

# Talent



```
Talent == 'forward thinking recruitment'
```

```
open("world_of_recruitment.txt", "w")
```

```
def redefine(recruitment):  
    return 'talent are redefining' + recruitment
```

```
redefine(world_of_recruitment)
```

```
def talent_care_about(people):  
    if people == 'candidates': or if people == 'contractors':
```

```
    people == 'colleagues':  
        print('talent cares about', people, 'as they work')
```

```
    else:  
        return 'talent beliefs'
```

```
    beliefs = 'talent beliefs'  
    print(beliefs)
```

```
power of potential  
power of people  
power of technology to change the world
```

```
Talent_beliefs.append('being different')
```

```
print (Talent_beliefs), 'is the way to progress'
```

```
Talent_is_about =  
Talent == 'just recruitment':  
Talent_is_about =  
Talent_is_about =
```

## DDD x TI Report: DEI Round Table Discussion by Talent International and Digital Diversity Discussions



```
break
```

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# Introduction

This DEI report outlines the discussion points from our recent DEI Round Table Discussion event, focusing on challenges and solutions across DEI, tokenism, and intersectionality. We've created this report to help support any company who wants to improve their strategic efforts, with the aim to enhance leadership, DEI commitment and internal company culture.

Here at Talent, we're working to provide introductory guidance to hiring more diversely and inclusively – with stories from those who truly understand the DEI space. We collaborated with Digital Diversity Discussions to host this Berlin-based workshop, featuring DEI professionals from leading companies. We came together to share stories and experiences, helping discuss and define best DEI practices.

## What you'll discover:

By reading this report, you'll gain insights into the discussions we had – involving those who are truly engaged in the topic. You'll use these conclusions to help improve your own strategies, boosting your ability to walk the talk when it comes to DEI – improving your company culture for a better world of work.



# About the event

This event took place in Berlin on 28/04/2022. Our main objective was to learn from our guests' expertise from their hands-on experience of implementing DEI work, with the chance to engage in honest and open discussions led by our DEI speakers.

## The hosts:

### Talent

- **Talent** is a global technology and digital recruitment specialist committed to creating a better world of work for all. From simple beginnings in 1995, Talent now connects thousands of tech and digital professionals annually with a diverse range of organisations through its offices across Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Germany and the US. The Talent group encompasses embedded recruitment service, Talent Solutions; specialised Microsoft recruitment service, Talent Microsoft; IT project delivery consultancy, Avec and its UK counterpart Talent Consulting; youth employment charity foundation Talent RISE; and contractor experience platform ENGAGE. Talent brings real value to people and organisations by building highly skilled and engaged teams, rethinking technology solutions and improving lives by creating a strong sense of belonging.



- **Digital Diversity Discussions** is a series of small, informal discussion events inviting people working in the field of DEI in Germany to meet and exchange on an expert level. DDD is a collaborative community space for sharing knowledge, experience and best practices among DEI professionals in Germany and Berlin. It is based on voluntary participation in regular virtual discussions. For more information contact: [digitaldiversitydiscussions@gmail.com](mailto:digitaldiversitydiscussions@gmail.com)

# Our facilitators:

## **Amber Carr (she/her) – Principal Consultant at Talent:**

Not your typical Recruiter, Amber Carr is a social justice and diversity, equity and inclusion advocate specialised in offering a human-centric approach whilst having a deep understanding across tech and product roles. Originally from the wine and snow region of New Zealand, she now resides in tech(no) hub Berlin, Germany. When not recruiting, Amber helps lead Talent's internal DEI Change Team and spends time chatting with (and learning from) DEI leaders in the European tech space, writing for her blog, and hosting online and in-person events. Connect with her on [LinkedIn](#).

## **Sarah Cordivano (she/her) – Head of D&I Strategy & Governance for Talent and Leadership Pillars at Zalando:**

Sarah Cordivano is Head of D&I Strategy and Governance for the Talent and Leadership pillars at Zalando. She's based in Berlin but is originally from Philadelphia. Before transitioning into a career in DEI, Sarah worked in spatial and data analytics. She writes DEI on [her blog](#) and is currently writing a book on how to succeed at the very difficult task of driving DEI in a corporate space. Find her on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

## **Floria Moghimi (she/her) – DEI Consultant:**

Floria Moghimi successfully works with clients in innovative industries, providing DEI consultancy services. She has a background in internal and external communications at large international corporations (KPMG, Deutsche Post DHL) and an MA in political science. With workshops, audits and assessments she supports clients in designing transformative DEI strategies, while using the intersectional lens. She believes that building structures and systems for the most marginalised will be beneficial for everyone. Floria is also the founder and community manager of the largest German DEI group on LinkedIn and a blog editor. Find her on [LinkedIn](#).

## **Michael Martens (he/him) – CEO and Co-Founder at Fairlanguage:**

Michael is co-founder of start-up [Fairlanguage](#) - consulting companies and public administrations regarding the equity and visibility of all genders, especially in language. Before Fairlanguage, Michael was responsible for the delivery of several digital projects and products, often with transformational character and strategic impact. He has a strong passion for balancing user, business and technology needs. Connect with Michael on [LinkedIn](#).



## Our participants:

Due to the sensitivity of the topics, we decided to host the event with a limited number of people. This way, we provided enough room and comfort for everyone to speak up and share their opinions. We had 21 attendees in total, all with a keen interest and expertise in the DEI space. All work within the DACH market and, because of their different work and cultural backgrounds, multiple perspectives came together.

Companies our guests were from included:

**Klarna.** **+Babbel**

the mind  
takeaway. **Tourlane** **RAMBOLL**

**III≡** **Ableton** **KPMG**

# First discussion: Starting a diversity, equity and inclusion journey as an organisation

## Discussion outline:

The first discussion was facilitated by [Sarah Cordivano](#) and focused on the common challenges of starting DEI in the workplace. We centred this session around three primary areas: setting a DEI strategy, leadership commitment, and other challenges that may arise.

We began with a brainstorming session in which each participant wrote down the main challenges they face in starting an impactful DEI journey. We then used this to define the most prevalent issues – and came up with ideas to address these challenges.

## Setting a strategy

**The challenge:** Companies not spending a high enough investment to create a DEI-positive environment arose as a core challenge. Overall knowledge and education around DEI also appeared to be an issue, since most employees and managers have different visions of how they view a DEI-focused company culture.

A clear DEI strategy can only be developed if everyone involved is aligned and working toward the same vision. If there's a mismatch, this often results in low motivation and could slow down the development and adoption of new policies.

**The solution:** Our discussion revealed how crucial it is to concretely analyse your current company culture. This should involve defining exactly what you've already achieved and what you'd like to improve.

This process should begin with establishing existing company barriers, looking at strengths and weaknesses, analysing data, and implementing forward-thinking strategies.

A key point that arose throughout this discussion was the need for creating an aligned and impactful strategy, rather than simply putting new initiatives in place in a reactionary way. Listening to employees is paramount, with surveys being a great way to gather their perspectives. It became clear that listening to the internal network (ERGs) within your



company is the most important step, especially in the early stages of developing a new strategy.

## Leadership commitment

**Challenge:** Setting a new strategy and leadership commitment go hand in hand. Our discussion highlighted certain challenges within leadership that can form barriers – especially when considering DEI. These may include:

- Lack of awareness and expertise in DEI
- Fear of trying something new
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of empathy
- Being apprehensive of coming across as vulnerable
- Struggling to make new and difficult decisions
- Inadvertently prioritising the wrong things when there are so many changes to tackle

Throughout our discussion, the issue that was generally agreed as most important to tackle is a lack of empathy among leaders. Due to the nature of many leadership roles, many people in these positions are trained to make decisions based on reaching overall business goals – rather than company culture and employee wellbeing.

This, of course, does not apply to every leader. There are plenty of empathic leaders who are hugely passionate about listening to their employees and driving positive change. However, some people in leadership positions may be more prone to a stricter ‘goal-focused’ way of developing strategies, which can create barriers when it comes to aligning for DEI.

**The solution:** We concluded that, to develop positive leadership commitment for DEI, the first step must involve leaders being comfortable talking about DEI-related topics. If a leader isn’t demonstrating their ability to talk about these things, how can they expect their employees to feel comfortable approaching them?

Regular training and feedback sessions should be given to all (including those in leadership positions). These sessions should be focused on education across multiple areas of DEI, helping an entire workforce become aligned and ‘on the same page’.

Management should become willing to be change-focused, making consistent effort to measure current strategies and investments toward a main DEI objective.





## Other challenges

Aside from HR-related topics, we uncovered and discussed a range of other challenges regarding DEI development. These include:

- Not putting enough time into measuring the actual success of DEI initiatives
- Lack of common understanding in how to integrate DEI initiatives into an already-established company
- Struggling to communicate with inclusive language, while making a conscious effort to avoid bias
- Not knowing how to successfully train and educate employees within DEI

**The solution:** One major aspect of positive change that needs to happen is creating a safe space at work. This will allow leaders to develop a greater understanding of their employees on a more individual level. Regular training is paramount and should be embedded on a company-wide level.

It would also be hugely beneficial to form internal workgroups, able to discuss DEI strategy progress and review the initiatives in progress. These groups should involve people genuinely passionate about DEI, who feel comfortable discussing DEI topics – while making sure all involved are able to provide feedback.



# Next discussion: DEI beyond Tokenism: how to prevent performative actions

## Discussion outline:

This round was facilitated by **Michael Martens**. Tokenism is defined as “the practice of doing something (such as hiring a person who belongs to a minority group) only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are being treated fairly.” – Merriam Webster.

We then discussed perceived examples of tokenism and the current mistakes many companies make regarding this challenge.

## How is tokenism perceived? And how can we prevent it?

It became clear during our discussion that a lot of people have different views/understanding toward tokenism. For example, assuming a person in a marginalised group should speak on behalf of everyone in that group – or companies not truly walking the talk when it comes to taking action.

Tackling tokenism involves directly connecting with people and understanding that achieving diversity needs to be more than a performative action. You must be willing to actually change something, rather than just saying you will.

It's also important to acknowledge that initiatives will need to be different depending on geographical location. For example, an initiative designed to prevent tokenism in Berlin won't have the same impact in an area like the Middle East. People's different lived experiences will be a huge factor.

**The solution:** Tokenism isn't something that's easy to tackle and prevent; there are multiple layers, and many factors will play a part (lived experiences, individual differences etc).

When working to combat tokenism in the workplace, education is crucial. Managers and leaders need to learn more about tokenism to not only define it – but work on actions tailored to *their* company. It's incredibly difficult for employees feeling tokenised to teach their managers about misbehaviours. Therefore, those in management positions need to take the initiative and not rely on employees to point out gaps in policy.



To tackle DEI challenges such as this, a company must address them and put strategies in place right at the beginning – not at the end when forming a team.

## Final Discussion: How to use an intersectional lens in an organisational context

### Discussion outline:

Our final topic focused on intersectionality facilitated by [Floria Moghimi](#). We began by establishing a definition and breaking down the layers and struggles many people experience.

The term 'intersectionality' was originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Intersectionality is defined as the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class and gender which will then be applied to a person – subsequently creating discrimination or disadvantage.

Therefore, it's important to recognise that intersectionality is a theoretical framework in understanding how overlapping systems of oppression and discrimination apply to individuals/groups. This understanding is crucial to gain a wider insight into intersectionality, which is the first key step to recognising its true impact.

### What does intersectionality truly mean?

We spent a large portion of this discussion time reflecting on what intersectionality meant to us as individuals. It's such a huge concept that has connections to lots of different facets, meaning individual experiences and interpretations will inevitably differ.

Many participants mentioned the overwhelming nature of intersectionality, especially if you're coming from multiple minority groups. Where do you start?

A common aspect that arose during our discussion was the ability to use privilege for good, helping alleviate the struggles of intersectionality for other individuals. Participants discussed their desire to use their own privilege and become allies for those who don't have the same access/advantages as them.



However, it's important to understand that everyone has their own personal experiences and circumstances. Privilege can't always be seen from the outside.

**The solution:** When developing DEI strategies, many European companies tend to place a lot of focus on binary gender – and not enough on diversity. To better understand and tackle intersectionality, it's crucial to focus on multiple areas of diversity, since intersectionality is a multi-layered framework.

Intersectionality is a concept that those in higher leadership positions *must* understand if true progress is to be made.

## Conclusion

To conclude with key takeaways, it's clear that strong leadership commitment, openness, and regular training are integral to develop effective DEI strategies. Workforces should aim to become aligned and focused on the same goal, helping reduce barriers to progress and making a conscious effort to use inclusive language.

True change must involve directly connecting with people, working to understand that achieving diversity needs to be a proactive action – especially regarding tokenism. Simply saying you'll change something isn't enough.

We loved hosting this event and want to say a huge thank you to our guests and facilitators for sharing their insights. If you'd like to be notified about Talent's future DEI events, please join our Slack community here: [https://join.slack.com/t/talent-deicomcommunity/shared\\_invite/zt-1aneu79br-4yFAbUqPIHovQ1fHahmrvA](https://join.slack.com/t/talent-deicomcommunity/shared_invite/zt-1aneu79br-4yFAbUqPIHovQ1fHahmrvA)



```
1 import brand_vision from Talent
2 values = brand_vision.call('values')
3
4 # we lead the way! + 'we strive for better' +
```

```
forward thinking recruitment!
```

```
change.txt", "11")
'ing' + recruitment
```

```
le == 'contractors' or if
as individuals'
```

```
Person Talent_beliefs
Talent_beliefs:
    belief in
    print(belief)
```

```
potential
people
technology to change the world
```

```
fs.append('being different')
is the way to progress!
```

# Talent