# BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY

The IMPALA Business Case from 2025 showed that an inclusive culture helps small teams improve performance, talent and creativity and audience engagement. The 2026 update looks at new research on diversity, inclusion and innovation. While these studies are not specific to the music sector, they offer useful insights for independent music companies and could inspire further research in our sector.

## KEY RESEARCH INSIGHTS 2026



Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) support business performance through their effects on innovation.



Diversity and inclusion may support innovation, particularly where employees contribute to developing new ideas.



Diversity and inclusion work as complementary inputs - both contribute to innovation but inclusion is the stronger driver.



D&I in products, services and marketing can make companies appear more innovative and attractive to consumers, especially when integrated in their core offering.



Executive gender diversity may influence how inclusion supports innovation.



Training can raise awareness but there is little evidence that it changes the workplace practices, hiring or structures on its own.

## WHAT COULD THIS MEAN FOR INDEPENDENT MUSIC COMPANIES?

These findings offer some possible areas for independent labels and other music companies to explore and could inspire new approaches and further research in the sector.

1

### Invest in inclusion

Independent companies could explore how to encourage everyone to contribute ideas, share perspectives and take part in decisions.

2

### Build EDI into your offers

Explore how diversity and inclusion could be reflected in artist development, marketing, services and audience engagement, beyond communication alone.

3

### Include different perspectives in decisions

Consider whose perspectives are represented in leadership and included in decisions on artists, audiences and business strategy.

4

### Combine measures

Explore fair recruitment, mentoring, flexible working and everyday support, rather than relying on training alone.

**READ MORE:**

Jacobsen et al. (2025)
Read the study

Covington et al. (2025)
Read the study

Monaco et al. (2026)
Read the study

Zhao et al. (2025)
Read the study