

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE MANIFESTO FOR THE WORKPLACE



MANIFESTO FOR INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN THE WORKPLACE

A practical guide to respectful, fair, and inclusive communication

1. Language is a cultural and responsible act

Every word you choose helps shape the environment we work in. The way we express ourselves conveys values, worldviews, and inclusivity – or, conversely, exclusion.

2. Use neutral or inclusive terms

Avoid: Employees | Prefer: Staff
Avoid: The manager | Prefer: The coordinator / The responsible person
Avoid: Workers | Prefer: The production team
Avoid: The man in charge | Prefer: The person in charge
Avoid: Everyone must do their duty | Prefer: All people must do their duty

3. Be mindful of stereotypes and gender roles

Avoid expressions that automatically associate a gender with a role or skill.

X "We need a male figure for this kind of job"

V "We're looking for a person with these characteristics..."

X "She's too emotional for that role"

V "They expressed an opinion with engagement"

4. Respect identity and self-definition

Ask and use each person's chosen name, gender, and pronouns. Don't assume gender identity based on appearance or name.

5. Inclusive writing: keep it simple and readable

Avoid solutions that make reading harder (e.g., asterisks employe Θ , double forms: colleagues and female colleagues).

Prefer neutral, plural, or paraphrased forms, such as:

"Anyone wishing to participate..."

"Interested individuals are invited..."

"All staff are involved..."

6. Emails, slides, minutes, presentations: everything counts

Apply inclusive language in all types of communication, including technical and formal documents. A small gesture, repeated daily, becomes company culture.

7. Correcting is educating, not punishing

If you notice non-inclusive expressions, pointing them out respectfully is a growth opportunity.

- "Would you mind if we rephrased this sentence more inclusively?"

- "I think this word could be replaced with a more suitable one."

8. Inclusion = performance

Inclusive communication:

- strengthens the sense of belonging,
- stimulates innovation,
- improves the quality of internal relationships.

It's not just correctness: it's a competitive advantage.

Useful Attachments

Quick checklist: 10 ways to make your language more inclusive

Avoid generic masculine

- › Use inclusive forms: "people", "colleagues", "those who work in..."

Speak by roles, not gender

- › Prefer "the person responsible for the project" over "the project manager"

Don't assume gender

- › If you don't know the gender, use neutral or plural forms

Choose representative and varied examples

- › Alternate names, roles, and identities when giving examples or telling stories

Avoid stereotypes or diminutives

- › Avoid expressions like "you're too sensitive", "strong for a woman", "marketing girls"

Respect pronouns and identities

- › If someone shares their pronouns, use them correctly

Include everyone in greetings and addresses

- › "Hello everyone", "Welcome all", "Dear colleagues"

Rephrase exclusive sentences

- › From "everyone must give their best" to "all people must give their best"

Ask, don't assume

- › If unsure about names, pronouns, or correct terms: ask respectfully

Correct kindly (and accept corrections)

- › Promote a culture of constructive feedback and mutual growth

Mini glossary of inclusive alternatives

AVOID	USE INSTEAD	WHY
Employees	People / Those who work in the company	Centers the person
Colleagues	Colleagues of all genders / Team members	Includes all genders
Manager / Boss	Responsible person / Leadership	Neutral and inclusive
Technician	Technical team / Technical roles	Makes multiple identities visible
Secretary / Girls	Support team / Secretariat area	Avoids gender stereotypes
Client	Clients / Customer base	Includes all identities
Welcome	Welcome all / Welcome everyone	Welcomes all genders
Everyone / Anyone	All people / Those who work in...	More neutral language
Businessmen	Business people / Professionals	Avoids gender exclusion
Moms and dads	Parents / Families / Caregivers	Includes diverse realities

Suggestion for monitor use:

Project one word per week with the title "Inclusive Words: did you know that...?"

Example:

"Employees" or "People"?

We choose the latter: it centers human value. #WordsMatter

Inclusive email template

SUBJECT: Team updates / Useful info for everyone

Email body:

Hello everyone,

I hope this message finds you well.

We're writing to share some important information about [brief topic description, e.g. "the new Project X", "the update to company policies", etc.].

What's new

Starting from [date], [summary of the update] will be available/active.

Who's involved

All people working in [area/department], as well as those collaborating on [project/topic].

WHAT TO DO

We invite you to [required action, e.g. "review the attached document", "join the meeting", "fill out the form by..."].

For any questions or suggestions, feel free to write to [reference email] or contact your point of reference. Thanks for your collaboration and for everyone's contribution.

Best regards,
[Sender or Team name]

Features of an inclusive email

Neutral and welcoming greeting: "Hello everyone" or "Good morning all"

Non-sexist language: avoid "employees", "the manager", "users"

Accessibility: simple sentences, short paragraphs, bullet points

Clarity: structured and focused on what/who/when/how

Empathy: collaborative tone, not impersonal

Manager's guide: how to give respectful feedback

1. Prepare carefully

- Reflect on the goal of the feedback: improvement, growth, or appreciation
- Focus on behaviors and results, not personal traits
- Be aware of your biases and avoid generalizations or stereotypes

2. Use neutral and specific language

- Avoid judgmental or absolute terms (e.g. "always", "never", "inadequate")
- Describe observable facts without attributing intentions or emotions
- Use concrete examples to make feedback clear and understandable

3. Adopt a positive and constructive tone

- Start with sincere appreciation when possible
- Frame suggestions as growth opportunities, not punitive criticism
- Be empathetic and open to dialogue, encouraging two-way communication

4. Respect individual differences

- Consider different experiences, cultures, and communication styles
- Avoid comments on personal aspects unrelated to work (e.g. appearance, gender, ethnicity)
- Use preferred pronouns and titles

5. Involve the person in the conversation

- Invite them to share their point of view and discuss solutions together
- Ask if there are resources or support needed for improvement
- Define concrete and measurable goals together

6. Avoid potentially offensive or discriminatory phrases

- Don't use sexist, racist, or stereotypical language
- Prefer expressions that include all involved (e.g. "everyone", "team", "colleagues")
- Always use professional and respectful terms

Examples of positive and inclusive phrases

SITUATION	NON-INCLUSIVE PHRASE	INCLUSIVE ALTERNATIVE
Behavior observation	You're too emotional	I noticed you seemed very engaged during the meeting; how did you feel?
Improvement request	You never pay attention to details	To improve further, you could focus more on details in the report.
General feedback	You did a good job, for a woman	You did a great job, well done!

Conclusion

Effective and respectful feedback is a powerful tool for developing an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and motivated. Practicing mindful language helps build trust, collaboration, and respect. Share. Apply. Adapt.

Inclusion is built every day, one word at a time.
#WordsMatter | #InclusiveLanguage