

Inspiration:

Working with people from other cultures

2024

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Foreningen af
Rådgivende Ingeniører
FRI

Inspiration for working with people from other cultures

The world has become more globalised, and in Denmark, we are faced with a need for more qualified labour both in the form of workers from abroad and Danes with different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, there is a need to understand other cultures – and to be understood – in order to maximise productivity and job satisfaction in the company and optimise conditions for interacting with the company's international customers etc.

Below is a list of topics for inspiration that can be discussed and considered in terms of how you as a company, regardless of size, can better accommodate different cultural backgrounds in the workplace and realise the great potential offered by diversity management in your company.

The topics focus on how members in the industry can work with inclusion on a daily basis so that all employees feel safe. We also offer a proposal for what the industry as a whole should be working towards. Many of the topics also make sense in terms of other diversity parameters such as gender, age, etc.

Inspiration for working with cultures that are in the minority in your company

Overall questions:

- Do your employees have different cultural backgrounds and how is this reflected in the team composition?
 - What are you doing to be more accommodating to employees with a cultural background that is in the minority?
 - Can your corporate culture be adapted to include more new types of employees?
 - Is your company aware of any cultural barriers in the workplace?
 - Does your company have international customers?
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- **Build teams and projects in a way that promotes diversity.** Representation of different cultural backgrounds in teams creates a platform for knowledge sharing, creativity and leads to better problem solving. Diversity among colleagues also contributes to social cohesion and well-being in teams.
 - Take into account different cultural and religious holidays and **consider flexible working arrangements.** Show respect for the different needs of employees by, for example, offering the option to replace certain Danish public holidays with an alternative day of paid holiday.
 - Recognise and **celebrate different cultural events** in the workplace to foster greater dialogue, inclusion and community. This also contributes to cultural education among employees.
 - **Be inclusive by being attentive to religious eating habits** and offering alternatives in the canteen whenever possible. It is also important to clearly label food that is vegan, gluten-free, lactose-free, halal, kosher, etc.
 - **Offer cultural skills training to all employees.** This may include training in intercultural communication skills, cultural awareness and how to avoid stereotypes. This will help minimise misunderstandings when encountering different cultures with internal and external project participants, both inside and outside the workplace.
 - **Consider whether the recruitment process creates potential for more diverse teams and anonymise the pool of applicants** so that recruitment is not based on bias

and preconceived notions of who can be a consulting engineer. Something of particularly relevance in relation to cultural backgrounds is having a diverse group of employees involved in the selection and hiring of new employees.

- **Be aware of language barriers and make sure that communication in the workplace is accessible to everyone.** Consider offering language training or interpreting services for employees who need it. This can contribute to better understanding and cooperation between employees with different cultural backgrounds and create a greater sense of belonging for everyone.
- **Create a framework for feedback between colleagues and establish mentoring programmes** where experienced employees can act as mentors for employees with different cultural backgrounds. Mentors can offer guidance, support and career counselling in the context of the local culture and broaden their own horizons, which can help create a sense of inclusion and help employees grow professionally and personally.
- **Offer a social sounding board.** Employees with different cultural backgrounds often struggle to find their place among their Danish colleagues. When you get your first job in Denmark, it will always take some time to learn the social norms of the workplace. It is therefore important to include colleagues with different cultural backgrounds in the social community to ensure that they learn about Danish culture – but the biggest focus should be on what unites us rather than what separates us. The company should therefore work to ensure that Danish colleagues are included and willing to become social sounding boards for a colleague with a different cultural background.
- **Ensure equal opportunities for career development and progression for employees with different cultural backgrounds.** Ensure clear guidelines and processes for promotions and rewards that are based on earned success and skills, not bias or preconceived notions. This will have a positive outcome for all employees.



- **Focus on diversity in management** so that diversity can also be seen in decision-making in the workplace. Representation of different cultural backgrounds in management positions ensures that different perspectives are heard and included in the decision-making process. Diversity at management level can also boost overall company performance and help attract talent that can mirror themselves in a diverse management.

FRI also identifies a need for more **macro-oriented** work on cultural differences, which in the long term will contribute to increased recruitment of engineers with different cultural backgrounds. In this context, it is relevant to address the following initiatives at industry level:

1. **Promotion of education:** Collaborate with schools and educational institutions to promote interest in engineering among young people with different cultural backgrounds. This may include mentoring programmes, internships and information campaigns that showcase diverse role models in engineering.
2. **Partnerships with stakeholder organisations:** Collaboration with interest groups and associations representing different cultural groups to create broader awareness of opportunities in engineering. This may involve events, conferences and collaboration projects that promote diversity and inclusion in the industry.
3. **Public awareness campaigns:** Launch awareness campaigns to raise public awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion in construction and engineering. These campaigns can highlight diverse role models, success stories and the benefits that diversity brings to the industry.
4. **Research and data collection:** Conduct research and data collection on diversity and inclusion in the construction industry and among engineers. This can help identify specific challenges, quantify benefits and measure progress and inform policy development and decision-making at macro level.

Get off to a good start

Inspiration for further reading:

Når mangfoldighed skaber værdi (When diversity creates value) – Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration (rm.dk) (in Danish).

Describes 20 examples from companies where employees with different language and cultural backgrounds have contributed to business growth.

Diversitet på arbejdspladsen fører til social samhørighed og trivsel i dit team (Diversity in the workplace leads to social cohesion and well-being in your team) (videnskab.dk) (in Danish)

Mangfoldighed ved ansættelse og rekruttering (Diversity in hiring and recruitment) (forsvaret.dk) (in Danish)

Kulturmøder på arbejdspladsen (Cultural encounters in the workplace) – Cabi (cabiweb.dk) (in Danish)

Language and culture: Undgå misforståelser og konflikter (Avoid misunderstandings and conflicts) – Cabi (cabiweb.dk) (in Danish)

Sproglæring på arbejdspladser (Language learning in the workplace) (integrationsviden.dk) (in Danish)

Mangfoldighed på arbejdspladsen (Diversity in the workplace) – DI (danskindustri.dk)

Sådan sikrer du diversitet i ledelsen, så din virksomhed står stærkere (How to ensure diversity in management to make your organisation stronger) (berlingske.dk) (in Danish)

MODTAGEKULTUR PÅ ARBEJDSPLADSEN 15 råd til at sikre den gode modtagelse af etniske minoritetskollegaer (RECEPTION CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE 15 tips to ensure a good reception of ethnic minority colleagues) (fiu-ligestilling.dk) (in Danish)

<https://mangfoldighed.dk/> – Counselling on implementing diversity management.

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FRI, the Danish Association of Consulting Engineers, is the trade association for consulting and engineering firms. FRI works to improve the business conditions of its member firms and the framework conditions of the industry. We have done so since 1904.

Family life

FRI's member firms primarily provide consulting within: Building, urban planning and architecture, construction and infrastructure, energy and industry, climate and environment and international development.

Clothing

- FRI is a platform for identity and pride
- FRI is a platform for networking
- FRI is a platform for influence
- FRI is a platform for services

FRI creates value for all member firms.

See more at www.frinet.dk

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