

Leaders must consult with wider teams on D&I agenda

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Business leaders must seek advice from internal networks to ensure that diversity and inclusion (D&I) strategies are engaging and effective. That is the advice from HR and diversity consultancy, the Clear Company (<http://www.theclearcompany.co.uk/>).

This recommendation comes after the latest PwC CEO Survey revealed a significant disparity between perceptions of diversity and inclusiveness across different levels of seniority. While the majority of CEOs surveyed (87%) said they were promoting talent diversity and inclusiveness within their own organisation, just two thirds (63%) of 'young leaders' agreed this was the case.

This suggests a block in insight being shared throughout companies, with D&I strategies either failing to cascade down from the top, or feedback on the feasibility of said initiatives not trickling up from the ground.

Kate Headley, Director, the Clear Company says:

"It's promising that 87% of leaders have reported that they are actively promoting D&I within their businesses, and these figures are reflective of what we are experiencing in our consultancy work. Business leaders are generally no longer asking 'Why?' they should get on top of the diversity agenda, but 'How?' they should go about doing so, which represents a real step-change in attitudes at the top.

"However, the disparity between CEO perceptions and those of their more junior counterparts points to a clear disconnect. Somewhere along the line it seems that messages are being lost.

"Effective inclusion strategies rely on multi-way communications across every level of the business and externally. This is true not only at implementation stage, but also when it comes to measuring success. It is crucial that senior leaders collect insight from their networks, including diverse stakeholders, to ascertain what steps are needed to push the agenda forwards – and that any initiatives are subsequently continually evaluated.

"PwC's figures may also suggest a difference in expectations between the professional 'generations' – what a CEO could perceive to be 'enough' at strategic level may not always hit the bar in the eyes of the wider workforce. Thankfully, this is a relatively easy hurdle to overcome.

"Success lies in the art of communication. By putting processes in place to engage and consult with existing and potential employees around D&I, CEOs and HR leads can best ensure that good intentions translate to measurable outcomes.

"Organisations that get this right can then act as a beacon of best practice to the one in 10 CEOs which PwC's survey found are not yet promoting D&I within their business."

ENDS

Carly Smith
BlueSky PR
T: +44 (0)1582 790 708
E: carly@bluesky-pr.com
W: www.bluesky-pr.com