The ingredients of inclusivity

The impact of inclusive work cultures on women in technology roles in Finland

Research report
The ingredients of inclusivity
Research background and objectives

Diversity is a hot topic but simply focusing on diversity is not enough. Only a truly inclusive and equal work culture, where everyone can thrive and be their true selves, will attract a diverse workforce and drive innovation and business growth.

Studies * show that in the most equal work cultures the innovation mindset is six times higher than in the less equal ones. Inclusion is, therefore, not only an ethical imperative, but a pre-condition to business success.

Women in Tech Finland, Mimmit koodaa and Tekniikan akateemiset have in collaboration with Accenture set up a survey for women in technology roles, with the objective to understand the inclusivity of workplace cultures in Finland and its impact on how females thrive at work.

*Getting to equal: Creating a culture that drives innovation (2019)
Women are ambitious but many still find it hard to thrive in technology roles

Key findings from research

Women in technology roles are ambitious but many find it hard to thrive.
46% pursue a leadership position in their current organizations. There are also more female role models in leadership teams than before. Over 30%, however, find it hard to thrive in technology roles.

An inclusive culture is the key that unlocks opportunities for women in tech roles.
Women working in inclusive workplaces are passionate about their work, happy with their pace of advancement, believe they are given equal pay, are loyal towards their employers and believe that they can thrive in tech. When comparing this group of women to those working in non-inclusive work cultures, the difference is dramatic.

There is no silver bullet - inclusivity is a mix of many ingredients.
The research reveals 7 key ingredients to inclusivity which have the biggest impact on how females thrive and stay on in tech roles.

In order to make change happen, organizations need to lead and measure inclusivity systematically.
Concrete targets, actions, measurement and leadership commitment is still missing in many organizations.
The study was conducted as a quantitative survey by research company Kuulas Helsinki in June 2021. The survey link was distributed via Accenture’s, Women in Tech Finland’s, Mimmit Koodaa’s and Tekniikan Akateemiset’s networks. The study was complemented with Norstat Finland panel sample.

The research questions were based on Accenture’s international survey and included approximately 40 pre-defined aspects of an inclusive work culture.

The survey data was analyzed using regression analysis. As part of the analysis, a culture index was created where respondents were segmented into “more-inclusive” and “less-inclusive” work cultures. This forms the basis of the report and allows for comparison and calls to action.

The target group of the study consisted of women currently working or having previously worked in a technology role, N=770.

The respondents that have previously worked in tech roles are labeled switchers in the report.
Women in technology roles are ambitious
Women in tech roles are ambitious
46% are pursuing management positions in their current organization

Do you aspire to be in a senior leadership position (executive team or directly reporting to the executive team) in your current organization?

Current, n=704

19 27 36 10 6

- Yes, definitely
- Yes, maybe
- No
- Cannot say
- I am already in a senior leadership position
There are more women in leadership
25% of the respondents say that the number of women in leadership positions in their organizations has increased significantly.

Which portion of your workplace’s senior leadership positions is held by women?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Current, n=704</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81-100%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-80%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-60%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-40%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-20%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In more inclusive workplace cultures, the amount of women in senior leadership positions is higher than in less-inclusive cultures and the positive change is bigger.

How has the number of women in senior leadership positions changed during the time you’ve been employed in the organization?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Current, n=704</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased significantly</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased significantly</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot say</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An inclusive culture matters
An inclusive culture matters
The degree of inclusivity in their organizations directly influences how women experience their jobs and how long they stay in them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More-inclusive work cultures (top 20 %)</th>
<th>Less-inclusive work cultures (bottom 20 %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I love my job</td>
<td>73 %</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am happy with the pace of my advancement</td>
<td>85 %</td>
<td>21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that women can thrive in tech</td>
<td>45 %</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am treated more junior than my male colleagues</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>75 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that men are paid more for the same work</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>64 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will probably leave my current job</td>
<td>7 %</td>
<td>53 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I love my job
I am happy with the pace of my advancement
I believe that women can thrive in tech
I am treated more junior than my male colleagues
I believe that men are paid more for the same work
I will probably leave my current job
Many tech women love what they do
A non-inclusive work culture, however, clearly makes them less enthusiastic

Do you love your job?

Current, n=704

4 38 37 15 6

All of the time Most of the time Sometimes Rarely Never

73 % of the women working in a more and 16 % working in a less inclusive culture love their jobs.
Overall 30% of women in tech roles think it’s difficult to thrive in tech. In inclusive work cultures 45% of the women believe they can succeed.

Overall, how easy do you believe it is for women to thrive in tech roles?

- Total, n=770:
  - 5 Very difficult: 5
  - 26: 26
  - 41: 41
  - 23: 23
  - 6 Very easy: 6

- Current, n=704:
  - 4 Very difficult: 4
  - 26: 26
  - 41: 41
  - 23: 23
  - 6 Very easy: 6

- Switcher, n=56:
  - 7 Very difficult: 7
  - 16: 16
  - 52: 52
  - 21: 21
  - 4 Very easy: 4

45% of the women working in more and 9% working in a less inclusive cultures believe it is easy for women to thrive in a tech role.
Many women feel that they are treated more junior than their male colleagues

How often have you faced situations where you were treated more junior than your male colleagues?

Current, n=704

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10% of the women working in more and 75% working in less inclusive cultures feel they are treated more junior than their male colleagues.
35% of the respondents think that men get paid more for the same job

In non-inclusive cultures the belief that salaries aren’t equal is even stronger

Do you trust that your organization pays women and men equally for the same work?

- Yes: 42%
- No, men are paid more: 35%
- No, women are paid more: 2%
- I don’t know: 22%

64% of the women working in less and 11% in more inclusive cultures believe that men are paid more for the same work.
Nearly 80% are likely stay in a tech role

An inclusive culture has a significant correlation with employee loyalty

How likely or unlikely is it that you’ll still be working in a technology role two years from now?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

Current, n=704

7% of the women working in more and 53% working in less inclusive cultures are very likely to leave their current employer in the near future.

How likely or unlikely is it that you’ll still be working for your current employer two years from now?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

Current, n=704
Why women leave tech roles
### Women leave tech roles for many reasons

Many point out a desire for change, better work/life balance, more responsibility in a new role and not fitting into the work culture as drivers for leaving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wanted change</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted a better work/life balance</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role offered to me was more attractive and offered more responsibility</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't fit in to the workplace culture</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt that I couldn't advance or gain more responsibility</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to balance work and family commitments</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The work was boring and repetitive</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could raise my salary level</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of sexual harassment or discrimination</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't like my line manager/supervisor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of senior leaders/role models of my gender</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of colleagues of my gender</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, what?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot say</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Swithers, N=56 Respondents of the survey who have switched away from a technology role*
Unhappiness with current roles drive women away from technology

To what extent was your decision to leave the technology role driven by the following…

*Switcher, n=56

- 11 respondents were attracted to the new role
- 16 respondents were unhappy in their previous role
- 27 respondents were driven by another factor
- 29 respondents were driven by an unspecified factor
- 18 respondents were driven by a different unspecified factor

*Respondents of the survey who have switched away from a technology role
The key ingredients of an inclusive culture
There’s no silver bullet
The research reveals 7 key factors which most significantly influence how women thrive and stay in tech roles

1. My workplace environment helps me work at my best
2. I have the freedom to be myself at work
3. The organization has succeeded in creating a culture where no one feels excluded
4. I feel trusted and am given responsibility
5. Promotions go to the most deserving employees
6. Sexual harassment or inappropriate remarks are not tolerated
7. The organization succeeds in attracting, retaining and advancing women
### Some elements of inclusivity are in a better shape than others

Each organization needs to understand their current situation

How do the following statements reflect your workplace?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>5 - Very well</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1 - Very badly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel trusted and am given responsibility</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have the freedom to be myself at work</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual harassment or inappropriate remarks are not tolerated</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My workplace environment helps me work at my best</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions go to the most deserving employees, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or ethnic background</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organization has succeeded in creating a culture where no one feels excluded</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current, n=704

- 5 - Very well
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 - Very badly
Over half of the respondents don’t see any progress in attracting retaining and advancing women in their organizations

How would you rate the progress your organization has made in the following areas since you joined?

- Attracting, retaining, and advancing women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - Rapid improvement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Rapid deterioration</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

60% of the women in inclusive cultures and 5% of those in less inclusive cultures believe their organization has made progress in attracting, retaining and advancing women.
Concrete actions, measurements and leadership needed
Over 40% of the respondents say that organizations fail in promoting advancement opportunities and career paths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5 - Very actively</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1 - Very little if none</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total, n=760</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current, n=704</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switcher, n=56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

54% of the women currently working in inclusive cultures agree that advancement opportunities are actively promoted, when in less inclusive cultures only 7% think so.
Leaders need to take more concrete actions to drive inclusion and diversity

How would you describe your current employer’s approach to improving the diversity and culture of the organization?

- Progress on gender diversity is measured and shared with employees
- Leadership team is diverse - consisting of people from different genders, age groups, nationalities and ethnicities
- Our leaders take action to get more women into senior roles
- Leadership team has clearly stated its gender pay gap goals and ambitions
- Our leaders set a positive example around work-life balance through the way they work, lead and behave
- Leadership team respects employees’ need to balance work with other commitments
- The organization is very welcoming to people who identify as LGBTQ+
- The organization is very welcoming to people from ethnic minority backgrounds

Current, n=704
Almost a third say that their organization has not set targets to increase diversity

Has your organization set a target/goal to increase diversity in the workforce?

- Yes, and these goals have been announced outside the organization: 21
- Yes, and these goals have been announced inside our organization: 24
- No, we do not have goals: 31
- I don't know: 25

23% in inclusive work cultures and 50% in the less inclusive cultures had no targets to increase diversity.
Our call to action
Our call to action

1. **Measure the current state of diversity and inclusion.** Previous research has shown that there is often a perception gap between the leadership and the employees when it comes to the inclusivity of the work culture. Only by having clear data of the current situation, organizations will know what to improve. It is also vital to trust that data and not dismiss it – even if it wasn’t what was expected.

2. **Gather insights about why women leave.** Listen to why they leave your company or technology roles and understand why they feel unhappy with their careers.

3. **Set your targets and create an action plan.** Once the stage is set, it’s go-time. Set ambitious goals and plan for actions towards that goal, whether they be big or small – it all counts.

4. **Zero in on the everyday experiences.** Inclusivity happens every day, starting with teams and meetings. A single incidence of “micro-exclusion” can lead to an immediate 25% decline* in an individual’s performance on a team project.

5. **Make some noise.** Spell out your values from the recruitment process to highlighting advancement opportunities and career paths for women throughout their progression.

*BetterUp, The value of belonging at work: New frontiers for inclusion (2020)*
Ultimately, more inclusive workplaces make work better and more meaningful for all, not just for women.
Appendix
Backgrounds of the respondents

Age
- 15-24: 31
- 25-34: 34
- 35-44: 10
- 45-54: 2
- 55+: 3

Area
- Western Finland: 53
- Helsinki-Uusimaa: 23
- Southern Finland: 13
- Northern and Eastern Finland: 11

Employment status
- Full-time work: 82
- Part-time work: 5
- Freelance/independent contractor: 2
- Full-time caregiver (children, parents etc.): 2
- On study leave: 1
- Retired: 1
- Unemployed, looking for work: 0
- Other, what?: 6

n=770
Backgrounds of the respondents

Please select studies you focused in at College or University?

- Engineering
- IT (Information Technology)
- Business, Economics
- Computer Science
- Science (Chemistry, Biology, etc.)
- Humanities
- Arts, Design
- Social Science
- Mathematics
- Data Science
- Education/Teaching
- Graphic Design
- Finnish, Finnish Literature
- Media, Communications
- Medicine, Dentistry
- Political Science
- Any other tech related
- Cyber Security
- Other, what?
- None of these

How many years have you been working since completing your education?

- 0-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31 or more

For how many different organizations have you been working for since completing your education?

- 1 - I am currently working at the only organization I have ever worked for
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

Which of the following best reflects your position within your organization?

- Owner or partner
- C-level executive
- Executive Vice President, Director or equivalent
- Vice president, Senior Manager or equivalent
- Manager or equivalent
- Specialist or expert
- Employee
- Other, what?
In which industry do you currently work?

- Telecommunications and ICT
- Technology
- Software
- Engineering
- Finance
- Consumer Goods and Services
- Retail and Logistics
- Education and Training
- Gaming
- Consulting
- Construction
- Marketing and Media
- Healthcare Providers, Healthcare Admin
- Arts and Culture

How many employees does your organization have?

- Less than 10 people
- 10-49 people
- 50-249 people
- 250-500 people
- Over 500 people

What age are your children?

- Less than 3-year-olds
- 4-7-year-olds
- 8-13-year-olds
- 14-18-year-olds
- Over 18-year-olds
- I don’t have kids

Which of the following best describes your living situation?

- I live at home with my parents
- I live alone
- I live with my spouse
- I live with my spouse and children

n=770
**Backgrounds of the respondents**

- **Background (n=770)**
  - Finnish: 97
  - Other: 4

- **What is your background (if other) (n=27)**
  - Russian
  - Estonian
  - Somalian
  - Former Yugoslavian
  - Chinese
  - Thai
  - Vietnamese
  - Turkish
  - Afghan
  - Somali
  - Swedish
  - Syrian
  - German
  - Danish
  - Norwegian
  - Other, what?
  - British
  - French
  - Iraqi
  - Indian
  - Swedish
  - Norwegian
  - German
  - French
  - British
  - Other, what?
  - Iraqi
  - Syrian
  - Swedish
  - Other, what?
  - British
  - Finnish
  - Other

- **Do you feel belonging to…? (n=770)**
  - Sexual minority
  - Ethnic minority
  - Cultural minority
  - Linguistic minority
  - Religious minority
  - Other minority, which?
  - I don't belong to any minorities
  - I don't want to reply

- **Backgrounds of the respondents**
  - Finnish: 97
  - Other: 4