

# Your 6-step guide to supporting an inclusive workplace culture with language learning

The importance of language learning in the workplace is underscored by data from leading HR consultancies like Deloitte, which found that organizations fostering inclusive cultures are three times more likely to be high-performing, and eight times more likely to achieve better business outcomes.

Improving English skills is a key transformational strategy for HR leaders to support and promote inclusivity and the wider DE&I agenda.

**Here's how to get it right.**

## Step 1

### Assess current employee and organizational performance

**A truly inclusive culture all starts with assessing current skill levels and understanding how inclusive your L&D and hiring practices are.**

- ✓ Assess your team's current English proficiency levels, noting strengths as well as skills gaps. Use the findings to inform specific development areas to focus on.

Top tip: Reduce bias in learning, and in your hiring practices, by using an inclusive language assessment tool for a level playing field.

- ✓ Review your hiring practices. Are candidates offered a truly inclusive interview process? Is the language you're using in job adverts and assessments accessible to all?

Top tip: Make note of their strengths too, language learning should celebrate achievement and your team may be able to help overcome each others' challenges.

## Step 2

### Define inclusive language goals for your team

**For language learning training to positively impact your organization's inclusivity, you need to know what good looks like. So, it's important to set and communicate clear, realistic and achievable goals.**

- ✓ Ask employees which specific language skills would bolster their sense of belonging at work.

Top tip: Design a skills matrix that shows the current identified gaps in language skills.

- ✓ Set goals that align with specific job roles, e.g. for customer-facing employees, goals could focus on improving customer feedback scores.

Top tip: Use a recognized goal-setting framework, such as SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed).

## Step 3

### Choose an inclusive learning platform

**An effective language learning platform not only gives your team the best chance of success, but also provides an inclusive and equitable learning foundation for all. Here's what to look for:**

- ✓ Flexible learning to accommodate different learning styles, paces, preferences and proficiency levels.
- ✓ Workplace-relevant language training.
- ✓ Interactive learning experiences with real-time feedback and varied content.
- ✓ Practical language scenarios that mirror real-world challenges.
- ✓ Measurable progress for both learner and employer.

Ensuring your learning platform and processes are inclusive to all means nobody gets left behind.

## Step 4

### Start rolling out the plan

**Demonstrate your commitment to inclusivity and the wider DE&I agenda by sharing your vision, and giving all employees a shared sense of ownership of the plan.**

- ✓ Schedule individual 1:1s to explain the benefits of better language skills, answer questions and alleviate any concerns.

Top tip: Keep it positive and help employees make the connection between language learning and an inclusive workplace.

- ✓ Share your vision with the whole team, and foster ways for all employees to engage and support the plan.

Top tip: Consider ways to support and promote a culture of continuous, inclusive learning – and perhaps a little healthy competition by launching a language learning challenge!

## Step 5

### Measure progress, and continuously assess impact on inclusivity

**Keep sight of your goals with clear measurements and regular reviews, and report results back to the team for a sense of collective momentum.**

- ✓ Make language learning a standard item on every annual performance review to show your team your commitment to skill development and inclusivity as a whole.

Top tip: Design and circulate a quarterly survey to ask employees how they feel their improving language skills are impacting the organization's inclusivity practices. Where might there still be room for improvement?

- ✓ Implement a feedback process that lets you know what's working well, and what might need to be refined. Any skill development program is always a continuous process, so expect to make tweaks along the way.

Top tip: Consider an additional, anonymous feedback system for language learning experiences, encouraging honest insights to guide continuous improvement.

## Step 6

### Support, reward and celebrate

**Employees must feel supported in their learning journey and acknowledged for reaching milestones. Embed a culture of inclusive learning by bringing teams together to celebrate success.**

- ✓ Implement a reward system to celebrate language learning achievements.

Top tip: Host monthly recognition events where employees who reach language learning milestones are publicly acknowledged and celebrated.

- ✓ Create a dedicated online space for sharing resources, tips, and success stories to promote a sense of community among language learners.

Top tip: Establish a mentorship program to give learners personalized support.

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Embracing language learning within the workplace goes beyond expanding linguistic capabilities – it fosters inclusivity and understanding, breaking down barriers, enhancing communication, and cultivating a unified work environment.



**Berenice López**

Global ELL HR Director at Pearson

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**For more support and guidance on making language learning a pivotal part of your organization's commitment to inclusivity, and to learn more about Versant by Pearson and Mondly by Pearson, discover [Pearson Language Solutions for Work here.](#)**