Diversity & Inclusion at Phundex

What being inclusive really means.

I've always thought of myself as thoughtfully inclusive. Growing up as a non-Catholic, non-Jewish, non-Francophone in Montreal, I was a minority, but I didn't think of it that way. I thought I was blessed to live in a city that celebrated diversity and had a vibrant international community. I worked with people who spoke English and those who didn't. Some celebrated Hannukah and some Christmas. We spanned the full colour and ancestry range, but we didn't think about that - we were just friends and colleagues.

Fast forward 40 years. I've lived and worked in 4 countries. I have celebrated the fact that we can share our respective cultures and beliefs and embrace that diversity. I've planned project timetables and deliverables to avoid conflicting with a range of special days, including local holidays, Christmas, Jewish High Holidays, Diwali and Ramadan.

And yet, I was stopped in my tracks this week by a colleague who pointed out the most prominent area that I never really paid attention to - language. Words like blacklist, whitelist, master/servant and phrases like grandfathered all have negative connotations, and yet we use them blithely, without really registering their original meanings. So I decided to do something about it.

On Wednesday 17th February 2021, I committed that Phundex Limited would only use inclusive language in its dealings, including documents, conversations and the Phundex Platform. On Thursday, I told our new technology partner that they would have to change the name of their Master Services Agreement before I could sign it and that we needed to focus on inclusive language as we build out our Platform.

Will it be easy? No. I work in a highly regulated industry where blacklisted countries and master documents are the norm. Will I slip up? No doubt. But, I commit, for myself and Phundex Limited, to using only inclusive language and persuading others around me to do the same.

Will you join me?