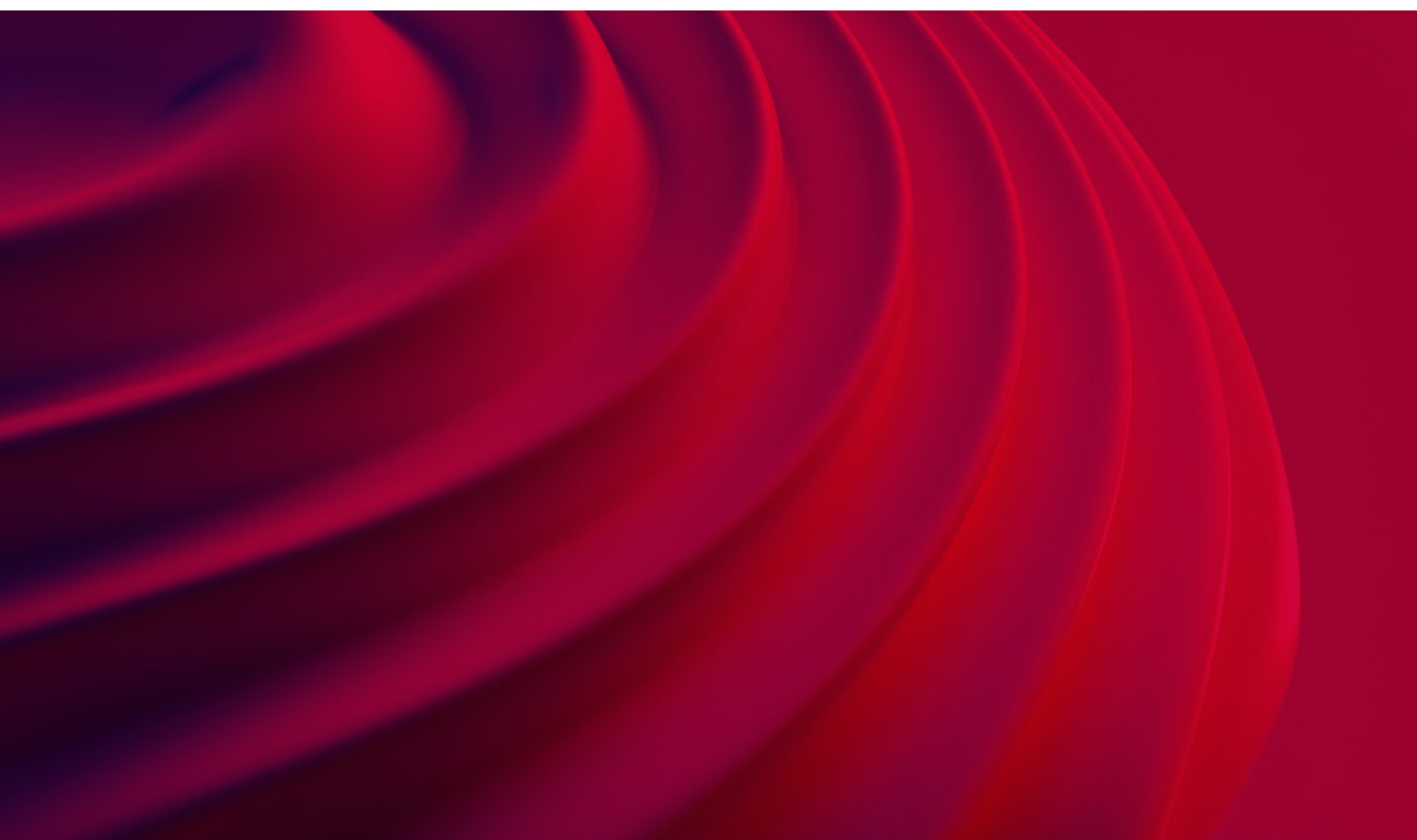


MBS Intelligence

# Inclusion and Diversity in Consumer Goods and Grocery

2021 Edition: Analysis from The MBS Group and IGD



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# Forewords

Inclusion helps to drive a community spirit and a feeling of social cohesion, and it attracts and fosters diverse talent. It also drives creative thinking and healthy challenge from individuals who see and feel things in an alternative way.

At IGD, we are passionate about helping to create a more inclusive and diverse workforce, to impact the millions of people who work in our industry. Having an inclusive culture is fundamental in attracting great people to work in consumer goods and grocery, to develop our workforce and to ensure our industry continues to thrive.

I'm delighted that our latest benchmarking research, conducted in partnership with MBS, demonstrates our industry's clear appetite to keep prioritising inclusion and diversity. Our boardrooms and executive teams are becoming more diverse, and there has been a genuine increase in the number of companies now formalising inclusion and diversity strategies into the DNA of their business. What's more, focusing on this is no longer the preserve of our industry's bigger businesses; we're now seeing organisations of all sizes prioritising and making great progress.

There is more to be done, but the fact we have continued to drive progress against the challenging backdrop of the last two years bodes well for the future, demonstrating that fostering an inclusive workforce is now embedded into our industry's way of thinking.

We know that senior leaders want the space to have open and honest conversations with their teams about what great inclusion looks like. Our industry leaders need to lead from the front and develop their own understanding of what it takes to build an inclusive culture in their own business.

This year, IGD has kicked off a reverse mentoring programme to support leaders to champion inclusion. The programme has created a safe and collaborative space for leaders to hear the lived-in experiences of those from underrepresented groups, and support companies to drive positive cultural change. Next year, we are increasing the programme at scale. Visit [here](#) to find out more and get involved.

Inclusion has to be part of our strategy to attract people to work in the consumer goods and grocery industry; this will help us to build an inclusive workforce that is fit for the future. Everyone, and every role, has a part to play.



**Susan Barratt**  
Chief Executive Officer, IGD

We are delighted to be working alongside IGD for the second edition of this report, looking into the status of inclusion and diversity in the consumer goods and grocery sector.

Fostering diverse workforces and inclusive work environments is not only right morally. It is a commercial imperative, especially in an industry serving such a diverse customer base, and with such a diverse employee demographic.

In 2019, the first edition of this research showed that the sector recognised the importance of I&D, but that businesses lacked sufficient data and resources to implement joined-up strategies.

This report shows that meaningful progress has been made. After The MBS Group collected data on more than 200 businesses, and held conversations with more than 100 Chairs, CEOs and HRDs in the sector, we found that businesses have formalised their strategies and allocated appropriate budget to furthering I&D. As a result, representation of women, ethnic minorities and other underrepresented groups have increased. These findings are especially encouraging given the context of the past two years, when Brexit and Covid-19 so disrupted the sector.

Across the industry, in organisations of every size and scope, creative I&D strategies are being implemented. In the case studies section of this report, we highlight examples of best practice from companies at different stages at their I&D journey. It is our hope that this publication will allow companies in the food and grocery sector to benchmark their progress and build on their existing efforts to encourage inclusion and increase representation.

Happily, the consumer goods and grocery sector is more visible than it has ever been. In part because of the pandemic, more and more people at executive and workforce level are recognising the opportunities that lie within the industry. Renewing focus on inclusion and diversity will only accelerate this, widen the talent pool and welcome more people into this innovative and exciting industry.

I would like to thank the Chairs, CEOs and HRDs who generously gave up their time to be interviewed for this research, and to Susan Barratt and the team at IGD for their contribution to this project and their commitment to creating a more inclusive sector. I'd also like to recognise the team at The MBS Group for leading the research and development of this publication.



**Huw Llewellyn-Waters**  
Director, Consumer Goods and Grocery Practice, The MBS Group

# Executive summary

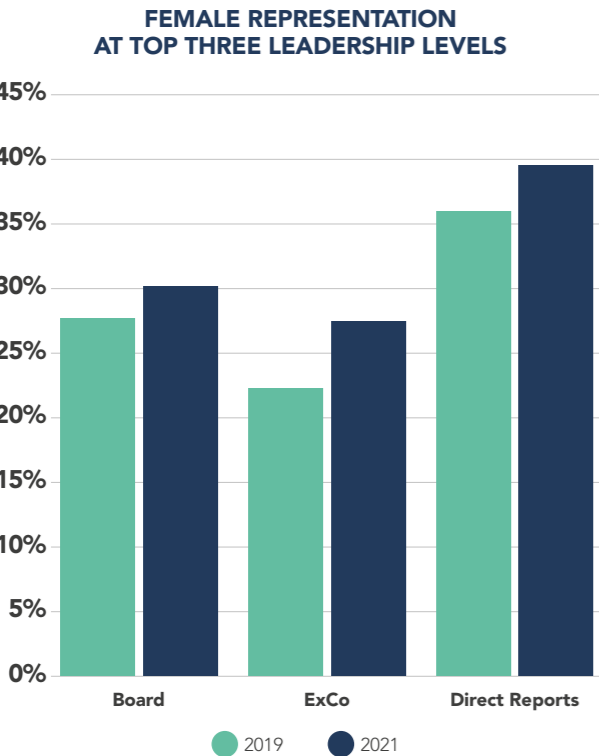
The MBS Group and IGD have come together to measure the updated status of inclusion and diversity in the consumer goods and grocery sector. Encouragingly, we have found that representation of women, ethnic minorities and other underrepresented groups has increased in the sector since our 2019 report, and that organisations are more committed to fostering a culture of inclusion.

This research, undertaken by The MBS Group, is based on data captured from 200 businesses, and conversations with more than 100 Chairs, CEOs and HRDs in the consumer goods and grocery sector.

We found that good progress has been made across gender and ethnic diversity in the industry.

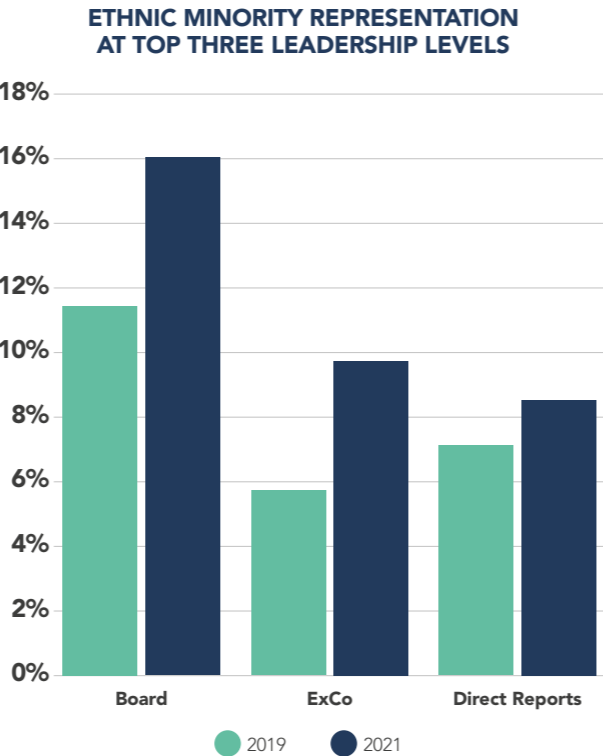
## Female representation is up across all three leadership levels

Encouragingly, there are more women in senior positions in the sector across all three leadership levels. While this indicates solid progress, the sector is still far from reflecting the 50/50 split which exists in society.



## Good progress has also been made on ethnic minority representation

The number of leaders from an ethnic minority background has also increased in the sector. In particular, we've seen a significant jump in the proportion of ethnic minority directors at non-executive board level. It is likely that this is partly a result of the acceleration of conversations around race and racism since the summer of 2020, and the need for businesses to be taking tangible action on the issue.



# Tracking progress

We have seen broad-based, meaningful improvement on I&D in the consumer goods and grocery sector. Since the last edition of our research, businesses have formalised their strategies and allocated appropriate budget to furthering I&D.

In 2019, we found that the consumer goods and grocery sector had a long way to go on inclusion and diversity.

While an understanding of the importance of I&D was in strong supply, this was combined with a lack of data, a fear of saying the wrong thing and insufficient resources allocated to move the dial. Promisingly, the sector has made good progress in the past two years, both on representation and on commitment to inclusion.

## Representation of those from underrepresented groups has increased since 2019

- 60% of companies have improved on female representation at at least one leadership level
- 60% of companies have improved ethnic minority representation at at least one leadership level
- Just 20% of companies have seen a drop in female or ethnic minority representation at any leadership level
- More than a third (36%) of companies reported having at least one openly LGBTQ+ leader at executive committee or direct reports level, compared to 27% two years ago
- More than a quarter (28%) of companies have at least one physically disabled leader at executive committee or direct reports level, compared with 15% two years ago

## Strategies have been formalised and baked into long-term strategy

In 2019, we unearthed a real enthusiasm for I&D. However, more than half (55%) of companies had no coordinated I&D strategy.

In 2021, more than three-quarters (77%) of businesses have a formalised strategy to increase representation and foster inclusion – a vast improvement.

“We’re being more overt now than we’ve ever been.”

2019: DO YOU HAVE A CO-ORDINATED I&D STRATEGY?



2021: DO YOU HAVE A CO-ORDINATED I&D STRATEGY?



The furthest-along businesses have I&D strategies which are:

- Built into long-term strategy
- Allocated sufficient budget
- Sponsored and championed by senior leaders and the CEO
- Communicated across the entire business, from front-line employees to the non-executive board

“ED&I is now linked to our vision and purpose

It is encouraging to see the number of organisations which have adopted formalised strategies, and the companies which have invested in their policies.

## Improvement has been made across the industry, and size is not a barrier to progress

Promisingly, our research has highlighted that businesses of all sizes and scopes have renewed their focus on inclusion and diversity.

Historically, larger businesses have performed better on diversity and had in place more mature inclusion strategies than smaller companies. Happily, however, we’re now seeing smaller businesses embrace I&D and make progress at the same relative pace as larger conglomerates.

## The industry is confident about the direction of travel

Our sentiment tracker has shown that leaders in the consumer goods and grocery sector are intentional about progress on I&D. In particular, our findings show that leaders are more confident that they are doing enough on I&D than they were in 2019.

	2019	2021
My company is doing better on I&D than 5 years ago	4.2	4.5
My company is doing enough on I&D today	2.6	3.3
I&D is sufficiently high up my personal agenda	4.0	4.5
The ExCo is sufficiently bought into the I&D agenda	3.6	3.9
Grocery is one of the best sectors for social mobility	3.6	3.6

# Progress in context

The consumer goods and grocery sector can be proud of the improvements it has made to date. Specifically, the industry’s progress should be considered against the backdrop of the past two years.

## I&D has remained a priority despite never-before-seen disruption

The consumer goods and grocery sector has experienced a highly turbulent period since the first iteration of this research in 2019.

First, the impact of Brexit has severely disrupted the talent landscape and global supply chains, forcing consumer goods and grocery businesses to reorganise their operations and respond at pace to changing rules and regulation.

Second, of course, is Covid-19, which left many businesses struggling for survival while others were propelled to the heart of the nation’s efforts to keep people fed.

In this context, it would have been disappointing – but perhaps understandable – for I&D to have slipped down the corporate agenda, and the sector should be pleased that inclusion has remained a priority and representation has increased.

## Covid-19 increased awareness of inclusion, but halted the creation of tangible initiatives

Our research has revealed that the events of 2020 served as catalysts for change in the consumer goods and grocery sector, in particular by kickstarting conversations around racism and new – more inclusive – models of working.

However, despite this increased awareness, many businesses reported that specific initiatives, such as female or ethnic minority leader programmes, were put on pause at the height of the pandemic. On top of this, some respondents told us that I&D budgets had been scrapped and diversity professionals put on furlough as part of cost-cutting measures.

### Inclusion and diversity: the impact of 2020

The importance of I&D was thrown into sharp relief in 2020. In just one year, we saw:

- The devastating impact of racial inequality as the virus disproportionately impacted those from ethnic minority backgrounds
- The higher likelihood of furlough and redundancy for women and ethnic minority colleagues
- The adoption of more flexible working structures, which accelerated conversations around inclusion in all its forms
- The murder of George Floyd and the increased awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement, which forced individuals and businesses to think deeply about ethnic diversity and racism

## The pandemic accelerated an existing focus on employee mental health and wellbeing

Throughout our conversations, a recurring theme was the importance of employee mental health, with many businesses reporting that wellbeing has risen up the corporate agenda since the outset of Covid-19.

This is a significant positive development. Firstly, wellbeing is a critical part of inclusion and feeling comfortable at work. Secondly, creating an environment where employees can discuss potentially difficult issues such as mental health opens the door for further conversations about other topics, such as diversity and discrimination.

A number of organisations in the sector told us that they had invested in training ‘mental health first aiders’, who are available for employees to speak to about difficult issues.

## The sector is more visible – and more attractive – than it has ever been

Since 2019, the sector has become far more visible as an exciting and important place to work. This is largely due to the impact of the pandemic, when front-line workers and senior executives alike received wide recognition for their role in feeding the nation.

Looking ahead, we expect that this can only have a positive impact on I&D in the sector. As the sector becomes more visible, organisations will have access to a greater – and potentially more diverse – talent pool. Indeed, the past eighteen months have shown how integral the consumer goods and grocery sector is to our society, and how fast-paced, challenging and creative it can be.

# Four trends on I&D in the sector

To bring this report together, The MBS Group spoke with more than 100 Chairs, CEOs and HRDs from businesses in the consumer goods and grocery sector. Below we outline four recurring trends felt by businesses in the sector when it comes to I&D.

## Businesses are adopting a more holistic approach to I&D

Encouragingly, most businesses in the sector are thinking more comprehensively about I&D, and considering how to foster inclusive environments as well as focusing on individual areas of diversity. While only the most forward-thinking businesses were doing this in 2019, today it is the most popular approach to take.

Our conversations showed that renewing focus on inclusion allows businesses to apply an intersectional lens to their strategies; to foster a culture of belonging across the entire company, and to avoid short-term thinking on meeting targets on specific areas of diversity.

After all, achieving diversity at the most senior levels does not necessarily mean a company is inclusive, and a singular focus on meeting representation targets can distract from solving deep-rooted issues that exist further down the organisation.

Moreover, our interviews revealed that focusing on inclusion results in better engagement from employees and other key stakeholders, especially in global organisations with a high number of European employees.

## There is an opportunity to unlock social mobility

There has long been a sense that the consumer goods and grocery sector is a good place for social mobility – and that it is possible to enter the industry on the shop floor or production line and progress to a senior leadership position.

For this reason, and because unlocking social mobility is often inextricably linked to progress on other areas of diversity like ethnic diversity, our interviews showed that companies in the sector are aware of the need to focus on advancing social mobility.

However, most of the businesses we spoke to told us that they are unclear on how to make progress in this area. This is partly because of the difficulty with measuring progress, or defining if one individual is ‘socially mobile’.

In other sectors, businesses have embraced social mobility through:

- Company-specific apprenticeship schemes
- Partnerships with local colleges and schools
- Collaborating with charities such as The Princes Trust or The Resolution Foundation
- Using government-backed schemes like Kickstart
- Providing targeted support for entry-level workers to support the challenging transition from shop floor to head office

## The challenge of fostering I&D in warehouse settings

Additionally, businesses across the sector reported difficulties in achieving diversity in a factory, warehouse or production line setting. In these environments, the workforce is typically made up of older white men who have been in service for many years.

Not only does a long length of service mean there are fewer opportunities to hire in new, diverse employees – but it can also lead to a closed-off culture that is resistant to change.

In this context, there is a real need to educate around the importance of I&D.

As detailed in the case study at the end of this report, Nestlé has put in a place a series of measures to mitigate this:

- Rolling out ‘respect at work’ training
- Piloting inclusion committees in factories and logistics teams
- Working closely in partnership with trade unions

## Location can be a barrier to progress

Many companies also shared that I&D in their organisation is set back by the location of their head office or warehouses.

Where businesses are based in parts of the country with predominately white residents, for example, leadership teams and workforces can be reflective of that region.

In a workforce context, location may legitimately negatively impact a company's ability to bring in diverse talent, especially in areas like race and LGBTQ+.

However, companies should not use this as a reason to be complacent or inactive on I&D. Indeed, where businesses are more homogenous, there may be more of a need to gather data on all facets of diversity and put systems in place to encourage inclusion.

From a head office standpoint, the emergence of remote and more flexible working could wave in a new era of recruitment, and allow businesses to hire from outside the office's local area.



## Joanna Allen

CEO, Graze

### **Graze is particularly advanced on disability inclusion. Can you talk a bit about this?**

Disability inclusion is something that's very pertinent to me personally. My son was born missing a hand, which really thrust me into that experience. I think it's an underdeveloped aspect of I&D, but one that offers enormous potency to businesses.

We've been talking to a company called The Ability People, which is run by an ex-Paralympian. It's been fascinating. The organisation essentially audits your business to ask "how accessible – physically and mentally – are you to your employees?"

### **Not all disabilities are visible, which can make them harder to support and cater for. How are you approaching this at Graze?**

I'd say that we're more advanced in the area of neurodiversity than physical disability. We've really embraced it across the team and used it as an opportunity to talk about the advantages that neurodiversity can bring to a business.

But there are definitely challenges. Physical disabilities are probably easier to recognise and manage in the office space, whereas it can be difficult to know which questions to ask regarding invisible disabilities. We're currently going through a process where we're receiving advice on how to remain inclusive at the interview and onboarding stage. For example, on our job specs we say 'If there are any accessibility adjustments to our recruitment process that would mean you find it easier to apply, please let us know' but if you're not able to read our typeface in the first place, then we're not making it accessible for all to apply and so we're working through some technical changes there.

Overall, we're trying to create an environment where people feel comfortable to talk to Graze through the application process, through the onboarding, and through the first six months of their career.

### **Mental health is closely linked to non-visible disability inclusion. How are you supporting your team from this perspective?**

We've got up to about 25 mental health first aiders, out of a cohort of 125 so it's a big number that we've invested in. Those people are around on a confidential basis to talk to, not as a counsellor but as somebody to offload to, and talk to, and maybe get advice on whether to talk to a professional.

### **Which initiatives, across the whole of I&D at Graze, have had the most impact?**

Interestingly, using Slack has really enabled us to talk to people differently. For the most part, sending an email to a group can feel quite corporate. Whereas using Slack allows us to open up, have more conversations, and gives people the opportunity to share things that they've found interesting. We've found that people are learning and are becoming better educated through content shared from other members of the team.

### **What does progress on I&D look like at Graze?**

One thing that I've been delighted to see is that everyone is much less nervous to have conversations about diversity. As that comfort level has increased, we've gained the ability to say "we messed up," which I think is really important. Admitting when we've missed the mark, and talking about it publicly and openly is a true sign of progress.

### **Graze was acquired by Unilever in 2019. How has being part of a group had an impact on the diversity agenda?**

Being part of the diversity network, Enable@Unilever has really added value to me as an individual member, and we can take learnings from it at Graze. More generally, we can take great inspiration from work at Unilever, such as their brilliant apprenticeship programme.

### **What one piece of advice would you give to businesses looking to sharpen their focus on I&D?**

Be really open as people. It's about education and a willingness to be educated.





## Natalie Rogers

Head of Group Talent Development & Inclusion,  
Greencore

### On building your inclusion and diversity strategy at Greencore, what were your main priorities?

Our main priority was to understand our data, exploring the diversity we have in Greencore today and how this compares to the UK, enriched with the lived experiences of our people. We learnt how it feels for colleagues from a wide range of different demographic groups to work at Greencore.

### How did you go about collecting and analysing diversity data?

We took a two-pronged approach. The first focus was data analysis, we looked at every possible bit of data we could get our hands on, from information about the makeup of our workforce to more advanced data such as how people progress through Greencore.

We started to combine multiple sets of data and it became the most detailed review ever done of the colleagues in our organisation. To enrich the data, we asked all our colleagues to share their lived experiences with us through an anonymous survey, and targeted listening groups.

We initially ran the groups based on the areas that we felt were going to be the biggest focus – gender and ethnicity. But very quickly the insights from the survey told us there was an appetite to talk about LGBTQ+, disability and general inclusion. So, we went from one or two listening groups to twenty over several weeks. This insight coupled with data enabled us to start shaping our aspirations to 2025 and the focus areas for the first two years of the strategy. These focus areas were inclusion, young people, ethnicity and gender. Once we had that clarity our work shifted to further engaging our senior leaders in our plan.

### Why was listening to employees important in building your I&D strategy?

By reaching out to colleagues, we could test, prove, or disprove any hypothesis from the data analysis. We are a people business and data alone wouldn't get us where we needed to be, we needed our colleagues to be on the journey with us. So, for instance, our existing data told us that we had very few colleagues who had a disability. We employ over 12,000 people so I was suspicious of that. The survey indicated that that was inaccurate, and the listening groups showed that it was a bigger priority for people than we initially had thought.

#### Greencore's steps to building an I&D strategy

- Collect and analyse data to understand where the business currently stands on diversity – take note of where you have no data too, that can be as useful
- Involve colleagues so they can share their lived experiences
- Help leaders on the journey too by inviting them to take part in listening groups, hearing stories from colleagues first-hand has been so powerful for them
- Augment the findings from data and stories to find your areas of focus

### What were the key challenges around collecting data?

Collecting the data, and knowing whether to trust it, is a key challenge. We realised very quickly data wouldn't give us all we needed, so we needed to fill the gaps in with people's thoughts and views. Going forward, to measure your progress accurately, data is important as it helps you understand your starting point.

### What changes have you seen since implementing your I&D strategy?

One of the changes we've seen is that colleagues' view of inclusion is more positive, with 72% of our colleagues telling us they can see we are working to be more inclusive.

Engagement in inclusion activities has been huge – we're getting more and more colleagues wanting to be involved in the events we celebrate throughout the year.

I can hear a lot more conversations in the business about it too. When we started talking about I&D, leaders and colleagues were nervous about getting it wrong. That nervousness stopped them having the conversations entirely because they didn't want to make a false move.

Now, we're having more open conversations about inclusion, we're asking more difficult questions and we're more honest that we don't have all the answers. We are all learning together.





## Paul Friston

Managing Director of International and Executive Committee sponsor for Inclusion & Diversity, M&S

### What does I&D look like at M&S?

We take an inclusion-first approach. There's no point in bringing in excellent diverse talent if they won't feel they belong once they're here. Inclusion also allows for intersectionality. When I first heard this term, I'll admit I thought it was overcomplicating an already complex issue – but, after learning more about the topic, it's clear how important it is; we don't want to pigeon-hole anyone into one 'category' of diversity.

### You've made fantastic progress on gender diversity in the past few years. How have you achieved this?

At M&S, we've nearly reached our target of 50% women at leadership level. Having balanced teams brings diversity of thought and is proven to be good for business. As 70% of our customers are women, shopping for themselves and the family, it makes absolute sense that we should have balanced leadership when it comes to decision making in our business.

We took a number of steps to get here. Firstly, we were very clear with setting and communicating our 50% target. Then we introduced dedicated programmes to make that a reality. We offered women in middle management roles access to mentoring and accelerated programmes to build leadership skills. We launched an inspiring speaker series programme to showcase great female role models inside and outside of the business, and as leaders we have supported the gender equality network to raise awareness amongst colleagues.

We spent a long time working out how we could level the playing field between men and women. We thought about 'imposter syndrome', and educated our hiring teams around recognising it in interview settings. We have also worked on ways to give women the confidence to know that their male counterparts are equally as doubtful, just expressing it differently. We have introduced the concept of unconscious bias through learning and development programmes to help line managers spot their own bias at play.

There's no silver bullet to progress – each thing you do brings a 1% improvement. You have to do one hundred things to get to 100%!

### Your priority today is advancing ethnic diversity. Can you speak a bit about that?

We're now asking ourselves what lessons we can learn from our progress on gender diversity and apply them to increasing ethnic minority representation.

We want to do more to make sure we're servicing a broad community. Particularly around food, for example planning for key festivals, or having Muslim product directors who can understand what it's like to be part of a Muslim family.

One way we're doing this is by partnering with external organisations who can shine a light on where the best talent is, which might not come from the traditional places. The 10,000 Black Interns programme, for example, is a phenomenal scheme. Our first intake will join us in summer 2022. These will be our future leaders in ten, twenty or thirty years' time – so it's not a quick fix!

### You've recently hired a group head of inclusion and diversity. What did that process look like?

We knew that we needed one person in a dedicated role, with a small team to mobilise action. It's been fantastic. Cleo acts as a single point of contact on inclusion and diversity for the different divisions of M&S and has the expertise and experience to drive change through the business. Her network is outstanding, so whenever we need advice or to bring in a speaker, she just whips out her digital Rolodex!

### What impact has having a dedicated I&D lead had on the business?

From the moment we advertised the role, the signal it sent to the broader company was just fantastic. We have seven employee network groups – covering six of the protected characteristics and the veterans in our business – who were the first to say "Wow, M&S is serious about this." Once Cleo had been brought in, it really hit home for the senior leaders in our business that I&D is something to which we are committed.

With Cleo leading the efforts, we've identified eight areas of focus for I&D and these are:

- Diversifying our recruitment, including Early Careers
- Internal careers, talent development and succession planning
- Sponsorship and reverse mentoring

- Expanding our knowledge via I&D education and learning
- Building I&D plans for use across M&S
- Elevating and creating awareness of our Zero Tolerance stance on racist, homophobic and other non-inclusive, behaviours
- Celebrating our multi-faith, multi-cultural colleagues, customers and communities
- Knowing who we are: better data on our colleagues, customers and communities

Additionally, Cleo has recently been appointed as the Government Disability and Access Ambassador for the retail sector. Her focus on making the industry a more inclusive place to work and shop for the 14 million people who have a visible or non-visible disability supports our inclusion strategy, and ensures that M&S continues to be a leader in this space.





## Katie Pearce

Chief People & Diversity Officer,  
Molson Coors



## Adam Firby

HR Director Western Europe,  
Molson Coors

### Your work on mental health is very advanced at Molson Coors. Can you talk a bit about that?

**AF:** Mental health became an area of focus around five or six years ago. One member of the team – Tina Samson – had a particularly strong passion for mental health, and she really sparked a fire in the organisation that changed mindsets and changed how we think as leaders, which is fantastic. So, the wellbeing group was built very much from the bottom-up, it came from the people who indicated that this is something they wanted to talk about. Yes, it had senior sponsorship and all the right structures around it, but it was really an employee project.

Since then, it has kept on gaining momentum. Around four years ago we started investing in mental health first-aiders, giving people the tools to talk about the topic and help themselves and others. We were blown away by the number of people who wanted to be trained – we had around 100 applications, each one of them with a personal story about why mental health was close to their heart. We've started training more people, and we've got an aspiration in Western Europe to get 10% of our population trained as mental health first-aiders. We want to get to a point where one in every ten people is someone you can turn to talk to.

### How do you maintain momentum and keep the entire organisation engaged in the topic of positive mental health?

**AF:** It's about communicating really heavily around its importance, telling stories and encouraging people to talk. Some people in our business very bravely went on camera to explain their personal challenges. People still talk about those videos now, and we reiterate them every so often. We have a #letskeep talking campaign, and we celebrate key days of the year like World Mental Health Day. One of the biggest things we've done in the business is just getting people talking.

**KP:** You can really feel the power of honesty and openness. I remember talking to people on the shop-floor team, who told me that they'd been working at Molson Coors for 40 years and this was the first time they were having these sorts of vital conversations.

### What impact has your work on mental health had on the rest of the I&D agenda?

**AF:** I just think the two naturally merge, in terms of the cultural output we're trying to deliver. I know it's a little twee, but it feeds into people genuinely just being themselves. Because if they're themselves, they're happy, they'll be brilliant at work. That's the output.

**KP:** It has definitely made us think about our diversity and inclusion strategy and how much we want to focus on the inclusion element over the diversity. And already, the reactions that we're getting across the total business – beyond just Western Europe – have been really positive. Everybody gets inclusion, and understands how they can be a part of it. And that's very linked to the mental health piece, around having positive wellbeing and open conversations.

### Molson Coors is a global company. What impact does this have on I&D?

**KP:** Our wider business is beautifully diverse and multicultural, spanning across multiple geographies. But this brings challenges. On diversity, for example, we have to balance being culturally sensitive to different historic cultures with being forward-thinking, progressive and brave.

### Why is it important for you to put 'inclusion' above 'diversity'?

**KP:** For me, I&D can't be a project or a new scheme. Our focus on inclusion is about making sure everyone – whoever they are – feels that our culture is a place where they can be who they want to be. We want people to feel as though they belong.

We're on a journey towards greater diversity and representation – we're not there yet. But for us, we're passionate about the fact that it starts with the right inclusive culture.





## Gharry Eccles

VP UK & Oceania,  
Cereal Partners Worldwide

## Ali Beresford

Inclusion & Diversity Manager,  
Nestlé



### What do the employee networking groups look like at Nestlé?

**AB:** We have six employee network groups. Each one focuses on a particular community. What sets these groups up for success is that they're led by our passionate people who want to make a difference. They've each got senior sponsors, and they're an employee-focused safe space too.

These groups do two things. First and foremost, they create a sense of community, a sense of belonging, and a safe space for those underrepresented groups to connect. And then, secondly, they drive change through the business. They keep us honest; they challenge us, they tell us what they want our plans to be, and what changes they want to make in the business. For me, that insight is the most important thing to come out of these groups. They have helped us shape policy, engage key stakeholders, and remain focused.

On top of this, we also have inclusion and belonging champions, who represent a business area and look more broadly at the work we're doing in inclusion and belonging in that area.

### How do you integrate outside perspectives and expertise into your I&D agendas?

**GE:** We're keen that our networking groups don't become echo chambers. We actively seek an 'outside-in' perspective, by partnering across the grocery industry with other manufacturers and retailers on this agenda. This enables us to amplify our efforts across the whole industry.

### How Nestlé and CPW are leveraging external partnerships

- Using the recommendations in Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter to build an antiracism plan
- Collaborating with culture change partners Utopia and MindCubed to hold listening groups and build inclusive leadership capability
- Partnering with PSALT and the 10,000 Black Interns programme to bring in ethnic minority talent
- Using the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index Framework to build LGBTQ+ inclusion plans
- Collaborating with GroceryAid and other grocery businesses through our sponsorship of the D&I in Grocery network to provide mentoring and education opportunities
- Joining organisations like MSDUK and Women Owned, which represent ethnically diverse and female business owners, to extend I&D efforts to supply network

### You've done an excellent job at extending your reach to your supply network. Could you talk a bit about that?

**GE:** Our philosophy is to be 'a force for good'. We must have thousands of suppliers across all our businesses, and the procurement and supply teams are doing fantastic work to encourage inclusion across that network. They've committed to increasing the amount of spend that the business uses on different, diverse suppliers.

### Two-thirds of Nestlé's business is in factories, which typically have a different employee demographic and workplace culture to corporate offices. How are you encouraging I&D in the factory settings?

**AB:** Factories provide very different work experiences to offices, and I know lots of people can relate to the challenge this presents around I&D.

We're rolling out what we call 'respect at work' training across all our sites. Even throughout the pandemic we've committed to providing this training. We focus on creating a local culture of respect and dignity, working in partnership with our trade union colleagues, which is vital to us. We're also piloting inclusion committees to proactively work together to avoid issues from arising in the first place and to change culture over the long term.



**Paul Baker**  
Founder, St Pierre Groupe

**What does inclusion and diversity mean at St Pierre Groupe?**

St Pierre Groupe is a small organisation, but as we've grown, inclusion and diversity has evolved organically. Our inclusive culture is a reflection of the people in the organisation, rather than a box-ticking exercise. It's not about writing values on the wall, or marketing diversity externally, but about living our values and fostering a culture of mutual respect.

**And as a leader, what does I&D mean to you personally?**

First of all, it's critically important that as a business leader you understand the complexities of diversity, but also the opportunities that it can bring.

My wife writes films about diversity and all that word encompasses. As a result, I'm attuned to the issues at hand, which I think means I&D comes more naturally to me. An inclusive mindset must come from within you, and I think those without an inherently positive attitude to difference can find it difficult to adopt an open mind.

I'm also encouraged and inspired by younger generations. They carry far less bias, and it's exciting to see this positive change play out.

As a business leader I feel a responsibility to be part of that change. Ultimately, every business is a team of people... so if diversity isn't at the top of your list, then you need to step up your game.

**How do you promote an inclusive culture?**

Part of it is about the language you use as a senior leader. I lead from the front and I know I've earned the respect of my colleagues by treating everyone the same.

My finance director once said to me, "you're gender blind." I'd never thought about it like that but that's how we work – we just look for the best person, and as a result, we're a diverse group – nearly three quarters of our management team are women.

We've also recently hired an HR manager who leads the diversity agenda. She attends our board meetings, which is a clear demonstration to the board and our team that we are prioritising the people at the heart of our business.

**In terms of a formal inclusion and diversity agenda, you're fairly early on in your journey. What is next on your list of priorities?**

As a leadership team, we're working closely with our HR manager to discuss ways to formalise our inclusive culture.

We're starting to think about data collection and about how we can launch employee engagement surveys to learn more about our workforce.

Addressing unconscious bias is also on the list. While unconscious bias training can be useless without an inclusive culture to underpin it, we're talking about what support we can give to our team in this area.

Additionally, we're having some exciting conversations about how we hire, and are exploring the idea of blind CVs to try and avoid any discrimination that can creep in.



# About us

## About The MBS Group

For more than 30 years, The MBS Group has been a leading sector-specialist executive search firm advising all consumer-facing industries, with a particular focus in the consumer goods and grocery industry. Clients consider us to be the partner of choice when searching for critical leadership roles that make a difference. We work at board level and on executive positions across all functions of strategic importance. For more information, visit [www.thembsgroup.co.uk](http://www.thembsgroup.co.uk)

## About IGD

IGD is an organisation of two interconnected communities. The profits from Commercial Insight are reinvested into Social Impact, which together work to drive change that makes a tangible difference for society, business and the individual.

Social Impact from IGD is delivered in four key areas:

- a.** People – focussed on giving young people opportunities to develop their employability and life skills, and on building the knowledge and capability of food and consumer goods industry colleagues, to foster an inclusive and productive workforce;
- b.** Health – nutrition experts use the latest research and behavioural science to develop practical tools that help the whole industry. IGD is collaborating with and inspiring companies to adopt best practice and implement change;
- c.** Sustainability – focused on mobilising the industry to tackle climate change, reduce food waste, increase food surplus redistribution, develop sustainable packaging systems and accelerate the industry's progress towards Net Zero;
- d.** Economics – supporting better strategic planning and decision making, for the benefit of consumers, through economic analysis and engagement with policy makers.

IGD's new reverse mentoring programme, launched in 2021, supports leaders in food and consumer goods to champion inclusion. The programme has created a safe and collaborative space for leaders to hear the lived-in experiences of those from under-represented groups, and support companies to drive positive cultural change. In 2022, IGD will be increasing the programme at scale. Visit [here](#) to find out more and get involved.

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## The MBS Group

3 Primrose Mews  
Off Sharpleshall Street  
London, NW1 8YW

+44 (0) 20 7722 1221  
[info@thembsgroup.co.uk](mailto:info@thembsgroup.co.uk)

[www.thembsgroup.co.uk](http://www.thembsgroup.co.uk)

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