INSIGHT 1: PRIORITISE INCLUSIVITY TO ACHIEVE COMPETITIVE EDGE

The business case for prioritising inclusivity is compelling. For example, companies like Apple and Starbucks have gained market prominence by fostering an inclusive work environment, leading to innovative products and services. In the discussion, it was noted that 67% of job seekers consider workplace diversity an essential factor. Furthermore, studies have shown that companies with higher diversity in their teams are 35% more likely to outperform their competitors. Organisations that integrate diverse perspectives, especially those of the younger generation, often demonstrate increased adaptability and creativity. The younger generation’s exposure to rapid technological advancements, as well as socio-political shifts like the rise of grassroots movements, equips them to navigate uncertainties better. Their resilience, evidenced by their adaptability to changing job markets and volatile global events, makes them valuable contributors. Engaging them is not merely a gesture of goodwill; it is a strategic necessity for future-proofing organisations.

INSIGHT 2: RECOGNISE AND ADDRESS CURRENT YOUTH TRENDS

Young people today display an acute awareness of global challenges, notably concerning the environment and access to opportunities. Yet they often feel detached...
from the impact of broad policy statements, seeking tangible results in their immediate surroundings. Moreover, they exhibit an incredible adaptability, seamlessly integrating new technologies into their lives with a level of critical thinking and savviness. This adaptability, coupled with their inherent skills, makes them invaluable in a corporate setting. Organisations must therefore build systems that foster trust, striking a balance between offering flexibility and ensuring autonomy.

**INSIGHT 3: BOLSTER SUPPORT TO FOSTER INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS**

Creating an inclusive workplace requires a threefold approach. First, leaders and colleagues alike must be introspective, gauging the frequency with which they overshadow others’ opinions. Such self-awareness can illuminate areas for personal development and promote a more inclusive discourse. Second, transparently sharing the often unwritten rules of corporate life can ease the integration of young professionals, ensuring they feel valued and understood. Anecdotal tips, shared generously, can make a considerable difference in a newcomer’s experience. Lastly, recognising and mitigating biases is essential. By understanding team dynamics and actively seeking feedback, businesses can create a setting where all voices are not only heard but valued.

**IN SUMMARY**

The world is in a state of flux, and the younger generation, with its fresh perspectives and adaptability, holds the key to navigating these changes. Businesses need to pivot towards inclusivity, viewing it not as a mere buzzword but as a core component of their long-term strategy. By recognising the challenges and potential of today’s youth, and by implementing measures to foster inclusivity, businesses can position themselves at the forefront of sustainable and innovative growth.

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**CALL TO ACTION**

Consider creating a youth council for your organisation to follow through with your commitments and be accountable. As a business leader or decision-maker, your actions affect others. This is a leadership matter – make sure young people are at the table, listened to and understood. They have the best ideas anyways!

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[Young people] have so many assets and so many talents. And when we only apply adult brains, and adult thinking and frameworks we came up with, we leave a lot of things intact and a lot of things unsaid.

Ailun Ku, President & CEO, The Opportunity Network

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**RESOURCES**