

## **8.2 What is an Inclusive Workplace Policy?**



An inclusive workplace policy is a framework that **encourages employee engagement** by standardizing employment conditions. It also enables your business to create its own organizational culture.

Your written workplace policy will depend on the size of your business and the scope of your intentions.

An inclusive workplace policy does not have to be complicated. Of course, if you operate a multinational company or report to a Board of Directors, your policy is likely to be somewhat more complex and extensive. Nevertheless, an inclusive workplace policy doesn't need to be complicated.

**An inclusive workplace policy is designed to guide the behavior of management and employees, in accordance with your businesses performance objectives.**

### **Why does my company need an inclusive workplace policy?**

A company's culture is defined by its workplace policy and diversity and inclusion are key components to business success.

The benefits of inclusion include:

- Improved employee engagement
- Increased market presence
- Better corporate image

These benefits are outcomes of your organizational culture. They also stem from meeting the needs of all employees more effectively.

Policy effectiveness is measured in terms of outcomes. This means that when a policy is implemented as intended, it helps foster a work environment in which no employee is excluded, marginalized, treated unfairly, or prevented from accessing any resources, responsibilities, opportunities or employment benefits.

# What are the components of a workplace policy addressing diversity and inclusion?

Generally, an inclusive workplace policy includes guidelines setting out a business's commitment in the following areas:

- Making reasonable efforts to guarantee an employee's dignity, confidentiality, independence, integration, and equal opportunities.
- Communicating with people with disabilities in ways that takes their disability into account.
- Providing assistive devices as needed.
- Making people with disabilities and their service animals or support people feel welcome in the workplace.
- Making accommodations as needed.
- Providing accessibility training to staff as needed.
- Establishing a process for receiving and responding to feedback.

*Note: Management practices are crucial to ensuring that **policies are implemented meaningfully**.*

## An Example of a Diversity and Inclusive Workplace Policy: Digital Job Posting

Our Business does not discriminate when selecting new employees. Culture, disability, religion, gender, nationality, and sexual orientation have no place in our hiring decisions. We select the best employees based on their qualifications, skills, knowledge, and commitment.

When selecting new employees, our Business's prime consideration is that the individuals must be the best candidate to fulfill job-related responsibilities.

Our Business also recognizes that candidates and/or employees may request accommodations in order to participate or perform to the best of their abilities. As per regional labour standards and national human rights guidelines, reasonable workplace accommodations and adjustments will be granted.

## An Example of a Diversity and Inclusive Workplace Policy: Workplace Adaptations

Our Business recognizes the diversity of its workplace and it is committed to treating its employees fairly while ensuring that all employees can use their skills effectively and efficiently.

Our Business will do its best to provide all employees with the equipment, devices or workplace adaptations they need so they may contribute to our Business's performance, production and service delivery.

## An Example of a Diversity and Inclusive Workplace Policy: Social Sustainability

Workplace modifications and adjustments are designed to ensure equal opportunities for all employees to participate in the workplace and in other related activities without discrimination.

Our Business also recognizes that candidates and/or employees may request accommodations to participate or perform to the best of their ability. As per regional labour standards and national human rights guidelines, reasonable workplace accommodations and adjustments will be granted.

## Take the Challenge!

### True or False

An inclusive workplace policy provides guidelines for a company seeking to create its own organizational culture. It also may bring direct benefits, including improved employee engagement and improved corporate image. **True.**

### Sources:

<sup>1</sup>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, in Allstream Corporate Policy, 2014AODA Regulation: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, in Allstream Accessible Customer Service Plan, 2014

<sup>2</sup>Inclusive Policies & Practices: What Do We Know? Burton Blatt Institute, Syracuse University, 2012 in collaboration with CAES-S.McEwen, Alberta.

<sup>3</sup>Canadian Human Rights Commission, A Place for All: A Guide to Creating an Inclusive Workplace, 2006.

### Disclaimer:

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