trusted, and able to contribute.

Inclusive leadership therefore goes beyond managing tasks and performance. Managers act as role models: the way they communicate, give feedback, respond to mistakes, and involve employees sends a strong message about what is valued in the workplace. Research has also associated inclusive leadership with psychological safety, which can help employees feel more comfortable speaking up, learning from mistakes, and contributing their ideas.[3]

An important distinction in inclusive management is the difference between equality and equity. Equality means providing everyone with the same treatment or opportunities, while equity recognizes that individuals may need different forms of support to access those opportunities fairly. Inclusive leadership seeks to balance individual needs with consistent standards, transparent decisions, and shared organizational objectives.

[3] Reuven Hirak, Ann Chunyan Peng, Abraham Carmeli, John M.Schaubroeck, Linking leader inclusiveness to work unit performance, Link: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.11.009?utm_source=chatgpt.com

For Generation Z, clear communication, fairness, feedback, trust, and opportunities to contribute can be particularly important. However, these expectations should not be treated as universal characteristics of an entire generation. Effective managers seek to understand the needs and motivations of individual employees rather than relying on generational stereotypes.

The role of an inclusive manager is therefore not simply to direct and control, but also to facilitate, support, and create the conditions for collective success. This does not mean lowering performance expectations. It means enabling different employees to meet those expectations through fair, supportive, and effective management practices.

Principles of Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leadership is built on a set of interconnected principles that guide how managers make decisions, interact with employees, and create fair and supportive working conditions.

These principles provide a foundation for managing diverse teams, including Generation Z employees, while ensuring that individual differences are respected and organizational expectations remain clear.

Six Core Principles of Inclusive Leadership

Fairness and equity	Ensuring that employees have fair access to opportunities, resources, and professional development. Equity recognizes that individuals may require different forms of support while maintaining consistent standards and transparent criteria.
Openness and transparency	Creating an environment where information is shared clearly, decisions are explained, and employees understand the expectations, processes, and reasoning behind management decisions.
Respect and inclusion	Valuing differences in backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and working styles, while ensuring that all employees are treated with dignity and have meaningful opportunities to contribute.
Trust and psychological safety	Building relationships in which employees feel safe to express ideas, ask questions, raise concerns, and acknowledge mistakes without fear of humiliation or unfair negative consequences.
Participation and empowerment	Encouraging employees to contribute to decisions that affect their work, take appropriate responsibility, exercise autonomy, and actively participate in achieving shared objectives.
Recognition and belonging	Acknowledging employees' contributions fairly and fostering a sense of connection, acceptance, and shared purpose within the team and organization.

These principles are closely connected and mutually reinforcing. For example, transparency supports trust, fairness strengthens the sense of belonging, and psychological safety encourages participation.

Inclusive leadership becomes effective when these principles are consistently reflected in everyday management decisions and behaviours, rather than remaining abstract organizational values.

Inclusive Leadership – Key Benefits

Why Does Inclusive Leadership Matter?

Inclusive leadership is not only an ethical and social responsibility; it is also a management approach that can strengthen employee engagement, psychological safety, team performance, and organizational adaptability. Research supports these connections, although their strength may vary across organizational contexts (Hirak et al., 2012; Siyal, 2023).

For Generation Z, whose workplace expectations may include fairness, meaningful work, transparency, recognition, and professional development, inclusive leadership can be particularly relevant. However, its benefits extend across generations and contribute to a more supportive and productive working environment for all employees.

1. Stronger Employee Engagement and Motivation

Inclusive leadership helps employees feel heard, respected, recognized, and valued. When people believe that their perspectives matter and that they have meaningful opportunities to contribute, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging and commitment to their work.

For Generation Z employees, regular communication, recognition, and opportunities to participate can be especially important in building engagement and a positive relationship with their employer.

2. Improved Team Performance and Collaboration

Teams benefit when different perspectives, experiences, and ideas are actively considered in decision-making. Inclusive management encourages employees to share knowledge, collaborate, and contribute their individual strengths.

By promoting open communication and reducing barriers to participation, managers can improve cooperation, support more informed decisions, and help teams respond more effectively to complex challenges.

Hirak et al. (2012) found that inclusive leadership was associated with psychological safety, which supported learning from failures and subsequent work-unit performance.

3. Better Talent Attraction and Retention

The quality of leadership and workplace culture can influence employees' decisions to join or remain with an organization. Employers that demonstrate fairness, respect, opportunities for development, and supportive management practices may be better positioned to attract and retain talent.

This is particularly relevant for younger employees entering the labour market, who may evaluate employers not only in terms of salary and career opportunities but also according to their values, management culture, and approach to employee wellbeing.

4. Greater Innovation and Creativity

Inclusive leadership creates opportunities for employees to contribute new ideas, challenge existing approaches, and participate in problem-solving.

Carmeli et al. (2010) found that inclusive leadership was positively associated with psychological safety, which in turn supported employee involvement in creative work.

When managers encourage initiative, welcome different perspectives, and respond constructively to mistakes, employees may feel more confident proposing improvements and experimenting with new solutions.

This can support creativity, organizational learning, and innovation, particularly in workplaces experiencing rapid technological and organizational change.

5. Healthier Workplace Relationships and Stronger Trust

Inclusive management supports a working environment characterized by mutual respect, open dialogue, and constructive relationships.

By listening to different perspectives, addressing disagreements fairly, and encouraging cooperation, managers can help reduce misunderstandings and tensions, including those arising from different generational expectations or working styles.

Trust becomes an important foundation for collaboration, psychological safety, and a stronger sense of belonging within teams.

6. Greater Organizational Adaptability and Transformation

Inclusive leadership also supports broader organizational development. It encourages a shift from management approaches based primarily on supervision and control towards greater participation, shared responsibility, and accountability.

Organizations that actively involve employees, value diverse perspectives, and adapt management practices to changing needs may be better equipped to respond to workforce transformations, technological developments, and evolving expectations.

Inclusive leadership therefore creates value at several interconnected levels: for individual employees through greater inclusion, motivation, and opportunities to contribute; for teams through stronger collaboration and trust; and for organizations through improved engagement, innovation, and adaptability.

Inclusive Leadership in Practice

What does this look like in everyday management?

Inclusive leadership becomes meaningful when its principles are translated into consistent management behaviors. Managers act not only as supervisors but also as facilitators and

coaches, encouraging participation, supporting individual needs, and maintaining clear expectations and accountability. The following table illustrates how these principles can be applied in everyday management.

Management Area	Inclusive Management Practices
Communication and Transparency	Communicate clearly and openly; explain the reasons behind decisions; encourage two-way dialogue; invite questions and different perspectives; provide regular, constructive feedback.
Fairness and Individualised Support	Apply transparent and consistent criteria; ensure equitable access to opportunities; understand individual needs and working styles; adapt support and communication methods without compromising fairness or performance expectations.
Participation and Empowerment	Involve employees in decisions affecting their work; encourage suggestions and initiative; delegate meaningful responsibilities; provide appropriate autonomy while maintaining clear objectives and accountability.
Trust and Psychological Safety	Encourage employees to raise concerns and express differing opinions; respond constructively to mistakes; address tensions and disagreements respectfully; create an environment where employees can ask for help without fear of humiliation.
Recognition and Belonging	Acknowledge individual and team contributions fairly; provide specific and timely recognition; ensure that different perspectives are valued; create opportunities for collaboration and connection within the team.
Purpose and Continuous Development	Explain how individual tasks contribute to broader organizational objectives; encourage learning and experimentation; support professional development; provide opportunities to acquire new skills and take on new responsibilities.

From Control to Trust and Accountability

A central feature of inclusive management is the shift from controlling how employees perform every task towards creating conditions in which they can take responsibility for results.

This does not mean removing supervision or lowering standards. Instead, managers establish clear objectives, communicate expectations, provide appropriate support, and allow employees sufficient autonomy to determine how their work is carried out.

For Generation Z employees, who may value autonomy, meaningful work, and opportunities to contribute, this approach can support engagement and professional growth. At the same

time, these practices benefit employees across generations by strengthening trust, cooperation, and shared responsibility.

Inclusive leadership is therefore not a separate management activity. It is reflected in everyday decisions, communication, feedback, and the way managers respond to different employees and situations.

Good Practices of Inclusive Leadership and Management

Inclusive leadership is not limited to general principles or formal diversity policies. It becomes effective when organizations translate their commitments into concrete management practices that support fair opportunities, employee participation, professional development, and individual needs.

The following examples illustrate how organizations can put different dimensions of inclusion into practice. Although these initiatives are not designed exclusively for Generation Z, they offer valuable lessons for managers working with younger employees and multigenerational teams.

Accor – Promoting Equal Opportunities and Inclusive Career Development[4]

Accor, an international hospitality group, has introduced initiatives to support diversity, gender equality, and professional development across its workforce.
One example is RiiSE, the company's gender diversity network, which promotes equal opportunities, raises awareness of discrimination, and provides mentoring opportunities.
Accor also supports career progression through learning, leadership development, and its Reveal Talent program, which helps employees from different backgrounds progress towards management positions.
These initiatives illustrate how inclusion can be integrated into talent development rather than treated solely as a recruitment objective.[5]

What can managers learn?

- Provide fair access to mentoring, training, and career development opportunities.
- Recognise employees' potential beyond their educational or professional backgrounds.
- Encourage employees from underrepresented groups to pursue leadership responsibilities.
- Use transparent criteria when discussing promotion and professional growth.

Key lesson: Inclusive leadership requires managers to identify and develop talent across the workforce, ensuring that opportunities for advancement are not limited by stereotypes or traditional career pathways.

[4] https://group.accor.com/en/group/people-at-our-heart/our-culture-of-inclusion?utm_source=chatgpt.com
[5] https://careers.accor.com/global/en/be-all-you-are?utm_source=chatgpt.com

L'Oréal – Embedding Inclusion in Organisational Culture and Management

L'Oréal has developed a broad diversity, equity, and inclusion approach that extends beyond its products and external communications to its internal workforce and management practices.[6]
The company promotes diversity in recruitment, provides training on diversity and inclusion, and supports employees with different backgrounds, abilities, and professional experiences. Its initiatives also address intergenerational cooperation, disability inclusion, and opportunities for employees to develop their skills and careers.
An important aspect of this approach is the recognition that inclusion requires continuous organizational effort, supported by training, management practices, and monitoring of progress.

What can managers learn?

- Integrate inclusive behavior into everyday management rather than treating it as a separate initiative.[7]
- Develop awareness of unconscious bias in recruitment, evaluation, and career decisions.
- Encourage contributions from employees with different experiences, perspectives, and abilities.
- Provide learning opportunities that strengthen managers' capacity to lead diverse teams.

Key lesson: An inclusive organizational culture depends on consistent management behavior, supported by training, clear commitments, and continuous improvement.

1. Vivendi – Supporting Employees with Disabilities Through Individualized Workplace Practices

Vivendi has implemented initiatives aimed at improving the inclusion and professional participation of employees with disabilities.
Its reported measures include awareness-raising activities, support for recruitment and job retention, flexible working arrangements, and assistance adapted to individual circumstances. The company has also established coordination mechanisms involving disability officers to identify needs and develop relevant actions.[8]

These practices illustrate the principle of equity: creating fair working conditions may require different forms of support according to employees' circumstances.

What can managers learn?

- Discuss individual working needs respectfully and confidentially.

[6] https://www.loreal.com/en/commitments-and-responsibilities/for-the-people/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
[7] https://www.loreal.com/en/commitments-and-responsibilities/for-the-people/promoting-diversity-and-inclusion/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
[8] https://www.vivendi.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/20250407_VIV_VIVENDI_URD_EN.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

- Consider reasonable adjustments to working arrangements and responsibilities.
- Focus on employees' abilities and contributions rather than assumptions about limitations.
- Cooperate with human resources and relevant specialists when additional support is needed.

Key lesson: Inclusive management does not necessarily mean treating everyone identically. It means ensuring that employees have fair opportunities to contribute and perform effectively, with appropriate support when needed.

From Organisational Examples to Everyday Management

These examples illustrate how inclusive leadership can support fair career opportunities, organizational inclusion, and individualized workplace support. Although larger organizations may use formal programs and dedicated structures, the underlying principles are equally relevant to small and medium-sized enterprises. The following Practical Guide for Managers translates these lessons into concrete actions that can be applied in everyday team management.

Practical Guide for Managers: Seven Actions for More Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leadership is built through everyday management decisions and interactions. Managers do not need to introduce complex programs to begin improving inclusion within their teams. Small, consistent actions can help employees feel heard, respected, supported, and able to contribute.

The following seven actions offer practical ways to translate inclusive leadership principles into everyday management.

1. Schedule Regular One-to-One Conversations

Set aside 15–20 minutes for regular individual conversations with employees. These meetings should provide opportunities for two-way dialogue, not simply progress reporting.

What to do:

- Ask about current priorities, challenges, and support needs.
- Invite employees to share concerns and suggestions.
- Provide constructive feedback and recognize progress.
- Agree on any necessary follow-up actions.

Example: Instead of asking only, "Have you completed the task?", ask, "What is going well, what is challenging, and how can I support you?"

Expected benefit: Stronger communication, earlier identification of difficulties, and greater trust between managers and employees.

2. Explain the Purpose Behind Tasks and Decisions

Before assigning work or introducing changes, explain why the task matters and how it contributes to team or organizational objectives.

What to do:

- Provide context before giving instructions.
- Clarify the expected outcome and its importance.
- Explain how individual contributions support wider goals.
- Encourage questions when expectations are unclear.

Example: Instead of saying, "Prepare this report by Friday", explain, "We need this report by Friday because it will help the team identify customer needs and make decisions about next month's priorities."

Expected benefit: Better understanding of expectations, stronger engagement, and a clearer sense of purpose.

3. Provide Specific and Constructive Recognition

Recognise employees' contributions regularly, using specific examples rather than general praise.

What to do:

- Acknowledge concrete achievements and improvements.
- Explain why a contribution was valuable.
- Recognise both individual efforts and team collaboration.
- Ensure that recognition is fair and not limited to the most visible or outspoken employees.

Example: Instead of: "Great job!"

Say: "Your client summary was particularly clear and helped the team make a decision more quickly."

Expected benefit: Employees gain a clearer understanding of their strengths and feel that their contributions are valued.

4. Encourage Participation and Different Perspectives

Create opportunities for employees to contribute ideas and participate in decisions that affect their work.

What to do:

- Invite suggestions before making important team decisions.
- Use open-ended questions during meetings.

- Give quieter employees opportunities to contribute without putting them under pressure.
- Explain how employee input has influenced decisions.

Example: Before changing a team process, ask, "What difficulties do you see with our current approach, and what would you recommend improving?"

Expected benefit: Broader participation, better-informed decisions, and a stronger sense of shared responsibility.

5. Replace Micromanagement with Clear Expectations and Autonomy

Focus on agreed objectives and results rather than continuously monitoring how employees complete their tasks.

What to do:

- Define responsibilities, deadlines, and quality expectations.
- Agree on appropriate milestones and progress updates.
- Allow employees flexibility in how they organise their work.
- Adjust the level of guidance according to experience and support needs.

Example: Instead of requesting constant updates, agree on a weekly progress review and clearly define when the employee should seek assistance.

Expected benefit: Greater autonomy, accountability, confidence, and opportunities for professional development.

6. Make Fair and Transparent Decisions

Ensure that decisions about responsibilities, opportunities, recognition, and professional development are based on clear and consistent criteria.

What to do:

- Explain the criteria used in decisions.
- Consider whether all relevant employees have had fair opportunities to participate.
- Be aware of possible assumptions or unconscious bias.
- Discuss individual support needs while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

Example: When selecting an employee for training, explain the relevant skills, development needs, and selection criteria rather than relying on personal familiarity or informal preferences.

Expected benefit: Greater confidence in management decisions and a stronger perception of fairness within the team.

7. Respond Constructively to Mistakes, Concerns, and Disagreements

Create conditions in which employees can raise problems, express different opinions, and ask for support without fear of humiliation or unfair treatment.

What to do:

- Listen carefully before drawing conclusions.
- Focus on understanding the situation rather than immediately assigning blame.
- Address inappropriate behaviour consistently.
- Discuss what can be learned and what support or corrective action is needed.

Example: When an employee makes a mistake, ask, "What happened, what contributed to the problem, and how can we prevent it from happening again?"

Expected benefit: Stronger psychological safety, more open communication, and improved team learning.

Putting These Actions into Practice

Inclusive leadership develops through consistency rather than occasional initiatives. Managers should begin with a few actions that address the most relevant needs of their teams and gradually integrate them into everyday management routines.

For example, a manager might start by introducing regular one-to-one conversations, improving the transparency of team decisions, and creating more opportunities for employee participation.

These actions are particularly relevant when managing Generation Z employees, but they are equally valuable for building inclusive, respectful, and effective multigenerational teams.

Quick Tool: Inclusive Leadership Self-Assessment

How Inclusive Is Your Everyday Management Practice?

Inclusive leadership begins with awareness of one's own management behaviour. This short self-assessment helps managers reflect on how consistently they apply the principles of fairness, transparency, respect, psychological safety, participation, and recognition in their everyday work.

Time required: 5–10 minutes

How to use this tool:

Read each statement and assess how consistently it reflects your current management practice.

Use the following rating scale:

1 – Never or almost never
2 – Rarely
3 – Sometimes
4 – Often
5 – Consistently

Be as realistic as possible. The purpose is not to achieve a perfect score, but to identify opportunities for improvement.

Step 1. Assess Your Inclusive Leadership Practices

Dimension	Self-Assessment Statements	Score (1–5)
1. Fairness & Equity	I apply transparent and consistent criteria when allocating opportunities, responsibilities, and recognition.	_____
	I consider individual support needs while maintaining fair expectations for all employees.	_____
2. Openness & Transparency	I clearly explain decisions, expectations, and the reasons behind them.	_____
	I encourage two-way communication and actively listen to different perspectives.	_____
3. Respect & Inclusion	I treat employees with respect regardless of their age, background, abilities, or working styles.	_____
	I ensure that all team members have meaningful opportunities to contribute.	_____
4. Trust & Psychological Safety	Employees can raise concerns, ask questions, or express different opinions without fear of unfair negative consequences.	_____
	I respond constructively to mistakes and focus on learning and improvement.	_____

5. Participation & Empowerment	I involve employees in decisions that affect their work whenever appropriate.	_____
	I provide appropriate autonomy while maintaining clear objectives and accountability.	_____
6. Recognition & Belonging	I regularly acknowledge individual and team contributions in a fair and specific way.	_____
	I create opportunities for employees to feel connected, valued, and included within the team.	_____

Step 2. Identify Your Priority for Improvement

Review your scores and calculate the average for each dimension by adding its two scores and dividing by two.

Dimension	Average Score
Fairness & Equity	___ / 5
Openness & Transparency	___ / 5
Respect & Inclusion	___ / 5
Trust & Psychological Safety	___ / 5
Participation & Empowerment	___ / 5
Recognition & Belonging	___ / 5

Reflection questions:

- Which dimension received my lowest score?
- Which management behaviour would make the greatest difference to my team?
- Is there a gap between how I perceive my leadership and how employees may experience it?

My priority area for improvement:

Step 3. Commit to One Practical Action

Choose one realistic action that you can implement within the next two weeks.

My improvement action:

I will _____

When will I start?

How will I know whether I have made progress?

Example

Priority area: Participation & Empowerment

Action: During the next four weekly team meetings, I will invite suggestions from all team members before finalizing decisions that affect their work.

Progress indicator: I will review whether more employees have contributed ideas and whether their suggestions have been considered in team decisions.

Step 4. Review Your Progress

After four weeks, return to your selected priority area and reflect:

- Have I implemented my planned action?
- What changes have I noticed in my own behavior?
- Have I received any feedback from employees?
- What should I continue, adjust, or improve?

Remember: Inclusive leadership is a continuous learning process. Small, consistent improvements in everyday management behavior can contribute to a more respectful, supportive, and inclusive working environment.

This tool is intended for personal reflection and professional development. It is not a validated psychological assessment or a formal measure of leadership performance.