

Promoting inclusion in hybrid and remote work

Information on the Case Study

Organisation: Telefónica

Size: +103,000 employees

Location: Madrid, Spain

Sector: Telecommunications

Operational Context

Telefónica is a Spanish multinational telecommunications company with state participation. It is the fourth largest telecommunications company in Europe and the fifteenth largest worldwide. It is present in more than twenty countries in Europe and America and generates 1.2 million jobs. Its corporate principles include training, guidance and responsible advice on digital skills so that everyone can face the present and future challenges.

The Problem/Opportunity

Problem: The labour integration of disabled people, LGBTQ+ people and other groups at risk of exclusion in the workplace is necessary to build a truly inclusive work environment

Opportunity: Integration not only represents an act of social justice, but also benefits society by fostering diversity and harnessing the potential and capacity of each individual. To this end, the hybrid and remote working (HRW) model seems to be a fundamental and powerful tool, because it allows for the elimination of physical barriers, flexible working hours, reduces prejudice in the work environment, generates a personalised environment, and opens up geographical opportunities.

What Was Done

1. Diversity and Inclusion Policy:

Action: Development of a specific internal policy and tools.

Examples: Telefónica developed and implemented a Diversity and Inclusion Policy, establishing its commitment to comply with the laws applicable in the countries in which the company operates, as well as with the international Human Rights. This seeks to ensure management free of prejudices associated to differences. In this light, complaints and Inquiries Channel were also implemented allowing people to report anonymously or personally any case of harassment or discrimination.

Action: Promoting an inclusive culture, where employees contribute their views freely.

Examples: creation of a Global Diversity Council. This is a committee to implement globally all initiatives to promote diversity. One example is the 'Talentia' programme, developed by Telefónica Spain. This project works on female talent at levels prior to management so that when there are opportunities for promotion, women are prepared to take up their new position.

2. Carrying out a study on the LGBTQ+ reality among employees:

Action: Telefónica carries out an annual diagnosis of the reality among LGBTQ+ employees.

Examples: Global Diversity Council promotes an inclusive culture, in which employees contribute their opinions freely. It is aimed at emotional-sexual and gender diversity and promotes the visibility of the group and family diversity in their advertising campaigns. It also facilitates access to employment for disadvantaged sectors of the population.

3. Awareness campaigns:

Action: Organisation and/or participation in events.

Examples: Affinity groups are present in different countries and areas, such as Spain, Brazil, the United Kingdom or Latin America, which allow actions to be aligned with the interests and concerns of the LGBTQ+ community. Participation in external events and, particularly, in the main pride marches in cities (e.g., Madrid, London or São Paulo) also helps build environments where Telefónica's employees feel valued and included.

4. Training and information:

Action: Organisation of courses, workshops and events, and preparation of corporate videos.

Examples: participation in the YesWeTrans project of FELGTBI+. Courses: The role of non-LGBTQ+ allies in achieving equality, lesbian visibility, bullying and harassment on social media, the reality of intersex people, the health and emotional well-being of LGBTQ+ employees and gender transition at work.

5. Inclusive, non-sexist or discriminatory language and communication

Action: Use of an inclusive language, free of discriminatory references.

Examples: In communication channels, images, documents, advertising and commercial materials (*i.e.*, both internal and external), Telefónica avoids the use of sexist references, and prejudiced or discriminatory messages.

6. Removing barriers

Action: Introducing technical aids and support to reduce and eliminate barriers to digital accessibility, connectivity, network performance, security, privacy, communication, and collaboration., ensuring equal work environments.

Examples: Telefónica adapts and customises workspaces (*i.e.*, assuming all the involved costs without government aids) for the well-being of employees with recognised disabilities, enhancing their working performances.

Outcomes

1. Visibility of the LGBTQ+ community:

Outcome: Increased number of LGBTQ+ employees.

Evidence: Employment contracts for 50 transgender employees

2. Labour integration of disabled people:

Outcome: Empower people with disabilities to humanise technology and break down barriers with digitalisation.

Evidence: In September 2023, the company had a total of 2 069 employees with disabilities, 39.6% more than in 2022.

3. Incorporation of the Hybrid Remote Work (HRW) model:

Outcome: Workplace accessibility and tools for remote work (key components for workplace integration) improved.

Evidence: 95% of the workforce works remotely and at the same time connectivity has been guaranteed. This evidence is related to the actions described above.

Conclusion

Labour integration for people at risk of social exclusion is not only a moral imperative, but also an intelligent strategy to build stronger and more resilient societies and companies. By breaking down barriers, using technology, among other tools, we not only build a more inclusive future, but also take advantage of the talent and diversity that will enrich communities and workplaces.