



# 2022 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Report

*A Focus on Gender Equality in China MNCs*

# Acknowledgments

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# Executive Summary

## China MNCs Lead in Gender Parity Compared to APAC and Global Stats

To lead by example, the WEC took an in-depth look at its gender diversity data from WEC members to identify gaps and showcase proven strategies and initiatives toward achieving parity. The findings show that WEC member companies, multinationals (MNCs) based in China, have higher overall representation of women in the workforce with **41%** compared to 37% in the global private sector (Statista, 2022). Moreover, representation of women in top-level leadership is on par with global at **31%** and exceeds APAC at 28% (Catalyst, 2022). However, consistent with global trends, the increase in hierarchical levels correlates with a decrease in the number of women, a phenomenon coined the ‘leaky pipeline’. With these insights, member companies have set data driven KPIs and will collaborate with the council to achieve them. With a cross-industry group of 15 MNCs, the WEC has diverse and strong partnerships and a trust-based culture to advance this agenda. Furthermore, best practices have been captured to inspire strategic actions for achieving these targets and creating an equitable workplace for all.

## Inclusive HR Guidelines Can Advance Gender Equity Companywide

When transparency and fairness are embedded in company policies and processes, all employees are more likely to be motivated, committed, and loyal. Advice from HR leaders on how to implement and help everyone embrace new policies and cultural shifts includes:

- **Be purpose-driven by getting clear on ‘the why’**
- **Change starts from the top, make leaders accountable for advocacy and actions**
- **Track diversity data consistently to inform decision-making and set KPIs**
- **Create multiple channels for transparent and trusted employee feedback**

**ConocoPhillips** and **Dow** have implemented best practices in China by setting company-wide DEI goals tied to performance and requiring diverse candidate slates, diverse interview panels, and neutral interviewers respectively.

## Policies and Programs to Empower Women in the Workplace

• **An Employee Resource Group (ERG) that has a clear mission, executive sponsorship, male allyship, and engaging activities is a vehicle for driving meaningful change for women in the workplace.** **bp** China’s Sales Women Advisory Network (SWAN) and **Deloitte** Consulting China’s Mom Club are standout examples for how targeted ERGs build stronger communities that support and advance women’s career and life ambitions.

• **An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides vital, round-the-clock support to employees. It particularly benefits women who tend to use the service more frequently than men, especially during**

**critical moments.** To maximize impact, complement the program with mental health awareness training and confidentiality assurance.

- **Development programs that offer coaching, mentorship, or sponsorship can be pivotal in accelerating the growth of high-potential women into leadership roles.** To attract participation, promote the benefits that mentors and mentees will gain and take a holistic approach to candidate selection. **FedEx** has an APAC program to broaden leadership perspectives and **Merck** China has reverse mentoring where young talent mentor leaders.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) promote wellbeing and work-life success by shifting focus away from where and when people work to how and what value they deliver.** **Henkel** China recognizes that trust is vital to success in a hybrid model and trains leaders to develop trust-based teams.
- **Family-friendly policies help to attract and retain women, as well as encourage men to be equal caretakers at home.** **Bayer** China allows employees to customize benefits to meet individual or family needs. **HPE** China promotes shared childcare responsibilities with six months of paid parental leave for new mothers and fathers.
- **DEI training drives awareness and behavioral change in leadership and all levels of employees.** It is most effective when consistently upscaled and continually reinforced with group discussions, individual reflections, and daily actions.

## Effective Practices and Principles to Strengthen DEI

Expand impact, improve outcomes, and bring everyone along on the DEI journey:

- **Procure from women-owned businesses to expand DEI footprint through supplier diversity**
- **Trust leadership teams to localize global DEI vision through expertise and partnerships**
- **Develop a culture of curiosity, compassion, and correction to fully embed diversity**

## Inclusive Leaders Can Transform Culture with Six Standout Attributes

1. **Self-awareness** is enhanced through reflection, seeking feedback, and listening
2. **Authenticity** is being your true self and sharing your experience with others
3. **Empathy** is treating everyone with compassion and respect
4. **Transparency** creates opportunities for honest sharing and helps build trust
5. **Accountability** models self-motivation and responsibility and delivers results
6. **Passion** drives vocal, courageous, and consistent ambassadors and support of DEI



The WEC is keen to expand our work with all who want to share, learn, and influence others in implementing strategies and taking actions today. Please join us to advance gender equity and drive DEI in businesses in China and beyond.

# Message from Co-Chairs

The Women Empowerment Council (WEC) is an engaged network of leaders and decision-makers that aims to advance gender equality in businesses in China and beyond.

This year, the WEC embarked on a new initiative to capture aggregate gender diversity data, equity guidance and best practices, and inclusive leadership insights and attributes in a pioneering Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Report. The objective of this report is to present the WEC's collective thought leadership and be a leading resource for anyone seeking to empower women in the workplace and drive gender parity throughout the organization.

This inaugural DEI report embodies our commitment to the WEC's core pillars of sharing, learning, and influencing. Having a clear picture of our current reality, both in terms of successes and areas for improvement, will help us to understand and focus on key areas to advance gender equality. We can shape and influence the narrative of what gender equality means for both women and men. Presenting the findings in this report models transparency, promotes accountability, and inspires action within businesses and the broader community.

By exploring our data and insights, we gain a deeper understanding of the efforts being made by MNCs in China to increase representation of women along the talent pipeline, create fair access and opportunities, and foster inclusive cultures that empower women to bring their authentic selves to work and feel like they are valued and belong. We hope this will help lay the groundwork, build on progress, and enhance impact for organizations to move the needle at different stages of the DEI journey.



**Fernando Vallina**

*Lead Country Manager*  
ExxonMobil China

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**Poh-Yian Koh**

*VP Operations, China*  
FedEx Express Inc.

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**Rajat Agarwal**

*President*  
Henkel Greater China |  
Global Head Lifestyle Adhesives

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rajat Agarwal'.



**Selena Chu**

*Vice President*  
Dow Greater China/CIO  
Asia Pacific

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Selena Chu'.

# Diversity Matters More Than Ever

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*Women’s economic empowerment benefits everyone.*

— **Kristalina Georgieva**, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund (Courtesy of WEF, 2022)

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An extensive body of research shows that diversity is a competitive advantage. A diverse workforce is attained by attracting, promoting, and retaining talent representing different identities and backgrounds. To be a market-leader, it is vital to tap into the entire talent pool available, including the 49.6% of the global population who are women (World Bank, 2021). Among the benefits, companies with higher levels of and a HR focus on gender diversity are more successful at attracting and retaining talent. Diverse teams also achieve better decision-making and problem-solving by reducing groupthink, leveraging different perspectives, maximizing creativity, and increasing the likelihood that information will be considered thoroughly and accurately. Lastly and importantly, diversity is associated with improved financial performance in terms of profitability and sustainability. (Catalyst, 2020)

The need for companies to focus efforts towards attracting and retaining women is even more critical today, since women experienced a disproportionately negative impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. Due in large part to burnout and pressure from the increased burden of personal responsibilities – such as childcare, elderly care, and housework – that fell primarily on them during the crisis, women, and particularly mothers with young children, were

more likely to step back in their careers or leave their jobs altogether (McKinsey, 2020). To reap the benefits of diversity and counteract the detrimental loss of women from the workforce, companies must take an in-depth look at their gender diversity data to identify where the gender gaps are and make strategic leadership and HR decisions in order to achieve gender parity across their organizations.

## China MNCs Lead in Gender Parity Compared to APAC and Global Stats

The WEC strives to lead by example. This section showcases aggregate data of the representation of women in the China-based workforce of participating WEC member companies. The purpose of this research is to understand the current state of gender diversity and set data-driven targets for individual members to work towards, with support from the council. By capturing quantitative data, WEC members can comprehend the current reality, reduce conscious and unconscious bias, and make informed decisions about the future. In addition, the WEC is sharing this data publicly for transparency and as a role model to motivate other organizations to follow suit.

For this inaugural report, the WEC focused on fundamental datapoints and captured the

representation of women in the workforce overall, as well as within specific business levels and functions. This approach provides both a big picture and a more granular look at the WEC's current state of gender diversity. For business levels, the WEC gathered data on the proportion of women in new hires, mid-level management roles, and top-level leadership. Consistent with global trends, the findings reveal that an increase in hierarchical level corresponds with a decrease in the number of women represented, a phenomenon known as the 'leaky pipeline'. Regarding business functions, the findings show that there is a higher proportion of women in back-office, support roles (58.6%) in comparison to customer-facing, revenue-generating roles (36.1%). In addition, women are in the minority in manufacturing and production roles (17.3%).

On the other hand, the WEC leads in representation of women in the workforce, with 41.2% women employees compared to 37% in the private sector globally (Statista, 2022). Furthermore, the WEC excels in the proportion of women in top-level leadership positions, with 30.9% compared to 28% in APAC, and on par with global, which reached its peak at 31% for the first time on record (Catalyst, 2022). This is especially important because, as Bob Sternfels, Global Managing Partner of McKinsey explains, "more gender-diverse leadership teams are strongly connected with positive business performance, making [them] a significant – but underused – lever for business growth". Despite excelling in these key areas, the WEC is determined to track data continually and consistently with the aim to make year-on-year progress towards greater gender parity overall. In summary, this section outlines where we are now as a bold statement of the WEC's commitment to moving the needle.

## Driving Progress through Strong Partnerships Built on Trust

The power of data is that it provides real insight into the areas to celebrate and the areas to improve. It is impossible to work on everything at once, so after reviewing the survey results, member companies have set specific data driven KPIs and will collaborate with the council to achieve them. What is unique and special about the WEC is its spirit of collaboration. Members are passionate about and dedicated to the

## Current Aggregated Data

### CHINA WORKFORCE

# 58,674

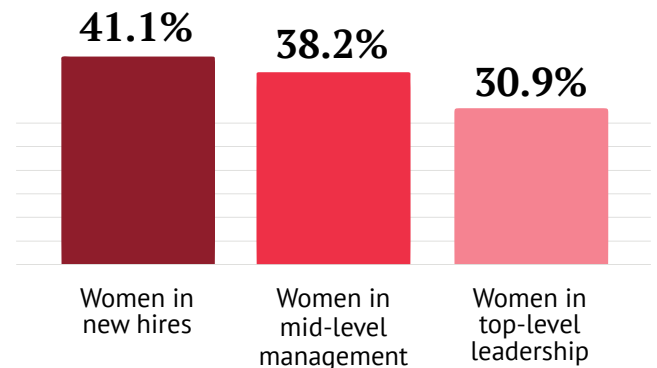
Total workforce headcount



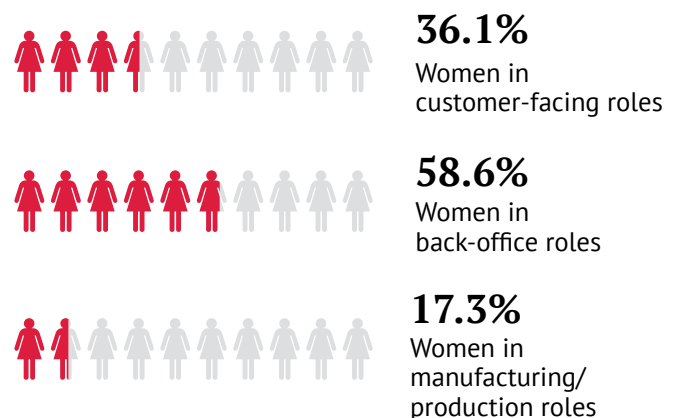
# 41.2%

Women employees

### LEVELS



### FUNCTIONS



## Notes

- 10 companies participated in this research
- All data presented is based on companies' China workforce only
- Data collected is from the previous fiscal year (FY2021) rounded to the nearest tenth (.1)
- Some data points do not apply to all companies; the average percentage is always presented
- Definitions of key terms can be found in the Glossary



common mission to advance gender equality in businesses in China. As a cross-industry platform of 15 multinational companies, the WEC is a role model for the strong partnership required to advance this agenda. Setting data-driven targets holds Members accountable to progressing in key areas and achieving these targets will be an important metric for determining the WEC's success. Establishing a trust-based and collaborative culture allows member companies to feel safe and motivated to share their data. This is essential for driving the WEC's overall aim to support companies in China to accomplish internal DEI goals while advancing gender equality on an organizational and systemic level.

## Strategic Actions

Now that WEC member companies have set specific gender diversity targets to work towards, strategic actions must be taken to achieve them. According to Sternfels, “gender parity is not a problem of innovation, it’s a problem of execution. Consistency and dedication are key.” He is referring to the finding that companies seeking to improve women’s representation must prioritize certain best practices (WEF, 2022). For this reason, the next section delves into the actions that WEC member companies are taking to achieve gender parity across the organization and create an equitable workplace for all.



# Achieve Equity with Intentional Actions

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*Companies that we see making significant gains in women’s representation are more likely to be prioritizing certain best practices.*

— **Bob Sternfels**, Global Managing Partner, **McKinsey & Co.** (Courtesy of WEF, 2022)

”

Equity is essential in order to reap the rewards of a diverse workforce. Where diversity is about increasing the mix of different people (genders, races, abilities, ages, personalities, etc.) in an organization, equity is about the actions taken to address systemic barriers that some groups face. To advance gender equity, companies must take into account the challenges and experiences that are unique to women and provide access to resources, opportunities, and power to ensure they have an equal standing with their male counterparts. Gender equity levels the playing field for women so they can fulfil their potential, flourish at work, and contribute to the economy, but it also opens the door for men to take on roles and responsibilities at work and at home without fear of being penalized or judged. Equitable organizations are well-positioned to outperform competitors and a step closer to creating a culture that people will trust and want to stay in.

## Inclusive HR Guidelines Can Advance Gender Equity

When transparency and fairness are embedded in company policies and processes, all employees are more likely to be motivated, committed, and loyal. They trust and believe that rewards will be a direct result of effort and performance, as opposed to biased attitudes or perceptions. Therefore, HR guidelines are integral to creating an equitable work environment.

HR leaders implement and are the change management experts who help everyone to embrace new policies and cultural shifts. This section presents strategic advice and actions to advance gender equity across the organization.

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## Tips from HR and DEI Leaders in China

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### 1 Build Culture that Starts with ‘Why’ for a Strong Foundation

**While DEI may be a trending topic, it is vital that companies new to the DEI space are not jumping on the band wagon without getting clear on the why.** Henkel China suggests that this is crucial at the start of the DEI journey, as with any significant culture change, “understanding the WHY for the organization is critical”. For Henkel, valuing people’s difference of opinions, identities, and backgrounds is embedded in the culture; they believe it is good for team morale and good for business. Building a strong culture starts with a strong foundation. Over 40 years ago, FedEx established its People, Service, Profit (PSP) philosophy. It starts with people because taking care of employees inspires motivation and

commitment to provide excellent customer service which, in turn, enables FedEx to earn a profit that can be reinvested back into their people. This overarching philosophy permeates the company values, policies, programs, guidelines, and behaviors.

## 2 Make Leaders Accountable to Advocacy and Actions

**A key message that comes up over and over: “to drive culture change, it has to come from the top.”** Without support and role modeling from top-level leaders, no meaningful or lasting change can happen. Senior leaders need to promote the importance and value of DEI to the internal team and through public endorsements. Taking it a step further, Dow China encourages top leaders to be active advocates for DEI through incorporating goals, priorities and development linked to the DEI strategy within the region. Dow also ties a percentage of the annual Performance award directly to the DEI metrics and KPIs for all leadership. Merck China suggests a key step is to actively communicate these objectives and the reasons to people at all levels. In the communications, the messages must be consistent and reinforced periodically to remind employees it is a priority and needs to be top of mind. These actions and steps are necessary in order to drive long-term change.

## 3 Track Data to Inform Decisions and KPIs

**When making decisions about gender parity targets, it is essential to track and analyze real-time data such as the percentage of women at different levels, as well as their rate of promotion and attrition.** Digital transformation and competition in most markets, including Asia, is fierce. People move around a lot, particularly in China, which adds an extra challenge to recruiting and retaining women, especially in male-dominated industries and functions. Through regular tracking of representation and movement of female talent, organizations can actually achieve ambitious gender parity KPIs. Volvo Cars has set an ambitious KPI to achieve 50:50 women and men for all new hires for leadership positions (people managers). To drive this, they encourage employees to recommend female candidates, and if the final candidate selected is a woman, then the referee is eligible for supplementary compensation. Moreover, WilmerHale tracks

quantitative data on the financial value that women-led teams bring to the company. Gender parity in leadership is not a hard sell when the company data shows that it brings value to the business goals and bottom line.

## 4 Reduce Bias by Training Key Stakeholders

**To successfully enhance diversity, it is vital to train recruiters, hiring managers, and anyone engaged in employee development on inclusive HR policies/practices and the impact of conscious/unconscious bias.** According to ConocoPhillips China, raising awareness about DEI is critical to establishing and maintaining an inclusive culture. The company has thus sponsored a series of activities and internal campaigns since 2018 which focuses on integration, appreciation, and transparent communication. With consistent training, ConocoPhillips China employees get to know what DEI is and what factors strengthen DEI. It has become an integrated part of HR processes and common language among the team. Most importantly, everyone feels comfortable and confident to raise their voice and ensure that diverse candidates are being considered for hire and promotion.

## 5 Create Channels for Transparent Communication

**To understand the real impact of DEI, there must be transparent channels to capture employee feedback on their perspectives and experiences.** Henkel China values the voice of employees in determining its DEI direction. They take employee feedback seriously and research market best practices when developing DEI strategies. In this way, they can address what employees want with what has been proven to work well. FedEx China takes a dynamic approach to facilitate and promote transparent feedback. First, through an annual sentiment survey, employees provide anonymous feedback on various focus areas, including DEI. Second, an open-door policy invites employees to raise issues and challenges, not only with direct line managers, but also with managing directors and VPs. Third, the Guaranteed Fair Treatment Procedure (GFTP) allows any employee who may feel unfairly treated to submit a complaint and have their concern addressed. With the GFTP, actions will be taken to address concerns raised and shows employees that they are being heard

and their perspectives are valued. Moreover, offering multiple channels support employees to share feedback in line with their personal communication style. Beyond internal feedback, WilmerHale sees value in inviting external DEI experts to make recommendations and encourages leaders to be open-minded to the difficult aspects of implementing their suggested changes.



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## Market-Leading Best Practices in China

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### Set Company-Wide DEI Goals Tied to Performance and Compensation

At ConocoPhillips, top management has ultimate accountability for advancing its DEI commitment, and all global employees are encouraged to play a part in creating and sustaining an inclusive work environment. In China, ConocoPhillips has created a vision to build an inclusive workplace where all employees have fair chances to succeed. The vision is consistently communicated to staff by ConocoPhillips leaders to showcase their commitment to DEI. Employees also receive training on how to define their own personal DEI goals. To support goal setting, HR hosted training sessions and leaders also shared their personal goals as examples. As one of the few local national employees on the Leadership Team, Lydia Zhou, VP of HR and Communications, focuses on diversified voices and employee engagement, “I want to speak up more, offer the local perspective, and host small group meetings to encourage employees to share what is on their minds.”



### Require Diverse Candidates, Diverse Interview Panels and Neutral Interviewers

Dow China implemented an inclusive hiring standards policy that requires every job opening (below a certain grade) to be listed on internal platforms, have a diverse candidate slate, and have a diverse interview panel. Specifically, the job must be listed for seven days, candidates must represent more than one gender. If a diverse candidate slate is not available after the initial seven days, then the job must remain listed to reach 14 calendar days for internal hiring and 21 for external hiring. In addition, Dow China implemented a policy that requires a ‘neutral interviewer’ for all hiring cases. The neutral party must not have any direct affiliation or conflict of interest with the person who assumes the role and is trained to perform their interview duties. In 2022, these progressive policies were conducted on a large scale with the aim to create a more inclusive

interview environment and fair selection process. The impact has been significant! Hiring managers now receive more objective feedback on candidates which reduces instances of bias and favoritism. Candidates feel the level of transparency and fairness provides an overall improved experience, and they are more optimistic about access to opportunities. Diverse talent gain visibility with leadership and, overall, these policies drive a DEI culture. In the future, Dow China aims to implement the neutral interviewer policy across other regions, working towards a global practice. This is an exciting case study of an MNC piloting DEI policies in China that could eventually lead to positive impact globally.



### Leverage Technology to Create Gender Neutral Job Descriptions

Henkel China's HR team recognize that men tend to apply for jobs more than women, particularly in certain functions and roles. To counter this gender imbalance and attract more women to apply, they leverage technology to make evidence-based changes to their job descriptions. First, job responsibilities are framed as what the individual can contribute as opposed to what the organization requires. Second, masculine-coded words are transformed into feminine-coded words such as, ambitious to committed, confident to enthusiastic, hierarchical to interdependent, and outspoken to responsive. These adjustments are supported by studies that show no matter how a job is described, men will apply, whereas women are less likely to apply when masculine-coded language is used.

## Policies and Programs to Empower Women in the Workplace

### Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) Activate Vocal Communities



*An employee resource group (ERG) is a voluntary, employee-led diversity and inclusion initiative that is formally supported by an organization. ERGs generally are organized on the basis of common identities, interests, or backgrounds with the goal of supporting employees by providing opportunities to network and create a more inclusive workplace.*

(Gartner, 2022)



## Tips from HR and DEI Leaders in China

### 1 New to ERGs? Pilot a Local Women's Group

**For companies planning to launch their first ERG, a women's network is a great place to start. Focus on clarifying the mission and piloting it in one city before expanding.** An ERG will not succeed if it is just checking off a box, it must have a clear purpose. At bp China, in line with their global gender ambitions, the Women's International Network (WIN) is a business resource group focused on driving gender diversity, supporting and empowering women in both career and personal development, and strategically influencing business outcomes in respect to gender. At Dow China, the Women Inclusion Network (WIN) is a platform with the aim to help advocate a diversity and inclusive culture and strengthen women's development and experience. It has four priorities that are universal across all regions: Diversity Culture, Women's Development, Male Allyship, and External Partnerships, such as with the WEC. At HPE China, the Women ERG aims to expand the network of female participants, which is key for career progression, and develop their leadership confidence and skills. Participating in the

ERG is a leadership opportunity in itself because, as an employee-led initiative, participants are empowered to take ownership, design, and organize its topics and activities. Moreover, WilmerHale leverages its Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI) to showcase the success stories of women leaders at the firm. These women leaders are role models to younger women and shows them their potential future paths. Overall, being clear on the mission and priorities of the women's ERG can shape and ensure impactful activities and outcomes.



### 3 Leverage the ERG to Drive Meaningful Change

**Effectively leveraging the Women's ERG can help companies understand the real needs, thoughts, experiences, and concerns of female employees so they can apply these insights to drive meaningful change at the company.** Rather than make assumptions about women's needs, listen to their opinions and perspectives, and then determine how to support them and what areas to focus on. At ConocoPhillips China, the Women's Network held regular gatherings to share ideas directly with the business unit President, followed by focus group discussions to further address issues raised and develop solutions that could be put into action. At Chayora China, a start-up company, leaders are able to quickly adapt and respond to ideas that come from their Ladies Inclusion Group (LIG). For example, they implemented biannual promotion opportunities which helped support the rapid progression of high-potential talent. At Dow China, the leadership team holds regular meetings with ERG Chairs to listen to priorities and feedback. Through this, they discovered that women workers at a manufacturing site felt there was a lack of hygiene systems in the plant. They responded by allocating funds to improve processes and raise standards, a seemingly simple change that helped to create a more inclusive environment for women operating in a traditionally male-dominated field.

### 2 Align Global, Regional and Country Leadership Support

**Leaders who are aligned on the value and goals of Women's ERGs nationally, regionally, and globally have a collective effort and can ensure sufficient support and sponsorship to boost its impact.** Leaders can and will support the Women's ERG in multiple ways, including the allocation of finances and resources towards activities. Across the firm, ERGs can participate in and draw insights from its shared platforms, advocate for the issues or ideas that are raised, and share their own career journeys and expertise. At HPE China, senior leaders meet with ERG representatives to discuss their actions, achievements, and outcomes, as well as learn what support they need from their leaders. This gives ERG representatives the opportunity to maximize their impact, but also increases their visibility among leadership, and even has the potential to help them find a career mentor or coach along the way.



**4**

## Don't Make It a 'Women's Issue' – It's Good for Men and Business

**As executive leaders are still predominantly men, sponsorship is an important aspect of male allyship, but it is not the whole picture.** Male leaders can work with the Women's ERG to engage male allies throughout the organization. Based on a survey, Dow found that many employees in Asia viewed WIN as a women's issue or a women's club. To break this bias and raise awareness, the APAC leadership team participated in a virtual campaign to advocate for WIN and invite more male colleagues to join in the ERG. Although this is a great example of leadership support, Dow China recognizes that it is not possible to get 100% of male colleagues on board immediately. The key is to gradually change mindsets and influence people by helping them understand WIN's value as a core element of the company culture that everyone can be part of and its importance for the growth of the business. Merck China recommends targeting men with an open mind first, these early adopters can become male ambassadors and over time accumulate and strengthen male allyship across the organization.

**5**

## Amplify Engagement by Making It Fun!

**When organizing ERG events and activities, aim to create a fun atmosphere through interactive and enjoyable experiences for all participants.** While the topics covered can be serious, a relaxed and receptive atmosphere is more conducive to sharing and increases the likelihood of higher engagement. Chayora China wants to ensure that ERG activities do not feel like work, and instead seeks to create a comfortable and safe environment where people can express their true feelings. At HPE China, despite the shift to hybrid work in the last couple of years, the ERG is encouraged to maintain in-person activities in order to help build connection between members. Dow China believes a successful DEI initiative is like a party where everyone is invited, feels like they belong, can be themselves and have fun!

## Market-Leading Best Practices in China



### Attract Women to Male-dominated Roles Through Function-specific ERGs

At bp China, leaders are committed to supporting, sponsoring, and empowering all staff through various employee communities such as Business Resource Groups (BRGs). Believing in inclusion and belonging, bp strives to create changes for the individual, the business, and more. bpWIN (Women International Network), as one of the BRGs, is committed to driving gender equality across bp. In China, BRGs joined hands with staff community to create a work environment where every hobby or interest is celebrated from psychology to football, reading, parenting, photography, and more. There are multiple and diverse engagement channels to enrich the employee experience, cultivate connections, and enhance collaboration. This year is the 10th anniversary of bp China's Sales Women Advisory Network (SWAN), a unique community that aims to bring saleswomen together to learn, share, and support each other to develop and advance. Sales is a notoriously demanding job but having a dedicated community helps to attract and support women in sales roles. Development is at the core of SWAN, as members are exposed to case studies and receive mentorship/coaching from sales leaders in order to learn how to succeed and advance in their careers. They are also encouraged to take ownership and drive the initiative with support and sponsorship from leadership. Collectively, these efforts contribute to bp's agenda to achieve 35% women in senior level leadership (SLL) by 2035. In Chinese and Asian society, women are often expected to take a backseat role, but bp encourages women to be proactive and be in the driver's seat of their careers.

### **Deloitte.** Retain Mothers by Changing Women's Mindsets and Outcomes

At Deloitte China Consulting, M Club (the working mothers' club) was founded under the umbrella of women in leadership. From company data, the ratio of women to men is around 50:50 at the analyst

(entry) level, but at the partner level, it is significantly skewed in favor of men. Women were found to leave at the senior consultant/manager level if they experience major life changes, such as marriage or pregnancy. It was perceived as too difficult to balance family and the high demands of consulting work. M Club aims to fundamentally address this ‘leaky pipeline’ by finding tangible ways to support women during the crucial two- to three- year period before children go to school. First, the club raises awareness about Deloitte’s internal mobility program that allows women to temporarily transfer to functions/ departments that offer more flexibility and less travel. Second, it seeks to shift the mindset that motherhood will make women fall behind in their careers. M Club co-founder Zaya Nyamdorj (Partner, Deloitte China Consulting) reassures younger female talent that “clients and colleagues never ask me how long it took to become a partner” because the time it takes to get there is not what matters. The co-founders also created a maternity handbook with information on relevant processes, policies, and practical advice. Moreover, they successfully advocate for policy change that requires maternity leave to be added to productive time and adjusted for utilized time so that performance evaluation and compensation is not impacted by the time taken off. Overall, the club creates a sense of community and belonging for its members. They bond over the physical, emotional, and mental challenges of being an expecting, returning, or working mother and help drive solutions to support, retain, and advance them. These efforts are also in line with China’s country strategy to increase birthrates, having shifted from the one-child to two-child, and now three-child policy in recent years.



### Conduct Research to Establish a Baseline and Uncover Persisting Biases

Last year, Merck China’s Women in Leadership (WIL) group produced a Merck Women Whitepaper to establish a baseline on the status of the employee experience for women in the workplace. The research gathered feedback from male and female employees with the aim to capture their perceptions and identify potential awareness gaps or biases. The findings revealed key areas of improvement that are being focused on this year in order to enhance support for and positively impact women at Merck China. For instance, despite promoting equitable HR policies, some women are still being asked by managers if

they are capable of doing a specific job or what will happen to the team when they take maternity leave. In response, leadership is taking action to build DEI into management training, as well as create appropriate settings where managers can ask questions regarding issues they are unsure about, as a way to address bias and reduce the negative impact on female employees.

### Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) Provide Critical Support



*An employee assistance program (EAP) is a benefit program that assists employees with personal or work-related problems that may impact their job performance, health, and general well-being. EAPs usually offer free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services for employees.*

(Gartner, 2022)



### Tips from HR and DEI Leaders in China

#### 1 Employees Value 24/7 Support

**EAPs provide round-the-clock support to employees and immediate family members.**

Leaders at bp China consider EAPs to be an important pillar of the overall benefits they offer. Through an external vendor, they provide face-to-face and telephone consulting to employees and their relatives. As a 24/7 support channel, it offers great comfort to individuals who can discuss issues they may not feel comfortable talking to line managers, colleagues, or even family members about. Having this easily accessible service improves the overall wellbeing of staff. It is also important during reorganization (reorg.) periods, when stress levels can be high, to help ensure a smooth transition. Lastly, EAPs proved to be critical to several companies during the COVID-19 pandemic which caused unprecedented pressure and anxiety, particularly for women. Due to lockdowns in



Shanghai, many people were unable to leave their homes for extended periods of time, causing significant strains on mental health. In these cases, EAPs helped to provide the practical support of delivering essential items like food and toilet paper to employees.

## 2 Use Data to Understand Usage by Women and Men

### **EAPs offer vital support to women who tend to use the program more frequently than men.**

Consistent with market trends, this is also evident in the summary reports produced by EAP vendors that present an aggregate gender data analysis. At Bayer China, previous usage reports reveal that more than 80% of their EAP users are women. The general subjects discussed by women can range from relationships with colleagues to family issues. Women tend to use EAPs as a channel to talk about the daily pressures that affect them not only in the work environment but also in their personal life.

## 3 Debunk Mental Health Myth and Stigma by Changing Mindsets

### **In traditional Chinese culture, talking about mental health issues is seen as “losing face” or a sign of weakness, something to be ashamed of.**

When tackling this stigma, the key message to get across to leadership and employees is that mental health is as important as physical health. When Volvo Cars China launched an EAP, they focused on promotion to inform employees of its purpose, benefits, and application. Communication is key, it must be consistent and far-reaching. In addition to promoting the EAP, Bayer China shares general knowledge about mental health through various channels, including email, WeChat (mobile app), employee portal, in-person lunch and learn events, live virtual presentations, and more. As a result, over 90% of employees who have used the EAP expressed a willingness to use it again if needed and would recommend it to colleagues and family members. Henkel China recommends using multiple communication channels, creating digestible materials, and sending frequent reminders because cultural mindsets do not change overnight. Other than awareness, it is crucial to find a trusted service provider and reassure staff that information will be kept completely confidential and inaccessible to leadership or even HR. By raising awareness

about mental health and instilling confidence in the EAP, employees will take it upon themselves to recommend the resource to colleagues during critical moments. Last year, FedEx APAC initiated an “It’s ok to say I’m not ok” program to encourage people to speak openly about their mental health struggles and leverage the resources offered by the company to support them. At Merck China, the trend of EAP uptake has increased since 2020. Initially, employees perceived it as useless and did not want to talk about their problems to a stranger. Now, more and more young people and people in general are aware of its benefits and take advantage of them.

## 4 Leverage Vendor Findings to Add Needed Support

**Although employee information is kept anonymous, vendors provide regular reports to summarize overall stress levels and topics that are being repeatedly raised.** At bp China, a dedicated Wellbeing team evaluates the findings and raises them with leadership if they feel that specific issues need to be further addressed. Every year, they invite the vendor to provide six to eight follow-up sessions on key themes that have come up, such as work-life balance. FedEx China values the follow-up sessions and has invested in initiatives such as family planning, financial planning, and medical conditions led by certified doctors and professionals. Dow China has a full-time doctor and medical team available on-site and recently conducted first-aid mental health training to certify over 20 people leaders in the Shanghai office. Within the legal industry, Patrick Krell is well-known for publishing studies on the mental health of the legal community related to pervasive substance abuse issues. He developed a series of E-learning that WilmerHale makes available to all staff to support everyone who is subjected to the pressure of a career in a legal environment. Ten years ago, mental health was a taboo subject, but Patrick Krell helped bring it to the forefront as an industry-wide trend, motivating firms to pay attention and take action.

## 5

## Company Values Factor into Cost-Benefit Analysis

**Per research, the average usage of EAPs compared to workforce population tends to be less than 10 percent, yet leaders still value it as an essential tool to support employees in critical situations.** Given the low usage rate, there is debate over whether an EAP is worth the investment as an employee benefit. For many companies, it comes down to two main factors: company values and available resources. If the company values people's wellbeing and has the funding, then an EAP is definitely a worthwhile investment. Furthermore, a low usage rate may not necessarily be negative. In fact, low usage may show the company has a good working environment and support services internally, and an EAP is only needed for the more critical cases. Regardless, there is a clear cost-benefit to have a readily available resource to support employees in need.

### Development Programs Narrow the Leadership Gap

The WEC recognizes coaching, mentorship, and sponsorship programs as three distinct forms of development support. Coaches raise self-awareness by asking powerful questions to help explore identity, strengths, and issues in order to achieve personal and professional goals. Mentors advise on challenges and opportunities as a role model or peer within the industry or organization, support personal and professional growth and help navigate a career path. Sponsors are senior leaders or decision-makers who have influence within the company and need to know your abilities and aspirations so they can advocate for promotions and opportunities to further your leadership within the company.

## Tips from HR and DEI Leaders in China

## 1

### Accelerate Growth of High-Potential Women

**Pairing a coach, mentor, or sponsor with high-potential (HIPO) women can be pivotal in advancing them into a leadership role.** A HIPO is someone with the capability, engagement, and aspiration to advance into and succeed in more senior, critical roles. At ConocoPhillips China, diversity metrics and talent are reviewed on a regular basis to identify the HIPO women employees. While all ConocoPhillips China employees have an individual development plan, there are specific mentorship and leadership programs targeting towards HIPO women talent to accelerate their growth at the company. The impact on program participants is not only from the mentors, but also from exposure to a network of cross-discipline HIPO women employees and their diverse perspectives on personal and professional development. At HPE China there is a healthy representation of women talent among the overall workforce, so they focus on offering programs that target HIPO women managers to develop into executive positions. To enhance the impact of these programs, they consistently measure the internal development of women talent and review the data at senior leadership meetings in order to set KPIs and make every leader accountable to close the gender gap in leadership.



## 2 Promote Program Benefits to Mentors and Mentees

**When promoting a new mentorship program, highlight the benefits that both mentees and mentors gain to attract higher participation.**

After conducting a kick-off session to share these benefits with all staff, FedEx China received many applications from potential mentors and mentees interested in joining the program. At WilmerHale, senior associates are reminded that mentoring someone younger is an opportunity to develop leadership skills. Moreover, Merck China holds a feedback session to learn from mentors and mentees what benefits they gained and any further suggestions to improve and add value to participants. They use these insights to continually evolve their mentorship program so mentors and mentees benefit.

## 3 A Holistic Selection Process for Greater Representation

**To maximize program impact, be intentional about the participant selection process and involvement of key stakeholders.** At Merck China, managers speak to team members at the beginning of each year to identify the actions needed for their individual development. Together, they review the gap between objectives and the status quo and identify the resources available, such as mentorship or coaching, to help close this gap. Based on mutual agreement, the identified resource is allocated as part of the employee's individual development program. Henkel China also considers employee needs and goals and invites leadership and line managers to provide feedback. Each year, more than 20 focus group discussions are conducted to obtain feedback on Employee Benefits, Work Environment, Professional & Career Development, and local initiatives are implemented to better address employees' needs. At HPE China, in addition to leaders, HR is part of the nomination process for their global women talent development program to ensure that rising stars are selected for the high profile and exclusive opportunity. FedEx China takes a holistic approach that involves self-nomination to self-select women with a strong willingness to develop, interviews with colleagues to provide candid feedback on the areas they need to develop, and endorsement from the reporting manager.

## 4 Multiple Programs Needed to Meet Diverse Goals/Needs

**With multiple programs, it is important to be clear on the specific purpose, format, and desired outcomes in order to attract the appropriate candidates.** Dow China offers multiple programs to support the career development of women colleagues, including Job Shadowing, Formal Coaching, and Official Mentoring. Job Shadowing gives participants the opportunity to experience six different functions at the company: sales, marketing, supply chain, finance, and HR. Formal Coaching leverages on internal and external resources to provide one-on-one sessions from certified coaches. Official Mentoring invites executive leaders to be mentors to younger staff. Shadowing broadens the career pathway for participants, coaching is tailored to personal or professional goals, and mentoring offers guidance and exposure to leadership. Through these diverse programs, women can choose the one that best meets their individual goals or needs.

## 5 Convey the Business Case to Address Opposition

**Leaders must be prepared to address the inevitable questions: “where are the development programs for men? Why do women get this privilege?”** Merck China believes that everything starts with transparency. They share the research on the importance of diversity in gender for higher business growth and profits and show the percentage of women in leadership at the company to demonstrate there is a gender gap issue. This demonstrates the decision is objective and not due to subjective bias. Laying the issue out in the open encourages people to view it in a more neutral way. Transparency also enables everyone to celebrate when progress is made. In addition to transparency, regularly communicate a clear narrative of how DEI impacts business performance. ConocoPhillips China leaders believe DEI is not about special focus or preferential treatment from management to one group than another. By implementing actions that can help employees with different needs, leaders become an effective ally to provide a level playing field and ensure everyone has a fair chance of success.

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## Market-Leading Best Practices in China

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### Cross-Border Programs Broaden Leadership Perspectives

At FedEx China mentorship programs cover various purposes: develop leadership capabilities, communication skills, strategic thinking, confidence, and more. China mentors are all senior manager level or above who have rich experiences to support mentee development which are tailored to their individual needs. This embeds flexibility into the programs and empowers mentees to outline key focus areas and take ownership of their development journey. At senior level and above, an APAC program exists that pairs officer level mentors with participants. Through this program, cross-country mentor relationships are established to foster more diverse thinking and broader perspectives in senior leadership. FedEx believes experience cannot be limited to one country and must include regional/global perspectives. Senior managers who aspire to become managing directors, the best way to expand knowledge and scope is to build relationships and network beyond China. For this reason, FedEx encourages people to pursue multiple mentors who can eventually become sponsors. The company culture expects all managers to develop talent as coaches/mentors with support from the internal resources and systems so are not reliant only on formal mentorship programs.



### Young Talent Reverse Mentor Senior Leaders

Merck China implements reverse mentoring and pairs young employees with senior leaders, especially to focus on innovative areas such as digital marketing. This encourages senior leaders to embrace humility and have a growth mindset. Young professionals gain confidence and understand they bring value and can contribute to the growth as the company evolves. The reverse mentorship experience benefits both parties who can learn from and build connections with each other.

## WILMERHALE Recognize and Support Industry-specific Disadvantaged Groups

WilmerHale recognizes that a law firm environment is very high pressure and a steep learning curve for new lawyers. Without a mentor to help them learn the ropes early on, there can be a perceived gap in competence/confidence. The first three years for lawyers are critical, and some may feel they are falling behind or that their peers have more exposure which can lead to turnover. Early-stage mentorship is an important retention tool, particularly for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups. Unique to the legal industry, there is a category for ‘first-generation lawyers’. Many lawyers come from a family of lawyers or have relatives who pursued a legal career and get a leg-up from established networks and support to help them succeed. A first-generation lawyer lacks these inherited benefits so many are disadvantaged. Mentorship is a key strategy to address this gap. WilmerHale requires Partners to mentor Associates and be evaluated on how they successfully helped their mentee navigate, progress, and build a network. This helps to create a culture of awareness and accountability in order to train a more diverse next generation of lawyers at the firm.



## Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) Promote Wellbeing and Work-Life Success

Future-forward companies have offered flexible work arrangements (FWAs) like flextime, remote work, and telework for decades. However, due to COVID-19 and social distancing policies, many companies were forced to adopt a fully remote or hybrid model quickly and with limited preparation or systems. At the time, leaders were not driving the change, the change was driving leaders. Since then, the world has entered a 'new normal' where global talent wants and expects FWAs to be an available and viable option. In China and around the world, working women had to balance the benefits with the challenges of the move towards FWAs. On one hand, it was convenient to work from home (no commute) but the family and household responsibilities still fell on them and juggling work and life blurred. However, as more children returned to school, there was a clear advantage to work from home and have more flexibility with work hours. As such, employers who want to attract and retain women, FWAs are fundamental to create a workplace that works well for everyone. While COVID-19 may have accelerated this shift, technological advancements that allow work to be done anywhere/anytime and a workforce that values flexibility and wellbeing make it an inevitable trend. Despite the significant negative impact and challenges caused by the pandemic, it also provides an optimal moment for employers to take this leap. The future of work is now and here to stay.

### Tips from HR and DEI Leaders in China

#### 1 Shift Work Focus from Where/When to What/How

**To succeed in the 'new normal', employers must shift focus away from where and when people work to what and how they deliver value.** This outlook values productivity and engagement over facetime, results and strategy over hours worked. Dow adopted a Design Your Day approach that allows employees to flexibly arrange their work time and location, as long as they discuss and reach agreement with supervisors. The objective of this global policy is to embed flexibility in the culture, improve the

employee experience, attract diverse talent, and empower team members to select when, how, and where they work through two-way communication with management. HPE has implemented a program with a similar purpose called Edge to Office. The program involves multiple elements, but its underlying philosophy is to expand the workplace to where people are; where their people are is where HPE is. To enable team members to successfully work off-site, HPE invested in several IT initiatives, tools, and platforms that support virtual meetings, ensure information security, increase efficiency, and simplify processes.

#### 2 Rethink Workspace to Accommodate Hybrid Models

**Companies are rethinking and making innovative design changes to the physical workspace to accommodate a hybrid work model.** At bp, offices were traditionally designed with individual desks and small meeting rooms. Recently, they have begun to redesign their offices globally to foster a more collaborative workspace for people. The more open office concept is not new, but it continues to evolve. The current principle is that focused work may be more conducive at home, while tasks that require collaboration and communication are more suitable in the office. HPE has also renovated their office space to enhance mobility, allowing people to set up and easily plug into the network anywhere. More importantly, they have created collaboration zones designed for discussion, ideation, and casual conversation. The goal is to make the office a place where people can connect, engage, build bonds, work as a team, and enjoy cultural activities. FedEx also recognizes that a fundamental aspect of employee wellbeing is to have opportunities for social interaction and bonding experiences with colleagues in the office.

#### 3 One Size Does Not Fit All

**Embedding flexibility in the culture is key, and it is critical to avoid a one size fits all approach for roles, functions, and industries, as well as in countries.** At bp, the global team provides guidance on FWAs, but country leadership decide how they are adopted, implemented, and managed in different phases to meet local legislations and business requirements. At FedEx China, leadership is conscious that not all households are appropriate

for work and employees who need skills development may benefit from being in the office. Therefore, a hybrid workplace is not mandatory, it is up to individuals to choose. On the other hand, for functions like manufacturing and science, remote work can be challenging or impossible as the nature of the job requires employees to be onsite. To make up for the lack of flexibility, companies use other ways to compensate these employees. Merck China invested in hiring more lab/manufacturing workers to increase the number of people on each shift so that onsite staff can have more flexibility and opportunity to take leave. Dow China invested in the canteen and sports facilities at their manufacturing sites to ensure that all workers have ample opportunity for social, well-being, and community activities.

#### 4 Train People Leaders to Build Trust-Based Teams

**To ensure teams can manage their time and deliver quality work from home, it is vital to provide ongoing education on how to successfully manage hybrid teams.** Leaders need to embrace the change and develop capabilities to effectively manage and support teams that work at different times and locations. To build leaders' confidence, bp China provides training, guidance, and checklists to all line managers. ConocoPhillips China also views this as a continuous learning process and provides ongoing resources to support people leaders and employees. They conduct surveys among supervisors and staff to better understand the challenges people face with hybrid models. The findings show that some supervisors are struggling to engage teams and drive results, while some people feel self-conscious about calling colleagues, subordinates, or managers at home. ConocoPhillips China encourages people to be vocal about challenges so they can work together to find appropriate solutions. Henkel China believes that the foundation of a successful hybrid work model is a trust-based culture. Dow China advocates transparency, trust, empowerment, and accountability leadership traits, along with strong communication skills to listen, respond, and reach mutual alignment to build productive teams that can effectively address problems together. To acknowledge the increased responsibility and importance of people leaders, they invite them to join the Annual Global Session called LEAD which has been expanded to include all people leaders to learn from top leadership on executive topics, company performance, investor views, ESG and sustainability.

#### 5 Evolve Continually to Thrive in the 'New Normal'

**The story of hybrid work is still being written; leaders must continue to gather feedback from employees and information on the latest market practices in order to meet the evolving needs of employees and customers.** At Bayer China, the management team conducts regular reviews and makes adjustments to the guiding principles when necessary. Their goal is to continue to develop more flexible ways of working and business models that support employees to achieve success and fulfillment in their personal and professional lives.



#### Family-Friendly Policies Attract and Retain Women

In Chinese culture, taking care of family members, especially children and parents/parents-in-law, is highly valued and prioritized. Unfortunately, due to ingrained societal expectations, these responsibilities tend to fall on women, a phenomenon that transpires across the world and is coined the 'double burden'. Companies can adopt a wide range of best practices to support families and alleviate the burden women carry. This section highlights standout policies that help to attract, support, and retain women, as well as encourage men to be equal caretakers at home.

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## Market-Leading Best Practices in China

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### Enables Employees to Customize Their Benefits

Bayer China provides every employee with the opportunity to customize their own individual or family benefit packages through a flexible benefit program called 'iBenefit'. The program focuses on three areas -- Risk Protection, Health, and Lifestyle -- to enhance the wellbeing of employees and their families. Risk protection enables employees to react to personal or family risk events appropriately and offers reliable financial protection. Health offers customizable health insurance coverage that allows employees to upgrade their individual and family members' medical insurance and check-ups using flex credits. Lifestyle supports employees and their family's various lifestyle needs with innovative flex spending and allows employees to choose reimbursement for individual or family expenses on gyms, travel, education, insurance, HPV vaccinations, and more. The HPV vaccine reimbursement was specifically added to benefit and protect women employees. Promoting the overall health and wellbeing of employees is a core value at Bayer China where great efforts and commitment are made, not only to protect employee health, but also to create a work environment that supports employee wellbeing. As such, Bayer China regularly collects feedback from employees and stays up to date on market practices in order to further optimize the design of benefits and enhance employee health, engagement, and wellbeing in line with their mission to stay healthy, live better.



### Offers Paid Leave to Take Care of Sick Family Members

ConocoPhillips China offers employees five days of paid leave to take care of family members when they are suffering from a serious illness, in addition to other forms of paid leave.



Hewlett Packard Enterprise

### Promotes Shared Childcare Responsibilities with Equal Parental Leave

HPE offers six months of paid parental leave to every employee globally. In 2019, they held internal discussions on how to provide an optimal workplace that supports people going through important life moments and priority changes. At the time, HPE implemented a program called Work That Fits Your Life which seeks to foster an environment that supports employees' priorities outside work. The equal and extensive parental leave policy was a key outcome of this program. When people become a parent, through birth or adoption, their life priority changes and they need to focus more on family. HPE wants to ensure that all employees feel safe and supported to enjoy this time and fully shift focus away from work. They believe that offering men and women the same length of parental leave is a true equalizer for women, because it combats the stereotype that women are not as focused on career after becoming a mother and reinforces the message that family responsibilities should be shared. Indirectly, it also supports the wives of male employees who want to continue to pursue their careers. Moreover, it strengthens the DEI culture and reduces bias in hiring and promotion decisions where a man is preferred over a woman due to the concerns about long absences at a certain stage in her life.

To successfully implement such an innovative policy and encourage male employees to take full advantage of it, HPE had a comprehensive top-down communication strategy with key talking points, guidelines, and a toolkit to help HR and people leaders understand and articulate the importance of the policy and why everyone should enjoy its benefits. Over time, the policy has gradually been accepted, and now many men are enjoying the benefits fully. The policy has incorporated flexibility to allow employees to take the leave at different times and choose what best meets their family and work needs. Helping teams embrace the benefits, offering flexibility to customize for personal needs, and ensuring people leaders fully understand and support the policy, male employees feel safe about taking leave without fear it will negatively impact their career. Brave early adopters who took the full paternity leave became role models and gave other men confidence to follow suit. For HPE, the policy is part of a holistic employee program and approach. It

reinforces that the company truly values their people and wants to support them to be successful and fulfilled in both work and life.



**Hewlett Packard  
Enterprise**

### Provides Condolence Allowance and Lifelong Medical Support

HPE China offers lifelong medical support to retired employees and provides a condolence allowance to family members of employees who have passed away.



### Invites IVF Expert to Provide Fertility Consultancy

Merck China invites an IVF expert to their on-site facility to conduct a fertility check and consultancy for employees who are interested and, furthermore, connects employees with private hospitals to receive complementary and prioritized treatment at their request.



### Established Family Club to Share Parenting Resources and Network

Volvo Cars China set up a Family Club to support employees who are parents and provide supplementary resources and training. Its purpose is to offer direct support to parents and allow employees to develop a network of other parents. Since balancing work and family life can be overwhelming, this has been especially valuable to new parents. The Family Club members share knowledge and experiences and arrange activities for parents and children so they can build relationships and learn from each other.



### Takes a Multifaceted Approach to Support New Mothers

WilmerHale introduced a variety of ways to support women employees who are new mothers. In addition to on-site nursing rooms, they have a 'Milk Stork' initiative that ships breast milk for women when they are traveling for business. They also have on-site

emergency daycare programs, in-home care services for elderly and children, and a return-to-work program where parents can bring their child to work more frequently during the early transition period.



## Drive Awareness and Behavioral Change through Training

With workplaces rapidly changing due to economic and societal shifts, technological innovation and global workforce mobility, the role of leaders must also continually evolve and adapt to the new realities. To stay abreast of the changes and expectations, companies invest in training of the latest DEI concepts and strategies to ensure leaders are fully equipped to support and manage diverse teams. It is also an invaluable tool for raising awareness and nudging behavioral change with all stakeholders. This section offers guidance on how to successfully select, implement, and boost impact through training for leaders and teams.





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## Tips from HR and DEI Leaders in China

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### 1 Create Training Options to Fit Values, Goals and Needs

**When choosing DEI training, consider the purpose, target audience, and desired outcome.** A variety of DEI training is available on topics such as Inclusive Leadership, Inclusive Hiring, Everyday Inclusion (working from home), Unconscious Bias, Hack Your Bias, Men Advocating Real Change (MARC), and Psychological Safety. ConocoPhillips China strives to make all voices heard and ensure all employees feel supported in meeting their full potential. The company acknowledges that, in addition to building employees' confidence to share ideas, it is also crucial for leaders and employees to create a psychologically safe space and to actively listen. They view this as a group effort and hold psychological safety trainings for all supervisors and staff, with the end goal of encouraging all employees to actively engage in the business unit's DEI journey. As Dell China advocates, inclusion is a two-way street: everyone has the right to enjoy an inclusive work environment AND the responsibility to create it!

### 2 Don't Make It a One-off: Refresh, Repeat, Retrain

**Everyone has deeply entrenched unconscious biases and blind spots that cannot be completely unpacked or resolved in one session.** Henkel China consistently upscales its training for all levels of employees each year. They assess the needs and provide ongoing training to address internal gaps and respond to external factors. They monitor the participation rate, conduct pulse surveys, and capture main takeaways in order to identify successes and areas to improve. They believe that the first step towards equality is to acknowledge that inequality exists. People who are aware of this are more likely to proactively and frequently challenge biases. For this reason, they focus on driving awareness to lay a solid foundation for driving behavioral change. Providing continual and upgraded training supports this endeavor, maintains momentum, and builds on progress year-on-year.

### 3 Ingrain Learning through Discussion, Reflection and Action

**Training is only the first step; to maximize impact, follow it up with group discussions, individual reflections, and daily actions.** In other words, just because someone knows something it does not mean they will do anything differently; there is a gap between knowledge and behavior change. At ConocoPhillips China, learning and development is broken down as 10% training, 20% reflection, and 70% on-the-job experience. They organize post-training discussions to initiate employee reflections on lessons learned and goal setting so that actions are implemented in daily life. These follow up sessions help transform knowledge into behavior change.

## Cutting-edge Practices and Principles to Strengthen DEI

To close, we present cutting-edge DEI practices and principles implemented by MNCs in China to expand impact, improve outcomes, and bring everyone along on the journey.



### Expands DEI Footprint Through Supplier Diversity

Dow China has implemented a corporate initiative to advance equitable and sustainable business practice by procuring goods and services from vendors managed and operated by minorities and underrepresented groups, including women, in order to achieve financial growth, transform the community, and drive diverse supplier inclusion. This initiative showcases how innovative companies like Dow are moving beyond internal impact to external impact by incorporating DEI strategies into the supply chain.



### Trusts Teams to Localize DEI and Partnerships

At FedEx, global leadership sets the overarching vision and guidelines for DEI but also recognizes that every country is unique. They entrust country teams to have the expertise to lead projects based on local requirements, taking into consideration cultural differences and employee needs. While the China DEI vision aligns with APAC and HQ, execution is localized and customized. A key strategy to support the localization of best practices is through external partnerships like the WEC that offer a network of diverse local perspectives. FedEx China has been integral in supporting the WEC to engage and partner with Chinese private companies in order to amplify the message and impact of DEI in China and beyond.



### Customizes Scorecards to Maximize DEI Impact

As a company, Henkel runs both B2B and B2C business units (BUs), and within each of these the status of gender parity is unique. For this reason, they created customized scorecards in order to track and monitor each BU according to their own specific set of KPIs. In the B2B business, gender equality in

intake (new hires) and succession plans for women's development are closely monitored. However, gender parity has already been achieved in the B2C business, so the focus is on generations, specifically to monitor whether millennials and generation Z (future workforce) are thriving. This is an exemplary best practice for companies with multiple business models that are striving to make a real DEI impact where it counts.



### Exceeds Local Requirements by Adopting Global Practice

Although there are currently no local Chinese laws enforcing companies to conduct a gender pay analysis, as in countries like the US and UK, Merck China still takes the initiative to perform an internal analysis on an annual basis. This aligns with their DEI values to ensure that there is no structural impact on pay differences between men and women in the workforce.



### Develops Compassionate Culture to Engage Everyone in DEI

The benefit of a diverse workforce is that it brings different backgrounds and perspectives to the table to counter individual blind spots and biases. WilmerHale strives to develop a culture where missteps are met with compassion and correction to emphasize that a mistake is acceptable as long as people strive to grow from it and move forward. To bring everyone along on the DEI journey, it is essential for people to feel it is acceptable not to know. WilmerHale encourages them to ask questions, be curious, and listen and learn from each other regardless of background and opinions.

## Inclusive Leaders

Inclusive leaders are essential to business success and social impact. In addition to taking strategic and consistent actions towards achieving gender parity, to fully leverage the potential of a diverse workforce, leaders and team members must strive to be inclusive. For this reason, the next section delves into the evidence-based benefits of inclusion, as well as WEC leaders' insights, recommendations, and strategies to help anyone become an inclusive leader and transform company culture.

# Inclusion Essential in Post-pandemic World

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*To create lasting change, representation must also be accompanied by steps to improve inclusion.*

— **Bob Sternfels**, Global Managing Partner, **McKinsey & Co.** (Courtesy of WEF, 2022)

”

In the wake of a global pandemic, people have been forced to pause and reflect on what really matters in their lives and reconsider how, where, and with whom they wish to spend their time. Since the average person will spend around 90,000 hours at work in a lifetime, the perspective shift about workplaces was significant. Last year alone, “over 47 million Americans voluntarily quit their jobs – an unprecedented mass exit from the [U.S.] workforce” and a phenomenon that is being coined the Great Resignation (HBR, 2022). This trend is being observed by markets globally, including China. Faced with a shortage of skilled workers and rising unemployment among young people, the nation’s state council has “pledged to make employment a top priority of its economic policies” (Bloomberg, 2021). As such, the power has shifted to the individual and organizations must take actions to ensure employees feel valued. Today, employers must demonstrate a real commitment to cultivating an inclusive culture. Research shows “employees experiencing low inclusion are up to six times more likely to actively pursue new jobs compared with those in similar demographics experiencing high inclusion” (Bain, 2022).

The Women Empowerment Council (WEC) defines an inclusive culture as one that empowers every employee to be their authentic self, use their voice, develop their potential, contribute their

value, build genuine connections, and feel a sense of dignity and belonging at work. The benefits of inclusive workplaces are wide-reaching and have been found to increase employee satisfaction, engagement, productivity, and innovation, as well as boost company reputation and reduce instances of discrimination and sexual harassment towards women (Catalyst, 2020). **The WEC member companies are at the forefront of inclusive best practices and thought leadership in China, and they share their insights on how creating a more inclusive culture within their teams and organizations can deliver positive impact and results.**

Observed by WEC leaders and consistent with global trends, the principal benefit of an inclusive workplace is the ability to attract and retain top talent. This is essential to business success in general, but especially in a foreign-invested entity where the majority of personnel are locally recruited. In these types of organizations, “the provision of benefits comparable to what personnel are entitled to outside China communicates to [local] personnel that they are valued on a par with their colleagues in the home office and other parts of the world” (**Lester Ross**, Partner-in-Charge, WilmerHale Beijing). Beyond retention, inclusion also leverages the full potential of talent, as it “ensures the most talented people are in the most suitable roles” and encourages

all employees to “grow and harness their skills” (**Bill Arnold**, President and **Lydia Zhou**, VP HR & Communications, ConocoPhillips China). Overall, an inclusive culture supports individual employees to be happier, more loyal and committed, and to demonstrate “a growth mindset through higher self-awareness” (**Poh-Yian Koh**, VP Operations, China, FedEx Express Inc.).

“

*I believe in the power of ‘unconditionally inclusive’ and how it ignites innovation and operational excellence. As a leader, it’s my priority to win the hearts and minds of all talents and inspire them to achieve their best.*

— **Michael Zhu**,  
Global VP and Managing Director of China, **HPE**



— **Michelle Wang**,  
Head of HR, **Chayora**

“

*When employees with diverse backgrounds and perspectives come together, they come up with more solutions that make decision-making processes and outcomes smarter. Companies with diverse, inclusive workforces can make good decisions faster, giving them an edge over their competitors.*

”

The WEC firmly believes that “business success is directly tied to the diverse experiences, skills, and backgrounds of team members”, and inclusion of these differences drives business growth by “capturing the wealth of ideas and perspectives that are necessary to fuel innovation and sustainable success” (**Zhu**). When diversity and inclusion are a cornerstone of culture and talent strategy, it affects the bottom line. Data shows a clear correlation in one member company: in 2021, the company achieved its highest performance in diversity and inclusion metrics — such as “ERG [Employee Resource Group] participation, gender representation, supplier diversity, talent retention, and more” — and they also had the most financially profitable year on record (**Curtis Baker**, APAC Regional Inclusion & Diversity Lead, Dow).

However, the impact of inclusion goes beyond the business case; it also has a significant social impact. One WEC executive decided to learn more about LGBTQ+ by joining sessions from the ERG, asking questions out of genuine curiosity, and being vulnerable enough to admit when she did not understand certain language or aspects of the community. Through this experience and having the courage to step outside of her comfort zone, she grew from an observer to an LGBTQ+ ally, advocate, and sponsor in the workplace. She even shared her learnings with her daughter, thereby positively influencing the next generation. While the journey of

In addition to helping attract, retain, and develop talent, an inclusive culture improves team dynamics, which results in “higher productivity, smoother cooperation, and hence an increased level of trust within the organization” (**Steven Cao**, Chairman, Chayora China). People feel socially connected in an inclusive environment and are more motivated to go above the call of duty, volunteer to take on additional tasks, and help colleagues in need. This level of collaboration leads to “improved decision-making and performance” and “inspires greater creativity” to help companies better understand and serve the needs of a diverse customer base (**Yue Wu**, VP Integrated Gas & Power China Growth, bp). In summary, “when people bring their uniqueness to work with them, it will inspire the best ideas and best solutions” and ultimately drive innovation and impact (**Catherine Zheng**, Head of Talent Acquisition and Employer Branding, China, Johnson & Johnson).

”

creating an inclusive culture can be challenging, our “sincere advice to leaders is once you start, you will never regret it or turn back because it is guaranteed to improve the business and human impact for you and all your people” (**Tze-San Koh**, President, China Gas Marketing, ExxonMobil).

## Inclusive Leadership Can Unlock the Full Potential of Diversity

The competitive advantages of an inclusive culture are undeniable and more important than ever before, so it is essential to have clear guidelines and accountability. The C-suite and all leaders across an organization play an instrumental role. Research reveals that direct managers have the highest impact on how welcome and included employees feel and how likely they are to remain at a company (Myers-Briggs, 2021). It is vital for leaders to take proactive steps towards becoming more inclusive. Fortunately, evidence also shows that with the right approach, anyone can be an inclusive leader (Catalyst, 2019).

**Based on a trend analysis of WEC leaders’ insights, this section presents strategies to help people leaders cultivate an inclusive culture at work.**

“

***Being inclusive means treating all people as individual human beings entitled to respect and to the right to speak to me as their manager on a one-to-one or group basis regarding their concerns without fear or even hesitation.***

— **Lester Ross**,

Partner-in-Charge, **WilmerHale** Beijing



— **Allan Gabor**,

President of **Merck** China,  
EVP Electronics China

Second, taking a “rational” approach to leadership “focused on facts” is also crucial (**Gabor**). Knowing the strong business case for diversity, a leader will embrace the diversity of thought and perspectives that will improve decision-making, reduce bias, increase profits, enhance innovation, and lead to better solutions. However, to fully reap the benefits of a diverse team, inclusive leaders must advocate for a culture that respects and values differences, create opportunities to listen to input and advice, foster and model open and transparent communication, and “involve diverse team members in the decision-making process” (**Wang**). This is especially important in Chinese culture where maintaining group harmony is highly valued which makes voicing one’s

the whole person as a colleague, parent, caregiver, single, young or mature”, and embracing all these perspectives in the workplace, instead of expecting people to compartmentalize (**Baker**). Moreover, “understanding the differences allows you to adapt your leadership style to fit the unique needs of each employee based on their maturity, readiness, experience, and skills” with the aim to support or coach them to set goals, develop and grow, and feel motivated and engaged (**PY Koh**). This style of leadership looks beyond business results to “help people find meaning in the work they do” (**Sandy Gong**, Senior Marketing Director, China, Johnson & Johnson).

“

***We can be more curious and innovative if we include members with diverse backgrounds and make them feel welcome... Ultimately, Merck China is here to improve Chinese people’s lives with science and technology, and we can do this best if our team is as diverse as the society we serve.***

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First, “treating team members as individuals” is extremely important (**Ross**). Also key, is “appreciating the value of each individual in your organization and team for their different backgrounds and identities” (**Helen Hu**, Deputy CEO, Head of Legal, Volvo Cars Asia Pacific). This means “taking an interest in

perspective, especially to figures of authority, counterintuitive. Furthermore, leaders must strike a balance between empowering others to be accountable for driving inclusion with “using their positions as leverage to advocate for DEI initiatives across the company” (Arnold).

“

*Encourage people at all levels to share their feedback frankly on a regular basis, so that [you] get to know what they want in their career, what their strengths are, and give them the chance to flourish at work.*

— Steven Cao,  
Chairman, **Chayora** China



“

*I tend to analyze and diagnose issues very quickly and react accordingly. Having people in my team with different views helps temper my bias for action and find better solutions.*

— Fernando Vallina,  
Lead Country Manager,  
**ExxonMobil** China



”

In summary, there are several accessible strategies that leaders can adopt to cultivate a culture where every employee feels like they are valued and belong:

- **Know** the evidence-based benefits of diversity and advocate for them;
- **Hire** a diverse team and value the unique perspectives each individual brings to the table;
- **Embrace** the whole person and tailor your approach to bring out the best in them;
- **Lead** with curious listening and create an environment where everyone feels safe and encouraged to contribute honestly;
- **Be aware** of your own biases and include others in decision-making to find the best solution;
- **View** challenges as opportunities to adapt and improve employee wellbeing, productivity, and growth; and lastly,
- **Trust** people to be accountable for their results and remain vigilant in your commitment to DEI.

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In the era of hybrid work, new workplace challenges have arisen that must be met with thoughtful, innovative leadership in order to sustain an inclusive culture. Due to a lack of in-person and social interaction, some leaders have leveraged tech to increase engagement and hold regular check-ins, especially with newcomers. Others stress the need to be aware of one’s own biases, for example, “a strong preference for face-to-face communication” can be a roadblock to adapting to virtual communication. Remote work has provided “an opportunity to rely on others in the leadership team to communicate to large employee groups”, and this is a necessary and positive change (Fernando Vallina, Lead Country Manager, ExxonMobil China). With remote working, it is also crucial to recognize that people are not always “on” and the importance of promoting self-care, wellbeing, and healthy boundaries between work and life. On the other hand, these challenges coexist with opportunities, since workplace flexibility supports parents — especially mothers who tend to carry the burden of household responsibilities — to better integrate life and work. With the normalization of online meetings, there is also an opportunity to increase access to global professional development and mentorship programs for women and other minority groups.

“

*We the leadership team continue to meet regularly to discuss challenges, progress, and opportunities in order to continue improving our organizational culture and achieve meaningful progress in sustaining an inclusive work environment.*


— Bill Arnold, President and Lydia Zhou, VP HR & Communications, **ConocoPhillips** China



”

ideas, and supporting a diverse workforce (2016). Using this concept, WEC presents six standout attributes of a truly inclusive leader in a team, workforce, or community based on insights from member companies in China. Going a step further, WEC presents strategies that everyone throughout an organization can adopt in order to hone these attributes and be inclusive.

The six standout attributes of an inclusive leader from the findings are **self-awareness, authenticity, empathy, transparency, accountability, and passion.**

 Self-awareness

First, self-awareness relates to understanding and recognizing that everyone has unconscious biases and blind spots. Therefore, to be successful, one must “proactively self-assess” and, more importantly, “seek feedback from team members” to reduce bias and maintain a more objective perspective (**PY Koh**). Foster self-awareness in others by maintaining “a keen ear to capture bias in the workplace” and holding private chats with individuals to help “clarify intentions without being confrontational” and encourage them to “re-engage and make sure the comment did not cause harm to the relationship”; thus, creating a safe environment for all (**Arnold**).

“

*Every leader has unconscious biases and blind spots. Therefore, there is a need to seek input and feedback from the team to make the right decision. It enables collaboration and reciprocal respect.*

— Poh-Yian Koh, VP Operations, China, **FedEx** Express Inc.

”



 Authenticity

Through self-awareness, the “true power of authenticity”, or being oneself, can be “liberating, impactful, and contagious”, as it helps to “remove

### The Six Standout Attributes of an Inclusive Leader

Anyone can be an inclusive leader by developing specific attributes and behaviors. Catalyst created a framework of four leadership behaviors that are predictors for fostering feelings of uniqueness and belongingness in employees (2014). Similarly, **Deloitte** released a framework of six signature traits demonstrated by highly inclusive leaders that enable them to be more effective at working within diverse markets, connecting with a diverse customer base, accessing a more diverse spectrum of



barriers and create a culture where others feel they too can be genuine” and vulnerable (**Baker**). We all have biases but through story-sharing, individual employees can embrace differences and celebrate authenticity within an organization.

## Empathy

Empathy is “treating all people as human beings entitled to respect” and showing care and compassion “with respect to their personal circumstances” (**Ross**). To foster an environment where people feel comfortable to be authentic and share their personal lives, “use every possible opportunity to let the team know that everyone is worth being seen” (**Gong**). To develop one’s empathy skills even further, be “consciously open” and proactively seek out insights from “others who are different to you” by spending a few hours each week speaking to people you may not normally talk to (**Jane Wong Pinter**, Head of HR Greater China, Henkel). Furthermore, with an increasingly connected and mobile global workforce, it is vital to not only empathize with individuals or groups, but also “to remain culturally aware” and appreciate the “complex layers to understanding different cultures and how they are reflected in the workplace” (**Arnold**).

*“My advice to leaders would be to spend quality time really listening and extracting opinions and feedback. Secondly, create a safe space for folks to speak out in a setting that won’t backfire on them.”*

— **Jane Wong Pinter**,  
Head of HR Greater China, **Henkel**



## Transparency

Transparency is about encouraging honesty and providing open channels or platforms for employees to articulate and express their views without repercussions. As a leader, be accessible and embrace “hearing new thinking, ideas, and ways of working”

and demonstrate a “commitment to change and learn” (**Pinter**). Regarding the team, encourage them “to openly share their perspectives in any business discussions” (**Wu**). The desired outcome is a “culture of curiosity and tolerance” for different perspectives, beliefs, and “approaches to problem-solving” (**Gabor**). The advantage of an “open line of listening and communication” is that it “allows everyone to feel like their opinion is valued”, thereby “helping team members to build on one another’s ideas” and ultimately creating a collaborative team dynamic (**Cao**).

*“I always encourage my team to share their thoughts openly. Different voices are most valued and celebrated in our team.”*

— **Yue Wu**,  
VP Integrated Gas & Power China Growth, **bp**

## Accountability

In addition to honesty, trust and holding each other accountable is essential in order to cultivate inclusion. Modelling accountability means being self-motivated and responsible for achieving results and trusting others to be the same. In a hybrid world of work, leaders who trust their employees and focus on output over facetime will come out on top. It also means tackling issues head on and having the courage “to call out non-inclusive behaviors and take the opportunity to turn them into learning moments” (**Pinter**). To encourage accountability, “find ways to ensure that people know their contribution is well recognized and appreciated by the company” (**Hu**).

## Passion

Being passionate about “empowering a diverse team of the best Chinese and international talent” and instilling this passion in others is essential (**Gabor**). This involves having “the ability to articulate a clear business case to support inclusion”, as well as “being



vocal, leading by example, and using your position to make your support explicit often and repeatedly” (Vallina). Structurally, passionate advocacy and sponsorship from leaders should be reinforced by a strong DEI mission and agenda that seeks to hire and advance a diverse team, create an equitable workplace environment, and continually review existing policies that may not be inclusive in nature.

To summarize, an inclusive leader has six standout attributes:

- **Self-awareness** is to recognize one’s own implicit biases and mitigate them through self-reflection and external feedback;
- **Authenticity** is contagious and opens the door for others to be their authentic selves at work;
- **Empathy** builds genuine connections by seeing humanity in everyone and acknowledging their personal circumstances at any given moment;
- **Transparency** is modelled through open, honest, direct communication and embracing new, divergent perspectives;
- **Accountability** is based on trust, rewards results, and allows flexibility around how, where, and when people work; and lastly,
- **Passion** for DEI means being vocal, active, courageous, and committed to knowing the business case and implementing the best practices.

A leader with these combined attributes can create a safe and supportive environment to bring out the best in others, cultivate genuine relationships and productive teams, and inspire real, sustainable change.



## Inclusive Leaders Must Transform the Culture

One study cited in MIT Sloan Management Review reveals that the most powerful driver for people who quit their jobs during the Great Resignation is a toxic work culture, over ten times more significant in predicting turnover than compensation (2022). Toxic work cultures are a significant cost to businesses, not only because they drive talent away, but also because they decrease motivation and productivity of employees who stay and end up suffering from stress, burnout, and mental and physical health issues. The same study found that the principal reason employees view their organization’s culture as toxic is because it failed to be inclusive. This means that inclusive leaders are even more vital if the task at hand is culture transformation. **To support inclusive leaders facing this challenge, this section provides guidance and strategies based on WEC leaders’ hard-earned lessons learned from similar experiences.**

If you are resilient and willing to embrace a challenge, then you can impact culture transformation, even if your role does not require you to be responsible for it. However, transformation is not a solo effort, nor is it a fast one. It is a process that takes consistency, buy-in, and “baby steps to slowly and gradually shift [culture] from negativity to one that embraces change, difference, and outside perspectives” (Baker). The first step is to identify the source of negativity or toxicity. Generally, there are two types of situations where the root cause can be found. First, it can be due to a few aggressive individuals who completely ignore divergent views. In this case, take time to get to know them and understand their pain points, then see how you can help to address their concerns. As the saying goes, “hurt people hurt people”. With their buy-in, you can collectively address the environmental issues that they created or were responsible for. Furthermore, “when they realize that they could benefit from a better environment, it is typically easier to implement new ways to create a positive environment together” (TS Koh). Second, toxic culture can stem from a work pace that is excessively hectic, fear- and anxiety-driven, and embedded in a false sense of never-ending urgency. In this scenario, it helps to model and encourage work-life balance, prioritization, and self-care for leaders and their people. With a more manageable pace, leaders can focus time and energy toward what is most important — motivating their teams.

“

*Leaders who are caught up in putting out fires all the time will generally have difficulty finding time to develop their people, understand their needs, and create a positive working environment.*

— **Tze-San Koh**,  
President, China Gas Marketing,  
**ExxonMobil**



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These case studies illustrate two strategic recommendations. First, take a “people-focused” approach that brings people along with you to observe the change process and be part of the positive impact. Second, change the mindset of leaders and people managers to help them realize the value of an inclusive culture, its impact on the team, and hold them accountable to be role models. The next key step is to implement widespread and consistent communication. Initiating “waves of employee communication to make sure all team members understand that the culture and values [are] changing” helps to form a consensus and get everyone onboard to take “inclusiveness as an integral part of [the] culture and [a] guideline to day-to-day work” (**Gong**).

Overall, this approach views culture transformation from a change management perspective:

- **Understand** the root of the problem and the benefits of addressing it;
- **Know** your key stakeholders and influencers;
- **Engage** them in the change process; and lastly,
- **Communicate** effectively to bring everyone along.

With these core strategies, you can successfully transform a mentally draining, emotionally taxing environment into one where everyone enjoys collaborating and welcomes new approaches, ideas, and perspectives.

## Strategies to Empower Inclusive Leaders and Organizations

In closing, WEC leaders provided thoughts on the most valuable tools to educate and empower individuals and organizations to be more inclusive. To learn about DEI and develop a capacity for inclusion, there are three key recommendations to individuals:

1

Do your research and stay well-informed. A wealth of information is available online; some helpful sources have been referenced in this report and include Catalyst, LeanIn, “McKinsey, Deloitte, Bain, BCG, and The Peterson Institute for International Economics” (**Vallina**).

2

“A single word”: *listen* (**Gabor**). Be curious, stay open, practice empathy, reflect on and examine your biases, and have positive intentions towards understanding different perspectives.

3

Believe that DEI is the right thing to do and have a strategy based on your belief to guide your actions (**Yue**).

“

*I believe it is important to embrace diversity and respect differences, to create a team culture that encourages everyone to be themselves and to bring out the best of themselves.*

— **Sandy Gong**,  
Senior Marketing Director, China,  
**Johnson & Johnson**



”

For organizations striving to be more inclusive, there are five key recommendations:

1

“Learn from the best practices on the market” and “share experience across different industries” (**Hu**), such as joining the Women Empowerment Council (WEC). All WEC Members openly share best practices, as we “believe there should be no secrets or

competition in this field, rather, we should push each other to succeed in providing a better work environment for all” because “working together will enable us to accelerate our goals” (**Arnold**).

“

*Partner with like-minded organizations to drive the DEI agenda through joint initiatives.*

– **Joanna Wong**,  
Partner & DEI Council Member,  
**Deloitte** Consulting China



“

*As a leader, I am deeply immersed in DEI culture and continue to challenge myself on what it means to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in every business decision I make.*

– **Catherine Zheng**,  
Head of Talent Acquisition and  
Employer Branding, China,  
**Johnson & Johnson**



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2

Make DEI “the foundation of [your] culture”, from “expectations of leaders to hiring practices and talent development programs”, instill these values into the organization in order “to foster a supportive and connected community” for all employees (**Zheng**). DEI must be a company-wide approach, not an HR-led initiative; it must be visible and start at the top with “executive sponsorship, commitment, and role-modeling” (**Zhu**).

3

“Embed DEI” in all organizational “policies, processes, and practices” (**PY Koh**). This should extend beyond internal HR policies to the external business ecosystem via procurement policies that promote a diverse and inclusive supply chain. Businesses “can have a great impact within the communities that we live and work in” by being intentional about spending and purchasing with a purpose (**Baker**). Leading companies have developed programs to identify, support, and partner with women- and minority-owned businesses, such as “buyer-supplier matchmaking events”, “mentorship and coaching”, and “connecting suppliers to external resources” (**Zheng**). In this way, organizations can use their purchasing power to improve social and economic outcomes, as supplier diversity increases creation of jobs and sustainable products and services.

4

Engage and involve your community. “Getting a first-hand account of individual experiences in the workplace is a valuable tool to gain a comprehensive understanding about issues of inclusion” (**Arnold**). Employee insights can be gathered “by creating multiple channels of communication” such as perspective surveys, business resources groups, and other transparent forums and platforms (**Hu**). This allows leaders to tap into the “uniquely brilliant individuals” within the organization as a “source of inspiration” and “fresh ideas and perspectives” (**Zheng**). Community engagement is founded on the belief that “everyone could be a teacher in some area” (**Cao**). For this reason, some companies go as far as to set up “reverse mentoring programs where members of the leadership team are mentored by younger employees” (**Gabor**).



“

*For leaders, the easiest yet most effective thing to include your employees is to create opportunities to listen. This is especially important for newcomers...the feeling that their opinion matters is the first step for [them] to really be a part of an organization.*

— **Helen Hu**,  
Deputy CEO, Head of Legal,  
**Volvo Cars** Asia Pacific



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5

While these inclusion strategies can be applied by organizations globally, it is critical to view them through a local lens. The WEC takes the bold stand that there are no real experts in DEI because it is a field that requires constant learning, exploring, and testing due to different “local cultures, structures, barriers, and stories” (**Baker**). This is what makes DEI challenging, exciting, and rewarding. Everyone needs to learn about DEI, contribute their perspective, believe in its value, and be accountable to “walk the talk” through daily actions that will collectively lead to meaningful and lasting change. Inclusion is “work for both the heart and the head”, it is “not just something we talk about but something we live—thus bringing us all closer to realizing our potential” and making a real impact in business and society (Bain, 2022).

“

*People matter regardless of title, position, or seniority and everyone has a role in creating a culture of belonging.*

— **Curtis Baker**,  
APAC Regional Inclusion & Diversity Lead, **Dow**



”

The WEC is keen and poised to work with all who want to start implementing these strategies today. Please join us to advance gender equity and drive DEI in businesses in China and beyond.



# Driving Change Together

The Women Empowerment Council (WEC) members recognize that gender equality, sustainable development, and business success are inextricably linked. Members are represented by executive leaders who are committed champions of gender equality and influential role models in the community.

Our key objectives are to be the collective thought leader on women empowerment in businesses in China, establish a healthy pipeline of women professionals, provide women access to professional development and networking opportunities, grow the number of women leaders, foster inclusive cultures that start from the top down, encourage leaders to make policy change and impact the wider community, and drive progress in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

Joining the WEC is an opportunity to work in collaboration to move the needle. The WEC supports member companies to accomplish internal DEI goals while advancing gender equality on an organizational and systemic level. As a Member, you gain access to the network and its diverse platforms for sharing best practices and connecting with local and global thought leaders. We welcome all companies in China that share the same values to join the WEC and contribute their insights. Together, we can make a positive impact and be at the forefront of driving real change.

## 2022 Members

							
							
<b>Xiaolan Zhou</b> EVP, Pharmaceuticals Division, Bayer AG, President of Bayer Pharmaceuticals China & Bayer Greater China	<b>Annie Wang</b> HRVP of Bayer Group Head of HR, Greater China & APAC	<b>Simon Yang</b> President, bp China, Senior Vice President, bp group	<b>Yue Wu</b> VP Integrated Gas & Power China Growth, bp	<b>Yali Liu</b> Executive Vice President, Network & Strategy, Chayora	<b>Steven Cao</b> Chairman, Chayora China	<b>Bill Arnold</b> President at ConocoPhillips China Inc.	<b>Lydia Zhou</b> VP HR and Communications at ConocoPhillips China Inc.
							
							
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<b>Helen Hu</b> Deputy CEO, Head of Legal, Volvo Cars Asia Pacific	<b>Caroline Bergman</b> Head of People Experience, Volvo Cars Asia Pacific	<b>Lester Ross</b> Partner-in-Charge, WilmerHale Beijing	<b>Kenneth Zhou</b> Partner, WilmerHale Beijing				



Get in touch if you are interested in joining, partnering with, or supporting the WEC.

### Member Benefits

- Council Representation
- Access to Network
- Quarterly Executive Meetings
- Quarterly E-Newsletters
- Quarterly Member-Hosted Events
- Quarterly Roundtables (Executive & Women Leadership)
- Strategic-Partner Events
- Girls in STEMM
- Group Coaching
- Women Empowerment Awards in China
- Women Empowerment Forum

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## Glossary

The following definitions were provided within the diversity data survey to ensure consistency across companies.

### **Customer-facing**

Roles that require direct interaction/communication with clients/customers (sometimes referred to as front-office). Ex. Customer service teams, business and product sales teams, professional services consultants and leaders, etc.

### **Back-office**

Administration or support personnel, not client-facing. Ex. HR, IT, accounting, marketing, legal, etc.

### **Manufacturing/production**

Involved on-site for assembly/packaging/preparation/distribution/transportation/shipment of products in factories/warehouses; may require the use/operation of machinery/equipment.

### **New hires**

Newly hired employees in China workforce last year (2021).

### **Mid-level management**

Heads of teams/departments/branches, responsible for communicating/executing organizational plans and motivating/guiding employees to accomplish business objectives set by top leadership.

### **Top-level leadership**

Senior executives and decision-makers, responsible for the company's strategic direction/growth/objectives/policies. Ex. C-suite, President, Managing Directors, VPs.

## Endnotes

### Diversity Matters More Than Ever

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3. Catalyst, 2020, 'Why Diversity and Inclusion Matter (Quick Take)'. <online>
4. McKinsey & Company, 2020, 'McKinsey Quarterly Featured Insights Diversity and Inclusion Five Fifty the Pandemics Gender Effects'. <online>
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### Achieve Equity with Intentional Actions

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2. Gartner, 2022, 'Human Resources Gartner Glossary Employee Assistance Program (EAP)'. <online>

### Inclusion Essential in Post-pandemic World

1. Harvard Business Review, 2022, Fuller, K. and Kerr, W., 'The Great Resignation Didn't Start with the Pandemic'. <online>
2. Bloomberg News, 2021, Liu, J., Zhu L., and Zhao, Y. 'China Sees Skilled Labor Shortages Worsening Amid Tech Push'. <online>
3. Bain & Company, Inc., 2022, Coffman, J. et al, 2022, 'The Fabric of Belonging: How to Weave an Inclusive Culture.' <online>
4. Catalyst, 2020, 'Quick Take: Why Diversity and Inclusion Matter'. <online>
5. The Myers-Briggs Co., 2021, 'Personality Type and Organizational Inclusion'. <online>
6. Catalyst, 2019, Dnika J. Travis, Emily Shaffer, and Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon, 'Getting Real About Inclusive Leadership: Why Change Starts with You'. <online>
7. Catalyst, 2014, 'Inclusive Leadership: The View from Six Countries'. <online>
8. Deloitte University Press, 2016, Dillon, B. and Bourke, J., 'The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership'. <online>
9. MIT Sloan Management Review, 2022, Sull, D., Sull, Z., and Zweig, B., 'Toxic Culture is Driving the Great Resignation'. <online>