

Blueprint for Inclusive Workplaces of the Future

How to create inclusive, safe
and compelling workplaces.

About This Document

This blueprint is both a vision of the future and a resource to establish a shared understanding of all the factors that shape workplaces around the world.

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Message from Sara Armbruster President and CEO, Steelcase Inc.



Sara Armbruster

Our purpose to unlock human promise has been core to who we are since we were founded more than a century ago and it's important our mission applies to everyone at work. We believe all organizations have the responsibility to build accessibility and inclusion into the design and implementation of forward-thinking, equitable workplaces. People should feel able and encouraged to bring their authentic selves to safe, compelling places where they can do their best work.

We are grateful to partner with G3ict in addition to the many people who contributed their time, energy and insights to this project. The workplace is in a rapid state of transformation. People want to feel a sense of belonging after so much time in isolation. They want to be productive and engaged. But they can only do those things if they are able to contribute fully. Building a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace is a shared responsibility and one in which we must all make continued progress.

We hope this Blueprint provides organizations with a vision for a more inclusive future where diversity and design can come together to inform the evolution of a better work experience for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Armbruster". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sara Armbruster

Message from Ambassador Luis Gallegos President of the Board of Trustees, G3ict

For the more than 1.3 billion persons with disabilities around the world, an inclusive workplace offers the opportunity to contribute their talents, passions and perspectives to achieving the important business and mission goals of organizations and companies and to achieve greater personal and family economic security.

Article 27 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. It calls for the opportunity to gain a living in a labor market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. An inclusive workplace is key to securing these rights.

G3ict applauds the leadership and commitment of Steelcase as our partner in shining a spotlight on the critical activities and roles that can define a workplace that is inclusive, as well as safe and compelling. We appreciate the generous contributions of experts around the world in creating this Blueprint for an Inclusive Workplace of the Future. We look forward to continued collaborations with industry, civil society and government to implementing this Blueprint and achieving greater inclusion in the workplace.



Ambassador Luis Gallegos of Ecuador



Ambassador Luis Gallegos

Report Accessibility Features

G3ict – the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies - is committed to making its reports and documents user friendly for all people by meeting the Web/Digital Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 Level AA (WCAG 2.1 AA). This document supports the following accessibility features:

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Key Terms

Definitions used in this project come from sources that are common points of reference for business, disability and human resource guidance. Several key terms are subjective and in a constant state of evolution. For that reason, where appropriate and possible, we used definitions already developed and widely used by partners and other organizations.

The key terms related to this work will continue to be updated to reflect changing norms in society and the context of sectors (private, public, nonprofit, academia, etc.) where the design, culture, technology and policies and management of workplaces are uniquely different.

Compelling

“A more human workplace is one that promotes people’s strengths, capabilities and functioning, leading to the high levels of engagement, productivity, satisfaction and retention businesses need.”ⁱⁱ In addition, research points to a need for companies to focus on “influencing and improving employees’ feelings about their overall experience using psychological, motivational and social principles.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Disability

Disability: “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”ⁱⁱⁱ

The Future

The Future – for this project, we are looking at a horizon of three to five years — the typical amount of time businesses would use for strategic planning.

Inclusive

“The achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization’s success.”^{iv}

Safe

“The working environment at a company should encompass all factors that impact the safety, health and wellbeing of employees. This can include environmental hazards, unsafe working conditions or processes, drug and alcohol abuse and workplace violence.”^v

Workplaces

A workplace is a system that depends on the integration of physical settings, work processes, organizational culture and information technologies, to support organizational effectiveness, as described by [Franklin Becker](#) and [Fritz Steele](#). For the purposes of this Blueprint, we are focusing our discussion on workplaces that are typically centered in office environments and can include remote work settings.

Introduction

In the first half of 2021, G3ict and Steelcase partnered on a project to understand how workplaces around the world should evolve to be inclusive, safe and compelling for all stakeholders. The project uniquely focuses on persons with disabilities which include those with diverse, intersectional identities, as a lens for discussing the many challenges and opportunities associated with the changing nature of workplace culture, design, technology, policies and management. The goal of the project was to develop this Blueprint for Inclusive Workplaces of the Future.

The Blueprint serves as a resource by establishing a shared understanding of the many factors that shape workplaces across the world, creating a platform for stakeholder engagement, and presenting recommended actions that will result in inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces for all. The Blueprint also establishes a vision of the future by building from the experiences of recent global events to set an aspirational goal for what workplaces can be.

Today, how, when and where people work continues to evolve rapidly. The Covid-19 global pandemic has become an accelerant for workplace transformations. At no other time in history has there been a need to merge the virtues of technology with the talents of employees in a manner that is adaptable, human-centered and inclusive. However, today it is not clear whether, to what extent, and how often accessibility and inclusion are built into the design and implementation of leading-edge workplaces supported by integrated technology. Workplaces of the future must be compelling destinations where every team member can contribute – not despite their unique identities – but because of them.

At no other time in history has there been a need to merge the virtues of technology with the talents of employees in a manner that is adaptable, human-centered and inclusive.

Workplaces of the future must be compelling destinations where every team member can contribute – not despite their unique identities – but because of them.

A Focus on Inclusion + Accessibility

This project focuses on persons with disabilities to provide a focal point for what it means for workplaces to be inclusive, safe and compelling. Diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility initiatives have continued to grow in prominence across sectors. The disability community is unique in that it intersects with every other aspect of diversity. Within the community there is representation across demographics of age, disability type, economic situation, educational attainment, ethnicity, gender identity and race.^{vi} Persons with disabilities, on average, experience higher rates of unemployment and poverty compared to their non-disabled peers.^{vii} Considerations of accessibility and usability of physical spaces and digital tools in the workplace continue to lag behind the needs and expectations of persons with disabilities, contributing to a level of exclusion.^{viii} Such experiences become even more complicated when longstanding societal barriers related to gender, race, and other demographic identifiers intersect with the lived experience of a person with disability.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) was adopted in 2006.^{ix} The historic treaty marked a significant step forward in the global recognition of the human rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. This project was developed in keeping with the principles of accessibility, equity, and a holistic perspective on the social dynamics that contribute to the experience of persons with disabilities found in the CRPD. Focusing on persons with disabilities as a frame of reference for this project required a constant reflection on the meaning of inclusion, and how this can be achieved with groups that experience many social, environmental and technological barriers in today's workplaces. In that sense, the need to go beyond basic regulatory compliance in recognition of the rights of diverse groups, and the critical importance of inclusive co-design are foundational themes of this Blueprint. The lens of the disability community offers an important perspective for creating workplaces of the future that are inclusive, safe and compelling for all.

Persons with disabilities, on average, experience higher rates of unemployment and poverty compared to their non-disabled peers. Considerations of accessibility and usability of physical spaces and digital tools in the workplace continue to lag behind the needs and expectations of persons with disabilities, contributing to a level of exclusion.

Process

The approach developed by G3ict and Steelcase to produce the Blueprint for Inclusive Workplaces of the Future included several key stages; a literature review, a global survey, a series of human-centered design roundtable sessions with a curated group of experts, and individual qualitative interviews. Each stage of the process is described and the learnings summarized in the following pages. G3ict and Steelcase collected, considered and interpreted the multiple important points of input received throughout the project to produce this initial output, with full acknowledgement there are more viewpoints to be included as steps are taken toward putting recommendations into action.

This project focused on three core principles – inclusive, safe and compelling – that must be present in any workplace environment. The principles are interdependent and necessary for organizations to achieve their full potential to maximize the creativity and productivity of a wholly-engaged workforce.

The foundation of the workplace of the future is inclusion. Without inclusion, employees will not truly feel safe in their physical or digital environments, or in their interactions with peers, leadership, or other stakeholder groups. This sense of safety extends well beyond the physical environment (e.g., contactless door sensors, fire suppression, improved ventilation to limit exposure to airborne illnesses, etc.). All people within a workplace must also feel safe to claim and express their identity without fear of consequences. In the absence of inclusion and true safety, workplaces will fail to be compelling destinations where employees thrive, organizations prosper, and customers and the community receive value. Culture and design each contribute to what makes a workplace compelling for the broad range of individuals there. While safe and compelling are built upon inclusive, each of these three core principles contributes to and reinforces the other.

Background Research

Research, survey results and outputs from expert roundtable discussions demonstrate the relationship between the core workplace principles of this project - inclusive, safe and compelling - and how they are influenced by stakeholders' actions.

Background Research

The literature review provided a foundation for identifying forces and promising practices impacting workplaces across the world. These forces include global digital transformation, initial and ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, changing social norms, and economic disruptions. Within these interrelated forces there was an array of topics that merit individual consideration, such as: the increased use of immersive technologies like augmented and virtual reality (AR/ VR) and remote collaboration platforms, the introduction of personal protective equipment into workplace lexicon and steps taken to ensure the health and safety of employees, and the elevated discussion of how employers are expected to create a great employee experience to enhance engagement and satisfaction within their organizations.

Prior to the pandemic, it was recognized that the advent of technology such as “digital communication, collaboration platforms, and digital reality technologies, along with societal and marketplace changes, have allowed for and created the opportunity for more distributed teams.”^x Movement toward hybrid, and in some cases fully digital workplaces, presented a challenge for organizations to rethink culture, team connections and community. This shift in workplaces is tied to the global trend of digital transformation, a movement to introduce technologies to “improve processes, productivity, deliver better customer and employee experiences, manage business risks, and control costs.”^{xi}

The onset of the pandemic triggered an abrupt transition from in-person workplace environments to fully remote. Recent data suggests it will be important to explore how to create a successful hybrid work experience. Seventy-two percent of global leaders expect a hybrid approach to work moving forward, 23% expect a heavy in-office presence and 5% expect an extreme work-from-home model.

In anticipation of emerging from the acute phase of the pandemic in some parts of the world, organizations are struggling with how work will change moving forward. This includes the increased reliance on technology, concerns about workplace safety and changing perspectives of what

72% percent of global leaders expect a hybrid approach to work moving forward, 23% expect a heavy in-office presence and 5% expect an extreme work-from-home model.

constitutes a compelling workplace. A 2021 survey by PwC shows the office is here to stay, but its role will change. Eighty-six percent of leaders say the office will continue to be part of how their organization brings people together to get work done and 87% of employees say the office is needed for collaboration and building relationships. At the same time, 55% of U.S. employees want to work partially in the office and partially remote and more employers are willing to offer people some form of flexibility.^{xii}

What the workplace will look like is under increased scrutiny as well. Steelcase research in spring 2021 shows 13% of global organizations expect to decrease real estate and 29% expect to maintain current levels by December 2022. Driven by growth, however, 58% of global organizations expect to increase real estate.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to the future of the work environment. Organizations are considering everything from the number of assigned and unassigned spaces, desk sharing, enhanced collaboration spaces, coworking and satellite offices. Some predict the office will become more of a hub for community and collaboration.^{xiii} Others are committed to the value of bringing people together to support all the ways in which people need to work including focus, collaboration, socialization, and learning.^{xiv}

People are pandemic-aware, and workers in every country rate a new set of safety issues as their top concerns about returning to the office, with a strong emphasis on mitigating the spread of disease. Air quality, the adherence to safety protocols and general cleanliness rank among the most important safety considerations, according to a Steelcase global research study.^{xv} A 2020 CB Insights report identified workplace

safety technologies such as low-touch and voice enabled interfaces, autonomous cleaning solutions, spatial intelligence and people-counting sensors, mobile-accessible communication and human resources tools, and resilient cybersecurity will be important to addressing worker concerns.^{xvi}

Steelcase global research with 52,000 responses in 11 countries uncovered five primary needs of workers in a post-pandemic office: to be safe and feel safe, a deeper sense of belonging, to be productive, holistic comfort and greater control.^{xvii} The research identified four macro shifts leaders will need to embrace moving forward. These shifts include moving from health and safety standards to a holistic approach to safety designed to mitigate the spread of disease, from single purpose spaces to multi-purpose spaces that balance team and individual needs, from a singular focus on attracting talent to creating a sense of community and shared purpose, and shifting from fixed architecture and spaces to more fluid and flexible environments.^{xviii}

While the global employment situation in 2020-2021 was disruptive for all workers, research shows no population was hit harder than persons with disabilities. In the U.S., one in five workers with disabilities were dismissed from their jobs during the onset of the pandemic compared to one in seven of their peers without disabilities.^{xix} The long-term effects of the pandemic are expected to depress labor demand, increase levels of poverty, and exacerbate existing inequalities for persons with disabilities.^{xx} Given this information, the need for organizations to focus on inclusive workplaces has never been more critical.

While there is considerable work to be done in influencing widespread adoption of inclusive workplace culture, design and

technology, more organizations are taking positive steps forward. A 2021 report found that 16 organizations in the FTSE (Financial Times Stock Exchange) 100 have set targets for greater representation of persons with disabilities, and 37 have established employee resource groups (ERGs) or equivalents. While promising, the same report found that nearly 30% of the FTSE 100 are behind on digital accessibility standards.^{xxi} Additional signs of progress include the commitments made by 500 organizations to put disability inclusion on the agenda of their boards, take a purposeful action in support of greater representation, and promote the importance of these principles through The Valuable 500.

There are also signals of progress from the design and architecture industries. Model principles for ensuring workplaces are designed to meet the needs and expectations of persons with disabilities are becoming more prevalent.^{xxii, xxiii} The same can be said for increased recognition of the need for inclusive technology, in all aspects of society, to include workplaces following the pandemic. Reports issued by the International Labour Organization, Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT) and XR Access are three recent references that employers should use to ensure the digital tools and environments are inclusive for all.^{xxiv, xxv, xxvi}

This Blueprint was developed with a priority to include persons with disabilities in the post-pandemic workplaces of the future. Research on the evolving, post-pandemic workplace discussion reveals many opportunities for achieving this goal. While the longstanding barriers experienced by persons with disabilities must be acknowledged and factored into strategies to achieve progress, this Blueprint offers an aspirational vision of what could be. Progress towards a goal of inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces for all can only be achieved through purposeful action and collaboration across stakeholder groups.

Progress towards a goal of inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces for all can only be achieved through purposeful action and collaboration.

Global Survey Outcomes

A summary of a global survey conducted in 28 countries to collect insights about three core workplace principles - inclusive, safe and compelling.

Global Survey Outcomes

In the first half of 2021, G3ict and Steelcase developed and deployed a global survey to collect initial insights about the three core principles of the Blueprint for Inclusive Workplaces of the Future – inclusive, safe and compelling.

The survey sample included self-selected respondents reached through partner channels at the International Labour Organization (ILO), The Institute for Work & the Economy, Portulans Institute, Society for Human Resources Managers (SHRM), XR Access, the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA), WorkAbility International, Steelcase and G3ict broad social media outreach. While not all of the differences reported are statistically significant at conventional levels due to small numbers in subgroups, these data do provide an important perspective on and insights to core issues of workplace inclusion from a diverse range of trades, professional associations and intersectional perspectives. For additional detail on the survey, please visit the [G3ict website](#).

The survey questions were intended to provide focus on physical, emotional/psychological and technological preferences and needs related to the evolution of workplaces. After analysis, the survey results provided a shared baseline of information for project participants as they worked together to identify and understand the key concepts, stakeholders, their needs and contributions, and the interactions that will shape the future of inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces.

The survey was completed by 373 respondents from 28 countries across all global regions. Survey respondents represented diverse industry sectors (e.g., Professional/Business services, Technology, Education, Government, Healthcare, Telecommunications, Manufacturing, etc.). 19.5% of respondents identified as being a person with a disability. Twenty-four percent were born before 1965.

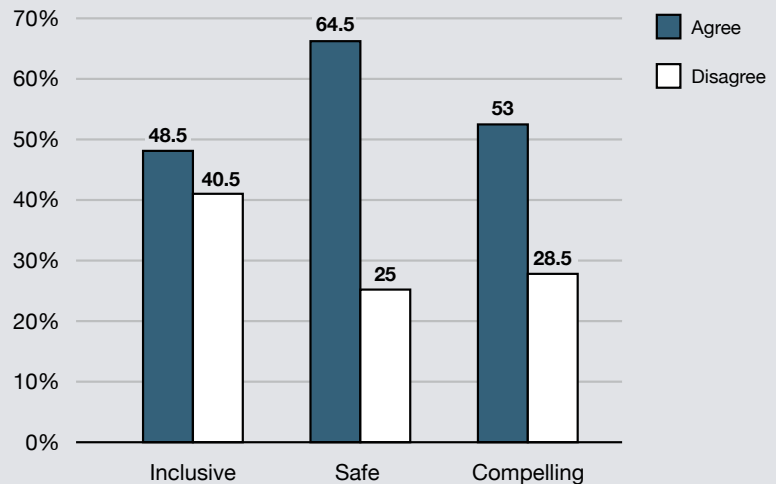
Global Survey Overview

28 Countries

19.5% identified as a person with a disability

Respondents were less sure their industry has a clear + shared understanding of an inclusive workplace.

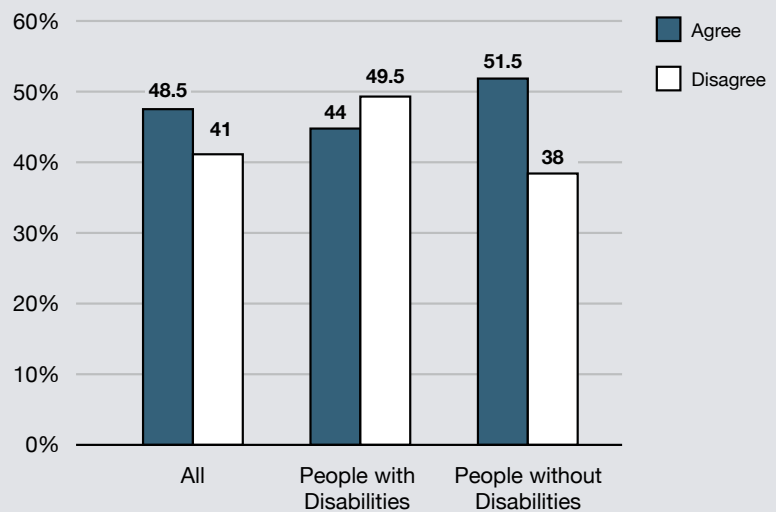
Survey Question: My industry has a clear and shared understanding of what is an inclusive, safe compelling workplace?



Survey respondents are fairly confident their industry has a clear and shared understanding of a safe workplace. They are less confident about a clear and shared understanding of a compelling workplace, and least likely to agree there is a clear and shared understanding of an inclusive workplace. Sixty-four percent say their industry has a clear understanding of a safe workplace versus 53% for a compelling workplace, and just 49% for an inclusive workplace.

Participants with disabilities are less sure their industry has a clear + shared understanding of what is an inclusive workplace.

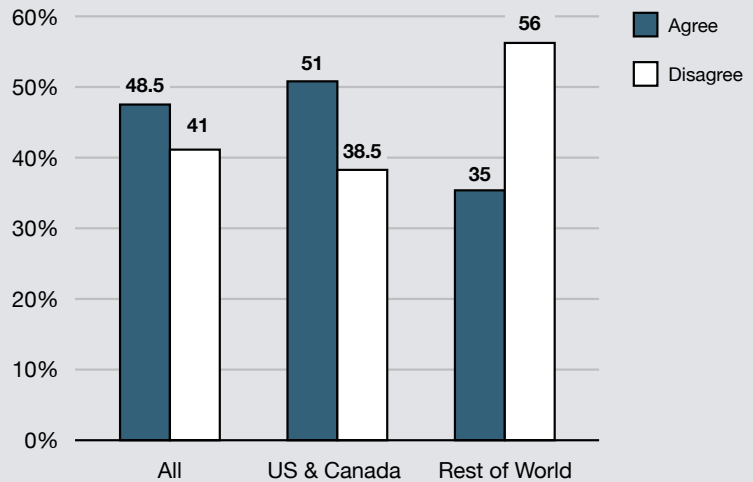
Survey Question: My industry has a clear and shared understanding of what is an inclusive workplace?



Respondents with disabilities are even less sure their industry has a clear and shared understanding of an inclusive workplace. Overall, 49% of all respondents say their industry has a clear understanding of an inclusive workplace versus just 44% of persons with disabilities and 51% of respondents without disabilities. Nearly half (49%) of respondents with disabilities say their industry does not have a clear understanding of an inclusive workplace, more than all the respondents and respondents without disabilities.

Participants in the US + Canada are more sure their industry has a clear + shared understanding of what is an inclusive workplace.

Survey Question: My industry has a clear and shared understanding of what is an inclusive workplace?



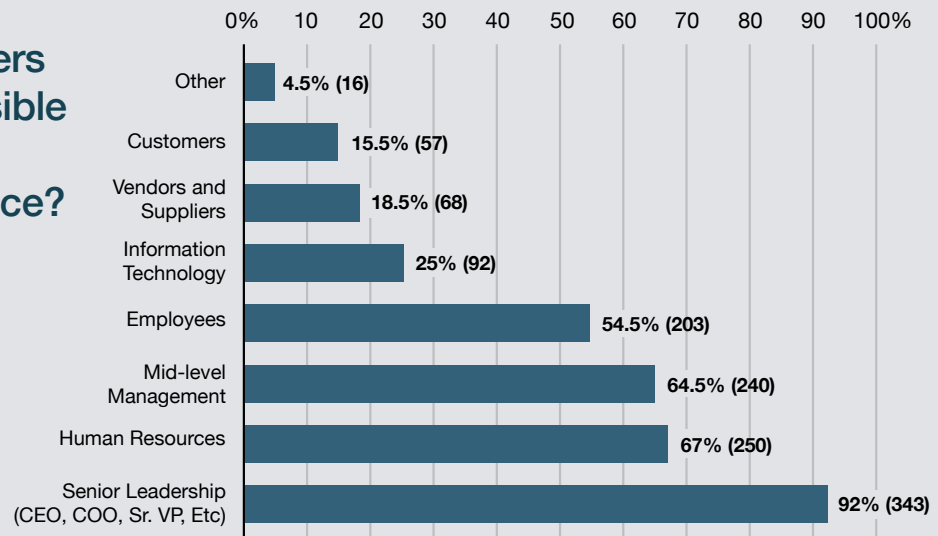
Respondents in the U.S. and Canada are more confident their industry has a clear and shared understanding of an inclusive workplace. Overall, 49% of all respondents say their industry has a clear understanding of an inclusive workplace versus 51% in the U.S. and Canada and 35% in the rest of the world. Fifty-six percent of respondents outside the U.S. and Canada say their industry does not have a clear understanding of an inclusive workplace.

	All Respondents	Respondents with Disabilities
What are the top three elements of an inclusive workplace?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representation + diversity across all functions and levels (61%) 2. Accessible products, technology + systems (45%) 3. Accessible physical space (45%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessible products, technology + systems (60%) 2. Accessible physical space (51%) 3. Representation + diversity across all functions and levels (44%)
What are the primary outcomes of an inclusive workplace?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased employee satisfaction (80%) 2. Increased innovation (65%) 3. Increased productivity – individual and team (53%) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased employee satisfaction (80%) 2. Increased productivity – individual and team (68%) 3. Improved products and services (65%)

Noteworthy: All respondents cite increased employee satisfaction as the primary outcome of an inclusive workplace. The two groups differ slightly on other top outcomes. Respondents with disabilities have a slightly different perspective on the top three essential elements.

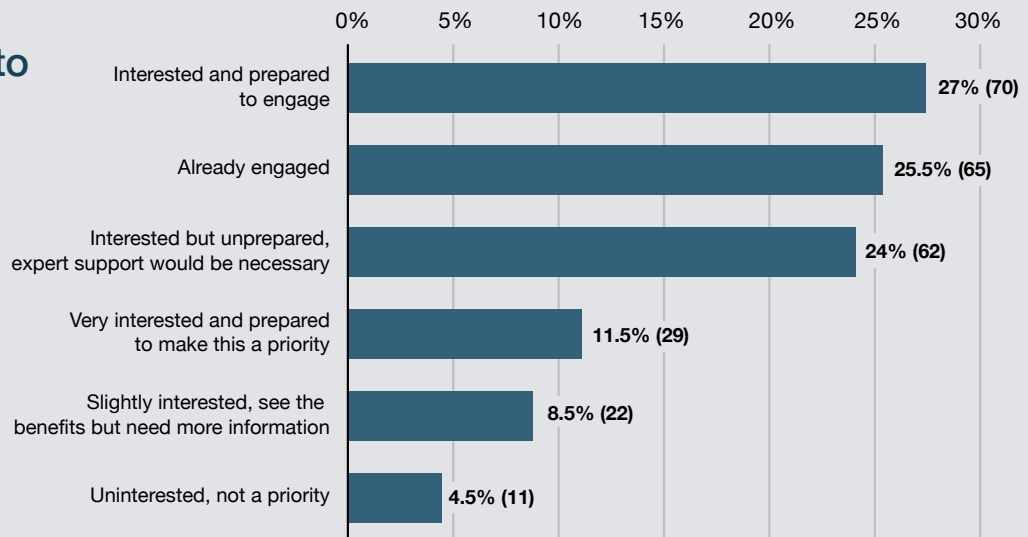
Which stakeholders are most responsible for creating an inclusive workplace?

Multiple answers allowed



There is strong consensus that senior leadership at organizations are most responsible for creating an inclusive workplace with a majority also citing a role for human resources, mid-level managers, and employees themselves.

Readiness to create an inclusive workplace



Looking forward, global survey respondents express a readiness to create more inclusive workplaces. Twenty-seven percent say they are interested and prepared to engage in creating a more inclusive workplace. A quarter are already engaged (even more among respondents with disabilities). Nearly a third say they are interested but need more information or support. Just four percent say they are uninterested and do not see creating an inclusive workplace as a priority.

Additional survey results are available at www.g3ict.org

Design Roundtables

Analysis of insights derived from industry experts provides concepts, stakeholders and interactions that contribute to an inclusive, safe and compelling workplace.

Human-Centered Design Roundtables

Human-centered design sessions were accomplished through virtual collaboration with industry experts from May-July 2021. Each event centered around specific design activities: concept mapping, stakeholder mapping and ecosystem mapping. The order of these activities created a progressively deeper understanding of the subject matter and fostered a community of practice.

The roundtables produced detailed sets of insights that were analyzed to arrive at summary lists of concepts, stakeholders and interactions that contribute to shaping inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces of the future. The outputs of each session are displayed graphically to demonstrate the dynamic relationships between concepts, stakeholders and ecosystem behaviors. These initial maps, their contents and the recommended actions for achieving progress are a starting point in developing a larger community of practice that will continue to advance this work.

The following sections provide a summary of each roundtable and the resulting outputs.

Summary of Principles and Concepts

Core Principles

Desired focus areas of future workplaces that enable all stakeholders to fully contribute.

- Inclusive
- Safe
- Compelling

Key Concepts

Key attributes impacting workplaces worldwide.

- Culture
- Design
- Technology
- Policies and Management

Summary of Stakeholders + Actions

Primary Stakeholders

These are the groups with significant influence over the creation of inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces, and who directly interact with the key concepts.

- People: Employees & Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)
- Business Functions: Human Resources (HR), Information Technology (IT), Legal, Mid-Level Management, Procurement and Senior Leadership
- External Beneficiaries: Customers & Community
- External Partners: Designers & Architects, Facility Managers, Occupational Health & Safety (OHS), Vendors and Suppliers

Recommended Actions

There are at least three recommended actions identified for each stakeholder. The actions are how the stakeholders should individually contribute and collaborate to create inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces of the future. Each action aligns with one or more of the core principles and key concepts. These associations demonstrate a real and achievable potential for each individual action to shape workplaces for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Concept Map

The first roundtable session of the project focused on a concept mapping activity. The purpose of the activity was to identify and categorize fundamental forces that impact how workplaces can be inclusive, safe and compelling. During the session, global experts and leaders were asked to share the most significant forces shaping future workplaces based on their individual industries or professional experience. The forces were documented and analyzed to arrive at a list of four attributes that relate to the core principles of the project.

Culture

Greater recognition and awareness of disability and intersectional identities in the workplace, including acquired disabilities which occur after birth, and the practices organizations must adopt to promote full inclusion.

Design

Examples include the tension between aesthetics, accessibility and the rights of all employees and the importance of inclusive design practices.

Technology

The need for co-designed technology implementations, particularly for emerging workplace technologies (e.g., Artificial Intelligence, Extended Reality, etc.) and new safety approaches supporting the return to in-person work models.

Policies + Management

Reconciling gaps between the physical, virtual and hybrid approaches to work and how the built and digital environments are managed to benefit all stakeholders.

The combination of the core principles and attributes resulted in a draft map to depict the relationship between each conceptual level (Figure 1). The concept map shows that persons with disabilities, as the focal point for inclusion, uniquely experience cultural, design, technological, and policy and management forces. The relationship between these attributes is central to understanding how the principles of inclusive, safe and compelling combine to shape workplaces of the future.

Each of the recommended actions identified in the Blueprint align with the concept mapping attributes. Many crossover multiple attributes. As an example, the recommended action for employees to inform the efforts of other stakeholder groups is directly related to workplace culture and design, the development and deployment of technology, and organizational policies and management decisions. Another example is the recommended action for IT professionals to evolve the state of their field by recognizing accessibility and usability as a human right. Through this action, IT reinforces a culture of inclusion and aligns resources, policies, and management tools and practices to the diverse needs of all stakeholders.

The concept mapping activity established an initial landscape of opportunities and challenges.

Figure 1: Concept Map



Stakeholder Map

The second expert roundtable input focused on stakeholder mapping. An initial list of stakeholder groups was identified through global survey responses and roundtable input. The list was then refined through roundtable discussions and a final round of analysis. Experts discussed each stakeholder group and identified:

- What they uniquely offer to create inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces
- What they require to fulfill their role; and
- Dependencies between groups

The result of this work is a stakeholder map (Figure 2) that organizes primary stakeholders by groups that represent their common roles and the contributions they can make to inclusive workplaces of the future.

In Figure 2, there are four concentric circles of stakeholder groupings. The innermost ring are individuals directly impacted by the workplace: employees and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) groups. The outer three rings are groups that provide resources that result in inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces. The second ring identifies business functions critical to achieving inclusive workplaces: HR, IT, legal, mid-level management, procurement and senior leadership. The third ring contains external beneficiaries that experience the outputs of inclusive workplaces: customers and the broader community. The fourth ring identifies external partners that contribute to how workplaces look, feel and function: designers and architects, facility managers, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), and vendors and suppliers. The final elements are the icons that show how resources flow from the outermost group toward the center, impacting the experience of employees, and how the lived experience of those in the workplace should inform the work of all other groups. This exchange creates a continuous feedback loop critical for achieving inclusive, safe and compelling outcomes.

The stakeholder mapping activity allowed the experts to identify and focus on the relationship between a short list of groups that have the most influence on whether and how a workplace is inclusive, safe and compelling.

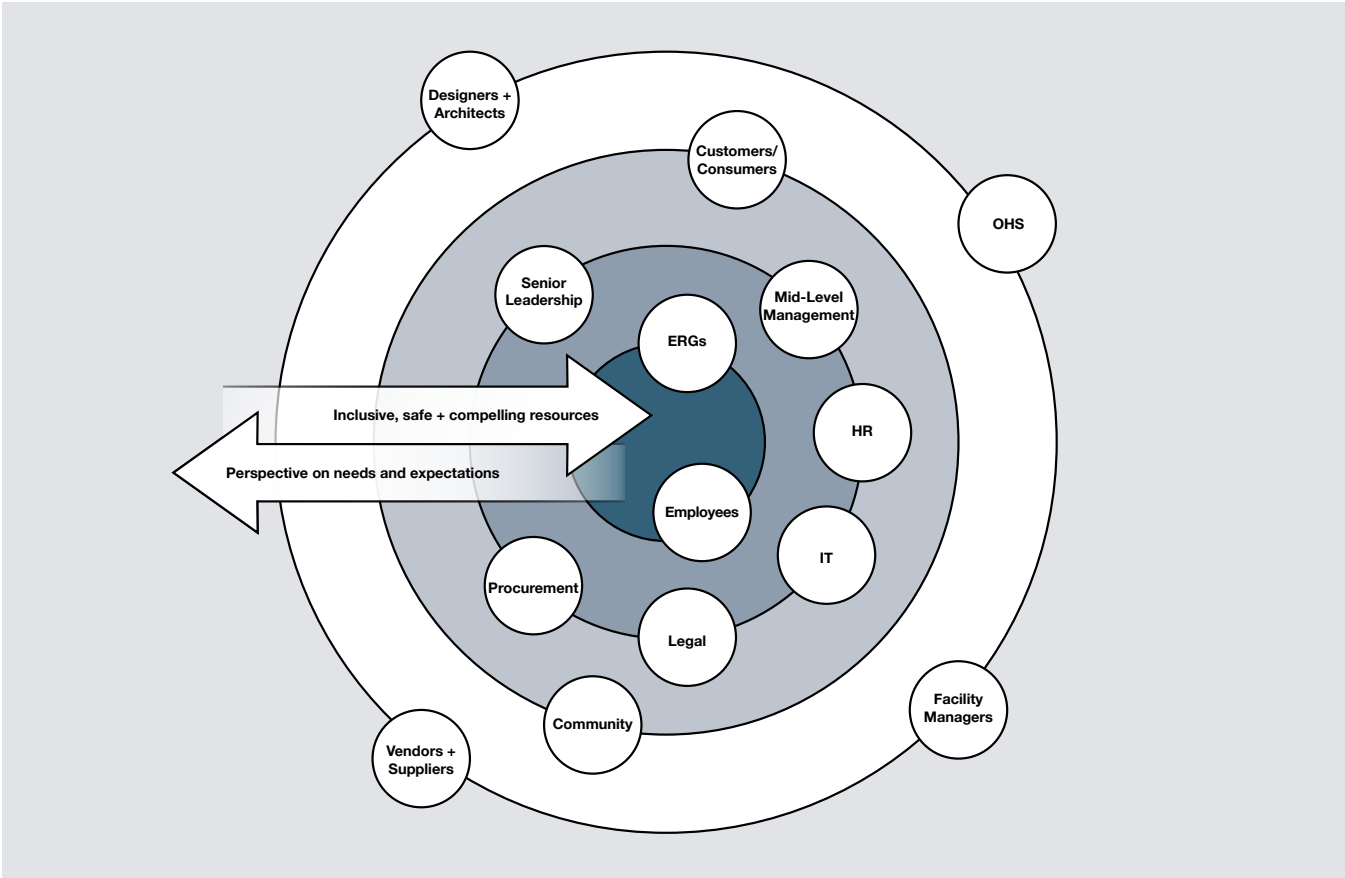


Figure 2: Stakeholder Map

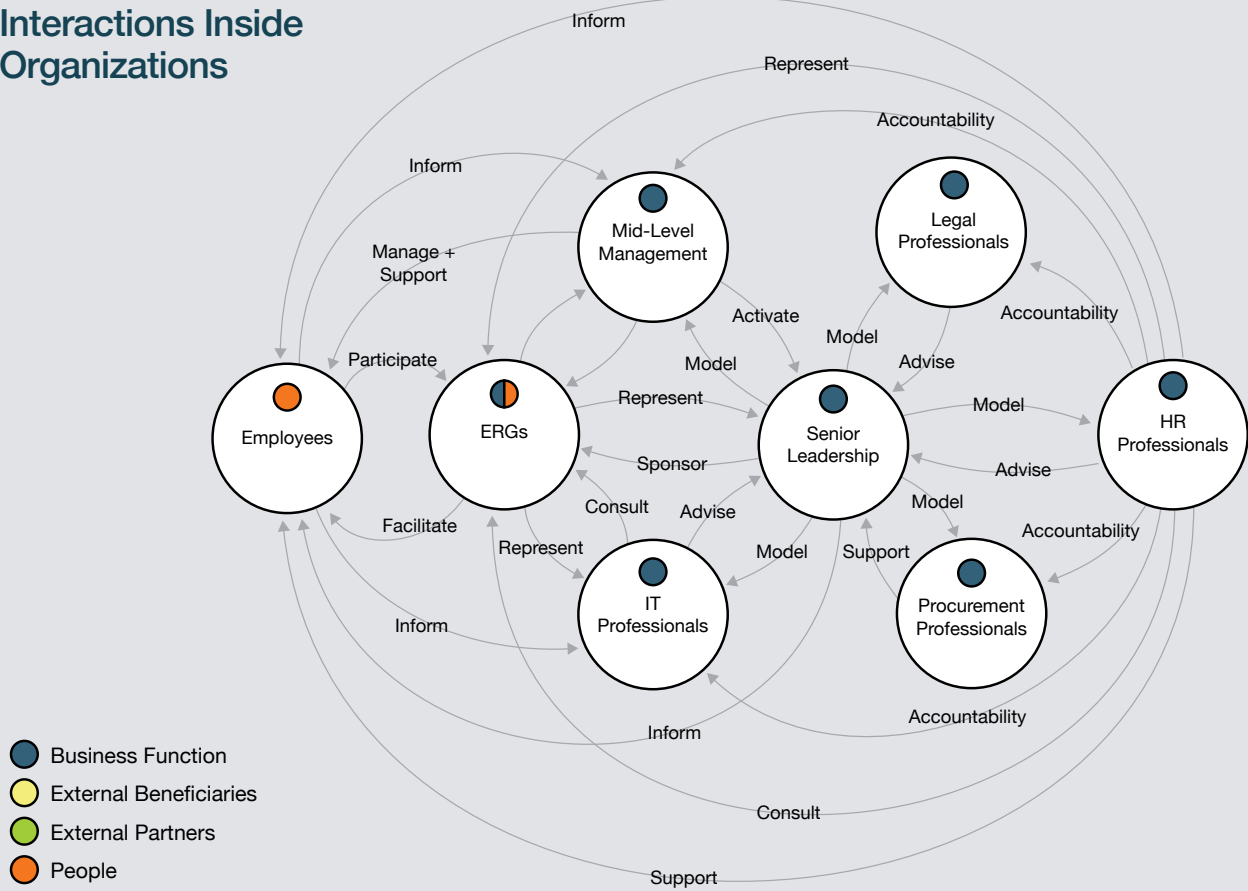
Ecosystem Map

The third expert roundtable focused on ecosystem mapping. The group of roundtable participants were asked to identify the most important actions each stakeholder group can take to shape inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces. Expert input was not constrained by the current role and practices of the stakeholder groups because the intent was to envision a future state. This allowed the experts to reflect on current best practices, behaviors they believe must change, and actions they think will have the greatest impact. Expert inputs were consolidated, analyzed for consistent themes, and then interpreted visually (Figure 3: Ecosystem Map).

Figure 3 depicts how the stakeholder groups relate to each other in the creation of inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces of the future. The stakeholder groupings are represented by colors, with orange for people, blue for business functions, yellow for external beneficiaries, and green for external partners. Each stakeholder is represented by a circular element, with looping connectors between each labeled with a primary action. The square elements on the ecosystem map depict where stakeholder groups cross over. The intersections occur between business functions and external beneficiaries, and business functions and external partners. They are displayed this way because the efforts of the whole organization, not just of one business function in isolation, to promote inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces influences external groups. The ecosystem map does not list every action each stakeholder could or should take. The recommended actions section of this Blueprint provides greater detail, with descriptions of each stakeholder and the interactions represented on the ecosystem map, a list of key actions identified by the roundtable experts, and examples of where such practices occur today.

The ecosystem mapping activity created a clear understanding of the behaviors of stakeholders in relation to each other and the context of the project. This understanding led to the identification of tangible, practical actions each stakeholder group can take to shape inclusive workplaces of the future.

Interactions Inside Organizations



Interactions Between Organizations + External Customers/Consumers

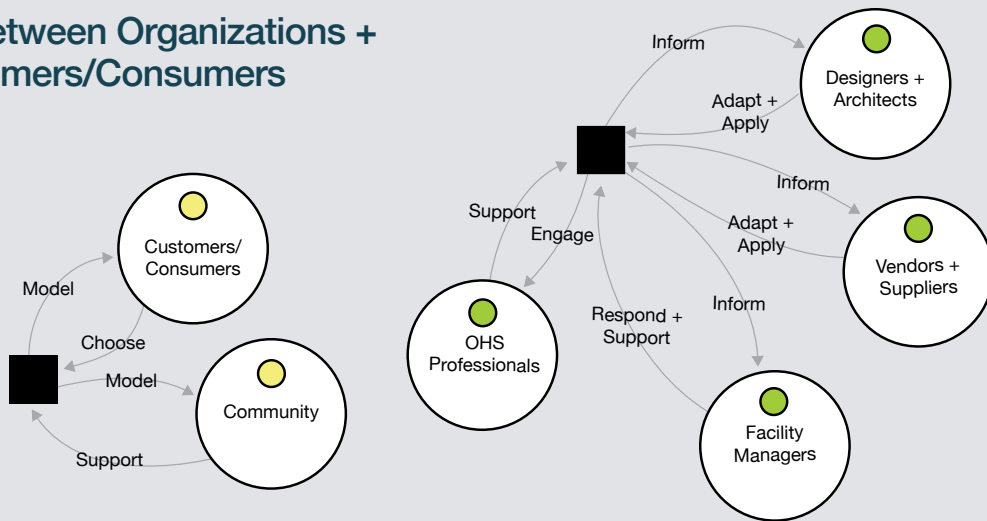


Figure 3: Ecosystem Map

Recommended Actions

Stakeholders have a responsibility to contribute and a right to have their needs met through the support of others. Recommended actions along with an account of each stakeholder and their interactions, support the achievement of inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces of the future.

Employees

Description

Individuals who work for an organization and interact with physical, digital and hybrid workplace environments. This project focused specifically on persons with disabilities with discussion about intersectional identities of disability, race, age, gender, etc. Despite this focus, it is important to recognize that workplace inclusion impacts all employees. Employees are critical stakeholders because their perspective ultimately decides whether a workplace is truly inclusive, safe and compelling.

Interactions

The primary interactions represented for employees in the ecosystem map are to inform the decisions of HR, IT, mid-level management and senior leaders based on the expectations, needs and lived experiences of persons with disabilities, and their participation in ERGs. Business functions are better able to support inclusive outcomes if they are informed, and the most valuable information comes directly from employees. Employee participation is required for ERGs to effectively act as a resource for advocacy and addressing barriers.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [World Economic Forum article](#) on creating a more inclusive environment through peer-to-peer support
- [Harvard Business Review article](#) and [Bentley University report](#) on allyship in the workplace
- [Steelcase article](#) on creating a great employee experience

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Encourage Choice + Control

With full acknowledgment of the importance of balancing individual, team and business needs, employees can shape their workplace by encouraging their employers to embrace giving people choice and control – over how, when and where they work to achieve commitments and deliver results. People are more engaged and productive when they are trusted and given the tools and spaces that help them do their best work, both alone and together.

Model Behaviors

Hold themselves, peers and managers accountable for creating a workplace environment that values all identities.

Participate

Take an active role in ERGs (both formal and informal) as founders, leaders, mentors and everyday contributors.

Inform

Provide insights on the lived experience of persons with disabilities and intersectional identities to HR, IT, mid-level management and senior leaders – directly and through ERGs.

Employee Research Groups (ERGs)

Description

Voluntary, employee-led groups that promote diversity and workplace inclusion – commonly led and comprised of individuals with a shared characteristic (e.g., age, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, etc.).^{xxvii} ERGs' role will continue to grow as society recognizes the importance of diversity to workplace culture and business objectives.

Interactions

ERGs can play a prominent role as facilitators for employees. ERGs primarily facilitate support for employees and represent employee perspectives to the business functions of senior leadership, mid-level management and IT. In turn, ERGs receive employee support in the form of membership, sponsorship from senior leadership, and a reliance from mid-level management and IT to consult and advise their efforts. Increasingly, employers have started to compensate leaders of ERGs for the important work they do.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [PurpleSpace report](#) on the impact of disability employee and resource groups/ networks
- [Disability:IN toolkit](#) and comprehensive resources for ERGs
- Medium Article from Sarah Cordivano: [“Understanding Employee Resource Groups: A Guide for Organizations”](#)
- Medium Article from Sarah Cordivano: [“Starting your Employee Resource Group: A Guide for Employees”](#)
- [Steelcase article](#) on an innovative approach to community impact

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Organize

Identify and codify standards and best practices of ERG engagement across the spectrum of design, culture, workplace technology and policies and management. Create a platform for dialogue on these issues to demonstrate the value of ERGs, meet the needs of employees, and support the actions of leadership. Impactful ERGs focus on the rights of individuals, above and beyond minimum standards of compliance.

Educate

ERGs can be a primary source for increasing awareness of the needs, expectations and cultural context of diverse groups in the workplace. ERGs do not just serve the interest of employees; they can improve every aspect of a company through peer-to-peer consultation and collaboration with other business functions. It could and should be the responsibility of ERGs to promote safe spaces for conversations on important and often sensitive topics, leading to beneficial outcomes for all.

Represent

Take on a more explicit and assertive role on the intersection of workplace culture, design, technology and policies and management to express the needs and expectations of diverse populations. This work could include creating an agenda to identify how ERGs can enable successful outcomes in a post-pandemic workplace by consulting on the likely interventions organizations will deploy and how they may cause unintended consequences for employees.

Senior Leaders

Description

Senior leaders, i.e. C-suite, establish a vision and goals, direct resources, and hold ultimate accountability for success.

Interactions

Senior leaders set the culture and allocate funding to achieve organizational goals. Their level of responsibility, decision-making authority and stewardship of resources, along with their commitment to workplace inclusion, are often the ultimate determinants of success or failure. Senior leaders model expected behaviors for HR, IT, legal, mid-level management and procurement. They rely on these groups to activate their vision and provide both advice and functional support. Senior leaders also have a responsibility to engage with employees and sponsor the groups organized to support team members.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [The Valuable 500](#): Organization leaders' inclusion commitments
- [International Labour Organization Global Business and Disability Network resources](#) for organizational leaders.
- [Dive: How Twitter sponsors ERGs](#)
- [Accenture: "Getting to Equal 2020: Disability Inclusion,"](#) eight factors to build more inclusive cultures
- Harvard Business Review: [Four Strategies for Building a Hybrid Workplace That Works](#)
- [Steelcase Global Report: Changing Expectations and the Future of Work](#)
- [Steelcase podcast on Ecosystems Leadership](#)

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Model Behaviors

Senior leaders should outwardly recognize and clearly communicate the rights of all employees and push beyond regulatory compliance.

Prioritize Inclusion

This can be accomplished through policies and management priorities that ensure the principle of inclusion is on the agenda for the organization's board of directors, taking executive action to support inclusion for all employees (e.g., organizational performance goals, creating a leadership position that is responsible for the fulfillment of such commitments, etc.), and communicating their vision for the workplace of the future.

Sponsor + Recognize

Engaged senior leaders create opportunities for employees and ERGs to give direct input and they actively sponsor initiatives that support inclusion in the workplace. One such approach is to reward employees and those who volunteer to lead representational groups for their efforts to incentivize greater participation.

Measure Outcomes

Building resiliency and discipline into an approach that prioritizes the inclusive, safe and compelling aspects of a workplace requires specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) metrics for success. Senior leaders should incorporate such measures in their organizational scorecards and report outcomes to stakeholder groups to maintain visibility and push for progress.

Mid-level Managers

Description

Mid-level managers are the connection point between senior leaders, team and line managers, and employees. Mid-level managers carry the responsibility for advancing a company's vision and goals by coordinating resources, support, and activities of the workforce.

Interactions

The primary interactions represented for mid-level managers in the ecosystem map are the activation of direction (e.g., vision and goals) from senior leaders, managing and supporting employees and consulting with employees and ERGs to gain perspective on the needs and expectations of those with diverse, lived experiences. Mid-level managers rely on senior leaders to model behaviors that promote inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces, communication with employees and ERGs, and the accountability provided by HR.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [Cornell University Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability toolkit](#) for managers.
- Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN): [Inclusion@Work: A Framework for Building a Disability-Inclusive Organization](#)
- [Steelcase article](#) on Managing Change in the Wake of the Pandemic
- Steelcase white paper: [Organizational Culture: Managing Your Culture by Design Rather Than Default](#)

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Activate

Carry out the direction originating from the role of senior leaders. Mid-level managers must establish functional standards for incorporating the principles of an inclusive, safe and compelling workplace throughout their programs.

Illuminate

Bring to light successes and challenges for senior leaders to maintain transparency and push for quick resolution of barriers to achieving goals supportive of inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces.

Model Behaviors

Create principles specific to team and front-line managers with practical methods for recognizing, promoting and supporting the experience of persons with disabilities. Mid-level managers must inform up to senior leadership, laterally with peers, and down to those they direct about cultural expectations that create inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces.

HR Professionals

Description

HR professionals play an important, strategic role in any workplace by developing a deep understanding of changing labor market dynamics, new business thinking, methods for hiring and retaining the right people, and providing ethical and cultural leadership across an organization.^{xxviii} Strong, strategic HR leadership shapes how culture, design, technology and policies and management converge to support employees and maximize organizational success.

Interactions

HR professionals primarily support employees and consult with ERGs to gain necessary perspective. They also advise senior leaders and manage accountability for all other business functions. The ecosystem map demonstrates the central role HR professionals play in not only maintaining compliance with laws and internal policies, but to also elevate awareness of the rights, needs and expectations of employees through their direct input and the support of ERGs. The accountability HR professionals place on business functions creates a vital feedback loop.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [Employing Abilities @Work training resources](#) by the SHRM Foundation and Workplace Initiative by Understood
- [Steelcase Global Report: Engagement and the Global Workplace](#)
- [Steelcase: HR Advocates Help Create the Right Work Space](#)

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Oversee Accountability

HR professionals ensure the fidelity of business practices that support, enhance, and maximize the employee experience in a way that drives continuous improvement. This comes through establishing and overseeing standards applied uniformly across all business functions. HR professionals must measure and assess outcomes that are based in both compliance as well as indicators of accessibility, engagement, equity, and inclusion.

Embrace

HR professionals must embrace the importance and changing landscape of their role in a post-pandemic environment. This includes actively identifying, sharing, and putting into practice models of success from organizations that have high levels of employee engagement and satisfaction that contribute to workplace inclusion. This can come through collaborations between industry leaders (e.g., SHRM, Valuable 500, Disability:In, ILO GBDN, etc.). HR professionals must reinforce a new vision for a compelling workplace where the foundation is inclusion.

Advise

Advise leadership on the evolving state of HR policies and practices including identifying and promoting investment in workplace training models that employ emerging technologies, are fully accessible, and provide safe spaces for learning and applying newly-acquired knowledge. This should include skills around diversity, inclusion, and equity as well as simulating hard skills and tasks.

IT Professionals

Description

The prevalence of technology in daily life, and all aspects of organizational performance, requires IT professionals to be at the forefront of understanding and planning for change while maintaining a steadfast commitment to accessibility, usability and equity for all employees. IT professionals act as stewards of resources and insights on how, when, where and why technology can maximize the positive experiences of employees and support organizational goals.

Interactions

IT professionals primarily consult with employees and ERGs to receive insights on the needs and expectations of those with diverse, lived experiences. They also advise senior leaders on emerging practices, necessary investments and strategies to advance organizational goals through technology.

For inclusive workplaces of the future, IT professionals should rely on the input of employees and ERGs to make informed decisions on technology acquisitions and policies, look to senior leaders to model behaviors that engender inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces and be held accountable by HR.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [G3ict Guide to Implementing Priority ICT Accessibility Standards](#)
- [PEAT Digital Accessibility Toolkits](#)
- Steelcase: [Transforming IT: An Agile Case Study](#)
- Steelcase: [Hybrid Collaboration: Three Key Concepts to Connect In-Office and Remote Teams](#)

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Anticipate

IT professionals should proactively establish organizational standards, policies and processes that recognize the needs and expectations of diverse, intersectional identities of age, disability, ethnicity, gender and race. This is especially important given the hybridization of work and the integration of more complex technologies, such as artificial intelligence and the internet of things, that are infusing digital capabilities into the built environment.

Evolve

Look first to matters of accessibility, usability and equity as a right-based framework for the application of technology. IT professionals should set expectations and measurable goals for professionalization based on global standards (e.g., WCAG, Section 508 and EN301548) that require forethought on the design and deployment of technologies. For emerging technologies, organizations should follow the development of new standards – such as those for the immersive web – that will build upon existing accessibility standards.

Advise

Advise organizational leadership on IT strategies with a rights-based orientation, geared towards the experience of all employees. This includes strategic foresight of phased deployments of technology that continuously raise the bar for accessibility, usability and equity. IT professionals should influence a mindset of inclusive co-design, modeled through the application of technology while also extending to all policies, processes and procedures.

Procurement Professionals

Description

The role of procurement professionals within an organization is to manage the process of acquiring resources to meet organizational goals. In the context of workplaces of the future it also includes the establishment of standards and measures of accountability that support inclusion. Procurement professionals serve as key advisors to other business functions to ensure vendors (and their supply chains) align with organizational values, and that any goods or services acquired meet accessibility standards.

Stakeholder Interactions

In the ecosystem map, procurement professionals support senior leaders on decision-making, processes and standards, and financial stewardship. Procurement professionals rely on senior leaders and business decision-makers to model behaviors that reinforce the importance of inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces. HR supports procurement professionals through standards and processes that create accountability across the organization, in support of employees.

Bright Spots + Examples

- G3ict's [Buy Accessible Portal](#) with procurement resources
- G3ict's [9 steps for procuring accessible technology](#)
- PEAT's [BuyIT Toolkit: Your guide to purchasing accessible technology](#)
- Steelcase: [How Craft, Data and Robotics Are Reshaping Quality](#)

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Establish

Establish standard language in vendor agreements that promotes accessibility, inclusion and equity in the design, deployment and application of acquired resources. Vendor agreements must be aligned with organizational priorities for inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces. Agreements must also be structured to allow an organization to respond to the needs of employees in a timely, efficient manner (e.g., lead time for workplace accommodations sourced from vendors).

Uphold

Uphold the mandate to prioritize the need, and right to access, for reasonable accommodations (e.g., assistive technology) above cost. Procurement must step outside of the inherent conflict between their typical charge to reduce costs if it comes at the expense of the needs of employees with disabilities.

Advise

Advise senior leaders on procurement strategies with a rights-based orientation, geared towards the experience of all employees. Such strategies must inform standards applied to identifying, selecting, and evaluating the performance of vendors to ensure harmony with organizational priorities of inclusion.

Legal Professionals

Description

Workplaces that are inclusive, safe and compelling cannot be achieved without a clear understanding of the legal landscape that shapes what each of those principles mean in practice and the legal function has become more important as a result of the pandemic.^{xxx} Legal professionals are key advisors on the growth and use of digital collaboration tools and associated risks, the balance between wellness/safety and productivity, reasonable flexibility in organizational practices, and how each relates to equity for all employees.^{xxx}

Interactions

The legal function primarily advises senior leadership on changing legal dynamics and requirements related to workplace inclusion and safety and how they impact employee and employer relations, the work of other business functions, and interactions with external parties. Legal also looks to senior leadership to model behaviors that engender inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces, and is held accountable by HR.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [General Council Legal 500 Diversity toolkit](#)
- [American Bar Association toolkits](#)
- [K&L Gates Hub series](#) diversity best practices, surpassing regulatory requirements
- [Steelcase: One of the world's most admired companies and the Corporate Equality Index](#)

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Engage

Engage proactively on matters of workplace inclusion and accessibility. The legal function is a critical source of information on trends associated with human and civil rights in the workplace. Legal professionals should support the development of centralized accommodation systems in organizations and assist HR with establishing affirmative hiring practices with a focus on persons with disabilities.

Bridge

Bridge the gap between regulatory compliance and authentic inclusion. Legal professionals can enable organizations to think beyond typical risk mitigation strategies that often create barriers to workplace diversity, especially when it comes to representation of persons with disabilities. Legal professionals should look to best practices emerging from within the disability, government and international development communities.

Advise

Advise senior leadership on legal strategies with a rights-based orientation, geared toward all employees. Allow organizations to think beyond established utilization goals and hiring quotas that often rely on regulatory compliance and penalties as motivators for action. Instead, advise organizational leaders on the importance of supporting rights-based initiatives, staying current with societal trends that promote intersectionality, and implementing policies that result in inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces for all.

Customers / Consumers

Description

Customers/ consumers represent any individual or group that interacts with and purchases or uses the goods and services of a company or organization. Apart from employees, customers/ consumers provide the most important insights on the value an organization creates. Because of their influential role, customers/ consumers directly impact the policies, standards and mindset an organization adopts. An organization should establish a continuous feedback loop with their customers/ consumers to maintain a pulse on demand, expectations and satisfaction.

Interactions

The primary interaction represented for customers/consumers in the ecosystem map is their responsibility to choose to support organizations that embrace the principles of inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces. Organizations must therefore model such behaviors to attract customers/ consumers and, in some cases, help to positively influence how much value they place on inclusion, safety and employee engagement when making decisions.

Bright Spots + Examples

- Steelcase example of how listening to customers influenced products and services: [Beautifully Easy](#)
- IIDA's vice president and CEO, Cheryl Durst on [Designing with a World View](#)
- [Disability Equality Index \(DEI\)](#) developed by Disability:In
- [Design Delight from Disability 2020 Global Economics of Disability report](#) by Return on Disability

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Educate

Educate themselves on the values of organizations they choose to buy from. Well-informed customers/consumers are better positioned to set expectations and support organizations that are upholding the highest standards for inclusion.

Demand

Demand that organizations establish high standards for inclusion, accessibility, and engagement and satisfaction for all employees. Customers/consumers should set an expectation for organizations to quantify and report information on these areas and treat them as seriously as financial performance.

Choose

Use their buying power to reinforce and incentive the behavior of organizations that create inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces, and extend those principles to their products, services and beneficiary engagement.

Community

Description

For this Blueprint, the community has two meanings. The first is broad and includes all of the people, business entities, schools, nonprofits and public entities co-located with organizations. The second meaning is the disability community, which includes persons with disabilities, their family members and caregivers, and Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs). Organizations that create inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces set an example for their communities, and create economic and social value. They also generate opportunities for persons with disabilities and address barriers to employment, economic mobility and community engagement. Organizations have the opportunity and responsibility to serve the community at large as well as the disability community.

Interactions

The community supports organizations that are role models for inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces. Organizations strongly committed to inclusion set an example for others to follow, creating positive effects for persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers, and other individuals, businesses, and public institutions.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [DePaul University's tool kit](#) for Asset Based Community Development
- Steelcase: [The Civic 50](#) shines a light on community-minded companies

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Demand

Demand organizations uphold high standards for creating inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces. Like customers/consumers, the community can hold organizations accountable for contributing both social and economic value.

Contribute

Actively reinforce the need for, and benefits of, asset-based community development. This includes working alongside organizations to combine the skills of local residents (including persons with disabilities), the benefits of structured and informal associations, and the resources of the public sector.

Support

Support the success of inclusive workplaces of the future by purchasing their products and services, promoting employment opportunities they offer, and seeking opportunities for partnerships. Community support will incentive organizations to maintain their commitment to inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces, and their authentic focus on employment persons with disabilities.

Designers + Architects

Description

Designers and architects apply their creativity, skill and experience to shape the built environment. Increasingly, they must consider the workplace adapts to changing social norms, business practices and the prominent role of technology. Designers and architects must find harmony between aesthetics, stakeholder demands and an intentional focus on accessibility, usability and inclusion for all employees, to include those with disabilities.

Interactions

Designers and architects adopt and apply principles of inclusion to support the achievement of inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces for all employees. They rely on standards, regulations and the preferences of their clients, in this case organizations, to inform the principles for their industries. Organizations arrive at these standards through direct input from employees and ERGs. Ultimately, there must be a clear linkage between the lived experience and expectations of employees, including those with disabilities, and the outcomes of the creative design process.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [American Institute of Architects framework](#) for design excellence and [guides](#) for equitable practice
- Steelcase: [Collaboration in the Hybrid Workplace](#): Designing spaces to support in-office and remote collaboration
- Steelcase: [Work Better](#) and [Designing a Better Work Experience](#)

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Learn

Learn about the needs and expectations of diverse employee groups through explicit outreach and inclusion actions. These actions must occur at multiple points. Make such outreach and inclusion an explicit part of any industry guides and standards. Designers and architects must also work alongside groups, such as the disability community, to develop practices that go beyond general awareness and code compliance building to a recognition of rights.

Adopt and Apply

Adopt and apply what they learn to the direction received from clients, and to shaping the direction of the industry. A direct reflection of progress is the degree to which matters of accessibility, usability, and inclusion receive a higher priority than design aesthetics. Designers and architects must establish more rigorous approaches to balancing overall human wellness, functional application, artistic beauty and the potential for unintended consequences for people in physical and remote spaces.

Inform

Inform the decision making of their clients based on learnings and evolving design practices that consider the lived experience of all employees. The industries must create guides and best practices for positively influencing their primary stakeholders, with consideration for the practical business case for inclusive spaces.

Facilities Managers

Description

Facility managers collaborate with stakeholders to organize, maintain and improve the built environment to meet the needs of the organization and staff. They work with HR, occupational health and safety, risk management and finance professionals to provision physical accommodations, establish protocols for workplace safety, and install, adjust or replace building systems. Their support directly influences morale, operational costs, risk mitigation, the incorporation of technology, security and the environmental impact of an organization.^{xxxix}

Interactions

The support for inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces provided by facility managers is informed by stakeholders within the organization, industry best practices, legal and regulatory standards and any changes in guidance for workplace safety protocols. Facility managers collaborate with fire and police departments, city inspectors and planning departments, utility companies, public works and neighboring facility managers.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [International Facilities Management Association \(IFMA\) Foundation Pandemic Manual](#) and book *Work on the Move 3*
- Steelcase: [Four Macro Shifts Organizations Need to Address](#)
- [International Facility Management and CISCO presentation](#) on Creating the Next-Gen Collaborative Work Environment

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Adapt

Adapt the mindset of the facility management industry to prioritize the accessibility, usability, and inclusion priorities of organizations. This includes establishing industry practices where resources associated with the accommodation and support needs of persons with disabilities is at the forefront of planning, rather than an afterthought or a means to avoid compliance risks.

Think Ahead

Think ahead to arrive at strategies, performance standards, and practical guidance to improve the accessibility and usability of their property portfolio. The industry must embrace lifecycle thinking and establish practices where facility investments are evaluated and scheduled to ensure they leave the built environment more accessible and usable.

Respond + Support

Respond to and support the goals and values of organizations relative to inclusion, safety, and employee engagement and satisfaction. This depends on open communication and collaboration on topics such as organizational risk management, budgets, and establishing and maintaining an inclusive culture. In workplaces of the future, the role of facility managers extends to remote and hybrid environments through the provision of resources (e.g., desks, chairs, lighting, etc.) and supporting interoperability of organizational systems.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

Description

Occupational health and safety (OHS) encompass laws, standards and practices focused on all workplace stakeholders.^{xxxii} The role of OHS has evolved during the pandemic and covers a range of topics including physical, psychosocial, occupational diseases and accidents, compensation and the science of ergonomics. OHS must now consider how to assess and prevent risks across physical and remote settings.

Interactions

To provide support, OHS must be engaged by HR, enterprise risk management teams, real estate and facilities professionals. Along with creating normative standards and working with policymakers and regulators, OHS relies on the perspective of employees to ensure workplaces are inclusive, safe and compelling. OHS relies on employee perspectives, leadership commitment, dedicated budget and workplace champions to ensure inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces.

Bright Spots + Examples

- [International Labour Organization guidelines](#) on occupational safety and health management systems
- [International Labour Organization guide to managing psychosocial risks during the pandemic](#)
- [International Labour Organization report on safety and health at the future of work expo](#)
- Steelcase: [A Systemic Approach to a Safer Workplace](#) and [Wellbeing: A Bottom Line Issue](#)

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Shift

Shift the approach of their industry away from a medicalized perspective of persons with disabilities, and towards a social and rights-based orientation. OHS must adapt methods for assessing and addressing risks in response to environmental conditions, the rise of flexible and hybrid work arrangements, and a growing recognition of the needs of diverse groups, including persons with disabilities.

Adopt

Adopt new approaches that integrate emerging technologies to better service the health and safety needs of employees, leading to a more compelling workplace environment. This includes establishing industry practices for supporting informed, personal decision making within evolving workplace environments, and the resulting changes for defining reasonable workplace adjustments. This adoption will require investment and training.

Support

Support organizational needs in a nimble way to assess, mitigate, and respond to risks. The support OHS provides to organizations should be informed by employees, including persons with disabilities, through direct contact, or facilitated by ERGs and union representatives where appropriate. Effective OHS practices within an organization requires collaboration, management commitment and funding.

Vendors + Suppliers

Description

Vendors and suppliers are external partners that provide essential goods and services to an organization. Vendors and suppliers also contribute to an organization's ability to promote inclusion in the workplace and throughout the external value chain. An organization cannot authentically endorse workplace inclusion if its external partners are not adhering to policies and practices that support the rights of persons with disabilities.

Interactions

The primary action depicted for vendors and suppliers in the ecosystem map is to adopt and apply the goals expressed by their organizational partners when providing goods and services. In turn, vendors and suppliers rely on organizational partners to provide clear direction on expectations through documented agreements and direct engagement. This includes statements about accessibility and usability of goods and services and operational practices that do not intentionally or unknowingly infringe on the rights of others.

Bright Spots + Examples

- Steelcase: An example of collective action toward more sustainable practices ([Collectively Stepping Up to Decarbonize](#))
- [G3ict inclusive procurement toolkit](#) for engaging vendors

Recommended Actions for Inclusive, Safe + Compelling Workplaces

Engage

Engage with organizational partners to gain a clear understanding of goals associated with inclusive, safe and compelling workplaces. Vendors and suppliers should recognize how their partners set a tone for operational practices that go beyond regulatory compliance and actively support the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Adopt + Apply

Adopt and apply the expectations and requirements of organizational partners to improve business practices, influence their own value chains, and contribute to greater inclusion. Practical action that vendors and suppliers can take is to flow down accessibility, usability, inclusive co-design and adherence to practices that promote the rights of persons with disabilities throughout their value chains.

Advise

Advise organizational partners on proactive steps that can be taken to increase the inclusivity of workplaces. This includes strategic foresight about industry trends that enables better planning of acquisitions and incremental improvements for existing goods and services. Each improvement should take another step toward goals of inclusion.

Conclusion + Call to Action

G3ict and Steelcase are committed to build on this collaborative effort. We invite you to move forward with us by joining our Inclusive Workplaces Taskforce.

Moving Forward

This Blueprint describes a comprehensive set of relationships, roles and activities that are critical to creating and supporting inclusive workplaces. G3ict and Steelcase are committed to build on this collaborative effort and move forward together with other leaders and organizations that share an interest in increasing inclusion in the workplace.

As a next step, Steelcase and G3ict, through both its Global Policy Center and International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP), have convened an Inclusive Workplaces Taskforce to explore and define how a global community of committed organizations and individuals might, together, drive greater inclusion of persons with disabilities in places of work around the world.

If you are interested in a community of like-minded individuals and organizations and would like to share good practices, information and networks – please move forward with us by visiting us [online here](#).

About the Partner Organizations

G3ict

G3ict – the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies – is an advocacy initiative launched in December 2006, in cooperation with the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at UN DESA. Its mission is to facilitate and support the implementation of the dispositions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) promoting digital accessibility and Assistive Technologies. Participating organizations include industry, academia, the public sector, and organizations representing persons with disabilities. G3ict promotes good practices in digital accessibility policies and programs and provides tools for advocates around the world, including its Digital Accessibility Rights Evaluation Index (DARE Index) designed to benchmark countries' progress. Through its division IAAP, the International Association of Accessibility Professionals, G3ict offers professional development resources and certification to more than 2,000 members in 46 countries. Since 2011, G3ict has organized the M-Enabling Summit in cooperation with E.J. Krause and Associates which promotes innovation in accessible technologies and environments. For more information, please visit www.g3ict.org.

Steelcase Inc.

Organizations around the world trust Steelcase to help them create places that help people work better, be inspired and accomplish more. The company designs, manufactures and partners with other leading organizations to provide architecture, furniture, and technology solutions – accessible through a network of channels, including over 800 Steelcase dealer locations. Steelcase is a global, industry-leading and publicly traded company with fiscal year 2021 revenue of \$2.6 billion. For more information, visit www.steelcase.com.

Footnotes

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