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INTERGENERATION

BOOKLET

6 AREAS TO ADDRESS INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICT AND
GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE WORKPLACE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **INTERGENDERACTION project** addresses the growing need for inclusive and equitable workplaces by tackling two major sources of conflict and inequality in today's professional environments: **intergenerational differences** and **gender-based disparities**. With the increasing presence of women across all sectors and the coexistence of up to four generations within the same organisational structures, companies face new challenges in fostering understanding, collaboration, and fairness.

To respond to these pressing issues, the project began with an in-depth **preparatory phase** that included national surveys and expert focus groups in five European countries: France, Spain, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal. The goal was to **identify the most relevant training areas** needed to **reduce conflict and enhance cooperation between employees of different ages and genders**. This evidence-based approach led to the selection of six key thematic areas that reflect both shared challenges and emerging priorities across various national and organisational contexts.

The six areas identified—**Diverse Team Composition, Equity in Pay and Benefits, Inclusive Communication, Values and Priorities Alignment, Flexible Work Policies, and Inclusive Organisational Culture**—serve as the foundation for the INTERGENDERACTION training strategy.

This booklet is designed as a **practical resource** for business people, entrepreneurs, managers, and team leaders who are seeking to **strengthen their people management and communication skills** in increasingly diverse workplaces. It is also addressed to employees who wish to better understand and explore the dynamics of **intergenerational and gender-based cooperation**.

Each chapter in this booklet offers a detailed exploration of one thematic area, providing a clear **definition**, an overview of its **practical implications** in the workplace, and an analysis of the **potential relational conflicts** that may arise due to intergenerational or gender-related dynamics.



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INTERGENERATION

Six Areas to address

**INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICT
AND GENDER PERSPECTIVE
IN THE WORKPLACE**



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DIVERSE TEAM COMPOSITION

AUTHOR:



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DEFINITION

Diverse team composition denotes the integration of individuals with varying backgrounds, ages, genders, cultures, skills, and experiences within a unified work environment. Such a team offers a broad spectrum of perspectives and expertise, fostering innovation and enhancing problem-solving through varied viewpoints.

Furthermore, it fosters the development of a more equitable and inclusive workplace, where every individual can share their talents free from discrimination. Within the framework of **INTERGENERATION**, diversity includes not only generational and gender differences but also encompasses aspects such as career orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, ethnicity, and the inclusion of historically marginalized communities.

Fostering diverse teams is essential for cultivating a more equitable and enriching corporate culture, enabling organizations to reinforce their commitment to social responsibility and sustainability. A diverse workforce not only aligns with principles of justice and equality but also positively influences business productivity, creativity, and competitiveness.

Diversity serves as a **crucial instrument** for adapting to a globalized and evolving world, empowering organizations to more effectively anticipate market demands and provide innovative solutions that mirror the realities of a diverse society.

Incorporating a gender perspective entails acknowledging the structural inequalities that disproportionately impact women and individuals with diverse gender identities. Promoting gender equity encompasses not only representation but also the establishment of equitable **conditions for participation**, task distribution, leadership opportunities, and a safe environment devoid of violence or gender discrimination.



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IMPLICATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Diversity within work teams profoundly influences organizational performance and dynamics. Some of its primary implications include:

- **Enhanced decision-making:** diverse teams can evaluate issues from various viewpoints, leading to more informed and equitable decisions.
- **Enhanced creativity and innovation:** the integration of diverse experiences and skills promotes the emergence of original ideas and distinctive solutions.
- **Enhanced attraction and retention of talent:** organizations that prioritize diversity are often more appealing to prospective employees and foster greater loyalty among their workforce.
- **Mitigating bias and discrimination:** the implementation of diversity and equity strategies can aid in dismantling exclusionary barriers and fostering a more inclusive environment.



- **Enhanced customer experience:** diverse teams possess a greater capacity to comprehend and cater to a similarly diverse clientele, delivering superior service and solutions tailored to various contexts.
- **Enhanced adaptability to change:** diversity empowers organizations to respond more swiftly to market challenges and anticipate global trends.



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- **Fostering empathy and inclusion:** a diverse workplace cultivates cultural awareness and mutual understanding, thereby enhancing collaboration.
- **Communication challenges:** cultural and generational disparities can influence how employees articulate their thoughts and comprehend messages.
- **Unconscious biases:** certain team members may possess implicit biases that obstruct collaboration and mutual respect.
- **Resistance to change:** individuals may find comfort in familiar practices and exhibit reluctance toward new methods of working or engaging.
- **Value conflicts:** varied generations and contexts may result in differences in work priorities, leadership approaches, and criteria for assessing success.
- **Challenges in role and responsibility assignment:** ambiguity in task allocation within a diverse team may result in misunderstandings and conflict.
- **Decision-making challenges:** divergent viewpoints within a diverse team can impede the decision-making process if not effectively managed.
- **Micromachismos and gender roles:** subtle yet enduring attitudes can perpetuate gender stereotypes, such as disproportionately allocating caregiving or support tasks to women, or challenging the authority of individuals with non-normative gender identities.

Strategies for conflict mitigation:

- **Implement diversity and inclusion training programs:** educate employees on the significance of diversity and effective management of differences.



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POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS:

A **deficiency in diversity within work teams** can pose a risk for the emergence of interpersonal and structural conflicts within organizations. When teams consist of individuals with homogeneous profiles—whether regarding gender, age, professional experience, cultural background, or other factors—the variety of perspectives, creativity, and the group's adaptability are constrained, potentially resulting in detrimental work dynamics and strained relationships.

Primary conflicts that may emerge in teams with restricted diversity:

- **Grouphink:** In homogeneous environments, individuals often possess similar beliefs and values, which can diminish constructive criticism and restrict the team's capacity to challenge ideas, make innovative decisions, or adapt to environmental changes.
- **Stagnation in problem-solving:** A deficiency in diversity may result in a constrained perspective when addressing challenges, leading to repetitive, uninspired, or ineffective responses to emerging demands.
- **Exclusion and a deficiency of empathy toward diverse profiles:** In teams where a singular model of experience or trajectory predominates, dissenting voices or those that do not conform to the prevailing standard are more likely to be overlooked or marginalized, thereby cultivating an exclusionary atmosphere.
- **Reproduction of stereotypes and biases:** In the absence of diversity, discriminatory attitudes and traditional gender roles may remain unchallenged, particularly impacting women and individuals with diverse gender identities who subsequently join the team.
- **Unequal development opportunities:** A homogeneous team often perpetuates established power dynamics, hindering individuals outside the dominant group from accessing leadership, promotion, or participation opportunities.
- **Disconnection from the reality of the environment:** Teams that lack diversity may find it challenging to engage with an increasingly diverse customer, user, or community base, which can impact the organization's competitiveness and sustainability.





EQUITY IN PAY AND BENEFITS

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DEFINITION

Equity in pay and benefits is the principle that individuals should receive **fair compensation** for their work, irrespective of their gender, age, or other personal characteristics. It extends beyond basic salary to include benefits such as bonuses, pensions, health insurance, and other forms of remuneration. The central idea behind this concept is to ensure that individuals performing similar or equal work receive the same financial rewards, with **no unjustified disparities based on gender, age, or other demographic factors**.

At the heart of equity in pay is the distinction between **equality** and **equity**. While equality focuses on treating everyone the same, equity recognizes that people come from diverse backgrounds and situations and may need different levels of support or accommodation to achieve fairness. This distinction is particularly relevant when considering both age and gender differences in the workplace. **Gender equity**, for instance, addresses the systemic disadvantages women often face, while **age equity** focuses on ensuring fair treatment across generational divides.



Gender-based pay equity has been widely recognized by institutions such as the European Union, which enshrines the principle of equal pay for equal work in its foundational documents, like Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). However, despite the legal frameworks and policies in place, **pay gaps based on gender and age persist in many workplaces across Europe**. The need for action has never been more urgent, particularly with the growing recognition of pay equity's role in promoting organizational inclusivity and long-term sustainability.



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IMPLICATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

The implications of **equity in pay and benefits** can be observed across various facets of the workplace. These implications are not only influenced by the individual's gender but also by their age. Below, we explore **how these factors shape the work environment**, with a focus on their distinct effects.

The table below highlights the distinct **implications of pay equity** in relation to age and gender, shedding light on the unique challenges and opportunities organizations face as they work towards creating an equitable environment for all employees, regardless of age or gender.



AGE	PAY EQUITY IMPLICATIONS	GENDER
Younger employees may feel underpaid compared to older peers with similar qualifications, leading to frustration or disengagement.	Impact on Employee Motivation	Women may feel demotivated if they perceive pay gaps exist, even if the pay has been adjusted, leading to decreased morale.
Younger employees might leave organizations if they perceive limited opportunities for advancement and equal pay progression compared to older employees.	Career Development and Retention	Women may be less likely to remain in organizations where they see persistent gender-based pay disparities, especially in leadership roles.
Companies may be viewed as neglecting the value of experience if they offer lower pay to older employees, leading to reputation damage.	Organizational Reputation	Gender pay gaps can harm a company's public image and affect its ability to attract top talent, especially from women.
Pay disparities based on age may cause tension between generations, reducing collaboration and increasing competition.	Employee Engagement and Collaboration	Gender disparities in pay may lead to resentment between male and female employees, negatively affecting teamwork.
Older employees may feel their rights are not being respected if pay is not adjusted to reflect their experience, leading to legal challenges.	Legal and Compliance Risks	Gender-based pay inequities can expose organizations to legal risks, particularly in countries with stringent equal pay laws.



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POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS

In the context of **pay equity**, both **age** and **gender** disparities can lead to significant relationship conflicts within the workplace.

Age-based pay inequity often manifests as tensions between older and younger employees. Older workers may feel undervalued or overlooked due to their longer tenure or perceived higher compensation expectations. Conversely, younger employees might perceive their older counterparts as resistant to change, leading to **generational clashes** over work dynamics, pay expectations, and career progression. These conflicts can hinder team cohesion and foster resentment, affecting workplace morale.

Gender-related pay inequity introduces another layer of complexity. Women, particularly those in **male-dominated industries** or **leadership roles**, may experience frustration and disengagement when they realize they are paid less than their male counterparts for similar work. This creates a sense of **unfairness**, eroding trust in the organization. Gender-based pay gaps can also perpetuate **stereotypes**, with women being perceived as less capable or deserving of higher pay, further deepening tensions. Men may feel conflicted if they perceive that efforts to address **gender inequality** place additional pressure on them, particularly if they hold leadership or management positions.

These pay disparities often result in **power imbalances**, **decreased collaboration**, and a **lack of mutual respect** among employees. When workers feel that their efforts are not fairly compensated, either due to age or gender, it creates an environment ripe for resentment, conflict, and disengagement. For organizations aiming to address these issues, fostering **open dialogue**, **ensuring transparency in pay structures**, and **creating clear pathways for equitable compensation** are essential strategies to mitigate these relationship conflicts and maintain a healthy, productive workplace.



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INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

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DEFINITION

Inclusive communication means a type of communication that is respectful of diversity and non-discriminatory. That avoids stereotypes and prejudices, valuing each person for who they are, their skills and contributions.

Inclusive communication is not just about gender, but it must embrace all diversity in the company, particularly one that is still little referred to is generational difference.

Both for gender and age, in communication it is essential to find common ground: different generations often have different language approaches, which need to be understood and made to dialogue. Conscious and careful language is the first step toward more inclusive communication: language, in fact, plays a key role in society and can convey discriminatory legacies. The use of gender-conscious vocabulary has a positive impact on employee engagement and well-being, as well as on productivity. In speech, we must pay attention not only to genders and pronouns, but also to all those expressions, terminologies, idioms, or jokes that may inadvertently convey a feeling of racism, ableism, or ageism (i.e., discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, disability, and age).



Inclusive communication practices create a space where every individual feels valued and understood, regardless of their gender or age. They go beyond language, including non-verbal cues, body language, tone, and accessibility considerations. The way in which messages are conveyed and received can either strengthen or hinder relationships among employees, influencing overall workplace morale. The impact of inclusive communication extends beyond personal interactions. It influences organizational culture, promotes trust, and reduces misunderstandings that can lead to conflict.



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IMPLICATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Various are the **implications** of inclusive communication in the workplace. The initial push must come from corporate managers and team leaders, who need to adopt good leadership models. Indeed, **leadership plays a key role** in promoting inclusive communication within organizations. Leaders are called upon to lead by example by adopting inclusive behaviors, establishing clear communication channels, and actively promoting inclusive practices within their teams.

By actively encouraging inclusive communication, leaders help create a safe environment in which employees feel free to express themselves and raise any critical issues, without fear of being excluded. Research on inclusive communication practices shows that organizations that prioritize inclusiveness experience **higher levels of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and retention rates**. When employees perceive that their voice has value, they tend to become more engaged in the pursuit of company goals. Conversely, organizations that do not adopt inclusive communication practices **risk alienating their employees, fueling internal resentment and losing valuable talent**.

In fact, many disagreements result from **misunderstandings or lack of attention to different perspectives**. Welch and Jackson (2007), divide internal communication into **four main dimensions**: 1) communication between managers and co-workers, 2) peer communication within teams, 3) peer communication in projects, and 4) internal business communication. Creating a business strategy that focuses primarily on the first three dimensions can be an effective choice for an organization's success in building a truly inclusive culture. The most practical benefits that inclusion strategies can bring are:

- Fostering a positive business climate, stimulating creativity, innovation and employee well-being;
- Valuing diversity, contributing to the formation of more balanced and high-performing teams;
- Strengthening employer branding, attracting new talent;
- Engaging a wide and diverse audience;



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POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS

A study conducted by Claudia Manzi, (Catholic University), highlighted how the presence of **misconceptions related to inclusive language can become rooted in corporate culture**. These beliefs often manifest as prejudices or personal resistance, thus influencing the linguistic choices of many professionals. This complex context creates a spiral of rejectability of inclusive language, as well as a blockage of initiatives aimed at promoting empathetic and respectful communication. These dynamics lead to concrete consequences for a company that must be managed and resolved. Regarding intergenerational issues, some employees (especially older ones or those used to a certain type of language) may perceive these policies as an imposition or a form of censorship.

Regarding gender differences, the desire to break down stereotypes and biases through inclusive communication can lead to **boomerang effects** whereby some employees may feel uncomfortable or threatened by these changes, interpreting them as a loss of identity or an imposition. Furthermore, efforts to promote inclusion may be perceived as favoritism towards one gender at the expense of another, causing feelings of exclusion. On the other hand, **no action or little one can lead to exacerbate the existent disadvantages of women in workplaces**.

It goes without saying that the main challenge for companies is to invest consistently in **employee training**, in order to standardize the soft skills related to DE&I topics, since not all employees have the same level of sensitivity or preparation on the topic of inclusive language. Employee training should also be accompanied by a re-definition of guidelines and updates to internal and external communication. This way, companies can reduce gender and intergenerational conflict, promoting a better work environment. It all starts with a **consistent managerial strategy** concretely aimed at improving productivity and work environment through thoughtfully designed communicative inclusion policies tailored to the corporate context and implemented with consistency and appropriate timing.



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VALUES & PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT

AUTHOR:

DEFINITION

Values and priorities alignment refers to the process of ensuring that an organization's core principles, mission, and operational practices resonate with the personal beliefs, ethics, and evolving expectations of its workforce. HR specialist Reinhard Guggenberger (2020) describes this alignment as a “**cultural bracket**”, a psychological and sociological framework that underpins all interactions within and beyond the company. Similarly, Dr. Colleen Batchelder suggests that it should not be limited to branding or vision statements, but requires a **consistent and authentic integration of these principles into daily work practices, decision making and interpersonal dynamics** (2024).

As the workforce becomes more diverse across generations, gender identities, and cultural backgrounds, **employee expectations are evolving**. Workers increasingly seek workplaces that align with their personal values, promote psychological safety, and support meaningful contributions, rather than viewing employment as purely transactional. A LinkedIn's research highlights the growing importance of company values, revealing that 59% of European professionals would not work for a company that doesn't share their values, with 55% stating that even a pay raise wouldn't change their stance. In the UK, France, Germany and Ireland, **68% of workers prioritize companies that align with their values**. This trend is guided primarily by younger generations, who are willing to leave jobs in search of organizations that prioritize values like environmental sustainability or ethical business practices, even amid economic uncertainty (Laker, 2023).

Besides, as Dr. Batchelder notes, **the values and priorities alignment is not a one time achievement**. As times change and societal norms evolve, so too must the organization's values. Leaders and managers must regularly engage with employees to ensure that organizational values reflect current social realities and employee expectations. Adapting to these changes is crucial for long term success (2024).

Finally, it can be concluded from the above that **alignment is not about enforcing uniformity, but rather cultivating shared understanding and mutual respect across differences**.



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IMPLICATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

The idea that congruence between personal and organisational values has positive implications for individuals and organisations has been the focus of decades of research in organisational and psychological fields, supported by various theories (Arieli et al., 2020). Moreover, several recent articles, such as the one recently published in Forbes (Evans, 2024), confirm the **benefits and implications of value alignment**, underlining how corporate culture that reflect individual values is increasingly crucial in today's work environment. The effects on employees can be:

- **Greater job satisfaction:** employees who share the organization's values find deeper meaning in their work. This sense of purpose enhances motivation, engagement, and fulfilment in daily tasks.
- **Improved mental and emotional well-being:** a values-aligned environment supports psychological safety and reduces stress, helping employees feel respected and at ease, while minimizing the risk of burnout.
- **Stronger commitment and loyalty:** employees are more likely to remain with organizations that reflect their beliefs, reducing turnover and fostering stable and dedicated workforce.
- **Enhanced collaboration and teamwork:** shared values create a foundation of mutual understanding, improving cooperation, coordination, and overall team effectiveness.
- **Better decision making:** clear values guide employees in making choices aligned with organizational goals, leading to quicker and confident decision making.
- **Increased innovation and productivity:** when individuals feel aligned and empowered, they are more likely to take initiatives, share ideas, and contribute proactively to organizational improvement.
- **Personal and professional growth:** working in an environment that reflects one's values promotes authenticity and create space for meaningful development, leadership opportunities, and long-term career satisfaction.

In conclusion, **values and priorities alignment is a strategic asset** that boost performance and support the well being of individuals.



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POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS

When employees' values and priorities do not align with those of their colleagues or the organization, **tensions and misunderstandings** can easily arise. These misalignments often become more pronounced when viewed through the lenses of generation and gender, each bringing **distinct expectations and value systems**.



Today's workforce is made up of four **generational cohorts**; each influenced by the social, economic and cultural forces of their time. As a result, employees bring diverse value systems into the workplace that don't always easily coexist. For instance, **Baby Boomers** tend to value loyalty, stability, and a strong work ethic, often equating long hours with dedication and success. In contrast, **Millennials** might prioritize flexibility, meaningful work, and well-being, seeing work as just one part of a balanced life (Espinosa, 2024).



As for the **gender perspective**, research has shown that while men and women may share basic ideas about what they find important at work, they tend to have differing values and priorities in their jobs. A study conducted by Luminari Inc., highlights that **male workers** generally regard pay, benefits, authority, status and power noticeably more than do female employees. Conversely, **women** tend to prioritize interpersonal relationship, collaboration, respect, equity and they often express a stronger preference for work-life balance and flexibility (Peterson, 2004).

These differing perspectives can lead to negative organizational consequences such as conflicts, decreased morale, and lower productivity, particularly if not acknowledged and respected. This highlights the need for managers to be aware of generational and gender dissimilarities and **avoid one-size-fits-all approaches when developing policies and strategies** (Alferjany, 2021). It is vital to **create a culture where all generations and genders feel included**. Recognizing the diverse value systems people bring to workplace, and actively working to integrate them, can turn potential conflict into a source of strength and innovation. By tailoring communication and management approaches to reflect these differences, organizations can help individuals feel more connected to their work and more aligned with the company's mission (Othman et al., 2024).



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FLEXIBLE WORK POLICIES

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DEFINITION

A flexible work policy is an agreement between an employer and an employee to modify the standard working arrangement in order to better accommodate the employee's commitments outside of work. **The primary goal of such policies is to enable a healthier balance between professional responsibilities and personal needs, while maintaining—or even enhancing—productivity.**

Flexible arrangements can involve changes to the **hours, pattern, or location of work.**

Some examples include:

- flexible start and finish times
- working from home for at least one day per week
- compressed working hours or a 9-day fortnight
- job-sharing
- giving employees the ability to design their own rosters with remote access through rostering and shift-swapping applications
- combining and sharing roles, for example: four days in an operational role and one day in a role that allows for remote working.



It is important to distinguish flexible working arrangements from standard employment rights. Minor or ordinary work adjustments—such as taking carer's leave, compassionate leave, or parental leave—do not fall under the umbrella of flexible work policies. These are entitlements afforded to all employees and should not be confused with negotiated flexibility.



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IMPLICATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Flexible work policies can serve as powerful tools for fostering engagement, reducing burnout, and improving employee retention. However, their success depends on how well they are aligned with the diverse expectations and circumstances of employees across different generations and genders.

For younger generations (Millennials, Gen Z):

Flexibility is often seen as a baseline expectation. These employees may prioritize autonomy, digital collaboration tools, and the ability to integrate work with personal passions or side projects.

For older generations (Baby Boomers, Gen X):

Flexibility may be valued in relation to health needs, caregiving for elderly parents, or phased retirement planning. However, they may also place high value on face-to-face interaction, structured routines, and traditional hierarchies.

From a gender perspective:

Flexible work is particularly critical in addressing gender disparities. Women, who disproportionately bear caregiving responsibilities, often rely on flexible arrangements to remain in or return to the workforce. However, without cultural shifts in perceptions and practices, such arrangements can inadvertently reinforce stereotypes or limit career progression (e.g., being seen as less committed).

To be effective, flexible work policies must be equitably accessible, clearly communicated, and embedded in a broader culture of trust, accountability, and outcome-focused performance. They should be available to all employees, regardless of role, age, or gender, and supported by transparent guidelines to avoid perceptions of unfairness. A culture of trust empowers employees to manage their time responsibly, while outcome-focused performance ensures that flexibility does not compromise results. Managers also play a key role in modeling and supporting flexible practices across diverse teams.

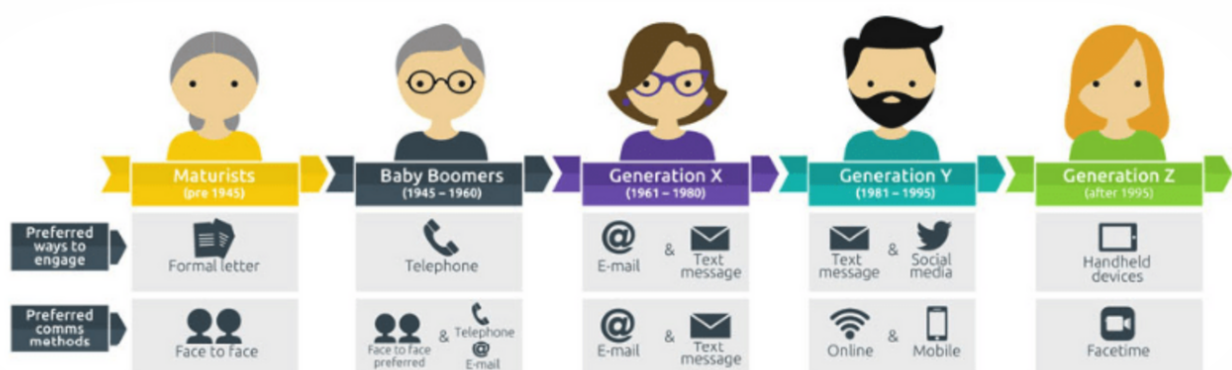


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POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS

While flexible work arrangements offer many benefits, they can also generate tensions and misunderstandings, particularly when viewed through the lenses of **generation** and **gender**. These dynamics, if not acknowledged and managed carefully, can lead to reduced cohesion, resentment, or unintended inequalities within teams.

Generational misunderstandings may arise because different age groups often have contrasting expectations and values regarding work. For example, Millennials and Gen Z tend to prioritize autonomy, flexible structures as essential to work-life integration. In contrast, Baby Boomers and Gen X may place more emphasis on structure, face-to-face communication, and clear separation between work and personal life. As a result, younger employees may interpret reluctance to embrace hybrid or remote work as resistance to innovation or a lack of trust, while older colleagues might perceive always-online habits or asynchronous communication as lacking professionalism, boundaries, or discipline.



Perceived unfairness can surface when flexible arrangements are not uniformly applied or understood. For instance, employees in client-facing or operational roles may have fewer options for remote work than those in administrative or knowledge-based positions. Older employees may also feel disadvantaged if they perceive digital proficiency as a prerequisite for flexibility—potentially excluding them from opportunities that younger, tech-savvy colleagues more easily access.



POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS

Gender-based tensions also emerge when flexibility is unevenly distributed or socially “coded.” For example, if flexible arrangements are primarily utilized by women—particularly mothers—this can reinforce stereotypes about caregiving responsibilities being a “female domain.” Research shows that this can result in women being perceived as less committed to their careers, negatively impacting their progression. On the other hand, men who seek flexible arrangements to fulfill caregiving roles may face social stigma or fear being judged as less ambitious, which can discourage uptake and perpetuate gendered divisions of labor.

Communication gaps and coordination challenges often emerge in hybrid teams where employees are working in different places or on varying schedules. These gaps can be particularly pronounced when generational preferences for communication (e.g., email vs. instant messaging vs. face-to-face) or varying comfort levels with digital tools are not acknowledged. Without inclusive practices—such as clear expectations, regular check-ins, and opportunities for social connection—employees may experience feelings of isolation or mistrust, which can deepen divides along generational or gender lines.

In summary, flexible work policies must be implemented with a conscious effort to recognize and address these potential sources of conflict. Doing so requires inclusive leadership, proactive communication, and the ongoing evaluation of how flexibility is being used and perceived across different demographic groups.



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INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

AUTHOR:



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DEFINITION

An inclusive organizational culture is a work environment where workers feel **valued** and **respected** independently of their background, identity, or condition. When effective, this culture promotes equity, shared responsibility, and productivity.

Building an **inclusive organizational culture** is about more than just policies — it's about creating an environment where people genuinely feel they belong. An inclusive organizational culture will shape how people treat each other every day, how motivated the team will be, how decisions are made, and how everyone's contributions are valued.

When inclusion becomes part of daily life in the workplace, diversity efforts stop being just box-ticking exercises and start to make a real difference. People feel **respected, supported**, and **motivated** to bring their **best** to work — no matter their age, gender, background, or abilities.

In this chapter, we'll look at what it means to build an inclusive work culture. We'll focus on practical steps businesses can take, especially drawing from European initiatives and resources that are already paving the way for more inclusive workplaces across Europe.

Whether you're a manager, a team leader, or an employee looking to make a positive impact, you'll grasp a better understanding of:

- Why you should make inclusion part of your organisation's everyday culture.
- How to create spaces for real cooperation across diverse teams.



Did you Know?

Inclusion pays off: 69% of European employees value a strong inclusive culture more than a higher salary. Culture matters!



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IMPLICATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

Creating an inclusive culture requires building a safe workplace where people feel secure to be themselves, speak up, and contribute fully.



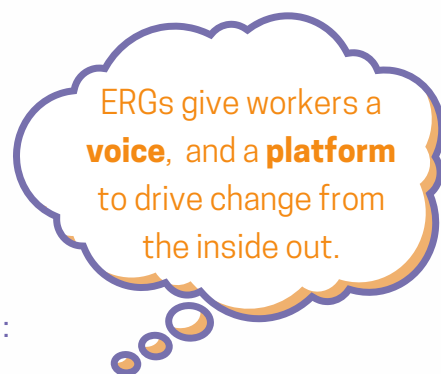
What changes in an *inclusive organization*:

- **Employee satisfaction**
- More **creativity** and better **problem-solving**
- Attracting and keeping **diverse talent**
- Constructive work **collaboration**



What *inclusive organizational culture* looks like in practice :

- **Employee Resource Groups** (ERGs): Voluntary, employee-led groups around shared identities or experiences - like gender, age, race, background, visible disabilities (e.g., visual/mobility impairment), and invisible disabilities (e.g., depression, ADHD, anxiety)). These groups work as safe spaces, raising awareness within corporate culture, and providing honest feedback to leadership.
- **Informal spaces for dialogue:**
 - Reverse mentoring - Flipped traditional roles of mentor/mentee (e.g., younger employee mentors a senior colleague). This practice enables teams to share different perspectives and balance power dynamics.
 - Diversity breakfasts - Informal, open-conversation gatherings (coffee break) to discuss topics related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).
 - Open discussion forums break down stereotypes and build mutual understanding between generations and genders.
- **Inclusive leadership:** Inclusion is a shared responsibility, therefore it is not just about employees, leaders need to set the tone. Leaders and team managers should strive to collect regular surveys and check-ins to help identify what's working and what needs to change in each specific team.



ERGs give workers a **voice**, and a **platform** to drive change from the inside out.



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POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS

Even inclusive environments can deal with conflicts — especially in **diverse teams** with different life experiences, communication styles, and expectations.

Common Sources of *Conflict*:

- **Generational misunderstandings** (e.g., work habits, communication style)
- **Cultural clashes**
- **Gender or identity-based microaggressions** - often unintended, but harmful
- **Resistance to change** (e.g. discomfort with inclusion initiatives or inclusive language)

It is important to mitigate conflict, however, conflict isn't always a bad thing! When handled well, it can lead to growth, stronger relationships, and better understanding.

Strategies to Prevent and Manage Conflict



STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
CLEAR COMMUNICATION	Explain clearly why inclusion matters. This should be reinforced on everyday tasks/contacts
OPEN DIALOGUE	Create a safe space for honest conversations at all levels (peers and leaders)
TRAINING	Provide workshops to build awareness and empathy
LEADERSHIP SUPPORT	Leaders should actively show commitment to inclusion, on a daily basis



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CONCLUSIONS

The **INTERGENERATION Booklet** brings together **six key areas** identified as fundamental for building **inclusive, respectful, and equitable workplaces** in the context of **intergenerational and gender-based challenges**. Based on national surveys and focus groups conducted across France, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, and Portugal, this collection reflects shared concerns and priorities across diverse professional and cultural contexts.

The chapters on **Diverse Team Composition, Equity in Pay and Benefits, Inclusive Communication, Values and Priorities Alignment, Flexible Work Policies, and Inclusive Organisational Culture** reflect a growing awareness that inclusion requires more than good intentions. It demands clear strategies, continuous reflection, and a conscious effort to challenge stereotypes, remove structural barriers, and create environments where every person—regardless of age or gender—feels valued and supported.

Throughout the different areas, several common principles stand out: the importance of **transparency, fairness in opportunities**, the alignment of **organisational and individual values**, and the **creation of policies** that take into account the diverse needs of a **multigenerational and gender-diverse workforce**. The persistence of certain inequalities, especially those affecting women and employees at the extremes of the age spectrum, calls for structured responses rather than isolated measures.

Rather than viewing age and gender diversity as potential sources of conflict, this booklet frames them as opportunities for growth, innovation, and long-term resilience—when supported by informed leadership and inclusive practices. These six thematic contributions not only offer practical recommendations but also serve as a **strategic framework** for organisations committed to meaningful and lasting change in the workplace.



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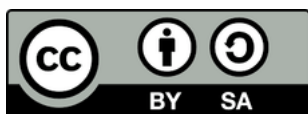
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