

How Do You #InspireDEI?

SIEMENS

Siemens Financial Services' Journey to Inclusive Leadership

At SFS we are 2,700 strong and together we empower customers around the globe to access technology with purpose and increase their competitiveness. With highly experienced and passionate teams in 20+ countries, we are paving the way for industrial productivity, smart infrastructure and sustainable mobility, facilitating the energy transition and enabling high-quality healthcare.

Our people are our business and true innovation comes from diverse teams. Therefore, we must be free to truly be ourselves in an environment where we are all included and have a voice. We embrace diversity to unleash the full potential in a culture of mutual trust and accountability.

Inclusion is the foundation for creating a sense of belonging, where everyone can bring their best self to work.



Ben Armes,
Senior DEI Manager,
SFS

Building the Foundations with Training

SFS has embarked on a transformative journey towards inclusion, marked by a series of strategic initiatives aimed at fostering a diverse and equitable workplace. The journey began with the establishment of The Innovators Group, a grassroots initiative representing the business globally. In collaboration with Business Unit Teams, this group laid the foundation for a culture of innovation and inclusivity. Recognizing the importance of leadership in driving change, we partnered with an external organization experienced in academic research, consulting, and practical transformation to set up Inclusive Leadership Training. This training was designed to equip leaders with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead inclusively.

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Some of the most powerful moments from our journey so far have come from the workshop activities undertaken with our partner, Korn Ferry. One example would be 'The Inclusion Scale' whereby we can think about how we interact with people based on how we feel about them. The concept walks you through a scale of different responses we may have for a person. We explored various scenarios and the actions we would take for each feeling, such as; somebody makes a mistake, how much would you help them based on your feelings about them. We came away with a reflection of "it does not matter how I feel, I should, as a leader, treat everyone with appreciation." We also had lots of fun with 'Diverse Teams by Design, an exercise that enables a shift in mindset- from 'Fit for Team' to 'what perspective are we missing?'

To underscore the strategic priority of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI), a dedicated team was established within Strategic Development. This team works closely with me, the Senior DEI Manager, to ensure that these values are integrated into the core business strategy.

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The Inclusive Leadership Training has now been handed over to individual business units, empowering them to tailor the training to their specific needs. From our perspective everyone can be a leader, so we are all on this journey together. Because of this I have been delivering Conscious Inclusion workshops to our teams to foster a deeper understanding of inclusion. Additionally, an Inclusive Leadership toolbox was developed to provide practical resources for leaders. We also published hiring guidance for inclusive recruiting and introduced a Virtual Reality exercise to confront leaders with their unconscious biases, activating emotions and promoting empathy.

What Inclusive Leadership Means to Us

Inclusive leadership at SFS is all about recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives. It's about creating a culture where everyone feels respected, valued and heard. This isn't just the right thing to do; it also boosts our performance, sparks innovation, and gives our people a sense of belonging and appreciation. As our CEO, Veronika Bienert, puts it, "By integrating diverse perspectives, we cultivate a sense of belonging that enhances job satisfaction and psychological safety, ultimately driving us to greater collective success."

Overcoming Challenges

Being an inclusive leader isn't always easy. Common challenges include unconscious bias, resistance to change, and lack of awareness. Leaders often face these hurdles, but can overcome them by staying curious and open to learning. We emphasise the importance of continuous self-reflection and education.

One of the key aspects of overcoming these challenges is recognizing and addressing unconscious biases. This involves being aware of our own biases and actively working to mitigate their impact on our decision-making processes.

Reflections

Inclusive leadership is a journey, not a one-time effort. I would encourage everyone to make time for inclusivity, as the benefits are immense. Sneha Shah, Director - Project & Structured Finance and member of the DEI Innovators Group advises emerging leaders to stay curious, be comfortable with discomfort, and not be afraid to make mistakes. "You can only grow beyond yourself if you feel included," she says.

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As we look to the future, we are committed to staying ahead and continuously improving our approach to inclusive leadership. This means staying informed about the latest research and best practices, and being willing to adapt and evolve as needed. By integrating diverse perspectives and fostering a culture of inclusion, we can create a workplace where everyone feels respected, heard, and valued. This not only enhances our performance and innovation but also makes SFS a great place to work!

IPFA is committed to driving and supporting change with respect to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the infrastructure and energy industry. In support of this we will be holding events, sharing thought leadership and conducting interviews with leading figures in our global network who are championing and taking action through DEI initiatives.