

ThirtyThree

DE&I Communications *Survey 2024*





Introduction

Competition for highly qualified talent has increased and organisations report struggling to attract candidates.¹ While there are many factors at play, research consistently shows that diversity and an inclusive culture are top considerations for those looking to change roles alongside pay and flexibility. The question is' **how do companies best communicate about their commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) so that they stand out as an employer of choice?**

A quick Google search will return a plethora of articles on the importance of DE&I in candidate communications. But many of these articles make recommendations which *blur the lines* between *policy* and *communications*.

The trouble is that for the most part research is heavily based on US data. It's a very different market here in the UK and the expectations and experiences of DE&I are not the same, nor are the policies we have in place.

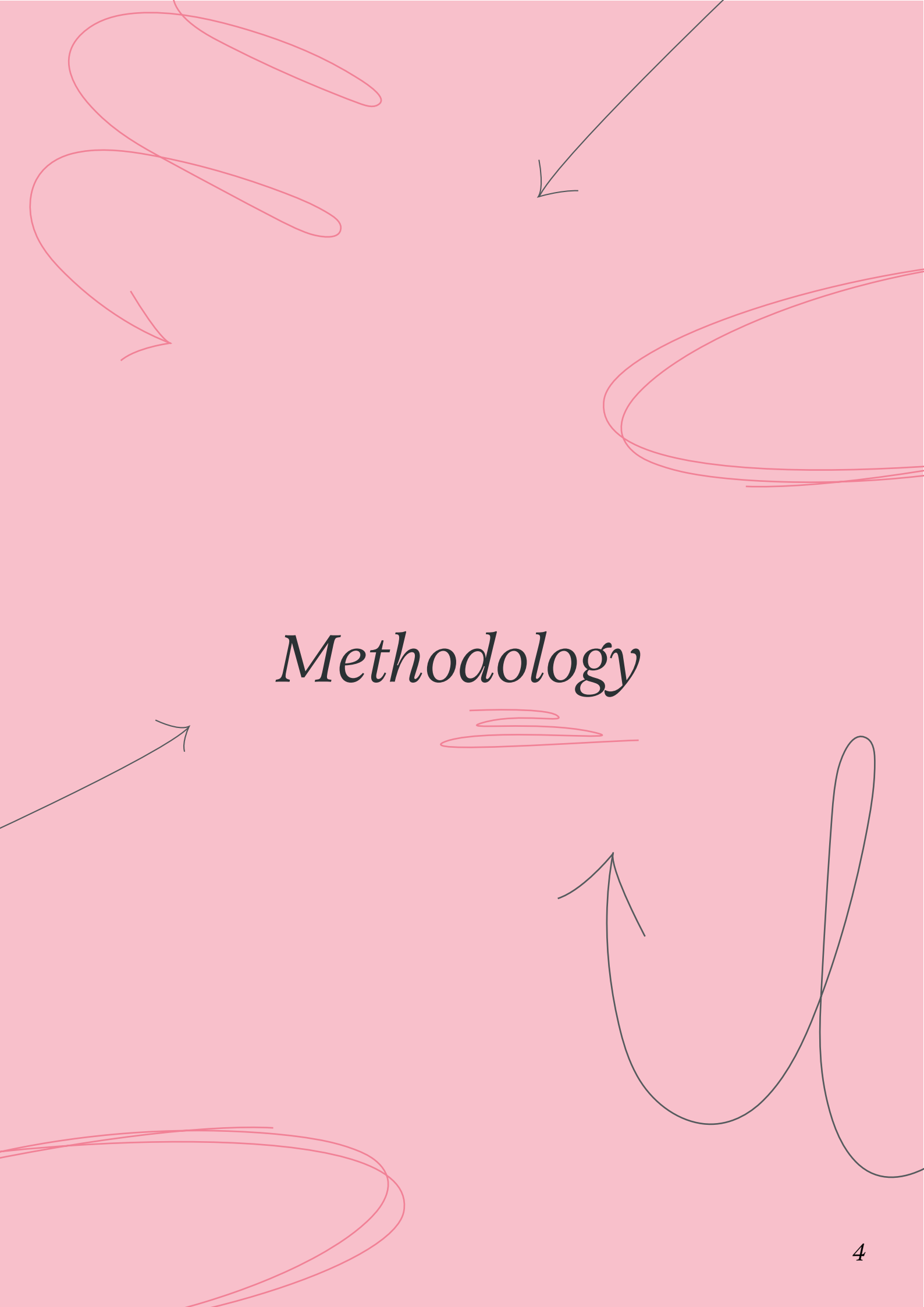
ThirtyThree's DE&I and Strategy & Insight teams wanted to understand more about how DE&I communications can impact job seekers and employees in the UK. This report explores why we should *care* about DE&I, how businesses can show they *value* it, and which content candidates *trust* the most.

¹ Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey 2022, CIPD.



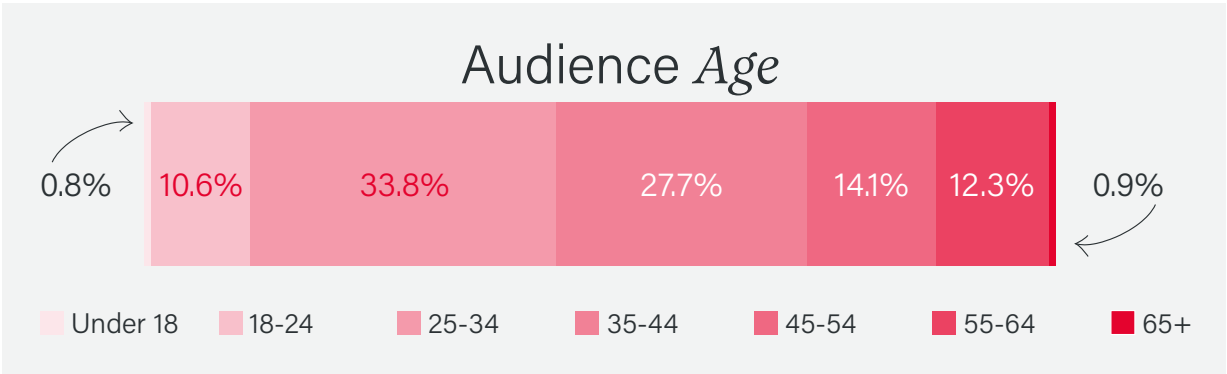
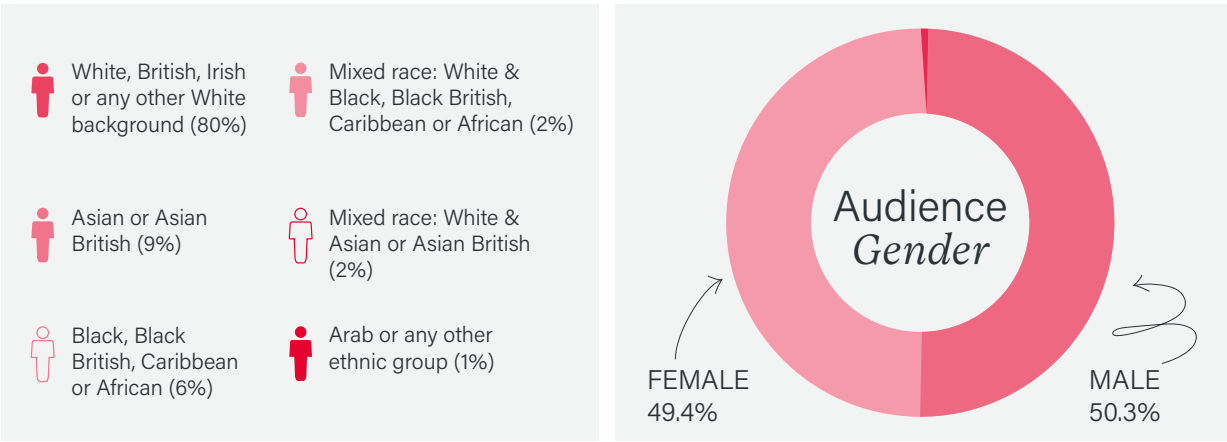
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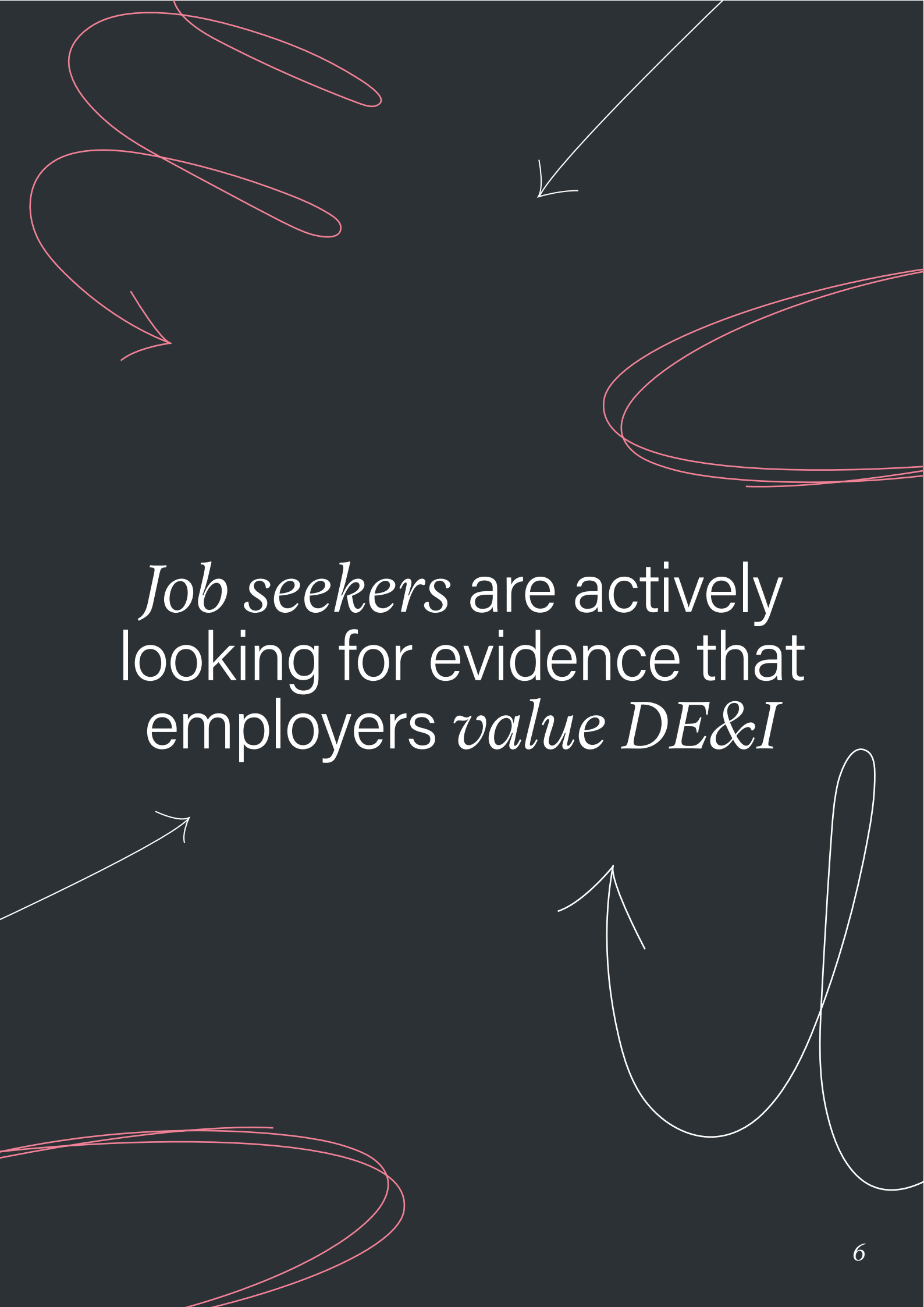
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The background is a solid light pink color. It is decorated with several hand-drawn elements: a black arrow pointing down from the top right, a red arrow pointing down from the top left, a black arrow pointing up from the bottom right, and a red arrow pointing up from the bottom left. There are also several red and black swirls and loops scattered across the page.

Methodology

We surveyed **340 UK-based adults** in **full-time employment**, making sure that we had a sample that was broadly representative of *gender, ethnicity, age profile and employment sector* for the wider working-age population.





Job seekers are actively
looking for evidence that
employers *value DE&I*

Let’s start with the *why*. We asked the question: ‘When choosing whether to apply for a job, how important is it to people’s decision-making that a company has a commitment to diversity and inclusion?’

There’s a considerable body of literature and evidence to support the moral and business case for why businesses should have this commitment. But to what extent do candidates care about this?

In our survey, **8 in 10** respondents said that it was at least somewhat important that a company has a commitment to DE&I, and this went up to **85%** for female respondents and **82%** for ethnic-minority respondents (**Figure A**).

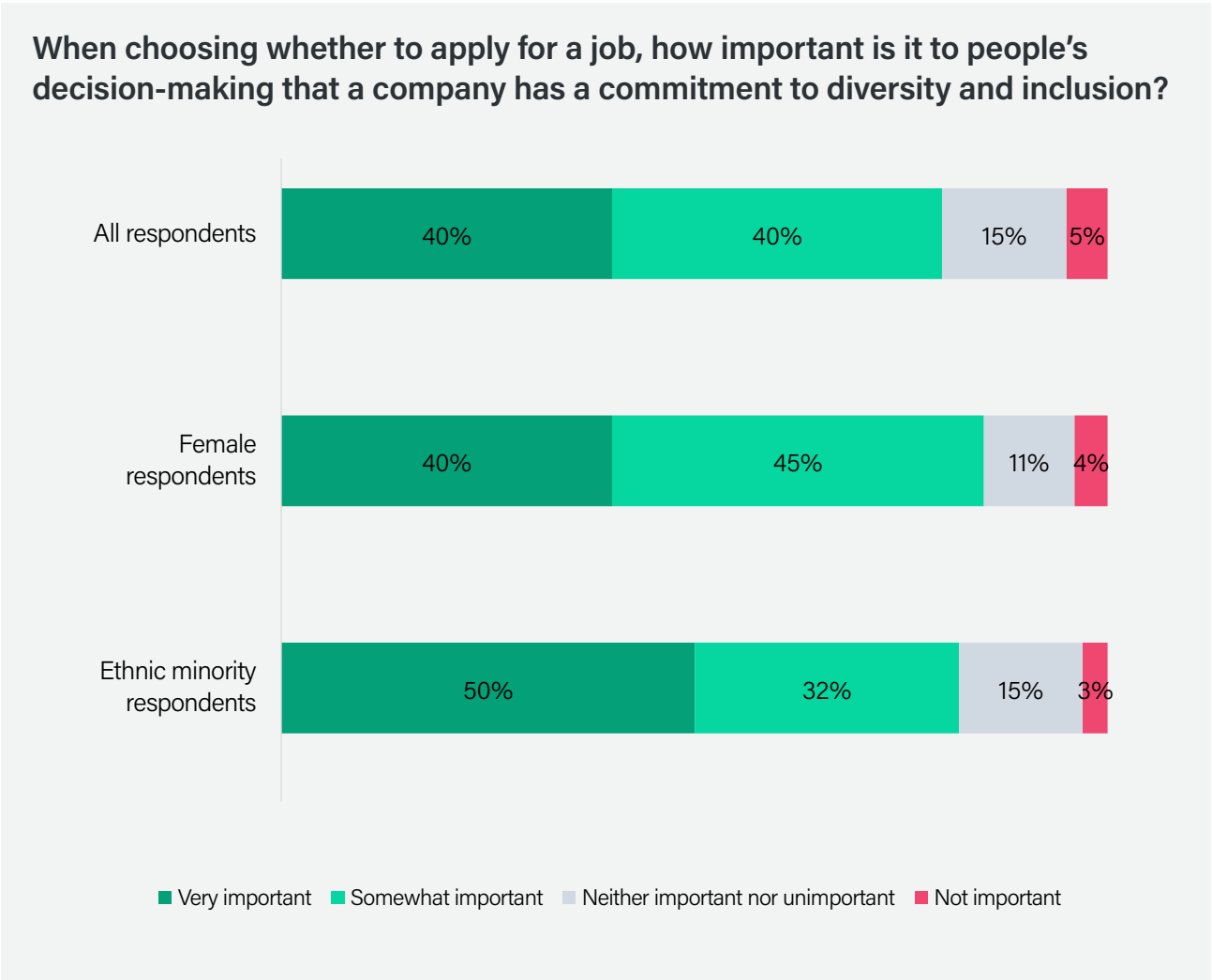


Figure A

When we looked at the results based on age, not a single respondent in the 18–24-year-old bracket responded with ‘not important’ (**Figure B**).

When choosing whether to apply for a job, how important are the following factors about the employer in making your decision?

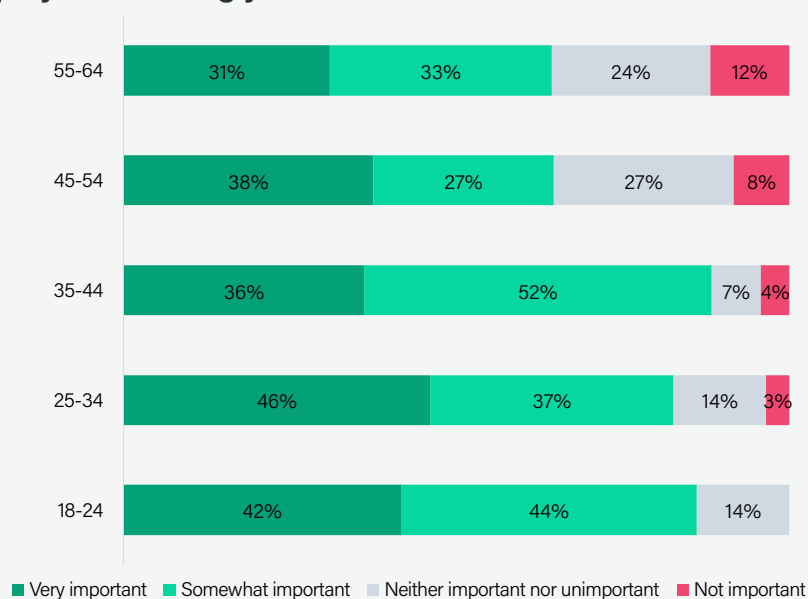


Figure B

We also found that secondary factors linked to DE&I are important to candidates. In particular, policies which support **wellbeing** are shown to impact decision-making. **92%** of respondents said it was at least somewhat important when deciding to apply. (Figure C)

When choosing whether to apply for a job, how important are the following factors about the employer in making your decision?

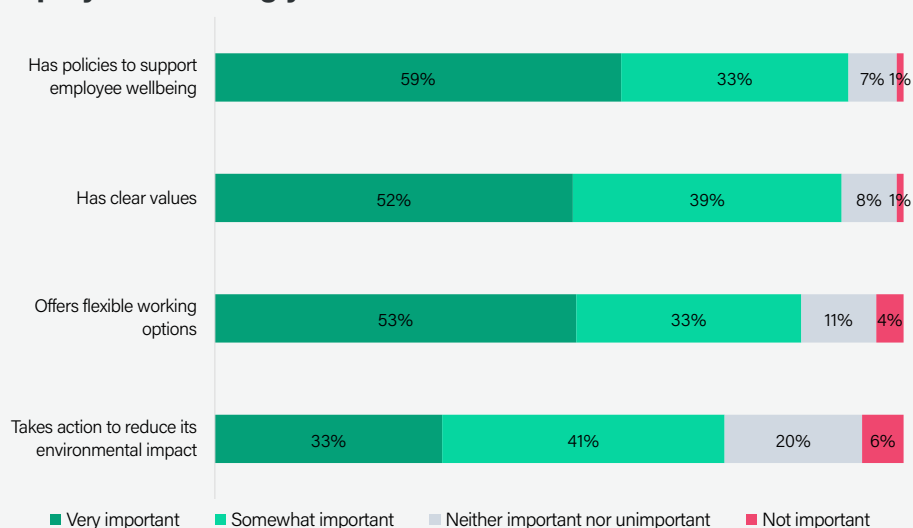


Figure C

So, yes diversity and inclusion matter to job seekers – particularly when you can prove that you're an empathetic employer that cares about the lives of its employees.



Detailed *policies* and
benefits are the most
effective way to show
you *value DE&I*

We also explored *how* to show you value DE&I. Based on our experience and expertise, we produced a list of 12 ways of communicating about diversity and inclusion. These focused on content and activation-based activities. When asked: 'How important is it that a company website or social channels do the following...' we found that each option was seen as important by over **8 in 10** people (**Figure D**).

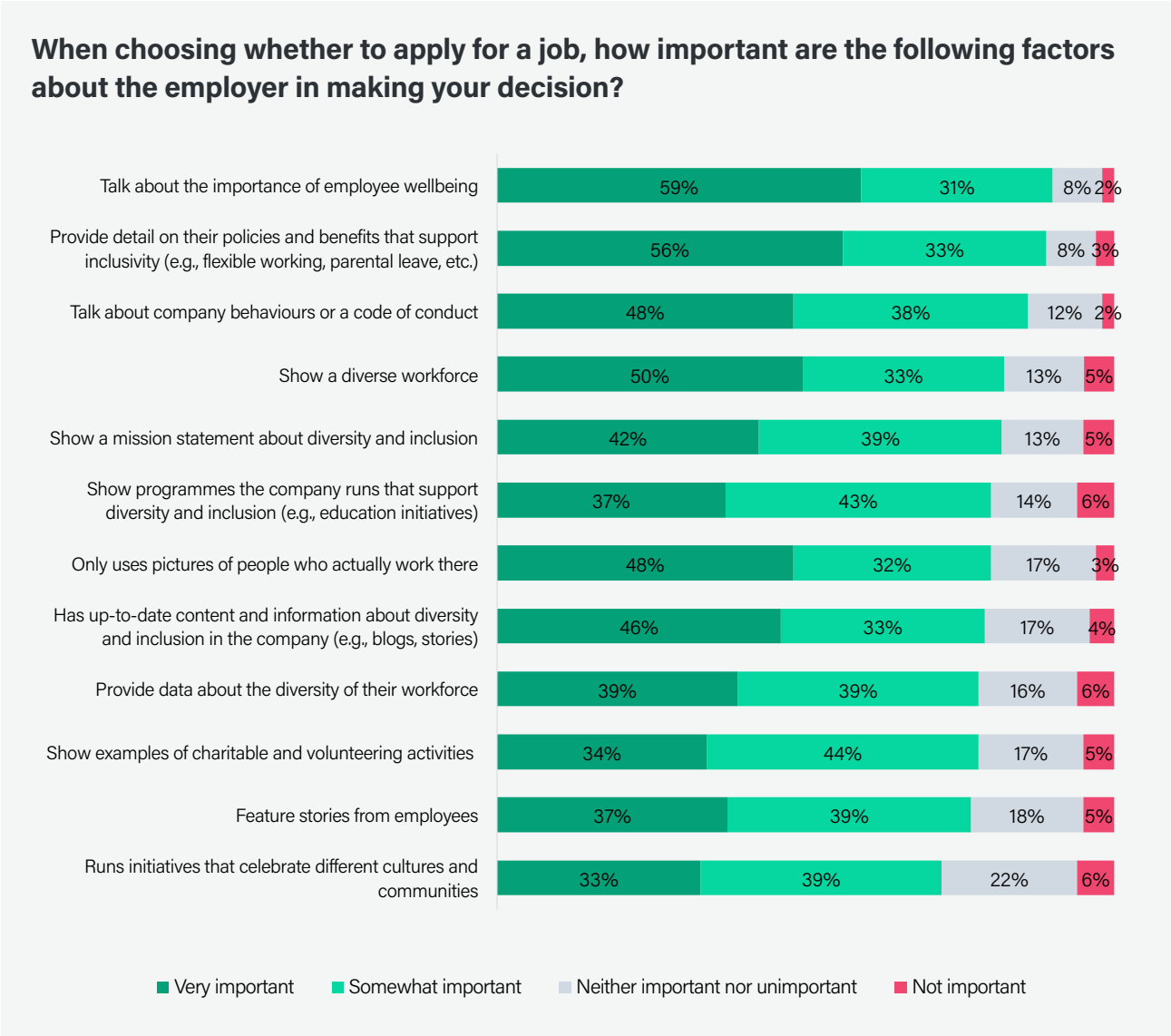


Figure D

When we looked at how each choice ranked, we discovered that communications that referenced **tangible policies and interventions** outscored the most explicit and direct options, like 'showcasing a diverse workforce.' Again, speaking about the importance of employee wellbeing was top of the list.

One of the most interesting learnings here was that over **6 in 10** respondents said they'd be more likely to apply if the company did all of the activities we included (**Figure E**). So, while some might be quicker wins than others, it's worth thinking of a more holistic approach to your DE&I communications.

If a company you were considering working for did everything mentioned on the previous list above, how would this impact your opinion of the company?

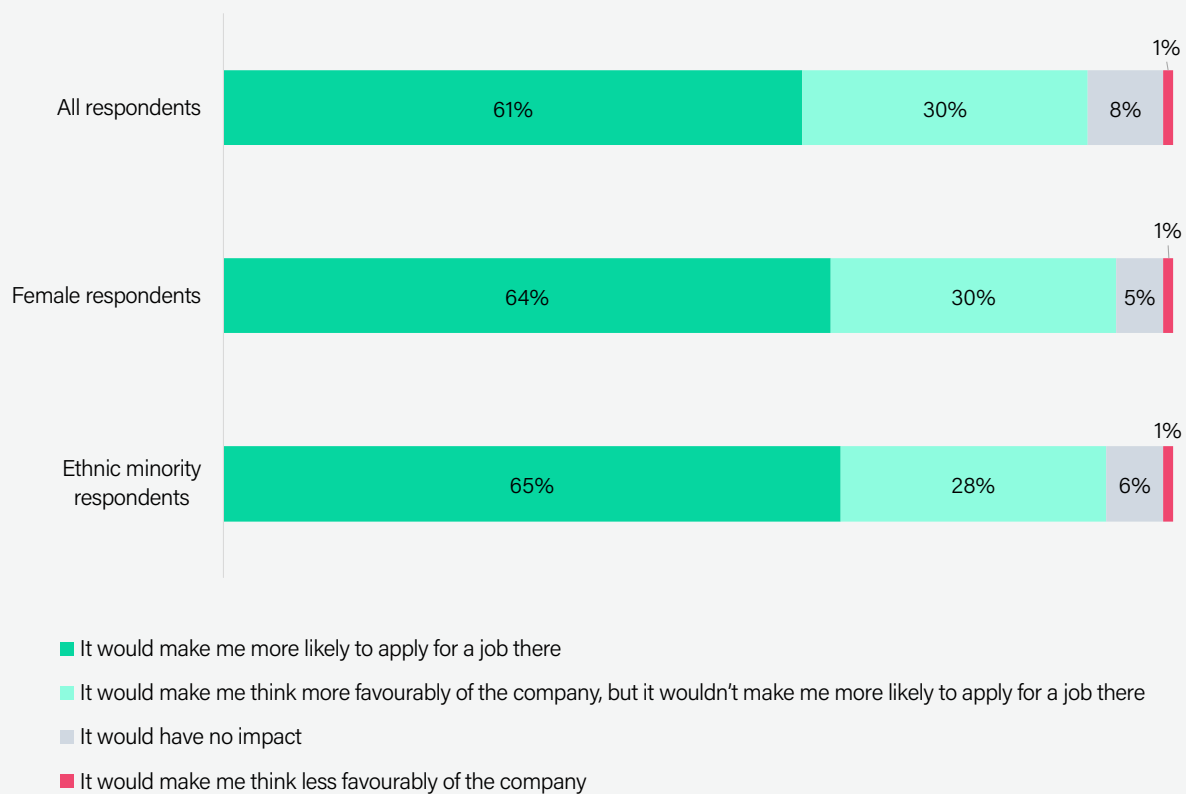


Figure E



*Content from
employees is the
most trusted source*

We wanted to understand who candidates are most likely to trust when a company talks about its commitment to diversity and inclusion. Is it better to have a message from the CEO, from a DE&I leader, the team managers or employee stories?

Our research shows that when it comes to DE&I, **70%** of people trust content from employees. Whereas the CEO ranked the lowest in terms of trustworthiness when communicating on this topic (**Figure F**). When it came to imagery, **80%** of respondents believe that only real employee photos should be used (**Figure D**).

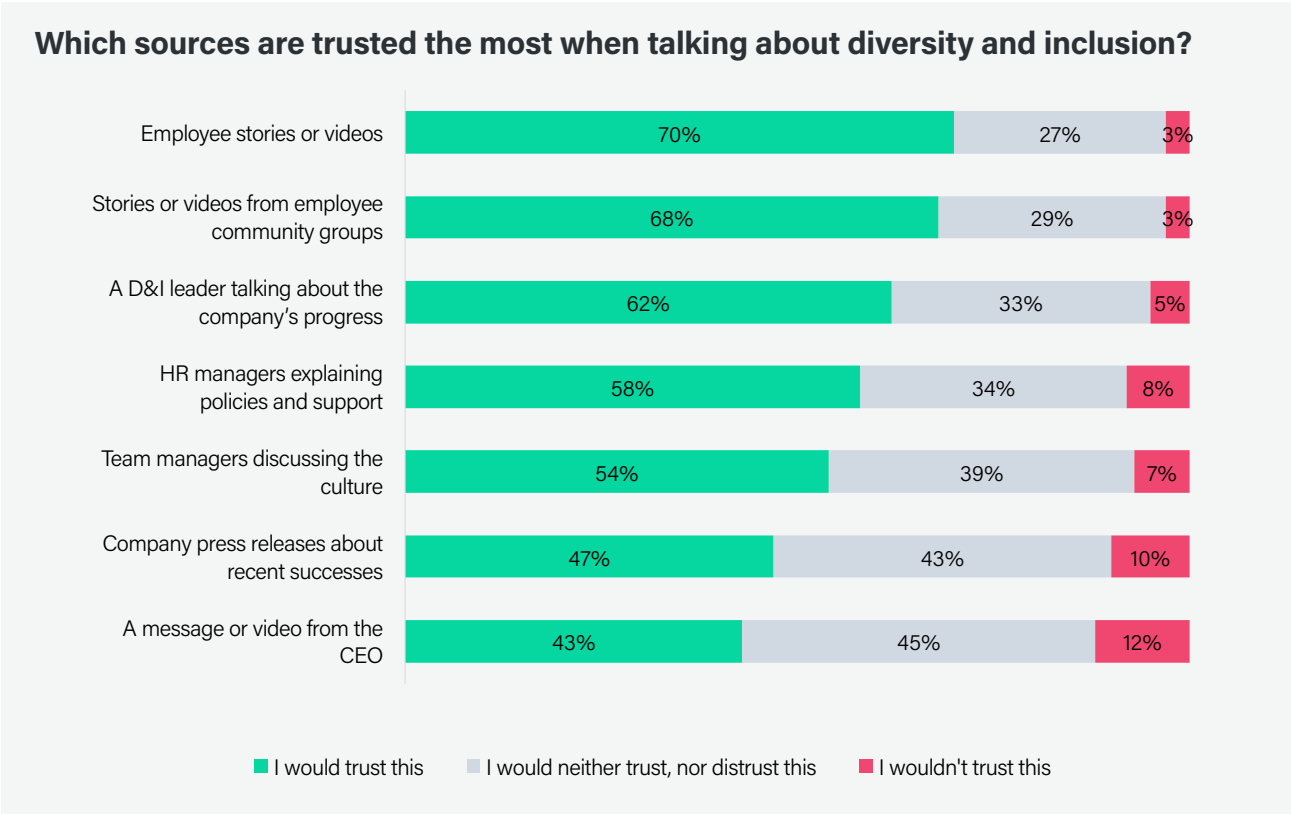
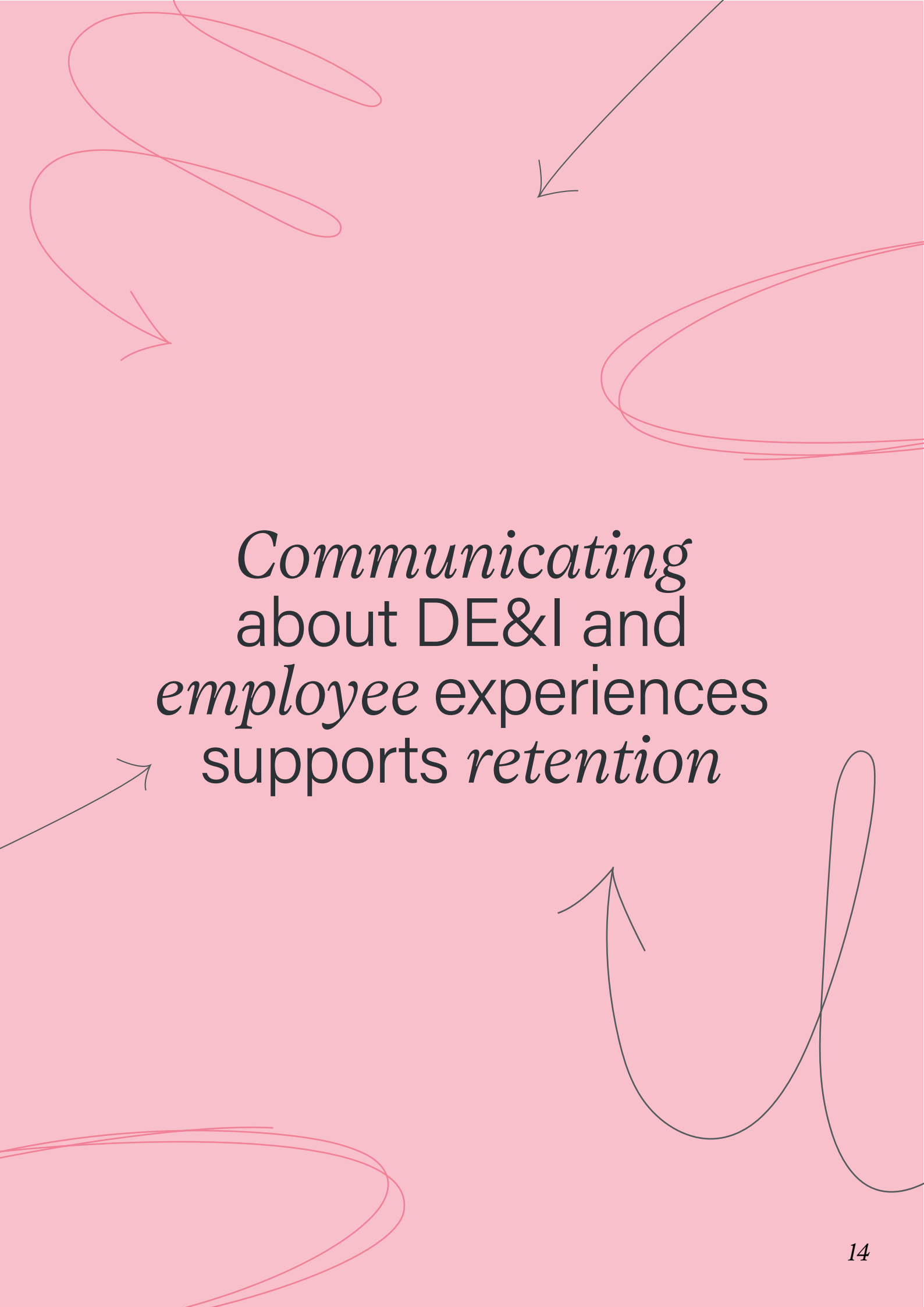


Figure F

What this shows is that people are looking for social proof – real stories from real people that they can relate to. The more senior and detached from the day-to-day running of the company a person is, the less relatable they are. And these findings were only more pronounced among our female-identifying respondents.



Communicating
about DE&I and
employee experiences
supports *retention*

The final topic we wanted to explore was how DE&I communications affect retention. To test this, we devised a list of the common ways companies amplify DE&I and asked which would make someone more likely to stay at a company. In some ways, these results were more surprising.

Nearly half (**44%**) of respondents said that they'd be more likely to stay at a company that promotes activities and stories from employee network groups (**Figure G**). Again, we see the role people stories play in fostering a sense of belonging and engagement amongst employees. What's more, this type of communication – employee stories – matters to workers.

Only **1 in 10** respondents, and **1 in 25** female identifying respondents, said none of the DE&I activations and communications examples we provided would make them more likely to stay at a company.

For those already within a business, it's sometimes easy to dismiss DE&I employer brand activations and communications as unnecessary and lacking in results. Perhaps, it's the extent to which a company delivers on the promises they make that actually impacts their engagement. However, our results indicate that DE&I activations do impact retention and engagement.

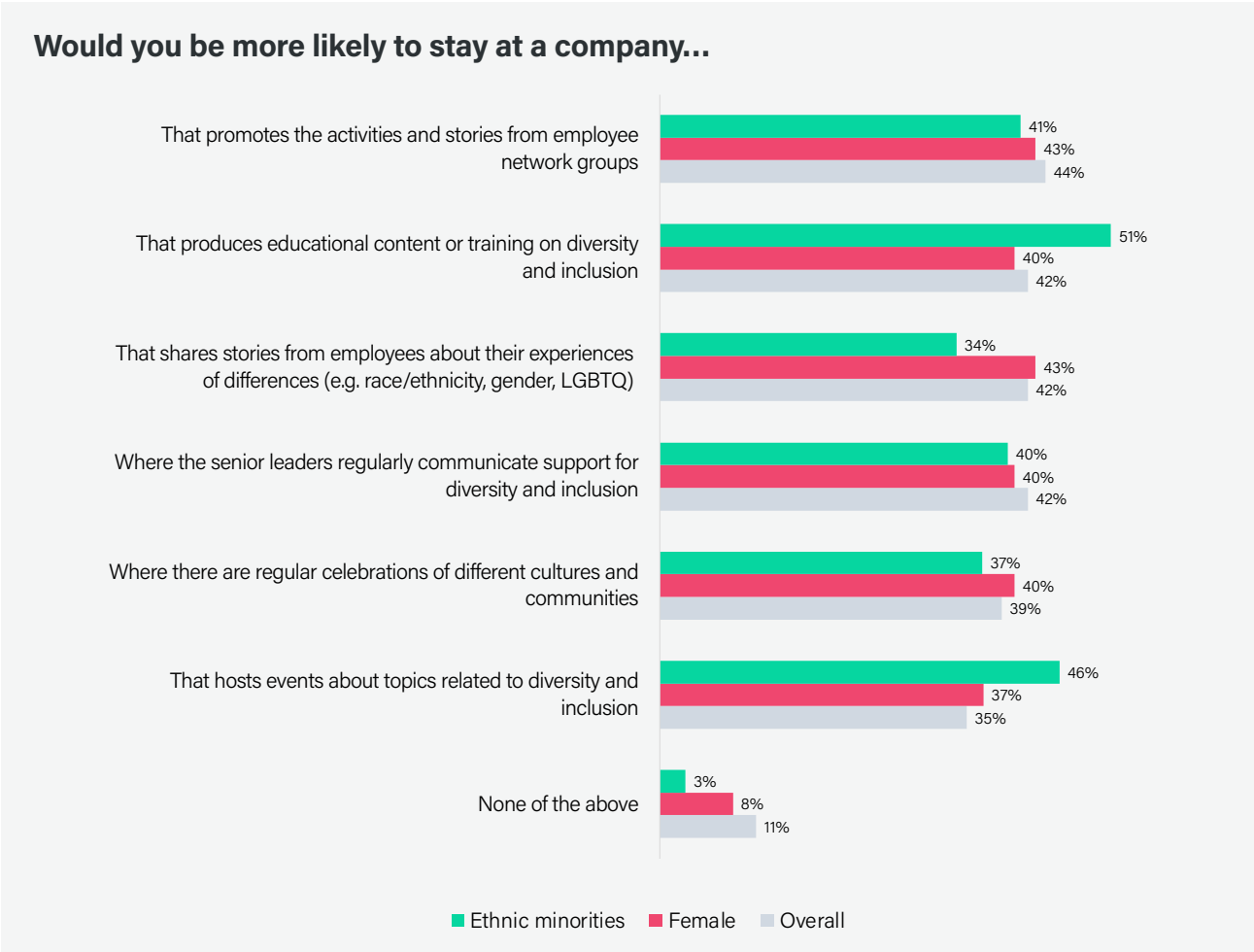
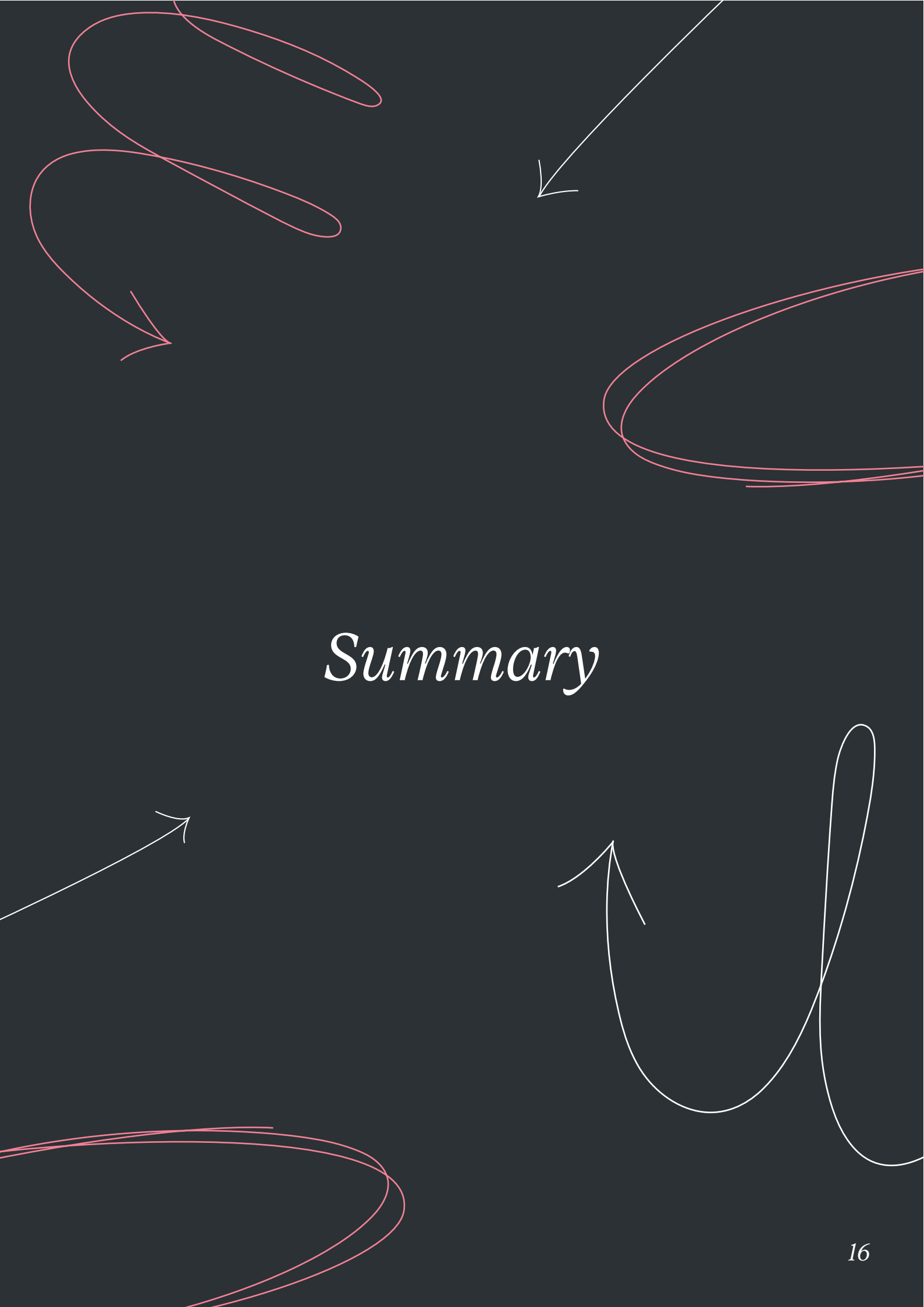


Figure G

The background is a dark charcoal grey. It is decorated with several hand-drawn elements: two red loops in the top left, a white arrow pointing down from the top right, a red oval on the right side, a white arrow pointing up from the bottom left, a white wavy line on the bottom right, and a red oval at the bottom left.

Summary

When speaking to prospective candidates, the story you tell about your company needs to show that you value DE&I. But savvy candidates know that culture is more than the words and images on your careers sites, or a long list of benefits and perks.

Don't just say it – *show it.*

You need to use social proof and provide evidence. Showcase your programs, and policies, and talk about resources you offer and initiatives you run.

It's not *one-size-fits-all.*

People trust different sources. Use a variety of different content and activations to reach different audiences in different ways.

Keep it *real.*

Include your employees' voices in your communications to offer social proof and build trust in your company.

As this survey has shown us - talking about DE&I makes your company more attractive and makes your current employees more engaged. In other words, getting your DE&I communications right will help to alleviate your talent challenges and signify the type of company you are and strive to be.

We're ThirtyThree – one of the leading employer branding agencies.

For us, DE&I is not a tick box – it's a business imperative. As storytellers for the world's biggest employer brands, we create work that influences and shapes culture. So, it's crucial that DE&I is embedded into every aspect of how we work as an agency.

We commissioned this research to test our assumptions and used the insights to develop **Unlocked**, our Inclusive Communications Audit – ensuring we're making the right recommendations to our clients.

We can help you understand and develop your communications to attract and retain the diverse talent you need.

Find out *more.*

