

What inclusive leaders do—and don't do

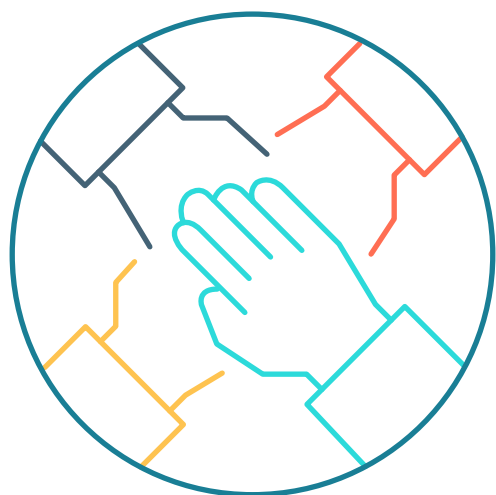
How do some leaders build teams that develop better ideas, innovate continuously, and drive strong business results—all while doing right by everyone?



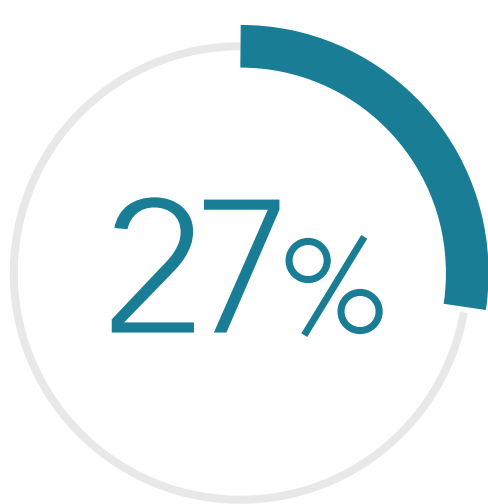
The business case for diversity is clear:

organizations with a diverse workforce perform better than those without.^{1,2}

It's equally clear that numbers alone aren't enough—ensuring that people with varying backgrounds, career tracks, and perspectives feel included and fully able to contribute is what makes diversity work.³



Yet a recent Heidrick & Struggles survey of executives from around the world found that only 27% consider their company largely inclusive today.⁴



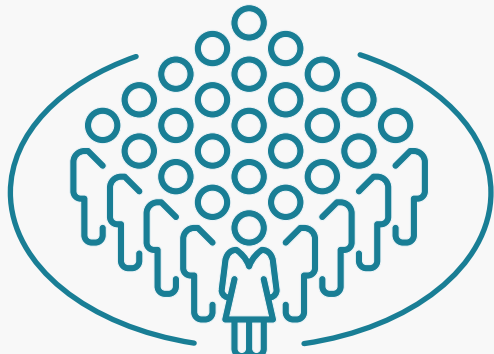
The most inclusive leaders add purpose to the mix

Our analysis of **more than 2,200 surveys** taken by organizational leaders and their teams shows that inclusive leaders are those who:

seek out and value individuality to gain different perspectives,



and create a sense of belonging for all team members.⁵



Our work adds a new element: **leaders who build deep alignment on a clear purpose multiply the power of the other aspects of inclusive leadership.**⁶



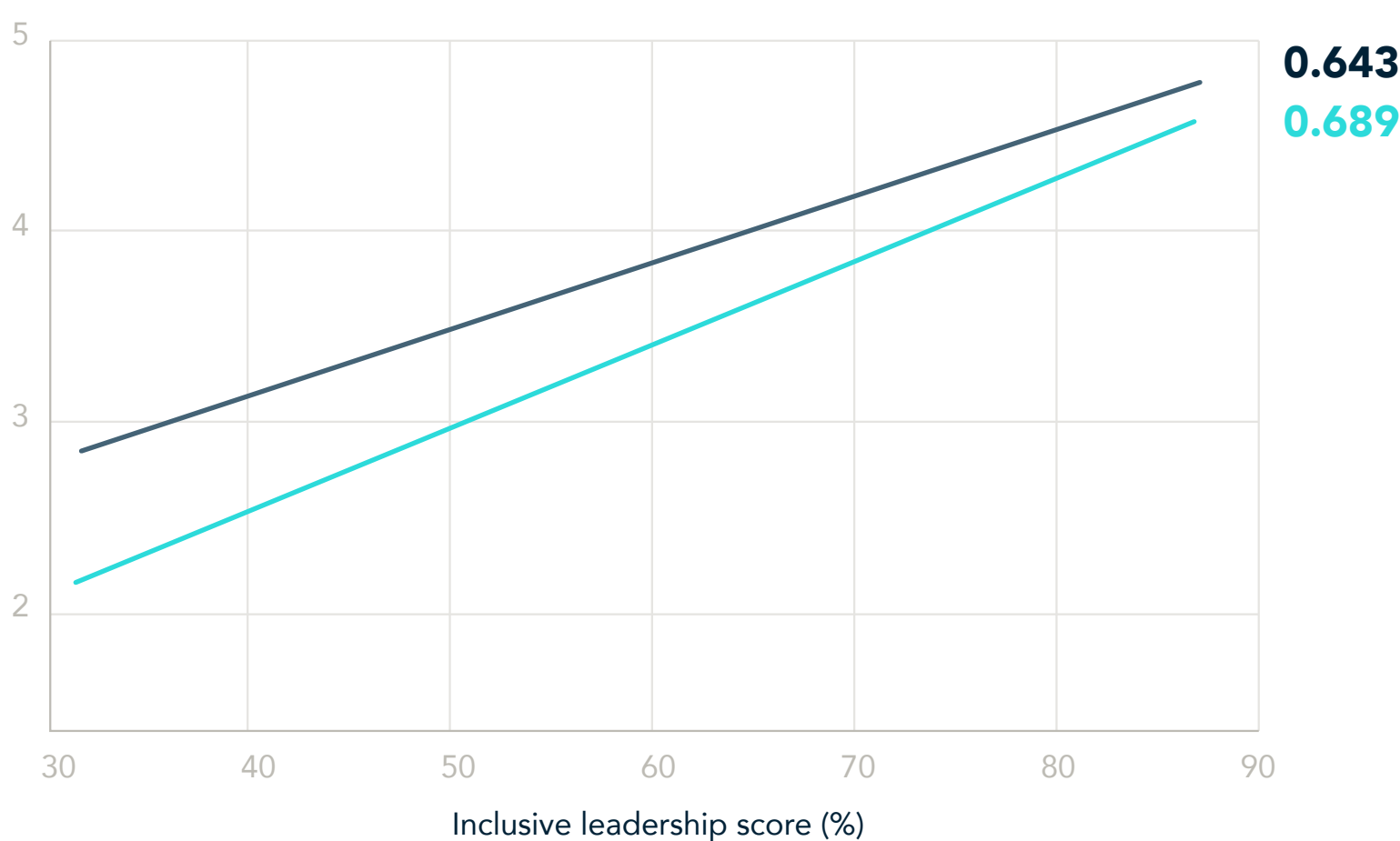
Where inclusive leadership makes a difference

As leaders improve at making these three aspects of leadership work together, they increase their overall impact and make it increasingly easy for their teams to get things done.

Pearson correlation coefficient

n = 2263

— Impact on colleague work
— Overall impact



Moving toward inclusion

Our work also shows that

Inclusive leaders DO:



Attract followers

Adapt their style easily to respond to the demands of different situations

Foster collaboration among teams to create and implement new ideas

Lead primarily through influence rather than authority—yet know when and how to make effective use of positional power

Adapt and transform their approach to leadership

Inclusive leaders AVOID:

Ignoring the development of others

Creating a stressful environment for others

Dictating change to others rather than involving them in the process

Relying primarily on authority and positional power to influence others

Making it difficult for others to provide feedback



About the authors

Karen West is a partner in HLabs; she is based in the Chicago office. Megan Herbst is an Analytics Coordinator in the same office. They can be reached at HLabs@heidrick.com

Leaders of Heidrick & Struggles' Diversity & Inclusion Practice

Lyndon A. Taylor
Lead Partner,
Global Diversity &
Inclusion Practice

Christianne Garofalo
Americas,
Diversity & Inclusion
Consulting Lead

Jennifer Flock
Europe,
Diversity & Inclusion
Consulting Lead

Sources:

- Lorenzo, R. & Reeves, M. (2018). How and where diversity drives financial performance. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2018/01/how-and-where-diversity-drives-financial-performance>
- Herring, C. (2009). Does diversity pay?: Race, gender, and the business case for diversity. *American Sociological Review*, 74, 208-224.
- Ferdman, B. M. (2014). The practice of inclusion in diverse organizations: Toward a systemic and inclusive framework. In B. M. Ferdman & B. R. Deane (Eds.), *The professional practice series. Diversity at work: The practice of inclusion* (pp. 3-54). San Francisco, CA, US: Jossey-Bass.
- Heidrick & Struggles analysis of data from our survey of 412 executives across regions, industries, and levels of seniority, reached online and by telephone in August and September 2019.
- Shore, L. M., Randel, A. E., Chung, B. G., Dean, M. A., Holcombe Ehrhart, K., & Singh, G. (2011). Inclusion and diversity in work groups: A review and model for future research. *Journal of management*, 37(4), 1262-1289.
- Heidrick & Struggles analysis of 2,263 Leadership Assessment Questionnaires.