



## Guide 05



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### Say It Right: A Guide to Inclusive Language at Work

A must-have for anyone communicating in today's diverse workplace

#### Words are powerful

In the semiconductor industry—where precision, collaboration, and innovation are critical — how we communicate can either build bridges or create barriers. Inclusive language isn't just about being polite. It's about creating a work environment where **everyone feels respected, heard, and welcomed to contribute.**

#### Who is the tool for?

This guide is for everyone working in the semiconductor sector—from engineers in cleanrooms to HR managers, from junior staff to senior leaders. No matter your role, your words shape workplace culture.

#### Purpose & Goal

This tool offers support for clear, respectful, and inclusive communication that helps attract talent, build trust, and foster collaboration across diverse teams. This tool gives practical guidance for daily workplace interactions—whether you're writing an email, hosting a meeting, or drafting a job description.

Find more opportunities and tools, get in touch with the ECDA team!



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[www.diversityinchips.eu](http://www.diversityinchips.eu)

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## What Is Inclusive Language?

Inclusive language:

- respects people's identities (names, pronouns, roles, experiences)
- avoids bias or stereotypes (gender, race, age, disability, etc.)
- fosters understanding and collaboration in diverse teams



It means saying "team" instead of "guys", or "partner" instead of "wife/husband".

It means writing job ads that invite everyone to apply, not just the loudest or most dominant.

## Why It Matters in the Semiconductor Sector

| Impact Area          | Why It Matters                                                                 |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Talent Attraction    | Inclusive language helps you reach more diverse and skilled candidates.        |
| Team Collaboration   | People collaborate better when they feel seen and safe to speak up.            |
| Innovation & R&D     | Breakthroughs come from different perspectives—language can invite or exclude. |
| Global Workforce     | Clarity and respect matter across cultures and geographies.                    |
| Reputation & Culture | Language shapes how your company is experienced—from the inside and outside.   |

# Principles and Practices

## Principles of Inclusive Language

### RESPECT

Honor people's identities. Use their chosen names and pronouns.

**Example:** Use "they" for someone whose pronouns are not known or shared, or when referring to employees in general. Alternatively, use active language: 'Employees who need assistance should contact the HR department.'

### PRECISION

Avoid vague or stereotypical descriptions.

**Example:** Replace 'Asian markets are always efficient' with 'Markets in South Korea and Taiwan have shown strong performance.'

### ACCESSIBILITY

Use plain language, avoid jargon, idioms, and ensure materials are usable by all.

**Example:** Avoid: 'Let's circle back when we're all on the same page.' Better: 'Let's meet again when everyone has reviewed the material.'

### EQUITY

Avoid reinforcing dominance or exclusion through language.

**Example:** Replace 'chairman' with 'chair' or 'chairperson'. Use asset-based language that focuses on strengths.

## Practical Applications Across Roles

### For All Employees

- ✓ Start conversations with inclusive and welcoming greetings.

**Example:** *'Good morning team, let's get started with our updates.'*

- ✓ Use relationship-neutral terms such as 'partner' or 'spouse' when referring to someone's significant other.

**Example:** *'You and your partner are welcome to attend the company event.'*

- ✓ Write clearly and respectfully. Avoid expressions like 'touch base' or 'think outside the box' which may be unclear to some.

**Example:** *Instead of 'let's touch base,' say 'let's check in tomorrow morning.'*

### For Managers and Team Leads

- ✓ Set the tone by using everyone's correct name and pronouns in meetings and communication.

**Example:** *'Taylor has submitted their part of the report.'*

- ✓ Support equal participation by inviting quieter team members to speak and making space for all viewpoints.

**Example:** *'Jamie, we haven't heard from you yet—would you like to share your thoughts?'*

- ✓ Give clear, constructive feedback based on observed actions—not assumptions about someone's background or skills.

**Example:** *'Your analysis helped clarify our testing priorities—great work.'*

## For HR, Admin, and Communications Roles

- ✓ Check that standard emails and announcements use inclusive terms—avoid 'he/she' or 'ladies and gentlemen'.

**Example:** *'Dear colleagues, we're excited to share the latest project news.'*

- ✓ Use inclusive writing tools to help ensure job postings are welcoming to everyone.

**Example:** *Use platforms like Textio to replace 'competitive' or 'dominant' with 'collaborative' or 'proactive'.*

- ✓ When collecting personal information, offer multiple gender options and allow individuals to opt out of answering.

**Example:** *'Gender: ☐ Woman ☐ Man ☐ Non-binary ☐ Prefer not to say'*



To know whether the language used is discriminatory or sexist, **reverse the gender.**

- Would reversing the designation or the term from masculine to feminine or vice versa change the meaning or emphasis of the sentence?
- Would it make the sentence sound odd?

**Women** should not seek out leadership positions.

**Men** cannot do two things at once.

**Men** should be educated about their rights

## Meetings and Presentations

✓ Make slides easy to read: use clear fonts, strong contrast, and simple language.

**Example:** *Use a large, readable font (e.g., Arial 16 pt) with minimal text per slide.*

✓ Provide captions or written summaries for videos and recorded meetings.

**Example:** *'All recorded meetings include auto-captions and downloadable transcripts.'*

✓ Choose images and graphics that reflect the diversity of your workplace and community.

**Example:** *Use illustrations that show people of varied genders and ethnic backgrounds working together.*



## Email and Written Communication

✓ Use inclusive greetings in emails.

**Example:** *'Dear Team, please find this week's update below.'*

✓ Consider adding your pronouns in email signatures to signal respect for gender diversity.

**Example:** *'Best regards, Alex Lee (they/them)'*

✓ Write in a straightforward and respectful tone. Avoid slang or culture-specific phrases that may confuse others.

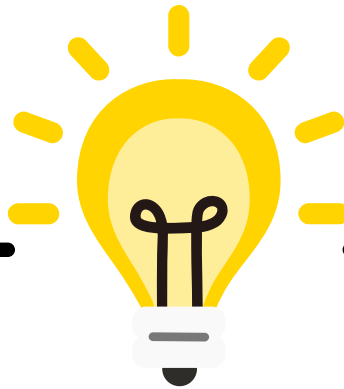
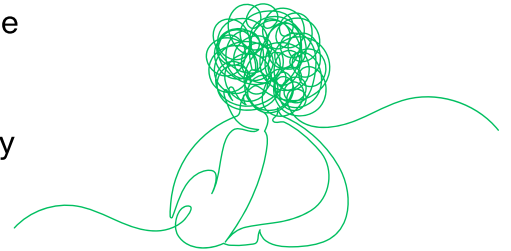
**Example:** *Instead of 'on the same page', say 'in agreement' or 'aligned'.*



## What if I get it wrong?

Using inclusive language is a learning process, not a test. Everyone makes mistakes — what matters most is how you respond.

If you use the wrong term or misgender someone, acknowledge it, correct yourself, and move on without making a big deal. Avoid over-apologizing or centering your discomfort. Most importantly, stay open to feedback and use it as an opportunity to grow. Inclusion isn't about perfection—it's about intention, respect, and willingness to improve.



### Two simple ways to stay on track:

- Practice self-correction: If you notice a mistake, pause, rephrase, and continue. For example: “He—sorry, they—have the updated specs ready.”
- Model openness: Share your own pronouns when introducing yourself. This helps normalize inclusive habits and invites others to do the same.

## Inclusive Language Substitutions

Use this table to find more respectful and inclusive alternatives to commonly used workplace terms:

| Non-Inclusive Term | Inclusive Alternative          | Why This Matters             |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Manpower           | Team / Workforce / Personnel   | Avoids gendered assumptions. |
| Chairman           | Chair / Lead / Coordinator     | Gender-neutral and accurate. |
| Man-hours          | Work hours / Staff hours       | Removes gender bias.         |
| Sanity check       | Final review / Clarity check   | Avoids ableist language.     |
| Crazy idea         | Unconventional idea            | More respectful and clear.   |
| Crippled system    | Slowed system / Limited system | Removes harmful metaphors.   |
| Dummy variable     | Placeholder variable           | Avoids derogatory terms.     |

## Inclusive Communication Checklist



**Use this checklist before sending out emails, presentations, forms, or reports:**

- ☐ Have gender-neutral terms been used (e.g., 'they', 'team')?
- ☐ Have people's names and pronouns been respected?
- ☐ Have idioms or jargon been avoided that may be confusing or non-inclusive?
- ☐ Has plain and clear language been used?
- ☐ Are the materials accessible (e.g., readable fonts, alt text for images)?
- ☐ Have people been presented fairly across gender, culture, and ability?
- ☐ Have I checked for unintended stereotypes or assumptions?

## Further Readings & Ressources

- [APA Inclusive Language Guide, 2nd ed.](#)
- [UN Gender-Inclusive Language Toolkit](#)
- [Council of Europe: Guidelines on Inclusive Language](#)
- [OHSU Inclusive Language Guide](#)

