



White Paper

# The Inclusive Culture Pyramid

## Implementing CQ as an EDI/DEI Solution in Organisations

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## Executive Summary

Exhaustive research clearly confirms that having a **mix of people** in an organisation is not enough to create better outcomes, you need an **inclusive culture** too; and the benefits of having both are tangible:

- **Inclusive leaders** make employees feel 84% more motivated (BITC, 2014)
- Organisations with **inclusive cultures** are:
  - eight times more likely to have overall better business outcomes (Bersin by Deloitte, 2017)
  - six times more likely to be innovative (ibid)
  - twice as likely to meet or exceed financial targets (ibid)
  - three times as likely to be high performing (ibid), etc.

Implementing Cultural Intelligence (CQ) into an organisation, to drive effective diversity and inclusion (D&I) outcomes, is straightforward to describe:

First, we build a solid foundation where CQ is the stepping stone to an intersectional approach to leading inclusion and effectively managing diversity. CQ serves as a mental model, for individuals and teams – starting with the most senior leadership – to ultimately inform all actions in an organisation,

Concurrently, to create equitable outcomes, the inclusive approach needs to be embedded as a change strategy into the organisation. McKinsey identifies four cornerstones as the basis of change: fostering understanding and conviction, reinforcing changes through formal mechanisms, developing talent and skills, and role modelling. McKinsey research suggests that you're eight times more likely to implement change successfully with all four cornerstones in use, than if you try just one.

To bring about sustained and sustainable inclusive change, you need to implement this new way of thinking and working across all four areas of the business: 1) how you attract people; 2) how you treat and progress your staff; 3) how you create the services and products of your business; and 4) how you attract and treat your users/customers/audience/members.

It's straightforward to describe, but it takes time, effort, and resources to implement. Nevertheless, this is a journey worth taking.

## Introduction

*By Marsha Ramroop, Director of Inclusion & Diversity, RIBA*

People come in a glorious variety, and a working environment which is inclusive of this diversity promotes high engagement, productivity, profitability, and innovation.<sup>1</sup>

Being inclusive of variety, difference, and diversity is not always straightforward. Instead, it requires special leadership skills and an understanding of people and perspectives beyond your own experience and realm.

We live and work in an increasingly globalised and multi-cultural world.<sup>2</sup> The barriers around what's acceptable and familiar are constantly being broken down. Getting to grips with how to lead and manage others who have different views, values, experiences, lifestyles, and approaches is key to being successful.

The Global and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) study in 2014, examined leaders and followers across 62 countries to determine similarities and differences in what followers want from their leaders.<sup>3</sup> When asked, followers had some agreement in what they did and didn't want in terms of negative (e.g. dictatorial, ruthlessness, egocentric, irritable) and positive attributes (e.g. trustworthiness, dependable, decisive, honest), but the way these adjectives were described when manifested in the individual still varied considerably. For example, how I determine 'trustworthiness' may be different to you. 'Irritability' may be acceptable in some circumstances, and you may be more tolerant or sympathetic to it than others.

So, how do you navigate these nuances?

## Inclusive Culture Pyramid<sup>®</sup>

The Inclusive Culture Pyramid<sup>®</sup> is a paradigm of my own design which overlays four different ideas: Cultural Intelligence (CQ<sup>®</sup>), The McKinsey Influence Model of Change, the levels at which inclusion needs to be implemented, and the four areas of an organisation, as I have identified them.

The purpose of the Inclusive Culture Pyramid<sup>®</sup> is to describe the strategic process required to embed inclusion in any organisation.

## Cultural Intelligence (CQ<sup>®</sup>)

Cultural Intelligence (CQ<sup>®</sup>) is the foundational principle and framework of capabilities required to be inclusive. CQ<sup>®</sup> is the capability to work and relate effectively with people who are different from you; it can be measured – a quotient, hence the 'Q' – and it can be improved.<sup>4</sup>

CQ<sup>®</sup> is broken down into four key competencies, which in turn are broken down into 13 sub-categories, each identified in order to help people pinpoint their CQ strengths and the capabilities they need to improve.



Figure 6.1: The four CQ® competencies are Drive, Knowledge, Action and Strategy<sup>5</sup>

The four key competences:

- **CQ Drive** - the curiosity and motivation needed to work well with others.  
 Subcategories: Intrinsic motivators, extrinsic motivators, self-efficacy  
 You're more likely to be effective at working and relating with others who are different from you, if you want to be.
- **CQ Knowledge** - understanding the kinds of differences that describe one group as they differ from another, without resorting to stereotyping specific cultures.  
 Subcategories: Leadership, Values & Norms, Socio-Linguistics, Business  
 You're more likely to be effective at working and relating with others if you are cognisant of differing values.
- **CQ Strategy** – thinking about thinking and planning strategically in light of cultural differences.  
 Subcategories: Checking, Planning, Self-awareness  
 You're more likely to be effective at working and relating with others if you know and understand yourself and check your assumptions, and think about what you're thinking about, using structure and procedures to mitigate unconscious bias.
- **CQ Action** – adapting behaviour to fit the situation.  
 Subcategories: Verbal communication, Non-verbal Communication, Speech Acts  
 You're more likely to be effective at working and relating with others if you are adaptable in your behaviours, but remaining authentic in yourself.

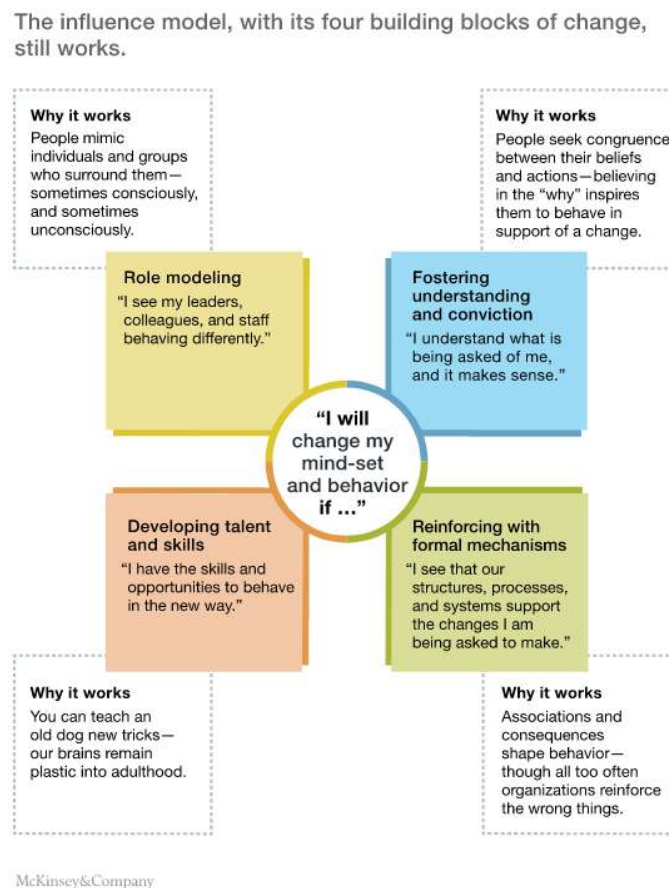
The next component of the Inclusive Culture Pyramid® is the McKinsey Influence Model of Change.<sup>6</sup>

## McKinsey Influence Model of Change

In both research and practice, McKinsey found that transformations stand the best chance of success when they focus on four key actions to change mind-sets and behaviour: fostering understanding and conviction, reinforcing changes through formal mechanisms, developing talent and skills, and role modelling. Collectively labelled the “influence model,” these ideas were introduced more than a dozen years ago in a *McKinsey Quarterly* article, “[The psychology of change management](#).”<sup>7</sup> They were based on academic research and practical experience - what they saw worked and what didn't.

In a recent McKinsey Global Survey, they examined successful transformations and found that they were nearly eight times more likely to use all four actions, as opposed to just one.

Figure 6.2: The McKinsey Influence Model



## Levels of Inclusion

The third component of the Inclusive Culture Pyramid© is the levels at which the two overlaid principles need to be adopted. Firstly, at individual level; secondly, at team level; thirdly, at departmental level; finally, as an organisation. This paradigm only works if every individual in an organisation takes responsibility for inclusive change, which they can do when they have the CQ® framework to work with and they're supported with the change model. The immediate team around you needs to be rowing in the same direction, with the same principles guiding the change, the departments form and implement inclusive policy and procedure, and every department does this across the organisation.

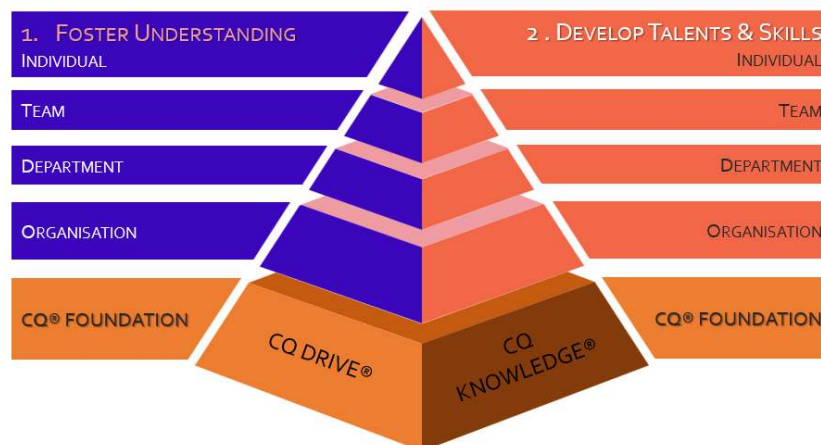
## Organisation

The final component Inclusive Culture Pyramid© is identifying the four areas of the organisation and ensuring each is robust in the way it delivers inclusion. The four areas are:

- *Attraction & Recruitment* - how you get people into the organisation/sector;
- *Staff Engagement, Management & Progression* - how you treat your people in the organisation/sector;
- *Products & Services* - how you create the output of your organisation/sector;
- *Users, Clients & Customers* - how you attract and treat the people who use the output of your organisation/sector.

## Inclusive Culture Pyramid®

4 Levels; 4 Sides; 4 CQ® Cornerstones; 4 Areas



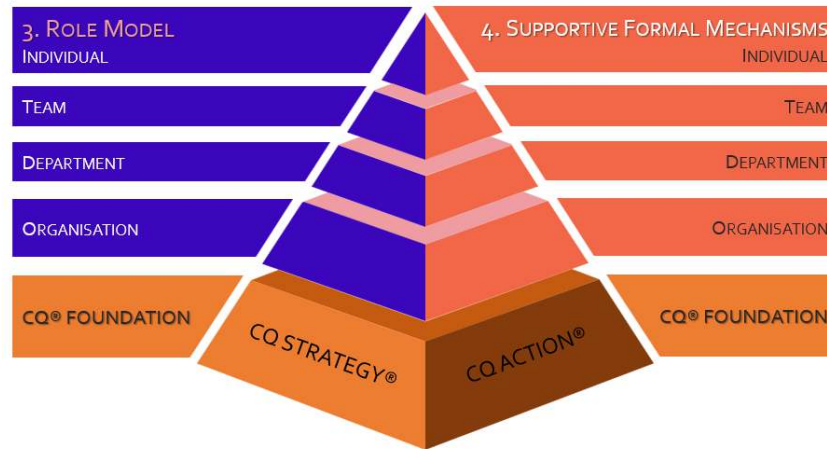
Organisational Areas of Implementation

**Recruitment/Attraction** **Staff Retention/Progression** **Output/Services** **Users/Clients**



# Inclusive Culture Pyramid®

4 Levels; 4 Sides; 4 CQ® Cornerstones; 4 Areas



Organisational Areas of Implementation

Recruitment/Attraction Staff Retention/Progression-Output/Services-Users/Clients

Figure 6.3a and 6.3b: 4 Levels, 4 Sides, 4 CQ® Cornerstones, 4 Areas.

When you bring all of these elements together, you can address any agenda in the Diversity & Inclusion space in order to bring about Equity, but it starts with every individual knowing and understanding their CQ®.

It is fairly straightforward to describe, but much harder to do. This is a granular, detailed piece of work that requires time, effort and resource, and certainly discomfort at times.

Approaching and managing these issues can cause you to feel defensive – we’ve been socialised to feel this way, in order that we don’t upset the status quo. If you do find yourself feeling this way, you have a choice: lean into the discomfort or shut down. If you do the latter, you will walk away from the engagement no better off than when you started it; but, if you accept the discomfort, and work through it, not only will you learn and grow, but you’ll be more successful at improving your CQ Drive.

If you make this investment of your time, energy and resource, from that will come growth, learning and ultimately better environments, increased productivity and enhanced business.

## Conclusion

My analogy to describe the journey to implementing inclusive outcomes is:

If **Diversity** – the mix of visible and invisible difference – is the richness of the landscape, and **Inclusion** is the road through it, to the land of **Equity**, then **CQ** is the best, most roadworthy vehicle to get you there.



There may be other lands, but they may not take in the richness of Diversity; there may be other roads, but they may not be wholly Inclusive or intersectional. There may be other vehicles, but CQ is the most robust.

The road isn't always easy and travelling companions are not always of one mind, but we should always be aiming for progress, rather than perfection; for equitable impact, rather than tokenistic gestures; for transformation, rather than momentary inspiration.

There are no magic wands, no silver bullets or quick fixes, only a deliberate, considered, conscious chipping away at the systems that create discrimination.

Organisational inclusive change is not an option, it's a leadership obligation. There will be challenge. There will be strife. But there is also hope. And step-by-step, there will be change.

A methodology like this, which provides a workable solution, should provide us with the optimism we need to start to combat societal ills. This is an opportunity to join an effort to build better workplaces, better environments, a better world. This is a chance to fulfil that obligation and drive forward towards an alternative future.

"Years from now, our children and our grandchildren will look up and lock eyes with us. They will ask us where we were when the stakes were so high. They will ask us what it was like. I don't want us to just tell them how it felt. I want us to tell them what we did." - Kamala Harris, The Truths We Hold

## About

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR – Marsha Ramroop (She/Her)



Marsha Ramroop has been working inclusively throughout her career as a journalist and leader with the personal work motto "giving the unheard voice a place to speak".

Prior to joining the RIBA as Director of Inclusion and Diversity in February 2021 she was influential with inclusion efforts at the BBC alongside her work in radio, as well as working in her own private Diversity and Inclusion practice, Unheard Voice Consultancy Ltd. She is a leader in Cultural Intelligence (CQ) in the UK, helping organisations deliver strategic inclusive change. She developed her own model overlaying CQ and a change paradigm to implement an approach which embeds inclusion across recruitment, staff engagement/retention/progression, business outcomes, and audience/user/client reach. Her approach tackles all agendas of under-representation, allowing for intersectionality to be effectively addressed across all areas of an organisation.

## ABOUT RIBA



The [Royal Institute of British Architects \(RIBA\)](#) is a global professional membership body that serves its members and society in order to deliver better buildings and places, stronger communities and a sustainable environment. Follow [@RIBA on Twitter](#) for regular updates.



## ABOUT THE CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE CENTER

The Cultural Intelligence Center is an innovative, research-based training and consulting firm that draws upon empirical findings to help organizations and individuals around the world assess and improve cultural intelligence (CQ)—the ability to work effectively with people from different nationalities, ethnicities, age groups, and more. We provide you with innovative solutions that improve multicultural performance based on rigorous academic research. More information about the Cultural Intelligence Center can be found on our website at [www.CulturalQ.com](http://www.CulturalQ.com).

## References

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<sup>1</sup> Juliet Bourke, *Which Two Heads Are Better Than One? How Diverse Teams Create Breakthrough Ideas and Make Smarter Decisions*, Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2016

<sup>2</sup> David Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The New Secret to Success*, Amacom, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Robert House, Peter W. Dorfman, Mansour Javidan, Paul J. Hanges and Mary Sully de Luque, *Strategic Leadership Across Cultures: GLOBE Study of CEO Leadership Behavior and Effectiveness in 24 Countries*, SAGE Publications Inc. <https://globeproject.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Further detail on the background research into Cultural intelligence can be found on the Cultural Intelligence Center website: <https://culturalq.com/about-cultural-intelligence/research/>

<sup>5</sup> Cultural Intelligence Center, 'About Cultural Intelligence', *Cultural Intelligence Center*, <https://culturalq.com/about-cultural-intelligence/> (accessed 17 May 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Tessa Basford and Bill Schaninger, 'The four building blocks of change', *McKinsey Quarterly*, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/the-four-building-blocks--of-change>, April 2016 (accessed 17 May 2021).

<sup>7</sup> Emily Lawson and Colin Price, 'The psychology of change management', *McKinsey Quarterly*, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/the-psychology-of-change-management#>, June 2003 (accessed 17 May 2021).