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## Everyone Deserves to Be Seen: Creating True Inclusion in the Workplace

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By

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Recently, a university hosted an "Employment Inclusivity Forum" and invited various industry representatives to share how to promote diversity and inclusion (D&I), with a special focus on supporting those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The organiser, the university's career office, aimed to explore how to "hire inclusively" and "recruit diverse talent". The content ranged from policy guidelines to practical cases, helping participants better understand how to support SEN individuals in the workplace.

More and more companies are realising that understanding employees' unique talents is the key to unlocking human potential. Meanwhile, many still hesitate, unsure whether creating "inclusion" means lowering standards or compromising performance. But is it really a binary mindset of "either-or"? In fact, inclusion is a mindset, a culture, not a favour or charity. At its core, inclusion is about ensuring every person feels valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

### **1. From "Labelled" to Valued – Understanding Before Judging**

Many SEN individuals may not excel in traditional ways—group work, multitasking, or presentation. Often misunderstood as "unmotivated" or "lacking ability", they may face unfair assumptions from teachers or parents. However, when given the right environment and tailored support, their potential shines. Are we ready to embrace and support them at work? Many SEN individuals have exceptional creativity, focus, and problem-solving skills—talents worth recognising.

### **2. Diversity Is Not Just About Labels—It Is Culture**

Many companies that implement D&I strategies form committees, set inclusion goals, and revise policies. These are positive steps, but a truly inclusive culture goes beyond policies and metrics—it requires psychological safety and a sense of belonging. This means having the courage to speak up, take risks, and bring one's authentic self to work. If team members are afraid to ask questions or admit mistakes, or feel penalised for speaking up, inclusion cannot truly take root.

### **3. Diversity of Thought: The Real Competitive Edge**

Innovation and growth often stem from diverse perspectives. D&I is more than visible differences like race, gender, or educational background—it includes diversity of thought. Can we accept "different ways of thinking"? Can we allow alternative communication styles? For example, if a SEN colleague prefers written updates over



verbal meetings, are we willing to adjust? Creating space for different working styles encourages learning and strengthens teamwork.

#### **4. A Message to Young People: The Workplace Is a Journey**

Work is not just about proving your worth, but about discovering where you fit. In your early years, focus not on “changing yourself to fit the mould” but on recognising your unique strengths. Every company has its own culture—once you find one that appreciates who you are and how you work, the right opportunities will follow. Inclusion is not just a corporate value—it is a mindset that leads to real professional belonging.