

# GLOBAL SUCCESS

THROUGH INCLUSION

A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY  
WITH INCLUSION CROWD

*“It’s time to  
do things  
differently”*

Case Study  
Recruitment - Sector  
Energize Recruitment Group



# Foreword

The recruitment sector is another traditionally 'male-dominated' industry now joining the diversity revolution and, embracing wider talent pools. It takes courage to look in the mirror and realise you need to evolve and that is exactly what Energize have chosen to do.



"Forward-thinking employers are going after EDI hard, translating their intentions into ambitious expectations for current and future recruitment partners. Many recruitment firms are at risk of being caught unawares or left behind."

Ed Jervis, CEO, Inclusion Crowd

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Not only is Inclusion Crowd governed by the International Inclusion Think Tank but we are also a pretty eclectic bunch in our own right. Bringing together psychologists, authors, influencers, writers, academics, researchers, speakers, educators, activists and advocates - we embody our values

We operate an environment of positive challenge, open source collaboration, operational excellence and continual improvement. We actively support our colleagues' passions and projects outside Inclusion Crowd; because when one of us succeeds, we all succeed!

# Overview of Achievements with Energize

## 1. BUSINESS GROWTH AND WINNING NEW CLIENTS:

**Strategic EDI Transformation:** Through the partnership with Inclusion Crowd, Energize has strategically integrated Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) into their core operations. This alignment with EDI is helping Energize attract diversity-focused clients and win new business, particularly in the SAP and Cloud solutions markets.

**Positioning as a Talent Partner of Choice:** By embedding EDI best practices into their recruitment processes, Energize has become the talent partner of choice for clients that prioritise diversity, elevating their competitive advantage in the global market.

**Enhanced Client Engagement:** Energize's commitment to EDI is resonating with clients, enabling them to provide value-added services like flexible role design and consultation on diversity hiring, resulting in more wins and deeper client relationships.

## 2. ATTRACTING TOP TALENT:

**Employer of Choice for Diverse Talent:** Energize has evolved into an inclusive workplace, successfully attracting a more diverse workforce. The percentage of women within their organisation has increased by 200%, and they have appointed their first female director.

**Improved Talent Retention:** By addressing internal challenges like gender balance and creating inclusive policies (e.g., flexible working for parents), Energize has improved talent retention, particularly among underrepresented groups.

**Data-Driven Recruitment:** Energize implemented a diversity data system to monitor incoming talent diversity, which has been instrumental in attracting a diverse candidate pool and ensuring continuous improvement.



# Overview of Achievements with Energize

## 3. SOURCING DIVERSE TALENT:

**Revamped Recruitment Processes:** With Inclusion Crowd's guidance, Energize revamped its internal recruitment processes, improving diversity outcomes at every stage of the hiring pipeline.

**Licence to Recruit Certification:** Energize's key Talent Acquisition professionals completed the Inclusion Crowd "Licence to Recruit" programme, ensuring that the internal team is equipped with the skills and knowledge to source and recruit diverse talent effectively.

**Enhanced Diversity Data Collection:** Energize closed critical data gaps by conducting an employee diversity survey with a response rate of 87%, empowering them to make informed recruitment and workforce decisions.

## 4. ADDING VALUE FOR CLIENTS:

**Expert EDI Guidance:** Energize has provided clients with expert advice on diversity hiring, which has helped clients make role design changes to attract more diverse talent, including senior female engineers.

**Credible EDI Leadership:** Energize's leadership team has undergone EDI-focused workshops, resulting in a deep personal commitment to EDI and ensuring their leadership is authentically driving these initiatives from the top down.

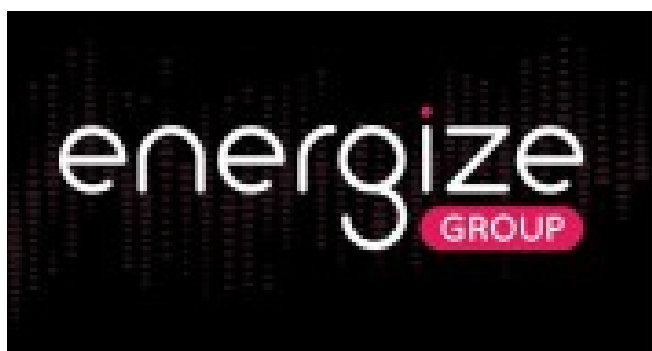
**Client Value Creation:** Energize's ability to authentically align their recruitment services with EDI best practices has not only attracted new clients but has also helped them retain high-margin business by adding differentiated value to their offerings.



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# Introduction

Employers are under increasing pressure to diversify their workforces – socially, politically and legislatively. At the same time, they are increasingly cognisant of the commercial benefits of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) best practice.



By engaging Inclusion Crowd as their strategic EDI partner and adopting the Inclusion Crowd EDI Impact Partner Roadmap, Energize Group are mastering EDI on behalf of clients and candidates whilst bringing in the broader benefits for themselves as well, augmenting their efforts to become 'talent partner of choice for SAP and Cloud solutions globally'.

Energize Group is a global staffing business headquartered in Manchester, UK and operating across Europe and North America.

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As innovative vendor specialists for SAP, Amazon Web Services, Google Cloud, and Microsoft Azure ecosystems, Energize enable clients to build teams and scale operations with fresh, diverse, world-class talent.

Energize are ranked highly among the leading employers in the recruitment industry, publicly recognised for their exceptional employee engagement scores and commitment to cultivating inclusive, compassionate workplaces.

The Energize partnership with Inclusion Crowd originated in gender balance concerns, several years ago:

*"We discovered we were struggling to attract and retain as many women in the business,"* says **Melanie Ross, Head of People & Culture.**





**With great influence  
comes great  
opportunity**

*Recruiters are in a very strong and  
privileged position of influence over  
the flow of societal representation  
into hiring organisations.*



# Diversity as a Growth Driver: Energize's New Focus

While Energize lost no time exploring and addressing underlying factors with their female team members, they also recognised a compelling opportunity to upscale their people and culture ambitions in line with broader plans for business growth:

"We realised that this was our time to step up to a whole new level of strategic focus on diversity and inclusion," explains Melanie. "Everywhere you turn, the appetite for diverse talent is climbing the agenda, as are the expectations of candidate communities.

"To continue to win in this space and grow in the right, responsible way, we knew we had to do it now and we had to do it right."

For Energize, that means striving to be the inclusive employer of choice for diverse talent as well as being the talent partner of choice for diversity-hungry clients, because...

***"..how can we be expected to do it for others if we can't do it for ourselves?"***





# Why Inclusion Crowd?

"We realised that this was our time to step up to a whole new level of strategic focus on diversity and inclusion. Everywhere you turn, the appetite for diverse talent is climbing the agenda, as are the expectations of candidate communities."



Melanie Ross,  
Head of People & Culture.

"We spoke to quite a few companies and ended up shortlisting three, from which we chose Inclusion Crowd," says Melanie, who had a strong sense of what the right partner would look and feel like:

"Good commercial knowledge and experience, able to understand and respect our broader business context and tailor their offering accordingly."

"Able to engage our people in a sincere, straightforward and positive way – capturing their interest, talking their language, and helping them feel safe and comfortable, not preached at or under attack."

"Ready to roll up their sleeves, wade through the weeds, and stay in the blood, sweat and tears with us until we reach our destination."

***"Inclusion Crowd has been all of that for us," says Melanie, "and we love working with Ed. He has terrific rapport with everyone here and is always authentic, always approachable and always on our side."***

So many companies were only selling off-the-shelf training and templates," says Melanie, "and **you really can't transform with training alone.**

"For us, this isn't about ticking boxes, easy wins and being on the bandwagon; it's a serious commitment to being the best in this space. We want to look clients and candidates in the eye with complete confidence when addressing complex issues on their behalf.

# Celebrating commitment and progress

With Ed Jervis, CEO of Inclusion Crowd

"Energize have been brilliant at delivering on their commitment to creating an inclusive approach that underpins their growth.

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The recruitment sector is another traditionally 'male-dominated' industry now steering into the diverse talent renaissance. It takes rare courage to look in the mirror and realise you need to evolve and that is exactly what Energize have chosen to do.

Importantly, they've not been backwards in coming at it from a place of mature, sensitive, heartfelt commitment:

- inviting feedback from female team members and making material changes to address their thoughts and feelings, having really listened to what they have to say;
- taking the harder path to drive out micro-behaviours at odds with who they really want to be whilst introducing more inclusive reward and recognition mechanisms; and
- expanding and strengthening thoughtful and supportive arrangements for working parents whilst introducing new flexible working options for all.

Positive change was not slow in coming. The percentage of women in their workforce increased by about 200% and they have appointed the first of their female directors.

**Everyone has benefited and Energize have not been slow in sharing value with their clients either. As experienced advocates for flexible working, for example, they convinced one e-commerce client with big gender balance ambitions to make role design changes that helped them attract more female engineers into senior positions."**

# Working with a EDI Partner

It wasn't only the perspective, personality and pragmatism of Inclusion Crowd that drew Energize to them. The Energize team understood that the right strategy would be challenging. They didn't want to shy from that. The Inclusion Crowd EDI Impact Partner Roadmap immediately struck them as a credible, 'do-able' path to solid, sensible outcomes and sustainable success:

"So many companies were only selling off-the-shelf training and templates," says Melanie, "and you really can't transform with training alone.

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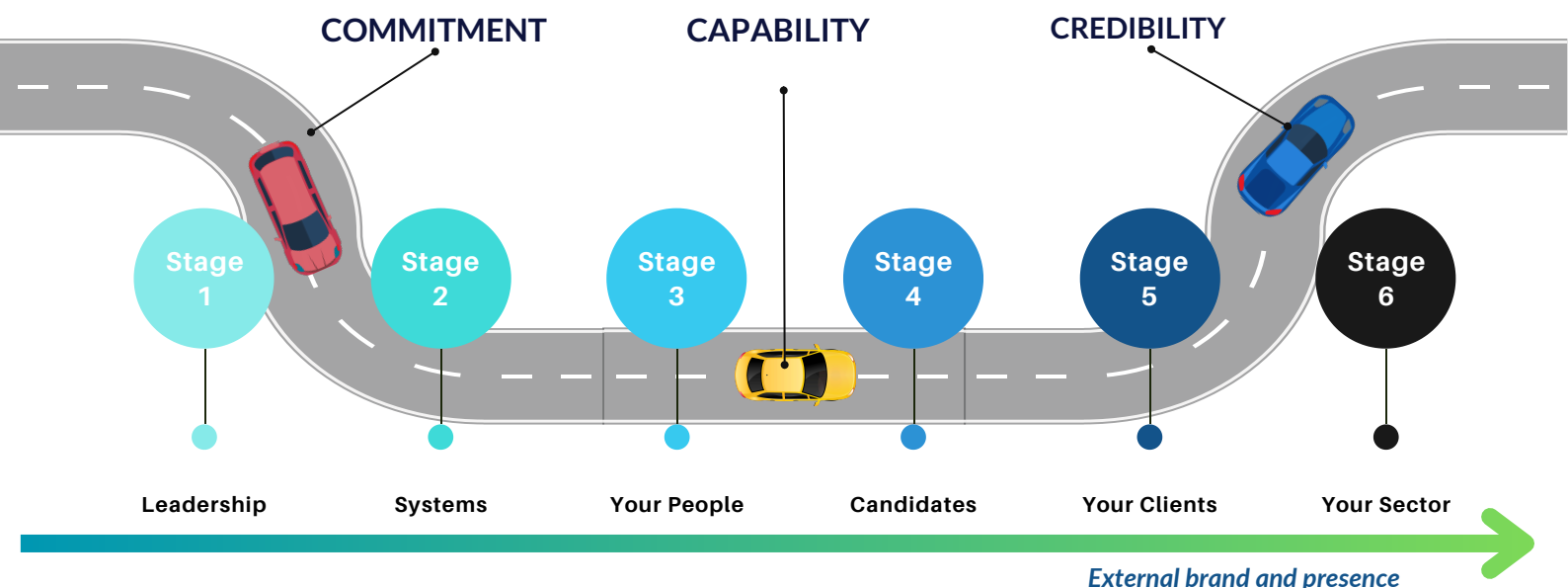
"When it comes to significant step-changes – especially for an international business with many intersecting, fast-paced priorities – knowing where to start, where to head, what steps to take and why to take them is critical. We don't have the time and money to waste being ad hoc and haphazard.

"Inclusion Crowd made it so easy to get started. They enabled us to take a more considered, structured and sure-footed approach, and I know we've moved faster than we ever would have done without them."



# Inclusion Crowd's EDI Impact Partner Roadmap

The Inclusion Crowd EDI Impact Partner Roadmap is the sum of hard-lived, hard-won insights from the new wave of international movers and shakers in the EDI space, including best-in-class UK recruiters. All have pooled their collective wisdom into this framework for becoming a knockout recruiter of diverse talent.



- Find a way to connect and commit to EDI.
- Get to grips with how EDI factors relate to your business purpose and affect your strategy and stakeholders.
- Understand and accept how you need to mature, change and improve.
- Set your goals – choose a destination and be explicit about what success will look like.
- Reconfigure your organisation to help deliver the outcomes you require, including policy, performance management and culture.
- Resolve any legacy issues and risk mitigation deficits.

- Refresh and build your external brand, value propositions and stakeholder engagement philosophies in alignment with your vision and goals.
- Set your own talent diversity strategy and set clear targets for delivering it.
- Adopt EDI best practice throughout your own recruitment processes and employee lifecycle with a continuous improvement mindset.
- Leverage new capabilities and growing insight and experience to delight clients with services that deliver sustainable EDI outcomes.
- Prompt new conversations with your clients, leading them in exploration of how your evolving value proposition can support their evolving needs.
- Proactively build public presence in your sector and work to establish and cement your status as an EDI thought leader and expert practitioner.

Internal

External

# Real-World Deliverables

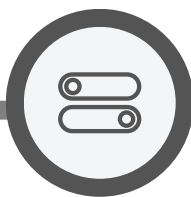
*By embedding the EDI Impact Partner philosophy, principles and practices in their thinking and approach, recruiters can fast-track to:*



**Attracting and retaining top talent for themselves**



**Winning and retaining high margin business**



**Sourcing exceptional candidates for their clients**



**Adding enhanced value and differentiated experience for their clients**

# Strategy & Leadership: Top-down drive for EDI

For Energize, the first goal was to strengthen personal EDI commitment among the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) whilst helping them understand how to be more effective, impactful EDI leaders.

Inclusion Crowd ran a series of SLT workshops designed to build the right levels of familiarity with, and personal connection to EDI – enabling SLT members to calibrate their leadership accordingly and drive change from a place of comfortable authenticity.

At the same time, the workshops focused on firing up the 'aha' lightbulbs, bringing everyone to an empowering place of 'getting it' regarding EDI and its relevance from every angle, and educating on specific duties in actively leading an organisation into EDI best practice.

Last, but not least, Inclusion Crowd supported the SLT in creating a plan of action by which to lead Energize through upcoming stages of the EDI Impact Partner Roadmap.





# Strategy & Leadership: Data-driven, employee-informed strategy decisions

Armed with unprecedented volumes of EDI intelligence and top-down insight regarding strategic interdependencies, Energize radically rebooted what EDI best practice looks like for their business.

They can now confidently articulate their ambitions and invest in achieving them, aligned to new strategic priorities for diverse talent acquisition – gender balance; race and ethnicity; social mobility – and a new suite of performance targets, monitored by the Energize Board of Directors.

A cornerstone in the new Energize EDI strategy is a refreshed commitment to local community representation in their own teams:

"Being talent partner of choice for SAP and Cloud solutions globally means being able to deliver tomorrow's talent, today, wherever it's needed, no matter the market challenges.

"If we don't reflect society wherever we operate, if we don't have that deeper community connection, there's something wrong. We're growing in all these locations internationally and we want to fuel that growth with exceptional, thriving talent that can engage exceptional, thriving talent whilst upholding our values, rolling with change, and outperforming again and again."

# Systems & Governance & Recruitment Capability

In parallel, Inclusion Crowd supported Energize in developing a system of governance that holds the organisation to account for EDI while enabling future decision making and improvement activity.

This has included refreshing HR policies, updating core training and evolving everyday management of EDI matters through the relaunch of the business' employee resource groups (ERGs), now dedicated to 'Equity, Diversity & Wellbeing', 'Mental Health & Wellbeing', and 'Charity & Social Value'. All of this has happened under the watchful eye of the new Energize ERG Steering Board.

Elsewhere in the organisation, working to push internal recruitment harder for enhanced diversity outcomes, the Energize team worked with Inclusion Crowd to:

- analyse their recruitment processes for improvement opportunities;
- put their Head of Internal Talent Acquisition through the rigorous, six-month Inclusion Crowd 'Licence to Recruit' certification programme, alongside external-facing recruitment specialists; and
- introduce an integrated diversity data system to provide clear monitoring of incoming talent diversity at different stages of the pipeline.



# Systems & Governance: Driving new EDI intelligence out of the business

Behind the scenes, there had remained a significant legacy challenge that Energize knew they would have to tackle in order to pursue their EDI Impact Partner ambitions:

"Comprehensive diversity data for our workforce was unavailable to us at the time," explains Melanie. "We captured what you might expect in our HR system, but we knew we could do better."

Energize wanted to close that intelligence gap with a bang, enabling fully-informed strategy planning from a detailed internal diversity baseline.

"You can't just start demanding it, though," says Melanie. "You have to approach it very carefully. And there are a lot of delicate data management considerations."

Aware that a strong response rate would improve their chances of 'right first time' results, the Energize team eagerly selected the anonymous and confidential employee diversity survey from Inclusion Crowd to address their needs.

The response rate of 87% exceeded everyone's expectations.

"From what was almost a standing start," says Melanie, "we suddenly had a wealth of employee data across the protected characteristics."

And that wasn't all, employees around the organisation felt comfortable volunteering fresh constructive feedback in response to open questions in the data survey.

**"There's no way we would have got all of this without Inclusion Crowd," says Melanie. "It propelled us to a whole new level in our thinking and planning."**





## People and Culture

**With a comprehensive communications plan prepared as well, the next step was for the SLT to engage their workforce in embracing new organisational commitment to EDI.**

With Inclusion Crowd by their side, they addressed their teams in interactive 'town hall' meetings – sharing, building, and inviting discussion on all that had been taken to heart in the SLT workshops, now evolving into a vision for the business.

The town hall meetings led into an Inclusion Crowd programme of 'no leaders allowed' mixed employee discussion groups and foundation training workshops.

As well as imparting best practice EDI knowledge and wisdom, Inclusion Crowd engaged the groups in open exploration of their experiences, ideas and topics across the wider EDI landscape.

These interventions enabled Inclusion Crowd to deliver a detailed baseline and next step recommendations for EDI cultural maturity at Energize.



## **Inclusion and Diversity Deep Dive and Analysis Report**

**A major milestone in this journey was a comprehensive, anonymized, organisation-wide EDI deep dive facilitated across the UK, Europe, and US markets. The detailed analysis, informed by the voice of employees at every level, provided unprecedented insights into the unique challenges and opportunities in each region.**

This thorough review allowed Energize to understand the varying regional dynamics and tailor their EDI strategies accordingly, ensuring that their approach was not only global but also highly specific to each market's needs.

### **Key outcomes of the report included:**

- A new level of understanding of employee sentiment around inclusion and diversity, highlighting opportunities for growth and areas requiring immediate action.
- Incredible insights into regional challenges, such as the differing perceptions and experiences of gender balance, social mobility, and cultural diversity in various markets.
- Tailored plans for each region, crafted to address local challenges and seize opportunities, ensuring a holistic yet nuanced approach to EDI.

These interventions enabled Inclusion Crowd to deliver a detailed baseline and next-step recommendations for Energize's EDI cultural maturity, aligning with their broader business strategy and growth ambitions.

Energize's commitment to building an inclusive workplace was now informed by data, grounded in employee feedback, and equipped with region-specific strategies to ensure meaningful and sustained progress.

This deep-dive analysis has become a key driver of Energize's ability to attract diverse talent and serve their clients with authenticity and purpose across multiple regions.

# Celebrating commitment and progress

"On a daily basis, Energize are feeling the squeeze of mounting EDI expectations from clients and candidates alike. Time and again, outcomes can pivot on EDI factors like gender balance.

Fortunately, when it comes to being well positioned and equipped to meet those expectations and shape those outcomes, Energize are leading the way. At Inclusion Crowd, it's a mystery to us that so many recruitment firms continue to play performatively at satisfying customers from behind a veneer of token gestures and rhetoric. That's not the path Energize have chosen.

Laser-focused on being the talent partner of choice for SAP and Cloud, they are stepping up to serve globally. And, in a complex universe of stakeholders who all take EDI very seriously, they know they need to step up with strength and credibility to be taken seriously themselves.

It's working. By putting the foundations first – strategy and leadership, systems and governance, people and culture – Energize are approaching new growth with their own house confidently in order and aligned to enhanced value creation.

Current and prospective clients are responding favourably to this new breed of inside-out EDI credentials. And so, comfortably ready to satisfy growing demand to account for themselves in this space, Energize are earning their expert 'impact partner' place at the table...and on the preferred supplier lists." **Ed Jervis, CEO of Inclusion Crowd**

For Melanie and the Energize team, it's been an excellent, eye-opening and empowering experience with Inclusion Crowd:

"This is no empty flash in the pan," says Melanie. "It's our future that we're building. We want strong, best practice foundations. You can't just skip to 'Oh, we want to be more diverse so let's recruit, recruit' – there's new groundwork that needs to be laid down carefully, including total business readiness for change.

We've put a lot of work into this and will continue to do so; it's part of us now – a new way of being. And by making it happen for ourselves, we're in a very strong position to make it happen for others." **Melanie Ross, Head of People & Culture.**



# Inclusion Crowd

At Inclusion Crowd, we recognise the significance of gaining the support of all impacted teams to drive successful EDI initiatives. Our close collaboration with clients helps create the operational space and resources essential for cultural transformation. We understand that allocating the initial time and resources for meaningful EDI progress can be challenging.

That's where we step in, assisting organisations in identifying strategies to prioritize DE&I, engage all employees, and build excitement and momentum around it. Our commitment lies in helping clients establish an inclusive culture that truly makes a difference.

We understand that entering the world of inclusion and diversity can be overwhelming. At Inclusion Crowd, we are dedicated to creating psychologically safe spaces where learning and growth happen without fear of making mistakes or causing offense. Our mission is to equip our clients with confidence and tools for implementing EDI practices tailored to their organisation. We believe that addressing issues head-on is the key to building confidence, unlocking the power of inclusion, and fostering a more welcoming environment for all. Don't let fear hinder your progress. Contact us to discover how we can support your journey in creating a culture of inclusion that genuinely makes a difference.

[www.inclusioncrowd.com](http://www.inclusioncrowd.com)



*It is our mission to  
ensure organisations  
reflect society at all  
levels*

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