

## An open and inclusive workplace

Colleagues share tips for cultivating an open, inclusive work culture for all

**Speakers:** Carlo, Emma, Thiago, Ambar, Jastinder, Cindy, Karen, Luisa and Imaan

**Carlo:** When you look at me, some people say, “You might be from Asia.” But when you listen to me, I sound like I’m from North America

**Emma:** We have to come out all the time. You’re always in a situation where someone has made an assumption and you feel like actually you need to set the record straight.

**Thiago:** There was this one colleague that kept referring to “your wife”. I said, “No, it’s my boyfriend.”

**Ambar:** From face value we can look quite similar.

**Jastinder:** Because Ambar’s fasting, they just presume that I’m fasting too.

**Cindy:** I’m bisexual. People would tend to ask me whether I see a boy and a girl at the same time.

**Karen:** I’ve worked for the bank for 40 years this August. I’m probably perceived as a little bit of a dinosaur. Maybe not seen for all the knowledge that I’ve kind of got and the experience that I can offer.

**Carlo:** Those are the shortcuts that people take to try to put you in a box and say, “I’ve got your profile now. I’ve got you figured out.”

**Karen:** The advice I’ve got for anybody ... in getting to know somebody that is different to them is to be open.

**Emma:** Perhaps think about questions that you can ask that get to know the person.

**Ambar:** You can’t define me because of my religion. My religion is my personal belief, but who I am is something so different to that.

**Thiago:** Talk about yourself first. If you want to gain someone’s trust, you need to give a bit of yourself.

**Ambar:** Body language is one of the biggest things that comes across when people are asking you questions.

**Thiago:** Body language tells a lot.

**Luisa:** The truth

**Thiago:** The truth, yes  
[Gestures]

**Luisa:** [Laughs] Are you asking an Italian? It’s all about body language. It’s all about moving.

**Ambar:** But another this is the way you ask the question as well. So, if you’re abrupt in asking, “Where are you from?” or “What is your background?” it might take me aback.

**Jastinder:** A lot of the time people have done that to me and Ambar, asked us where we're from and then left it at that, as if what we've said is wrong.

**Imaan:** It's not only about learning something new, it's going with the mindset that, "OK, I'm willing to let go of my biases and willing to learn."

**Thiago:** I'd rather someone come to me and talk to me and ask me things as opposed to having your preconceived ideas in your mind.

**Carlo:** There isn't just black and white anymore. There isn't just male or female. There are other ways of living. There are other cultures out there and keeping an open mind and being much more informed about that is a good starting point.

**Emma:** Not being afraid of making mistakes is also really important. I've been in situations where I have mixed up somebody's gender. That's a bit of a challenging situation and you have to correct yourself or allow yourself to be corrected.

**Jastinder:** No question is a dumb question because if you don't know, you don't know.

**Imaan:** As long as the intention is good

**Cindy:** Yes. As long as you're genuine.

**Imaan:** And respectful

**Cindy:** Yes

**Imaan:** Ask respectfully

**Cindy:** Just ask the question

**Imaan:** Yes

**Cindy:** We'll answer them

**Emma:** The next generation coming up actually is even more open and even more fluid. Therefore, we have to not hide behind the excuse of, "It's something that I don't understand, it's something that I'm not part of."

**Cindy:** It's a social responsibility to be sensitive and to be considerate to people who are different from you.

**Carlo:** The energy and effort to get to know someone is worth it. Because there could be something exciting at the end of it that you could learn from and didn't know before.

**Jastinder:** That's how you move forward.