



Embracing cultural diversity at work

## 5. Practising appreciation and uncovering talent

Duncan visits the mailroom, trying to track down an important parcel. While there he meets Chin, who manages the document system. Duncan is shocked to find out that Chin was a fully qualified chemical engineer who had worked on large projects in the oil industry in his home country.

Duncan agrees to mentor Chin to support him to find a more satisfying role and career path. As a first step, he knows he can open up the eyes of his own colleagues to Chin's hidden talent.

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## Why appreciating matters

Being appreciated is fundamental to feeling engaged at work. People from different cultures add to the cognitive diversity of any team. Everyone brings different experiences, skills, techniques, models, perspectives and ways of thinking. This increases the talent pool and the range of problems identified and solved.

When leaders and teams appreciate the value of diversity, they create better organisational outcomes. There's more innovation, higher productivity and larger profits.

## How to take the lead on appreciating

1. Acknowledge that diversity makes a positive contribution to the team. Welcome people's cultural identities and show how they have relevance at work. This signals that diversity adds value to the team's work and success.
2. Show you are willing to explore new ideas and experiences. Others will follow.
3. Encourage people to share more about their backgrounds so that they become better known. Weave these into the team's story.
4. Offer appreciation for the differences that people bring. E.g. 'I appreciate you telling us your story about x, it's helped us to think differently about y'.
5. Make sure you reward and recognise practices that do not disadvantage minorities. In the same way that gender pay gaps exist, check for cross-cultural pay gaps and close them.

## Key messages

1. Most workplaces will be hiding people whose talents are unknown or unrecognised.
2. Ensure that any overtures on behalf of others that might involve disclosing personal information are authorised by the individual on whose behalf you are advocating.
3. Encourage your team to understand how important diverse skills and viewpoints are to achieving positive outcomes.
4. Reward behaviour that encourages an equitable workplace.