

SMALL BUSINESS CASE STUDY: MICRO-FRESH®

Byron Dixon O.B.E. is the CEO and Founder of Micro-Fresh® a proven ingredient brand which prevents microbial growth. This keeps footwear, clothing, bedding and bathwear fresher for longer and has sustainability benefits by also reducing landfill. The company currently employs 10 people.

Micro-Fresh® puts inclusivity at the heart of everything it does. The company believes a diverse and inclusive workplace is good for business and it champions an inclusive culture throughout its global business including overseas offices in China, India, Vietnam, Pakistan and the US. c Micro-Fresh's approach is based on trust-building and creating a safe space where people can challenge ideas and put forward new ones, and where genuine diversity of thought is listened to and respected.



Byron says: My views on inclusion have been instilled in me from my childhood growing up in a truly diverse city as Leicester. My belief is we should be in it for the long term gains, not short term box ticking. Inclusion and Diversity are fantastic things - a varied workforce looks different, asks different questions, and you get new and valuable ways of looking at challenges, opportunities in the workplace and, of course, the solutions! If you all look the same you're all going to say the same thing and in my opinion that's not good for true business growth across cultures and countries.'

Byron believes that everyone taking small deliberate, everyday actions is central to creating an inclusive culture. He gives the example of when the NFL realised they had no black coaches, despite the proportion of NFL players being close to 70%. To address this the NFL made a deliberate choice to interview one person of colour for every coach vacancy and doing this meant they started to see and to value different perspectives and skills. This has now been extended to all vacancies in the NFL from Head Coach to administrative functions and across to the NBA and NHL, and being adopted as standard business practice across the US to encourage true professional mobility.

“I try and lead from the front - I show the team that I am vulnerable, I am not perfect, and we encourage management and decision making from all members of our team. It's quite normal that meetings are led by what may be classed as junior staff members and we have created an environment where they are comfortable challenging the more established point of view in order to achieve the best outcome.”

Micro-Fresh also encourages junior staff members to take turns at being the CEO for a day or an hour, to make decisions as if they were running the business. This helps to elevate new and different ideas, encourages people to see the business from a different point of view and for others to learn from these new ideas and approaches.