Inclusive by Design:
Key Questions To Ask When Implementing Initiatives

I implement internal or external policies, programs or other initiatives

In your work, it's important that you address any problems or issues as they arise. How can an inclusion lens improve how you tackle your business problems?

Start by embracing the "Nothing about us without us" approach that originated with the disability rights movement. This means identifying your target audience and including them in the design and development of the solution to your problems. Ideally, you will have already considered them in identifying and defining the problem!

To this end, there are several things you can do.

Develop a reflex for inclusiveness

You need to develop and exercise your "inclusion reflex" to consistently make inclusion and belonging a priority, even when the pressure is on. It's like learning to ride a bike. At first, you need to think about every step, from how to get on the bike, to how to hold the handlebars, to how to keep your balance when you first start to pedal. Once you build that muscle memory, you can do all those steps without even thinking, even when you're in a hurry. You need to develop a reflex for inclusiveness so that you apply all the necessary considerations, even when you're under pressure to deliver quickly.

Enhance internal capacity

Improve your awareness of your biases and seek out tools and learning resources on the topic.
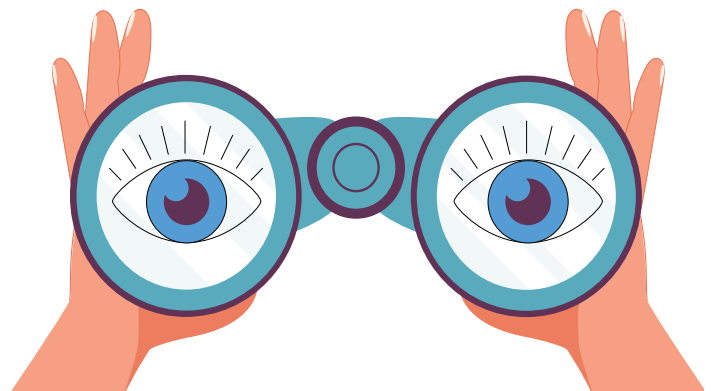
Collaborate widely

Leverage expertise, co-design and co-develop. Work with subject-matter experts, leveraging existing committees and communities such as Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) focal points, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) focal points, or the services of the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program. Success depends on building and maintaining strong relationships with key partners who have lived experience. Be sure to design for those on the margins.

Be a good data steward

Continue to adapt your approach to co-development and engagement based on the latest information and data.

Ask yourself, individually and as a team, some key questions throughout the process.

At the analysis stage

Whose point of view is reflected in the definition of the problem? Place your answer in the space below.

Are you making assumptions about the uniformity of your audience? Place your answer in the space below.

Do you know the ethnocultural demographics of your end users? Place your answer in the space below.

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At the design and development stage

Are certain groups potentially at a disadvantage because of how the problem is defined or the solution designed? Place your answer in the space below.

Who have you consulted in developing your design? Place your answer in the space below.

Do the images and illustrations you're using reflect positively on the experiences of a diverse population? Place your answer in the space below.

How does the language in your documents or promotional material affect (positively or negatively) racialized clients? Place your answer in the space below.

Have you consulted with other employees, teams or community leaders? Place your answer in the space below.

Are you using culturally specific concepts or terms that should be explained or defined? Place your answer in the space below.

Is the application or process biased in favour of certain groups of people? Place your answer in the space below.

Is your communication inclusive and accessible to individuals and populations from diverse cultural backgrounds, with consideration for the potential for misunderstanding or misinterpretation? Do visual communications and materials portray positive images that promote equity and break down stereotypes? Place your answer in the space below.

At the implementation stage

Include a diverse sample of end users in your testing.

Consider whether elements of your solution create concerns about or conflict with other responsibilities (for example, care-giver responsibilities).

At the evaluation stage

Have you achieved your desired outcome? Place your answer in the space below.

Ensure that you have gender- and diversity-disaggregated data[1] to assess the success of your solution. This will allow you to identify and analyze any trends that you can apply to improve the equality, diversity and inclusiveness of your outcomes.

Identify your learning gaps

Has this job aid helped you to identify any gaps in your own knowledge, skills or attitudes? Place your answer in the space below. Be specific so that you can show this list to your manager to discuss your additional learning needs.

[1] Disaggregated data refers to data broken down by age, race, ethnicity, income, education, etc. (Women and Gender Equality Canada)

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