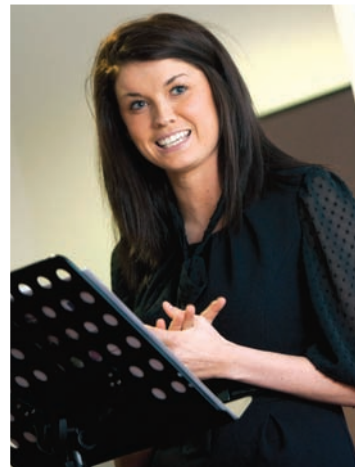


Evolve Programme for Business

Managing Diversity for Business Success



Chwarae Teg
 **Agile Nation**



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What's it all about?

The Evolve programme offers small and medium sized businesses the opportunity to develop and implement best practice diversity strategies, in a way that can improve the success of the business for little or no financial outlay.

Even if you already have policies that promote equality and diversity, Evolve offers practical support to help transform them into workable solutions that deliver on-going benefits to your business and your employees. When you develop and implement your diversity strategy your business will be joining the ranks of many of the UK's leading organisations who have already seen the benefits of adopting such best practice.

Taking advantage of the expert support provided by Evolve will enable you to go beyond legal compliance and truly enhance the flexibility and diversity of your organisation.

This booklet explains the Evolve programme, how it works and how your business can benefit from it. As the programme is part of Chwarae Teg's Agile Nation project it is fully funded by the European Social Fund and the Welsh Government.



Diversity is good for business

In 2008 the European Commission surveyed 1,200 SMEs who had adopted a diversity strategy, 82% said diversity had a positive impact on their business.

Successful businesses are being more innovative than ever in order to make the most of every opportunity that comes their way.

Creating a positive and progressive working environment has proven benefits:

- **Increased productivity as a result of:**

- > Improved staff motivation
- > Reduced levels of absenteeism
- > Greater staff loyalty

- **Enhanced business reputation as a result of:**

- > Having a best practice diversity strategy in place
- > Promoting your legal compliance and responsibilities
- > Becoming an employer of choice
- > Effectively engaging with staff, customers and suppliers from all backgrounds

- **Efficiency benefits as a result of:**

- > Implementing remote working
- > Adopting worklife balance practices

“Now more than ever businesses should ensure they have in place a diversity strategy. Aside from being the right thing to do for your employees, by embracing diversity in the workplace the business itself can benefit in many valuable ways, including improved morale and productivity to reduced recruitment costs.”

Leighton Jenkins,
Assistant Director Policy, CBI Wales



Leighton Jenkins

Evolve in action

The Evolve programme starts with a **free 1 day workshop** that will enable you to:

- explore the benefits of adopting a diversity strategy
- maximise the business benefits of diversity
- understand the impact of the new Equality Act
- develop more effective working practices
- explore flexible and remote working

The workshop has been developed to address these issues in the context of the current Welsh economy. It is a valuable opportunity to spend a day with fellow professionals examining different diversity tools and learning how to make them work for your organisation.

The workshop is suitable for business owners, directors and senior managers from small and medium sized companies in the private, not-for-profit and third sectors.

“Attending the workshop showed me that diversity is much more than just a policy and now I’m pleased the Agile Nation team are helping me develop an effective diversity strategy for DecTek. I’m convinced this is a good thing to do for my staff and my business.”

Dave Beese,
Business Development Director,
DecTek, Pontypridd www.dectek.co.uk



Dave Beese

The Service

After the workshop we offer a range of support specifically tailored to your business, all of which is financially supported by Evolve.

We recognise that each business is unique, which is why we work in partnership with you, lending our expertise to help you reach your business objectives.

We offer expert impartial advice on how to manage a diverse workforce and client base for maximum business advantage. Working together, we can help

you create a diversity strategy that sets out straightforward, cost effective actions to:

- improve your working environment
- get the best performance from the people you already employ
- expand your customer base
- work more efficiently and productively
- enhance your corporate reputation and become an employer of choice

The Service continued...

If you identify a need to introduce remote working as part of your diversity strategy, Evolve also offers specialist impartial advice and support to assist your business.

We can help in 3 ways:

- 1 **Technology** – our dedicated ICT Project Manager will work with you to identify the technology requirements your business will need to adopt remote working practices
- 2 **Policy and Process** – we will help you develop the appropriate policies to support the effective use of remote

working ranging from Fair Use IT to Data Recovery

- 3 **Financial** – to help with the implementation and adoption of remote working practices.

Agile Nation 24/7

The exclusive online resource for businesses that take part in Evolve. Here you'll find up-to-date information and best practice advice on a range of topics including equality and diversity, flexible and remote working and worklife balance.

"It's all well and good writing an equality and diversity policy but businesses must act on that if they want to be an employer of choice. Through the Evolve programme I have received practical help and advice to ensure my business is actively working to address the issues laid out in our policies."

Rachael Flanagan, Director
Mrs Bucket Cleaning Services,
www.mrs-bucket.co.uk



Rachael Flanagan

"Due to the nature of the work we do at Pia, we have a diverse customer base and we value equality in all sorts of ways. Through Evolve, Pia is embracing remote working, making it easier and more convenient for people to work for us and helping us to retain and recruit the best talent from the widest possible pool."

Sharon Williams,
Managing Director,
Pia, Cwmbran
www.pia.co.uk



Sharon Williams

FAQs

Here are some of the most common questions we get asked about diversity in the workplace. Hopefully you will find the answers useful in helping you decide to choose the Evolve programme.

Q. I don't employ a diverse workforce so why have a diversity strategy?

A. Diversity is not just about who you employ, but also who you do business with. We recognise many SMEs aren't looking to employ additional staff, but that doesn't mean you can't benefit from expanding your customer base, improving customer satisfaction and enhancing the loyalty you get from your existing employees.

Q. How much will the Evolve programme cost me?

A. The Evolve programme is managed by Chwarae Teg as part of its Agile Nation Project and is funded by the European Social Fund and Welsh Government which means we deliver our support free of charge to you.

Q. I'm very busy, how much time do I have to commit to this?

A. There is a certain time commitment required from you however the advantage of the Evolve programme is that you receive dedicated time from a member of our expert team. They will help you create a strategy and also assist in delivering the actions. This frees you up to get on with running your business.

Q. Why bother with diversity, we've always got along fine?

A. The world of work is rapidly changing and local businesses aren't immune to the effect globalisation is having, in particular increased competition. Added to which there are social changes, with people retiring later, and more women, older people, disabled people and

people from different ethnic backgrounds entering the labour market. A diversity strategy helps to ensure your business can adapt naturally to these changes and even benefit from the new opportunities they present.

Q. We're a small team and work out time off informally. Why should we adopt formal policies?

A. Informal arrangements are fine – however they don't safeguard the business if an employee raises a grievance in the future. Without policies and monitoring systems in place the business has no evidence to show it has a fair and appropriate means of allocating time off. Informal systems also increase the risk of unintentional discrimination as there is no guarantee that all employees will receive the same treatment or opportunity to access time off or flexible working.

Q. I already have an equal opportunities policy. Isn't a diversity strategy just another view on the same thing?

A. A diversity strategy goes beyond an equal opportunities policy as it produces real, measurable outcomes that will make a difference to your business. A strategy allows you to demonstrate that you actively implement the values you stand for, and truly harness the benefits of diversity for your business.

Q. How can a diversity strategy help me win more business?

A. A diversity strategy can increase your organisation's competitiveness when tendering for contracts. In addition, you can use a diversity strategy to make your products and services more accessible, helping to open up new markets for your products and attracting new customers of different ages and a wide variety of backgrounds.

Next steps

The Evolve programme is available to businesses that have their main base in one of the local authorities shown below.

To request a place on the Workshop or to find out more about Evolve please call the office in your area.

North Wales

Covers Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Gwynedd

Call 01492 514237

Email agilenationnw@chwaraeteg.com

South West Wales

Covers Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot

Call 01554 770612

Email agilenationsww@chwaraeteg.com

South East Wales

Covers Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen

Call 01443 824410

Email agilenationsew@chwaraeteg.com

