



## THE TIMES 100

### BUSINESS CASE STUDIES

## Diversity and inclusion - Tarmac

As a firm in the heavy building materials industry, Tarmac traditionally had a strong male bias in its workforce, but this is changing. Many posts are now open to men and women across a huge range of job roles. For Tarmac to succeed in a competitive market place, people are a critical resource. This is because the diverse talents of staff make Tarmac distinctive in the marketplace. Technical knowledge, corporate experience and the understanding of customer needs all make a critical difference.

The idea of **equal opportunities** is concerned with eliminating discrimination. The purpose is to ensure workers have equality of access to recruitment, training and promotion opportunities in the workplace. This increases the pool of potential employees for firms. Recruitment decisions are therefore based on getting the right person for the job. Tarmac has a rigorous policy for equal opportunities. No current or potential employee should experience any discrimination arising from background, gender, ethnic origin, age, religion, sexual orientation, political belief or disability.

Tarmac has taken this a stage further. It is now building a **culture** and vision that is known by the term **Diversity and Inclusion**. In this context, diversity means all the complex ways in which people are different. This includes visible differences such as gender or ethnic origin. The term also captures less obvious differences between people: religious or political beliefs, sexual orientation or education and social background. When a person comes to work, they bring with them their own thinking and learning style, personality type, experience, ambitions . even their own sense of humour. A diverse workforce better reflects Tarmac's target market. It can be more adaptable to changes in the market because of the range of skills and experiences to draw from. A greater cultural understanding can also lead to the provision of a better level of service.

The heavy building materials industry has developed a stereotype of older, male employees. This is not inclusive. To achieve change, effective training and the active example of leadership right up to CEO level are essential. Senior managers aim to provide Diversity and Inclusion support, guidance and resources for employees. The firm actively searches for staff in the widest possible labour pool. For example, it advertises job vacancies on the Equality Britain website. Once appointed, keeping staff motivated is the key to quality and productivity. Retaining employees is also important. Low staff turnover can reduce recruitment and training costs, but perhaps more importantly, results in an experienced and skilled workforce. By valuing the distinctive qualities that each worker brings to a job, Tarmac can generate a 'feel good factor' among employees. Tarmac's stance on diversity also promotes family-friendly working for male and female employees as well as anti-bullying or harassment policies.

Benefits of a diversity strategy include:

**Engaging employees** - Tarmac recruits in a highly diverse labour market to achieve corresponding diversity in its workforce.

**Developing markets** - Tarmac needs the confidence and trust of its customers. A diverse workforce can build the necessary relationships with increasingly diverse customers in both existing and new markets.

**Reducing Costs** - Valuing all employees for who they are and what they offer increases motivation and improves retention. These are two powerful ways to reduce costs and raise quality.

**Managing assets** - Diversity builds new networks of communications. A diverse workforce is best able to represent the company in gaining contracts and local approval for investment decisions.

**Acting Responsibly** - Tarmac is committed to accepting **social responsibility** in all its business activities. This means a high level of concern for all of its **stakeholders**, including the local environment.





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### Questions

1. What is meant by diversity?

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2. Describe equal opportunities.

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3. Explain how Tarmac manages to recruit from a wide pool of labour.

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4. Analyse the advantages of having a Diversity and Inclusion culture.

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### Task

*Research task* . using the internet, research the different diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities policies of a range of businesses. How do the policies differ, if at all? How could the policies be improved?

### What have you learned?

Create a summary circle of the learning from today's session. Identify the number of learning points from the session. Divide a circle into the same number of segments as the learning points. Now add one learning point to each of the segments. Add colour and icons to aid recall.