

# openSAP Invites Thought Leaders, Episode 19

## Transcript

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:00:01] We create this awareness that this is the nowadays world, and this is what we need to do in the workplace to be inclusive, that we also become aware we have our biases. They're not only bad, they're not only bad, but they can be limiting us. They can be limiting us, and they can actually be against the law and they can be very damaging to other people so that we are aware of this and that we can use our slow brain, that we can think about things that we can help put in place structure to get rid of our biases.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:00:46] Welcome to a special Thought Leaders episode with Martina Peskoller-Fuchs, in which we discuss the complexities of our working lives, interwoven with our different cultures, values and biases. Martina explains in a clear and very entertaining way why we need to reimagine today's workplace. Tune in to hear Martina's top tips on how to be a great dinner host and ensure that everyone feels welcome at your next party or workshop. I'm Elisabeth Riemann and it's a pleasure to be your host today. Let me introduce you to Martina Peskoller-Fuchs. Martina Peskoller-Fuchs is from Austria and holds a Master of Law degree from the University of Innsbruck, Austria. She worked in a legal and international environment for over a decade after spending considerable time in war torn regions and dealing with large scale crimes while working for the International Criminal Court. She developed an interest in conflict prevention and alternative dispute resolution. She then trained and became a certified mediator in Austria and started working as the Ombudsperson for the European Molecular Biology Laboratory. Furthermore, she has training and extensive experience in coaching NLP, communication, conflict resolution, and meaning centered psychotherapy by Viktor Frankl. Let's say hello. Hello, Martina, welcome back to openSAP Invites Thought Leaders.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:02:24] Hello, Lizzie. Thank you very much for having me back with you today.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:02:28] It's our pleasure. Martina, there's a real necessity for us to reimagine and shape our workplaces from grassroots level. Diversity initiatives, as we

know have a long history, and today, if anything, I think the topic is even more emotional and more widely debated than ever before. Corporates need a diversity and inclusion strategy not just as a moral imperative, but because it's been proven to make business sense. But where does that leave us as part of the workforce? So, Martina, in this episode, I'm excited that we'll be casting buzzwords aside and focusing on learning from you, Martina, the skills we need to create a domino effect of positive change when it comes to inclusion. So, Martina, let's say diversity is a fact. Inclusion, a skill, not a given. What's your personal view?

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:03:18] Thank you very much for allowing me to exchange with you on this very important topic today. It's very dear to me and let me start with a little story or with an idea that I had and where we can maybe develop these topics together. So, imagine I have a super business idea, and I need investors. It's a very diverse group of people. And I want to impress them. I thought of a great strategy. Don't question the strategy. That's

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:03:51] Hahahaha.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:03:51] Not what we here for. The strategy is to prepare for them a very yummy international dinner. With food from all over the world. Now, first, when I say they're a diverse group of people, you can imagine they come from different countries, have different cultures, different traditions. But mind you, even if they were from the same town, they would still be diverse, right?

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:04:19] That's so true.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:04:20] Think of different countries, and that makes it diverse. Someone might be a vegetarian. Some people might be completely into sports. Others might be into drinking nice wine, whatever. So, they are diverse, not necessarily only shaped by their country of origin, but by their preferences, by their own experiences throughout life. Going back to my super strategy to impress them with a nice dinner. I'm very lucky that I have people, friends from many different places in the world. So, I think to bring them over and together, we will make a nice dinner. Now, that's also very diverse then. I have a diverse group of people to help me make the product. This is diversity. If I want to make sure that it's not only a tokenism, but they

also need to matter and they have their say and they really bring in what they know and what they can do. I need to include them. I want to include them. I want to make sure that I make most out of what they know, what they're able to do. I could do my own shopping. I could even dictate the menu. I can think for myself. Yeah, anyway, I've traveled the world. I have some ideas for nice food from all over the world. And what then? I make them cook something that I dictated, and I think it's diverse without benefiting from their experience. So, me being able to be aware that they have things to bring. That I can benefit from this. And also bringing them together, allowing a dialogue between us and see how can we best design a menu including all of their skills and knowledge. That will make it not only a diverse group, but I will also have included them, hopefully. Also, they feel a sense of belonging, and I think that's the best set up for a great dinner.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:06:43] I think so, too. Martina, I absolutely love that. I think you are the perfect dinner host. And I think it's a fabulous idea and one that we can all really easily identify with as well. The joy of bringing different dishes together, being asked to bring a dish when you're invited around to a friend's house or a colleague. It really is so lovely and exchanging recipes, exchanging ideas. Everyone has different strengths, different tastes, and what a wonderful story to start us off with and to really exemplify diversity and inclusion. So, Martina, here with this story, you've given us a lot of ideas about how D&I is possible and spoken a little bit about the benefits. If we now look at the business perspective. Is there a recognized business case for inclusion in general? What are your thoughts there?

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:07:26] You know, Lizzie, you already said it up front. This is now the environment that we live in and there is a strong push from many different sides. On the one hand, you can say this idea to include people, to be inclusive and to take into account the diversity. On the one hand, it's a question of human dignity. It relates to our morals and how we understand the world today. You can read a lot of literature about it that for nowadays, complex challenges in the world, we need solutions that are maybe not readily available everywhere and where we need to join forces. This is a long-standing concept. We have different traits, and we need to work together so that we can produce something novel, something better than we could do by bringing by working it out on our own. And the more diverse the workforce is, the people that work

together, the more likely is it that we bring up something very special and we are more creative.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:08:37] Absolutely, I think, you know, to bring back your opening story back in there as well, I think, you know, you might have a set idea yourself as host, but I think we tend to fall back on our classic ideas. But if you invite friends, people bring new ideas in and then it turns into something much better than you could possibly envisage before.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:08:53] Yes, absolutely. And, you know, it's exciting, it might also, you know, be much nicer to work together and have these inspirations, but also imagine, you know, I have this group of people that I would like to impress, remember my investors? And I want to serve them good food. If I'm not a vegetarian, I could even be completely blind to this concept of being vegetarians. I mean, nowadays we know about it. But some years ago, if I didn't have a vegetarian in the group who would point out this to me, or maybe with allergies, they would say, don't put everywhere the nuts on top of it. Several people might not be able to eat it. What if we make a composition of things? We put it in the middle and everyone can serve themselves. Because, wouldn't it be a pity? I make such a nice dinner for 10 people and six can't eat it? And you know, this is more common now. We are aware of it, but maybe with bringing in different cultures, we have a solution that is more appropriate for more people or for the business or for the stakeholders we're looking at. So it helps us also to deal with our own limitations because we can think we are so clever, but we still have our biases and we still are limited as a team. If you're able to listen to your, your colleague, to the persons around you. You have much more potential, and it helps you to open your own horizon and your mind.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:10:26] I was also thinking as well, it really is broadening our horizons, right, it's having experts in the team, its cultural awareness, it's awareness for different aspects of different characters, different expertise. Really is bringing everyone together then to make us stronger as a team. And Martina, when it comes to inclusion, what kind of skills are we actually talking about here? So tangible skills, how can we acquire and develop these skills as well?

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:10:49] Mm hmm. I like this catchy slogan, and they say inclusion is an act. Ok. And I would like to say an act, someone needs to be active. So the act is also from the person who organizes it, from the organization, from the workplace. I will create the structure and put things in place, which allows them to work together. But at the end of the day, it is a skill. We also need the individual to be able to contribute. Mm-hmm. And it's communication. It's listening. I need it, more so than the people I invite. If I see there are some shortcomings and some people are not assertive, they're very passive, I will need to help them communicate and become more assertive. To be assertive is an important skill that we need in our modern workplaces, where we are asked to speak up, where we are asked to contribute and not only to implement and follow orders. Remember if I would just give a menu and say, and this is what you do and you don't need to talk. You just need to chop. It could be also one way of division of labor. But again, in our complex working environments and knowledge-based environment, we want everyone really to contribute, being assertive, being able to express, being able to listen and being able to do conflict. Well, it's an important skill in our days workplaces.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:12:26] Mm hmm. I think it's great that you kind of use that analogy as well and you say, is the host, you know, you're really making people feel included, you're letting them be assertive, you're letting them bring their skills also to the table. And I think, you know, when you're a guest and you're successfully integrated and included in our party, then this whole atmosphere, this whole culture, it kind of is replicated throughout the whole group.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:12:47] Absolutely, I also believe in power to the people, and if even if I were to be a bad host, if I have great friends, they could work it out themselves and they will come up with something. That's what I also think in our workplaces, you might not always have the leadership to walk the right walk and put everything in place. But we can still be empowered and we can make a difference to our organization. All of this shapes the culture. Individual behavior is that's a big part of the culture. Of course, leadership is important, and it's much better if they also pave the ways again how I invite them. Do I ask them before they come? Look, this is I give them an idea. I make them excited. You know, I prepare them for the other people who are coming, and then I also include them and I say, shall I go shopping before? Shall we shop afterwards together? You know, should I just shop random things? I include them

already before. They will, they will find feel welcome before they even are on my house. You know, the good thing is they are friends, so or my friends. So we have already something in common. Imagine I wouldn't know them. I would need to create that. And that's what we need to do. And that's what our leaders, or people in human resources, they need to put in place. To have this bond already that makes the people want to come and be open, you know, to collaborate with others.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:14:19] What is the role of a company when it comes to inclusion? How much of an onus should be placed on companies that they are the ones that create this environment that promotes inclusion and supports everyone in acquiring the necessary skills?

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:14:30] The bigger the company gets, the more, of course, individual behavior will be shaped by structures and processes in place. Right? So, if I only have five people to be my chefs with me, we create it together. And maybe I'm I am more important because we say the leader sets the tone. But if I wasn't that assertive and I have two or three other friends, which I have who are very assertive,

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:15:00] Haha.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:15:01] Then you know they could set the tone. They can. They can determine the atmosphere. But the bigger it gets, if I were to invite 100 chefs because now that's the business idea to have such a big business, then I need to think about it before. And I might need to bring a small team of people together and say, how do we organize this? How we make sure that they know what our objectives are. How we bring them in the right mindset, right? How we explain to them what is our culture, what we want from them? Because of course, every group of people, they shape their own culture in one way or the other. And you know, I can just either let it happen. Or I can already actively influence it, and I can think about it. I, as the manager, I need to, or I can already influence it right from the start. And I can help people produce faster in a way, produce, be connected. And also make sure that I'm already prepared with training or with places. For example, let's go back, if I think there might be conflicts between two people, two of my friends who don't like each other so much, so I could maybe already do something about it, you know? I could maybe sit them down before and say, look, you know, how do we deal with this? How we go about your conflict? I might employ

some mediation skills to already pave it before we actually start. So, I create structures. I understand there might be conflict. There might be problems. That's very normal and already put in place resources where people can turn to, if they feel they need.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:16:54] Mm hmm. And what sort of resources are you talking about there, Martina?

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:16:59] If an organization wants to make inclusion work, there are many things they can do, and it starts obviously from having a diverse workforce and starting with the interviews, and it goes throughout the whole stay of a member of personnel in the organization. But I think it's very important that we talk about um, making sure that we can have meaningful dialogues and make available fora to discuss subjects that are not simple. You know? That might hurt. That people can go somewhere, for example I mean, I'm an ombudsperson as you, as you know from before, have maybe also counselling services for mental health. You could have workplace advisers, you, HR has an important role, obviously. But also, any additional resource person you could put in place, which can really assist people directly when they are struggling with the topic of inclusion and diversity.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:18:16] I think it's really important that you have those resources in place that we don't say naively with the best of intentions, inclusion works naturally, it's something that really has to be an act. As we said before, it's something that you have to drive and support proactively. It's a mindset that you also have to follow through with real positive actions and to really bring these people together. And if there are issues there, what's one of the fun exercises you can maybe try to really find a common denominator, find out things in common? So, if we go back to your example with the dinner party, say the completely unknown people in your team, how can we really find this common sense of ground to really get us, help us get along in a better way?

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:18:57] You flagged many different things I would want to comment on. You said many important things. But first of all, allow me also to say exactly we cannot only assume it and say that's a personal trait or it's a moral attitude to be inclusive. It takes more than this, right?



**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:19:17] It's hard work, isn't it, I guess.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:19:19] It is hard work and also you need to see it somewhere and you need to bring people in this direction. I cannot say to my friends, you know, I foster an open dialogue and it's important that we also get along outside our task, but I don't allow them to have a coffee break together. I say, you're here to work, don't have a coffee break together. I can say, Look, if you want to talk about something, why don't you sit over there? I have a nice, cozy environment organized for you. And then you can exchange. Maybe you come up with a new dish together. I know to put in place facilities that support this concept. I cannot only claim it's there by miracle. Very often now we read what brings us together: our common values, our common background. But actually, when we are included, when we are talking about diversity, inclusion, we need to insist. It's not maybe our background and our common values, it's our common objective.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:20:15] It's so important.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:20:16] It's our common objective, right? Because again, with the dinner party, we are very aware that having something different makes us better, and that's an added value. Very often understanding that we are different sets us apart and it feels like insurmountable, and the exercise is to create something. Where can we work together? Look forward, look to a common objective. Create a vision together. Have a big vision, you know? Sit together and think, you know, how our how are they going to be so excited about the dinner? And make something, develop something that everyone can identify with, which is in the future, which drives us.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:21:02] Yeah, I love that. It really is having that common goal that you define, perhaps together even. And I find that so motivating when you bring people together and you really have this vision that you're working towards together. And it might be completely different to what you envisaged beforehand. But the way there, that's a process in itself that's very, very important in bringing the team and bringing these different and diverse individuals together then, too.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:21:22] It sounds very obvious when we talk about this dinner example in a way, right? But I think we can translate this into the business



context, and into our work context. And we can just take this understanding with us. This is what we try to achieve, right? And also, when we are these individual friends who were invited, you know, maybe if I as the boss, I go off track, you know, and I get lost.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:21:49] Can it can happen.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:21:51] Yeah, it can happen haha. And then, you know, the friends, they also as these individuals, they're not only there to follow. They can say, you know, look, this is what you invited us for. This is why we're here; you know? And then we, from there on what's the common purpose? Let us develop something. And they can also be active and become active themselves. And they can realign and maybe also the managers and the bosses, who are not really in line with the original intention that they had. So that we can shape it. If you if you have a good start, it also helps to stay on track despite some manager or leadership that might have lost the path a bit while implementing.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:22:34] Yeah, and I think we all make errors. And I'm laughing when you're saying that, because I just have to immediately think of some of the nicest get-togethers with friends or with colleagues have been. Maybe you're cooking a dinner, to stay with the food example, inviting people over, right? It doesn't always go to plan. You can practice a dish beforehand, and it's really, really good when it's just for you and your partner and your family. You invite friends around, colleagues and all of a sudden things don't go to plan. For whatever reason, something might burn, something's been in the oven too long. I think some of the best experiences of bringing people together is when you just laugh about the mistakes that you've made, your own shortcomings, and you really work to find a solution together. Whether that be kind of cooking something else together, clearing up the mess together. And I think the same situation we also have in the office where you might have been working on a project on your own with your own limitations, you've not been able to succeed where you wanted to. But really talking about your weaknesses and really admitting that, being open and bringing other people in really helps you together to find a much better solution, a much better dinner in the end. Something completely different to what you initially planned to do. But the actual result is so much better.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:23:39] You underlined, you know, something very human specific. They say it's humor, you know? We have to be a bit cautious with humor when we talk about diversity because we sometimes think we are so funny, but we aren't. But, you know, to be humorous about ourselves haha, that is. And, you know, in a way to be humbled. And that is really something that brings people well together. And also, what you said is a crisis, a crisis, as we know, is both its risk and opportunity. And you know, with this opportunity, we can grow. And a key component, a key a key trait we can have or a key skill, if you want, is flexibility. It's good nowadays to remain flexible, you know? Flexible not to bend over all the time, but flexible to not be too set in oneself, in one one's behaviors, one's biases. To remain open again. We say to remain open and this will help us and there is a big call on us to train this flexibility. And then, as you say, if you're flexible, you make something new out of it and you will be surprised what actually can happen then.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:24:50] Martina, you mentioned that unconscious bias again. It's a recurring theme in the discussion, so what do you mean exactly by this? How are our biases formed? And what I'd really like to know is: Can we actually have any conscious influence over something that really is so unconscious? How does that work?

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:25:09] So I'm not your expert on unconscious bias. I can tell you how I understand it and how I use it. And cognitive bias, right? What our mind tells us. It's very important and there is a is a great book also of, you know, Daniel Kahneman, who says, I don't know if you read it, "Thinking, Fast and Slow" for me. What is it? We have a fast brain and we have a slow brain. The fast brain, as it says it works fast and you know, its vested with all these biases. There are some 180. There is a fantastic chart, a very nice graph. It includes 188 biases, and they also have grouped it into four categories. Like a bias who helps us when we have too much information. Biases that help us when we have too little information. A Bias, you know, a group of biases that help us to think what we should remember. And also, a group of biases that help us to act fast. Ok? So these are biases. They are there for a reason and they help us to think fast. But sometimes this thinking fast is not helping us and we are aware of it. Ok? And this is where the slow brain comes in, and then we could become aware of certain biases. For example, let me go back to my dinner and my friends. I could think, OK, I have two friends. One is from Mali, one from Uganda. Well, no, they wouldn't know about French wine and the French cuisine, so I cannot have them for that. It's a

bias, right? Now I have them there. Wouldn't it be better to ask, who knows about French wine? I can just let go of my stereotypes.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:27:07] I could be become aware of it. Like, why would I not ask them, yeah? Because I thought that they would not understand something about French wine. My bias limited me to bring together the skills and the knowledge because I immediately shut it down. We can become aware of biases and also the fact that we have this now. If you understand what bias means, if you understand it, I think this awareness helps us to make a difference. They say change starts with awareness, so you first need to become aware. Other biases can be even more harmful, and they can be against the law and they can be very destructive. Imagine that they have in this group a friend and I think, you know, I have to make small subgroups of my teams, and I just assume I think the best team leader would be a central European white male. I think they're the best team leaders. Right? I can make a quick and big decision. Maybe it's my bias. And it could be actually against the law if we're looking at workplaces, right? To we could enter into discrimination. We could not even articulate, give a fair chance to the different people. Instead, I could ask who would like to do it? So let's make a test or let's have someone other evaluate like, you know, have an anonymized test or even first of all, asked for interest. And maybe not only let them show have you been leading teams before, because it's much more likely that the white average, you know, male has led the team before more than someone else. I could look for potential.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:28:57] It's giving people the chance as well, because people may have that potential, as you say, but not perhaps have had the opportunity for whatever reason. And it's about opening doors for everyone. But it's a complete minefield, right? And it brings in that whole discussion when you apply for a job, if you actually have to put down your gender, your name, your nationality, or if it really should be based on your experiences.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:29:17] And potential, you know, as you say, exactly on experience, but very often, you know, we create in workplaces a barrier for people to come in so they can never acquire those experiences.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:29:28] That's so true, that's so true, sadly.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:29:31] And very often it's the same group of people we prefer and there is a preference, you know? Nowadays it's more common you have working moms. I'm not sure some decades ago this would be your average normal consideration to give a working mom a leading position. And, you know, with my friends, if I were to have a one person who has a disability. Maybe a physical handicap, you know? So, OK, you can think I invited them, I brought them there, so I will make sure they can access the kitchen and everything, obviously, right? I will not then say, well, it's your thing you wanted to come. It's obvious that I will do my best to make sure and they are not there because of this and this should not make a difference. They're there to cook the food.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:30:25] Mm hmm. And I have to say that that makes me realize what an excellent host you would be a leader and manager. But there were other examples where people would invite friends around to their house for dinner and say: Here's my kitchen, I don't care whether you can get there or not. And so it's a complete attitude change and that really shows, would you like to work for this person or not?

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:30:43] There is a big world of employers out there, and I do think with the young people I'm speaking with and the students, you know? They do have a bit of a different mindset and they look for the values and what is this organization all about. And just saying we are inclusive without any visibility to this inclusivity. Sitting on an interview that is absolutely not inclusive, getting already inappropriate questions on your interview. That will turn people off. So imagine going back to my group of friends the way I approached the whole thing. If I'm not such a good, a good friend anymore or I, I don't sell the idea in a good way and they might not even come. They say, I'm not making the effort. Now you look for someone else. Go and get someone else to do this nice dinner for you to impress your people. I'm not coming. Hmm. It's a pity because, you know.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:31:52] And that's clear feedback.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:31:53] And that's very clear feedback, and as you say, that's a development in our society and our culture. We already understand what do we want and what we would not accept from a workplace, from an employer. We are

educated, we are aware, and this is what we do not want, and this is where we will not bring in our own skills and motivation, effort, dedication.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:32:20] Martina, I'd like to stay with what you mentioned before about young people starting work with an employer and really choosing, okay, what do they offer? Does this fit in with my own personal values? What do we do, however, when we find we're working for a company and it was maybe just lip service to include, and it's not really living these differences and making a positive change. What if we experience discrimination or workplace harassment? What's the reality there?

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:32:47] I think it's not an exception, but nowadays that will be more often the case that at the moment employers, they pay more lip service, some lip service and they're like, maybe hypocrite about it, but others they would want to do it. They would want to be inclusive, but they don't know yet how and miss what they should do in order to make it happen. So I must say it is very often nowadays that the people will find themselves probably in such an environment that is not yet adapted to or in line with what was the illusion or that was given at the very beginning. We said diversity is something that that exists. That's a fact. We have inclusion as an act, an act from the side of the organization, but also a skill because we are part of it. And then we have discrimination and harassment. Let me say, let's take harassment as a very big term. Workplace harassment. The bigger term that includes discrimination. In different countries and we use these words a bit differently, but there is no common definition. I think the best is we think of it on a very high level. Harassment is this is individual acts of person that go against a person's dignity.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:34:18] They are belittling and demeaning. And or they also create a hostile workplace environment. So they go against the dignity in most of the many countries and also organizations. It's not the intention of the person who commits these harassing acts that counts, but it's the impact, you know, if you intimidate, if you so you know. If I shout at the people, of course it might not at my chefs. I shouted them, you know, my intention is to have a good dinner and to make them all belong to it. But I might be shouting I might be very aggressive, and one person might actually decide to leave because I'm such a terrible group leader or what you want to call it. So it is how the person perceives it and how the person struggles with it. And not was my intention to actually make them feel intimidated. Harassment goes

against human dignity. Discrimination is actually when you discriminate against people, exclude them also based on the fact that they belong to a certain group. Very often, it's the protected groups that we now have, and it's also regulated in the law that this is not allowed. That I cannot exclude someone, I have at company, based on their religion or gender that I say I only recruit females or I only recruit of a certain faith.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:35:53] And that is discrimination. One could understand it as one subcategory in harassment. Both of them are at the very other spectrum of inclusion. You exclude people. You exclude people, you don't make them feel they belong. You're not using their talents, you make them feel uncomfortable. And by doing this, you know, if I shouted only one of my friends the entire time and I have a go at them. This will not be indifferent to it. It poisons the whole environment. You know, someone else might even decide to leave because there's - I'm not working here. Forget about this whole dinner or what's this whole thing about. So um this is where I think so it's on the other side of the spectrum. You have harassment and discrimination, which is absolutely not in line with inclusion. People don't belong. You exclude them. And both of them, however, inclusion and harassment, you can say it's not only an individual act because you can see the phenomena in the workplace. It's a culture that allows it if I have one of my friends shouting at the other being very aggressive. It will only continue if we tolerate it. It will only continue if we tolerate it.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:37:22] Mm hmm. As you said, it poisons it, poisons the whole atmosphere, then.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:37:26] Exactly. Or I even I foster it if I give both the same task and they're not clear what their role is, I give them both the same and then I say, Oh, you're grown up, just deal with it. No, you didn't tell us what we are here for. You gave everyone a clear task. I don't know what you want from me. I would like to deliver, but I don't know what you want from me. So clarity of roles, the division of labor, the structure that is set up. I'm supposed to work with perishable food, and you put me out in the sun to top it all or with the fish. I'm not good here. This makes me nervous. It stresses me. So again, it's a culture that fosters both and that creates a fertile ground for being inclusive or for not being inclusive, for even being harassing and discriminating. So it takes a joint effort, a combination of the organizer, me or the organization to put in place structure, to think about it, to know what we can do in order

to foster it or to stop the negative behavior. And then the individual to speak up. The individual to intervene.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:38:36] I think it's really good how you exemplified the complexities of any relationship that we have socially, but also the working relationship that we have and the expectations that we place on our leadership teams, and also that we place on of the team members as well. And it really just shows that we need to be quite clear. We need clarity of roles. We also need clear communication at every single level as well.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:38:59] It is a lot of work. There are the benefits, but of course, there are no benefits if there are also not costs or the downside. I come from conflict resolution and we have five strategies to deal with conflict. And one of them, you know, there is to avoid, to accommodate, to compete, to compromise or to cooperate. Cooperation is one of the strategies, really. If you think about it the theory suggests it, we all can buy into it. You will get the best outcome because you cooperate on something. So that means there is something in it for everyone. Everyone gets something out of it that sparks the motivation. But of course, it's exhausting because you have to find out. It needs dialogue. It needs time. You need to invest. Cooperation needs time and an effort. And the same is like with creating an inclusive environment, not only having diversity, investing in this, making sure this diversity is working and you benefit. It would be very nice I make a very nice Austrian style dinner with some little ideas or hints of international dishes. I even can say to my group of investors that I want to impress afterwards. Look, I had a very diverse group of people. They were very diverse. That's tokenism. I have someone from Uganda on there. I have a vegetarian on there. They will say, where is the Ugandan dish or where's the African dish? Or Where is where is the vegetarian dish? It's tokenism I had them on the end product. They are not interested in this. And then they say, great, you had them on. It doesn't matter. So either you see this diversity on both sides, on your customer and on your workforce, and you make it yours and you allow it. And then, yes, it's a big investment, as you said before. It's also, you know, when your dinner turns out to be sour, the one you prepared before.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:41:05] Yeah.



**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:41:06] Yes, you have to invest again, and you have to be flexible, and you have to be creative. But something good might be coming out.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:41:13] And it's, you said, it's really having a diverse team, it's not always easy, but the benefits really outweigh if you're prepared to put in in the extra work and to really make sure that it works and facilitate that. Martina to conclude today's episode, please, can you summarize for us once again the most important inclusion skills we need to acquire?

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:41:32] Skill is an ability to do it. It's an ability to do something, and very often we adults, we want to have the knowledge first. And the knowledge is, is the theory behind it. And then afterwards we venture out trying to avoid more mistakes. We have to do it. Knowledge is also awareness. It's not only theory, but it includes maybe as even before an awareness. If we are aware of the benefits or the necessity to be inclusive, that starts. First, we create this awareness that this is the nowadays world, and this is what we need to do in the workplace to be inclusive, that we also become aware we have our biases. They're not only bad, they're not only bad, but they can be limiting us. They can be limiting us, and they can actually be against the law, and they can be very damaging to other people so that we are aware of this and that we can use our slow brain, that we can think about things that we can help put in place structure to get rid of our biases. In an interview or have tests or or have some structures in place that allow us to neutralize them to balance them out, then when it comes down to what we need to train ourselves, I would say, it's emotional intelligence and becoming an assertive member of personnel, becoming an assertive person.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:43:07] That means we have a mindset that is again directed towards cooperation. My values are as important as your values. Let us come up with a common objective. You know, use I messages that you can find a whole list about assertiveness. Also, go into a conflict. Go into a discussion. Remain open. Look for cooperation, how we can find a way out together. And it's not only about competing or avoiding. It needs courage. It needs also communication and listening skills, something that we can train. We can build and it will require us to do it. And if we have small problems, we should just start doing it because this will help us then for the big cases where we were really needed. What I don't think is good for inclusion and what I will ask those people who have a tendency to police others, you know, it's not about

now again creating another layer or another obstacle where we say, are you, you offended me. Or because you cannot use this word and you know, we have this censorship and put this put this as a real obstacle in a communication.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:44:28] Please allow us a forum to be open where we can say, please, can you express it differently? Or This would hurt me. And you know, maybe, for example, I put the team leader there who is a white, and they would say, Why are you only putting this colleague as our team leader? Can I ask? Can we not open this again? Instead of saying you have a bias and this is not fair, you know? Sometimes that's necessary to call out such behavior. But in general, please, we are all in a way new to it. We are all only building this, so be tolerant with each other and also help us to work this out together and then I maybe can say, you're right. I shouldn't have only appointed. I didn't even ask my friend if he wants to be the team leader. Is it OK? I need to undo it. So let's do it in a different way. You're right. I had a bias or it doesn't make sense. Remain open, remain flexible, and also that we join the force and we help each other to become more aware and to benefit better from each other.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:45:35] Martina, thank you so much for raising our awareness today when it comes to inclusion, diversity, discrimination, harassment. It's been a fascinating discussion. Thank you so very much.

**Martina Peskoller-Fuchs:** [00:45:46] Thank you so much for having me and also for giving this topic a lot of weight. Sometimes that's not so tangible what we're talking about, but I do really think from my experience that this shapes our workplace. And this is why it's good to talk about it and have critical dialogues about it and make sure we can embrace it fully when we are all back, especially in person at our workplaces.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** [00:46:16] Thanks for listening to openSAP Invites Thought Leaders with Martina Peskoller-Fuchs. And thank you to our sound engineer, Miguel Caroli. If you've enjoyed this episode, please share, rate, and leave a review and be sure to check out openSAP's free learning portfolio of massive open online courses, microlearning videos and podcasts on openSAP.com. And don't miss your next invite. Subscribe now!

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