



## INCLUSION IN ACTION WORKSHOP

*“Thriving Talent has a strong reputation as a Swiss-based company with an impressive roster of clients and some employees had benefitted already from their executive coaching. It made them a natural partner to accompany us as we embark on our journey for greater diversity and inclusion,”* says **INTERSPORT’s Human Resources Manager Elizabeth Botterill**

### BACKGROUND

INTERSPORT has a mantra - ‘You’ll never sport alone’ and believes sport should be available to everyone. Inclusion is at the heart of its values. INTERSPORT’s employees understandably wanted to see and feel these values in the company’s words and actions more explicitly.

It prompted the international sporting goods retailer to self-reflect and identify gaps between its ambition and how its values are being translated for the employees and millions of consumers around the world. Based in Bern, Switzerland, the company has a presence in 5,700 stores in 57 countries across all continents.

### ENGAGING THRIVING TALENT

*“They are so professional and resourceful. They know how to get people on board in a powerful and engaging way to see the benefits of this important work,”* says **Elizabeth**.

INTERSPORT approached Thriving Talent based on their prior knowledge of its work in executive coaching, their practical free webinars and experience working with prominent clients in Switzerland on diversity and inclusion (D&I). INTERSPORT wanted support to deliver unconscious bias training to leaders and employees in Switzerland and Netherlands.



Thriving Talent proposed the “**Inclusion in Action**” training course, which includes a blended learning approach. Participants are invited to complete a pre-course e-learning, and during the course work, with interactive and experiential learning activities equipping participants to increase equity and inclusion in their day-to-day work.

## APPROACH

A key aspect of the training are business specific case-studies and Thriving Talent identified four key areas for INTERSPORT to focus on: recruitment, marketing, people promotions and working from home. They also met with different members of the leadership and management team to build trust, manage expectations and to launch the company’s D&I journey.

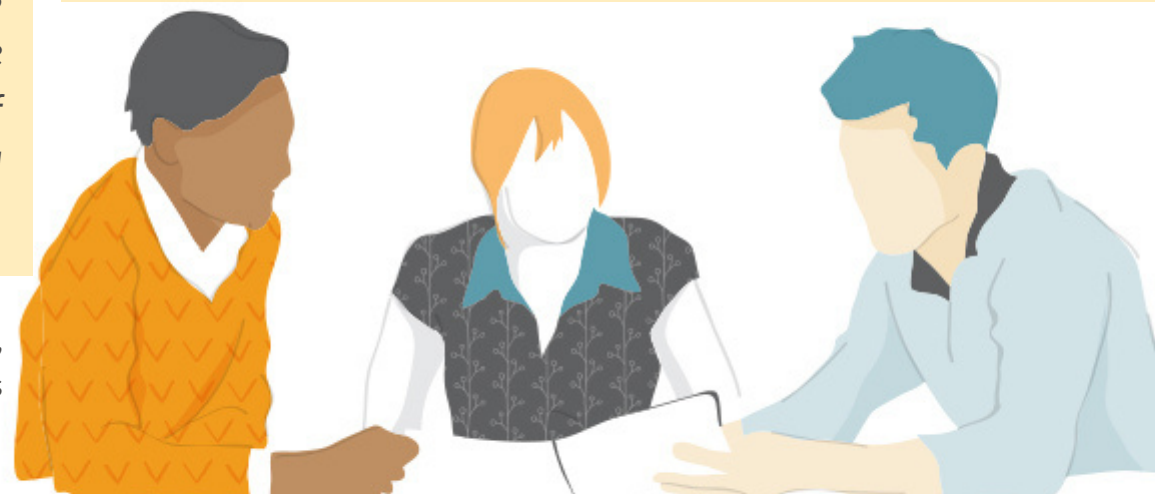
*“Working with Thriving Talent has been a positive, efficient and an impactful experience. In some ways, it’s been uncharted territory for us to raise these issues corporately. They coached us through some of the uncomfortable internal conversations and pockets of resistance we faced to keep us focused on our overall vision and goals.”*

While the work took a bit longer than expected in light of the pandemic, the sessions reached over 50 people – leaders of all of its headquarters and subsidiaries in Bern, Amsterdam and China.

The content considered most valuable by participants included, microaggressions, recognising their unconscious biases, learning about stereotypes and fostered a curiosity to learn more. Participants consistently rated their satisfaction with the sessions over 80 per cent and considered it a valuable learning experience. 100 per cent would recommend the workshop to a colleague.

*“The sessions proved insightful and emotional for many employees as they shared personal experiences. People wanted to learn more around bias and asked for longer sessions,”* **says Elizabeth.**

*“They helped us open our minds. We are now more comfortable to discuss topics and our employees feel empowered to air their views that previously would never have been raised. This work has made us reflect and become braver to act as a result.”*



## RESULTS AND IMPACT

*“The work with Thriving Talent exceeded our expectations. It was cost-effective and helped us hit all targets, influencing everyone from the CEO and through the organization.”*

Elizabeth believes that people at INTERSPORT are starting to recognize and discuss their unconscious biases more openly; one can sense that changes are happening. Aspects that would not have previously been considered are now leading to changes within the organization.

Over 90 per cent of participants said they now have greater self-awareness of how their implicit biases manifest in life and at work, and 86 per cent of participants defined commitments and an action plan for themselves. All participants would recommend the session to colleagues.

The employee training sessions have created a strong appetite for more. The recently formed Employee Resource Group for D&I is advancing the conversations to help sustain the momentum with well-attended employee events.

*“I’m proud of INTERSPORT and how receptive our teams became at all levels. I always like to work for organizations where I can make a difference, and INTERSPORT allows this and supports the investment in this very fulfilling work,”* says Elizabeth.

**How can we help  
your talent to thrive?**

## ADVICE TO OTHER COMPANIES

*“Be brave,”* says Elizabeth. *“Be willing to put yourself on the line; be passionate. This work is too important to be any other way. Diversity and inclusion are good for people, business and the bottom-line. It’s uncomfortable at times, yet you’ll soon see the rewards and how worthwhile it is.”*

## NEXT STEPS

*“It’s not an easy time right now for retail, but our commitment to diversity and inclusion is unwavering. We know what to do next and our employees expect us to follow through on the action plan we developed with Thriving Talent. It makes us a stronger employer and better able to reflect our consumers,”* says Elizabeth.

INTERSPORT would like to expand their work with Thriving Talent to include recruitment, working from home, and greater representation of women in leadership.

*“If budget allows, I would love to keep Thriving Talent on speed-dial.”*

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