WHY LINE MANAGEMENT IS CRITICAL TO CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Many organisations are frustrated that, despite having diversity and inclusion programmes in place, they are making very little progress. Attracting diverse talent, progressive parental leave programmes and support for flexible working are all well and good, but if we don't address the lived experience of diverse talent in our organisations, we will not make progress. Having effective line managers is key to ensuring that the working environment is inclusive. Covid 19 is putting even more emphasis on the need for line managers to support their teams who are working remotely, including around mental health.

Our research suggests that line management in our industry is not a valued activity. Line managers are often appointed by default (being the head of a team or desk) or because the individuals see it as a stepping stone to a more senior position and not because of their aptitude as a people manager. Line managers are rarely given training or objectives that set out what is expected of them. Their work as a line manager is rarely assessed or rewarded. This contrasts with the clarity of recognition and rewards for fund performance, for gaining new clients or for generating consulting fees. If firms do not value and reward good line management in the way they value and reward other outcomes, it will be difficult for firms to achieve their diversity and inclusion goals.

We would like all Diversity Project members to hold a conversation about the current state of their line management practices and to develop their own approach to the recruitment, training, objective-setting, assessment and reward structures for line managers. This is about cultural change - revising what is valued in the organisation. It will not be easy and there are no short cuts. The leaders in member firms, with their employees, need to identify what behaviours are expected and valued in their organisations. And then they need to operate in such a way that those revised cultural norms are embedded and reinforced at every opportunity.

The conversation we would like DP members to have should cover the following:

- **how line management is valued in their organisation**
- **whether they have the right people in the job**
- **whether line managers have clarity over their objectives and receive feedback from their report(s)**
- **whether they are supported with training and rewarded appropriately.**

The following is a suggested approach to preparing for and running a workshop for line managers on this topic:

1. **Send out long form paper to line managers 1 week in advance as pre-reading**
2. **Send out a survey at least 24 hours in advance (ideally take no more than 5 minutes to complete); suggested survey questions attached**
3. **Review the survey feedback and agree 3 key areas of focus for discussion pre workshop**
4. **Run the workshop (virtually), sharing scores/ heatmap, celebrating successes and digging into key areas of improvement drawing out different views, ideas and actions**
5. **Debrief to review ideas and action next steps (ideally embed into existing processes**

Suggested pre-event line management survey statements

Can be set up in any survey tool with line managers (and others potentially) invited to indicate the extent to which they agree with each statement on a 1-5 scale. Both the average result and the spread of results (a heat map is a helpful way to present the results) are useful in identifying the key themes and structuring the subsequent conversation. While doing this anonymously is good for getting honest responses, trying to identify the outliers and getting them to share their perspective is also helpful.

- I believe that *[insert company name]* is committed to creating an inclusive culture.
- The role of line management is a critical component to developing a more inclusive culture at [insert company name] in addition to my delivering against my core responsibilities.
- I feel supported in my role as a line manager and know where I can go if I need help or guidance with my line management responsibilities.
- I receive the right frequency of training and tools to develop and refresh my capabilities as a line manager
- Line management is a core responsibility I have to take on in order to progress with my career at [insert company name].
- I have the capacity to dedicate sufficient time to my line management responsibilities alongside my core responsibilities.
- I enjoy being a line management and see myself taking on more line management responsibilities in the future.
- I have one or more performance objectives in [insert objective software] that relate to my ability to line manage my team.
- I have access to the right level of feedback from my team on my line management style and approach so that I can become a better line manager.
- The performance of my line management responsibilities has a direct link to my pay, performance and bonus so that I am rewarded for the effort I put into line management.
- Between *[insert methods of employee feedback]* I have multiple methods for me to receive feedback from my team.

- I regularly ask my team for feedback on my performance as a line manager through *[insert feedback tool]*.
- There is a safe space where I can talk to other line managers about the challenges I face and what other team leads are also dealing with.
- I have received advice and support from other line managers on how I might deal with a challenge or an issue I have faced.
- Training and materials provided by *[insert company name]* help me develop my capabilities as a line manager.

The Diversity Project has produced a longer report on this topic, which has also been uploaded on **www.diversityproject.com**

If you have any questions, please contact: **info@diversityproject.com**