

Diversity and inclusion at Ericsson: Making better and fairer decisions

Diversity and inclusion are both crucial to me. I believe they're key to all of us accessing the things we need, from healthcare to employment, and living to our fullest potential. However, these two words have become loaded in recent years. For some, they're a promise that has gone unfulfilled. For others, they create fear that representation targets now mean they'll be left behind. And for many of us, they come with the fatigue of trying very hard to fix something incredibly complex and long-term.

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Our D&I mantra

So, my first mission on joining Ericsson was to cut through all of this. To take D&I back to basics and find the common purpose that we can all rally around. And this became our D&I mantra:

D&I at Ericsson is about making better and fairer decisions.

Better decisions come from seeking input from many different perspectives, enabling us to spot risks, generate new ideas, and include information we might not otherwise have considered. Fairer decisions come from focusing on the data that really matters, not the biased data or opinions that distort our decision-making.

I've yet to meet anyone who isn't interested in making better and fairer decisions, and it's something so practical that every one of us can immediately play a role in. Imagine what would be possible if you could make just a handful of your decisions today better and fairer?

Webinar insights for better decision-making

This subject was the focus of a webinar we ran for D&I Awareness Month, with guest speaker Professor Tali Sharot of UCL/MIT. Professor Sharot used her deep expertise in brain function to help us understand how to be better decision-makers.

Here are three of the actions that she recommended, which we can all take today:

1. Establish common ground: You're more likely to accept different ideas (and have your different ideas accepted) if you begin by focusing on where you agree with another person. Start by exploring what you have in common to create the safety required for constructive disagreement.

2. Review your decision with an impartial person: If you already have a view on the subject you're investigating, it's challenging to be impartial with new information. You'll likely overvalue data that aligns with your viewpoint and undervalue data that doesn't. The simplest way to address this is to get the perspective of someone with no vested interest.
3. Consider your mood: When we're stressed, our brains are more likely to absorb negative data and overstate the probability of bad events. If you're feeling frazzled, be aware of how this may distort your thinking and wait until you're in a better frame of mind before making big decisions.

It's easy to become overwhelmed by the scale of the D&I challenge. So, let's stay focused on what's firmly in our control: the quality of our decision-making and taking the small actions that make those decisions better and fairer.

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