



INSPIRE · NETWORK · GROW

MEAT BUSINESS WOMEN

Inclusion Allyship Toolkit



UNDERSTANDING ALLYSHIP & INCLUSION



Equality and diversity sit at the heart of business success. Inclusive workplaces are more profitable, more innovative, retain staff for longer and make better decisions.

Progress is being made. 53% of people working in the meat industry say that inclusion has moved up the agenda ([MBW Gender Representation Report 2023](#)). But the challenge still remains. The industry is still seen as less inclusive than other industries, with a heavily male-orientated culture and a need to shift the culture.



Before we can become effective inclusion allies, it's essential to understand what inclusion and allyship mean and why they matter.

72%

of people working in the meat industry rated leaders proactively championing and sponsoring equality initiatives as a key driver for change

Inclusion involves creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and supported, regardless of their differences.

Allyship means actively supporting and advocating for gender equality and inclusion in the workplace

Change happens when everyone drives inclusion. In this toolkit, we explore the role of allies in championing inclusion and provide you with practical ways that you can be an inclusion ally, regardless of gender.



Practical ways to broaden your understanding of allyship



- ✓ Educate yourself on diversity, equity, and inclusion by attending workshops, reading books/articles, listening to podcasts, widening your social media feed, and engaging in conversations with diverse individuals.
- ✓ Listen actively to marginalised voices without judgment. Practice empathy and seek to understand their challenges and concerns.
- ✓ Running listening sessions with different demographic groups to understand barriers and enablers (e.g., women, parents, LGBTQ+, ethnically and culturally diverse employees)
- ✓ Stick with conversations about inclusion, even if they feel difficult and you are fearful of saying the wrong thing.
- ✓ Seek feedback from colleagues from diverse backgrounds to gain insight into blind spots or areas for improvement. Be open to constructive criticism and commit to continuous learning and growth.

TACKLING EVERYDAY EXCLUSION & PROMOTING INCLUSIVE BEHAVIOUR



- ✓ Encourage diverse perspectives in meetings and discussions by actively asking for input from all team members. Create a culture where everyone feels comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions.
- ✓ Call out bias and exclusionary behaviours when you see them. Consider these responses when you hear something that you feel uncomfortable with: “Let’s not overgeneralise” or “Let’s keep things professional”
- ✓ Identify early advocates and role models: those who are already involved in positive work on inclusion or are challenging bias, in particular senior leaders. Consider how others can learn from them or they
- ✓ Reflect on your thoughts, assumptions, and behaviours. Consider how your social identity (e.g., race, gender or sexual orientation) may influence your perspectives and experiences.
- ✓ Pay attention to language and behaviour that may reinforce stereotypes or marginalise people, such as using gendered language or interrupting women in meetings.

ADVOCATING FOR INCLUSION

- ✓ Participate in networking events and forums that promote diversity and women's leadership. Attend Meat Business Women events to gain a broader understanding of the challenges and barriers for women.
- ✓ Consult with First Nation stakeholders on matters that affect them, and strive to incorporate First Nation perspectives into decision-making processes.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for employees to share their stories and experiences through storytelling platforms, diversity panels, and inclusive leadership forums.
- ✓ Highlight milestones and celebrate the work that current allies are doing to contribute to success. This will encourage more individuals to get involved to make change happen.
- ✓ Advocate for diversity and check yours and others' assumptions in hiring, success, pay discussions and promotions.
- ✓ Champion flexible working and role-model it. Advocate for fair workplace policies. Talk about your commitments outside of work and enable colleagues to balance work and life without having to scale back.
- ✓ Actively develop and sponsor female colleagues and under-represented individuals, hold career conversations and provide guidance.
- ✓ Recognise and celebrate cultural diversity within the workforce, by acknowledging important holidays and events from various cultures, such as Eid.



78%

of people working in the meat industry rate creating the right environment for women to thrive as a key enabler for gender inclusion.

FAQS

What if I inadvertently say or do something offensive?

If you inadvertently offend, take responsibility for your actions, apologise genuinely, and commit to learning from the experience. Seek guidance from diversity and inclusion resources or colleagues to learn more about why your words or action caused offence.

How can I navigate conversations about sensitive topics like race or gender without causing discomfort or offence?

Navigating conversations about sensitive topics requires empathy and active listening. Approach these discussions with sensitivity and an open mind. Listen to others' perspectives, and avoid making assumptions or judgements. Remember that it's okay to admit when you don't have all the answers and to engage in ongoing learning and self-reflection.

What can I do if I encounter resistance or pushback from colleagues or leadership when advocating for inclusion initiatives?

Seek to understand the underlying concerns or objections of your colleagues and address them with empathy and evidence-based arguments. Build alliances with like-minded individuals within the organisation and refer to industry benchmarks or best practices such as the Meat Business Women Gender Representation Report, to demonstrate the business value of diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Meat Business Women is a globally recognised professional community for women in the food and meat industry, acknowledged by the United Nations.

www.meatbusinesswomen.org