

**ASCENTIAL**

Act today, win tomorrow.

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Ascential

Progress to date and priorities going forward

April 2023



# Contents

## 3 Executive introduction

## 4 Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion approach

- 10 year commitments
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) roadmap
- Progress against 2022 objectives
- Digital Commerce 2023 goals and enabling activities
- Ascential Futures 2023 goals and enabling activities
- DEI Governance

## 12 Activity snapshot:

- Highlights from 2022
- Our Employee Resources Groups (ERGS) and Networks
- Highlights from our ERGs and Employee Networks

## 17 Diversity data 2022:

- Notes on data
- Gender
- Race & Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation



# Executive introduction



**Paul Harrison**  
Chief Operating Officer  
& ESG Board Sponsor



**Tracey Gray**  
Executive Vice President,  
People & ESG Exec Sponsor

**Dear Colleague,**

The Ascential Board and Executive Committee remain focussed on the value we can create as a company for all stakeholders. Our overall approach to Corporate Responsibility is to ensure the impact that our business operations have on the communities and environments in which we operate is positive and considered.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion remains a key priority for the reasons we stated when we first published our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion report two years ago, and which remain true today. Firstly, we believe our business and the sectors we work in should reflect the society in which we operate and, secondly, it is extremely important to us that our people can thrive at Ascential, regardless of their background.

The partnerships our Brands continue to build are key to the impact we have in this area. From the Lions partnership with Black Executive CMO Alliance (BECA) which supported a group of young Black marketers to attend Cannes Lions through to Flywheel Digital's partnership with Next One Up (NOU), a long-term mentoring non-profit that transforms the lives of young men in Baltimore city, I'm inspired by the impact we can have when we work in collaboration.

**Dear Colleague,**

Our vision and overall commitments have remained the same since we launched them in 2020. However, we evolve and re-prioritise our enabling actions each year. Ensuring that the actions outlined in this report meet the needs of our colleagues, customers and wider society is key to their success.

In order to get feedback from our colleagues across Ascential, we now run an Engagement Survey each month. This survey covers many topics, with DEI being part of the core. This means we're getting rich feedback on what's working and where our colleagues would like to see us doing better. This feedback shapes our actions and strategies across our Brands. Our overall inclusion score is in-line with our

consumer benchmark and we monitor this closely, looking at the score for different demographic groups to ensure consistency of experience for all our colleagues.

I am pleased to see the progress we've made against our 2022 actions and look forward to even more progress in the coming year. I am also inspired by the impact we have when we work in collaboration. The progress we make through this collaboration will stand the business in strong stead for years to come.



# Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Approach



# Diversity and Inclusion approach: 10 year commitments

We launched our vision and 10 year commitments in our 2021 Diversity & Inclusion report which is available on our website.

## Vision

For Ascential, diversity is core to us. Our value as an employer and to our customers is greater when we draw on the full range of our collective perspectives and experiences. We continue to be committed to attract, retain, develop and engage a diverse workforce, and we will work constantly to ensure that everyone at Ascential feels comfortable to be themselves. This is the right thing to do to ensure a sustainable future for our organisation and to make a positive impact for our people, customers and society.

## Commitments

### Colleagues:

- We will co-create an inclusive culture with equitable systems throughout our workforce, so that people are comfortable in bringing their authentic selves to Ascential, to thrive, and progress their career.

### Customers:

- We will deliver the ideas, perspectives and cultural richness that our customers – and their customers – need to future-proof their products and services.

### Society:

- We will play our part in imagining and developing a brighter, more equal society, starting with our own company and the industries we work in. We will report openly and regularly on our progress to enable others to learn from us and hold us to account.

## Objectives

### Colleagues:

- We aim to create a workforce that fully reflects, at all levels, the ethnic diversity of our major markets before 2030.
- We aim to ensure our senior leadership represents an equal gender split before 2030.
- We commit to measuring and assessing any possible gender and ethnicity pay gap.

### Customers:

- Each of our major brands will develop specific, measurable and public ways of championing diversity in their respective industries, and track progress systematically.

### Society:

- We will report honestly on our workforce diversity data and initiatives on an annual basis to create accountability, show progress and share our lessons.
- We will continue to manage and seek appropriate charity partners in line with our ambitions to support young people to succeed in the digital world.

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Roadmap:

## Initiating

- DEI programmes initiated by passionate individuals.
- Programmes are brand/industry specific with the opportunity to connect them centrally across all Ascential.
- Focused specifically on gender as an area of diversity.
- Programmes designed from assumption as data insight unavailable.
- Employee Networks established and led by colleagues.

## Advancing

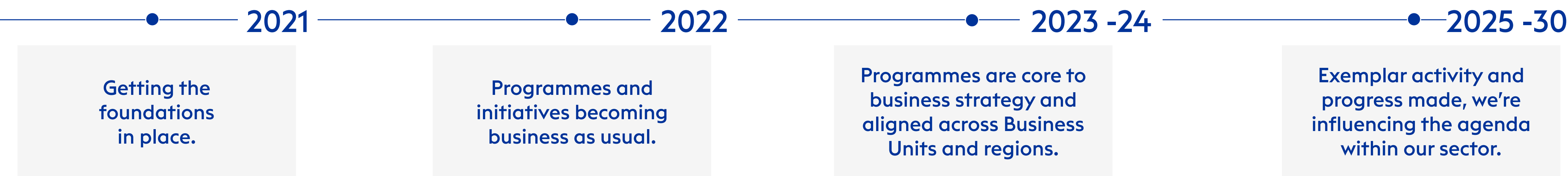
- Central DEI Governance and Exec Sponsorship create central strategy and commitments.
- Focus broadened to incorporate 2-3 areas of diversity.
- Focus on equitable career development and inclusive recruitment.
- D&I data collection initiated and some demographic data available to provide insight on areas requiring focus e.g D&I Engagement Questions, Anonymous Diversity Survey.
- Programme leadership, building more accountability as delivery models develop across the business.

## Integrating

- Central strategy, targets and commitments with clear accountability throughout the business.
- Specific senior ESG resource influences, connects and equips leaders on DEI across the business.
- Programmes are starting to deliver business value, over and above making the business an inclusive place to work.
- Individuals delivering DEI work within the business are resourced accordingly.
- Sophisticated and representative diversity data available to inform decision making and priorities.
- Employee Networks resourced and empowered to deliver against own and organisational DEI priorities.

## Leading

- Workforce, at all levels, matches the demographics of the communities in which we operate.
- DEI supports and enables business strategy and effectiveness.
- Accountability is clear throughout the organisation.
- Company seen as a DEI thought leader in the sectors in which it operates, and shares learning and opportunities to enable others to progress.
- Employee Networks represent entire workforce, are active across brands and drive focus across the business.



# 2022 priorities: progress update

In the 2022 Diversity & Inclusion report we set out eleven actions for the year, split across our priorities groups: colleagues, customers and wider society. The following pages provide an update on the actions and what we'll be continuing to focus on in 2023.

## Colleagues

**1** We will empower and enable Regional DEI structures to take the lead on designing and implementing programmes and initiatives that support their DEI priorities.

*In 2022 the business split into two divisions, and those divisions are now the best placed structures to lead DEI programmes. Both Digital Commerce and Intelligence and Events now have a DEI Lead in their HR teams and have established frameworks for action which you can view on pages 9 and 10.*

**4** Employee Networks will continue to be supported to achieve their own priorities, while also being equipped to support the overall Ascential commitments. Exec Sponsors will work to provide the right resource to create action as well as rewarding and recognising the ERG's efforts.

*For more information on our Employee Networks see pages 15 and 16.*

**2** By the end of the year we will have trained over 400 people leaders in New Rules of Leadership to further embed inclusive leadership across all Ascential Leadership.

*As the needs and priorities of the leadership team changed over the course of the year, so did the training requirements and the New Rules of Leadership training is being evolved. DEI training was included as part of a continued Manager training series and will continue to be developed and rolled out across the business as required.*

**5** We will create a specific and measurable succession and development plan for the top 20% of roles taking our diversity goals into account.

*Inclusive recruitment remains a key action in working towards our aims for a more diverse senior leadership population by 2030. You can find details of these aims on page 5.*

**3** We will continue to collect Diversity Data in Workday, demonstrating to our colleagues how and where their data is used. By the end of the year all Business Unit Board updates will use DEI data to inform business decision making.

*Work to encourage and reassure our colleagues to provide their diversity demographic data on Workday continues. As Brands reach representative data they are able to use this to prioritise the right DEI and business actions.*

**6** In 2022 we will publish an action plan to close the gender pay gap in the UK and continue to collect the data required to reasonably assess other potential pay gaps.

*You can view our UK gender pay gap action plan and results in our latest gender pay gap report.*







# 2022 priorities: progress update

## Customers actions

- 1** We will develop accountability measures on DEI for our Exec and Business Unit Leaders.  
*As our leadership teams evolve as a result of our strategic review, relevant DEI accountability measures will be considered for inclusion in their success measures.*
- 2** We will assess the feasibility of using our business products and tools to support diverse owned businesses within both our existing and new sectors and networks.  
*WARC, WGSN, Money 20/20 and LIONS have all launched products and content which support their sectors and customers on DEI.*
- 3** We will measure the diversity in our supply chain and identify where improvements may be required in order to align with customer and investor expectations.

## Society actions

- 1** We will double the number of UK Early Talent opportunities provided in 2021 by continuing to grow our work experience, intern and apprenticeship programmes.  
*We launched 35 new internship opportunities, primarily in Lions, Flywheel and Perpetua. Six of those interns progressed into permanent roles within the company.*
- 2** Signature move/game changer activity: Identify an external partner in our key digital commerce region (North America) who can support us in our diversity goals for the sector.  
*As a result of the Divisional restructure, we changed this objectives to empower brands to develop the charitable partnerships at a local level that aligned with their brand values and colleague interest. This saw a wide range of organisations being supported in a range of ways from charitable donations, to volunteering and skills sharing.*



Objective achieved in 2022



Work on objective underway and continuing into 2023



Action de-prioritised as a result of organisational changes



# Digital commerce: DEI goals and enabling activities

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Mission</p>	<p>Our Mission is to drive action that creates a positive impact for our people, customers and society by building a more inclusive and diverse workforce. To create a workplace which encourages and supports equity and fairness and eliminates all forms of discrimination, we are committed to listening, educating, celebrating and developing our team.</p>			
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Goals</p>	<p><b>Talent acquisition/development:</b> Attract, develop and retain a diverse workforce. Foster an inclusive environment through the entire employee lifecycle.</p>	<p><b>Training/education:</b> Educating our colleagues to help develop a diverse and inclusive environment in which everyone feels comfortable being themselves.</p>	<p><b>Communication:</b> Be a championing voice for all individuals within Ascential, representing the diverse experiences and backgrounds that make up our organization.</p>	<p><b>Events:</b> Create events to celebrate, educate, inspire and network around important DE&amp;I milestones. To build an inclusive culture, especially in a remote environment where employees feel empowered to connect and network.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Enablers</p>	<p><b>Data:</b> Increase completion of Diversity data on Workday to inform areas of focus. <b>Hiring:</b> Create diverse hiring best practice toolkit - build on inclusive recruitment toolkit. <b>Training:</b> Train hiring managers on inclusive recruitment <b>Internal Development:</b> Provide opportunities for underrepresented groups to access leadership development and mentorship.</p>	<p><b>Quarterly roundtables:</b> Facilitated discussions on different DEI topics <b>Bi-yearly storytelling events:</b> storytelling from colleagues at all levels on topics to showcase diversity and help build understanding and community. <b>Diversity calendar:</b> Create a shareable calendar for all Ascential to learn about cultural events and holidays.</p>	<p><b>Newsletter:</b> Sharing of celebrations, events, holidays, timely education, DEI initiatives and requests, etc. <b>Social Media:</b> Leverage our network of social channels across the ADC brands to share updates regarding DEI initiatives. Promote our organization and our DEI commitments.</p>	<p><b>Respond to Peakon results:</b> Create events and activities to address relevant feedback on events and cultural activities. <b>Enable DEI training events:</b> Partner with training/education to deliver their events. <b>Celebrate important cultural events:</b> Where relevant supporting ERG's with their events.</p>



# Ascential Futures: DEI goals and enabling activities

Mission	<p>For Ascential Futures, diversity is core to us. Our value as an employer and to our customers is greater when we draw on the full range of our collective perspectives and experiences. We continue to be committed to attract, retain, develop and engage a diverse workforce, and we will work constantly to ensure that everyone at Ascential Futures feels comfortable to be themselves. This is the right thing to do to ensure a sustainable future for our organisation and to make a positive impact for our people, customers, and society.</p>			
Goals	<p><b>Talent acquisition/development:</b> Attract, develop and retain a diverse workforce. Foster an inclusive environment through the entire employee lifecycle.</p>	<p><b>Training/education:</b> Educating our colleagues to help develop a diverse and inclusive environment in which everyone feels comfortable being themselves.</p>	<p><b>Visibility/Communication:</b> Be a championing voice for all individuals within Ascential, representing the diverse experiences &amp; backgrounds we have. Share regular DEI updates &amp; encourage active conversation on monthly topics.</p>	<p><b>Leadership engagement:</b> Leadership teams champion DEI and engage in a number of DEI initiatives as part of this plan.</p>
Enablers	<p><b>Data:</b> Increase completion of Diversity data on Workday to inform areas of focus.</p> <p><b>Training:</b> Ensure any new managers are trained on inclusive recruitment and existing managers continue to uphold principles including the new diversifying your network section.</p> <p><b>Internal Development:</b> Provide opportunities for underrepresented groups to access leadership development and mentorship.</p>	<p><b>Cross brand training:</b> External DEI training rolled out across Ascential Futures.</p> <p><b>Diversity calendar:</b> Produce and share a DEI calendar for all Ascential Futures to learn about cultural events and holidays and associated learning/activity.</p> <p><b>Quarterly roundtables:</b> Facilitated discussions on different DEI topics.</p> <p><b>Bi-Monthly storytelling/goal sharing:</b> HR and brand leaders to help surface stories to showcase diversity and help build understanding and community.</p>	<p><b>Townhalls &amp; Slack:</b> Monthly updates on DEI topics from shareable calendar, associated learning available and any specific initiatives across the brands. Share progress against our DEI goals. Celebrate important cultural events.</p> <p><b>Peakon results:</b> Respond to feedback on diversity recruitment, belonging and feeling valued (Qs that feed into overall D&amp;I score) and any comments.</p>	<p><b>Reverse Mentoring:</b> Launch Reverse Mentoring Programme to empower leadership teams to become champions of inclusion and ensure diverse communities are listened to and supported with personal development.</p> <p><b>ERGs:</b> Leadership continue to support Employee Networks to raise profile and ensure priorities are aligned across the organisation</p>



# DEI Governance

## Board and Exec

Ascential plc Board

Ascential Exec

ESG Board Sponsor  
Paul Harrison

Exec Sponsor  
Tracey Gray

Set and sign off 2030 and annual commitments.

## Central Support:

- Diversity Demographic Data.
- Track progress against commitments.
- Both internal and external best practise surfaced and shared.

## Business Unit Leaders

Support with regional roll out of central commitments.

## Brand Leaders

Support Ascential wide commitments and set specific Brand commitments where required.

## Employee Network Groups

Set focused commitments specific to Network and support Ascential wide commitments.

## Brand Change Committees and HR:

Lead DEI activity within the brand and region. Supported by Leadership and with best practise shared across committees.





# Activity snapshot



# Highlights from the year

Our Brands continue to design and deliver the DEI programmes that work for their employees, customers and the society in which we operate. Here is a snapshot of some of those activities.

## Colleagues:

- We developed new Diversity, Equity & Inclusion training for managers as part of our Leadership series. The training focussed on building psychological safety and gave managers straightforward actions they can take to build inclusion across their teams.
- In addition to the training, policies and commitments we set centrally, we also support our Employee Networks. All networks are run by volunteers across the company and details can be found on the following pages.

There are now c.900 people engaged in Employee Networks. The newly launched Employee Network Toolkit sets the framework and expectations for all networks to operate within and the support available for these groups.

- The CSR Committee for Latam focused on diversifying the company through recruitment and inclusive hire. HR and Managers worked together to widen the recruitment pool and attract candidates from a range of backgrounds and demographics, looking at ways to develop candidates who have great potential but not necessarily the required experience.
- One way the LATAM team is supporting this development is by launching a programme of English classes. In Brazil, it's typically the private schools who offer English education, so to provide the training at work means candidates and colleagues from a wider educational background can better access opportunities.

## Customers:

- Since our first Inclusive Representation Content Audit in 2021, our Content and Marketing teams have implemented action plans to ensure that their content represents the diversity of the communities we serve. Through the audits we assess the perceived gender and race and ethnicity of all quoted individuals, contributors and imagery used. Our last audit of October 2022 reviewed 1349 pieces of content and the overall gender split was 45% men, 50% women and 4% unidentified, this is a 5% increase in women representation from the first audit conducted in May 2021. 26% of images and contributors were from a perceived minority ethnicity and 68% from a majority ethnicity which is consistent with the results from 2021 and in line with the population of the regions we operate in.

## Community:

- Money20/20's Do Better Pledge, works to increase representation around gender, and race and ethnicity, on panels at Money20/20 events. Thanks to the success of this programme, Tracey Davies, Money 2020 President, was named Diversity, Equity and Inclusion industry champion by The Financial Technologist.
- Lions continued its partnership with Black Executive CMO Alliance (BECA) to support the next generation of Black marketing leaders. In conjunction with The BECA Playbook, the alliance sponsored eight Future Leaders to attend the Cannes Lions Festival. It was the first time BECA took to the global stage at Cannes leading discussions on the role of Black marketers in disrupting the marketplace, diversifying brand storytelling, and creating a pipeline for Black marketing leaders.
- Flywheel Digital continued its partnership with Next One Up (NOU), a long-term mentoring non-profit that transforms the lives of young men in Baltimore city by supporting their development with programming starting in middle school. They have recruited a growing number of NOU alumni and have partnered on events that directly support the learning and long-term development of their students. This year 30 high school students attended Flywheel's Career Day.





# Employee Resources Groups and Networks:

## Employee Resource Groups:

ERGs are groups of employees who represent and advocate for a particular community of people within the company. They're run by internal volunteers, have a Senior Leadership sponsor and work to achieve the DEI goals of the company as well as the goals identified by their network.

## Employee Networks:

Employee Networks are groups of employees who come together around a shared interest, community or cause to meet, interact and share experiences. The group is organised by an individual or group on a voluntary basis.



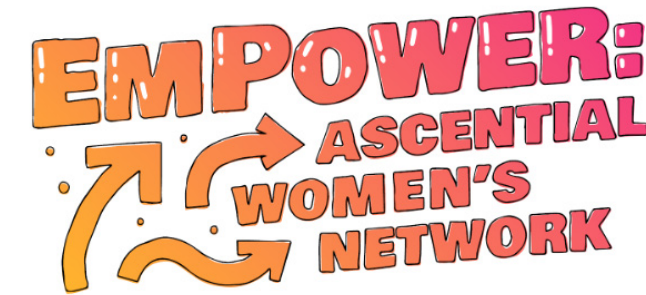
## Ascential Pride

Ascential Pride is open to individuals from the LGBTQ+ community, and their allies. Pride is a global network, focused on the safety of our community at work, advocacy of our community, events and education to foster better allyship, and empowering our community to bring their full true selves to work.



## Black in Business

Black in Business is a space for our Black colleagues to network and share their experiences. The Black in Business group also supports Ascential to attract, retain and develop the best diverse talent; ultimately creating a more inclusive environment.



## EmPower

EmPower: Ascential Women's Network is an open space to discuss your personal challenges, experiences and wins as a woman. As a member, you'll work with your colleagues, and leadership to champion change in working practices that support women in the workplace.



## Latinx Ascential

A network for members of the Latinx community to come together, share and celebrate culture and meet like minded colleagues across the business.



## Shalom Ascential

An open space to connect with and learn about the Jewish community. All are welcome. Shalom!



# Employee Resources Groups and Networks:

## Activity highlights from 2022

- **Latinx** and **Shalom Ascential** were both launched by volunteers from within the business and ended the year with over 100 members between them.
- **Empower** led a range of activities across our regions to celebrate International Women's Day, this included a re-launch of the themes of our women's network - celebrate, get involved and take action as well as a mix of in office celebrations.
- **Ascential Pride** celebrated Pride month with a range of events around the world including a Pride Quiz in Singapore, Seattle and Baltimore joined local Pride Marches, while Dublin and London hosted office networking.
- **Black in Business** designed and delivered a range of events throughout the year, including 'Community Week' to align with the UK's Black History Month, a week of activities to empower, educate, bring community and share Black voices across Ascential. Over the week the group ran five curated sessions: Mental Health and Burnout, Brazilian Voices, Intersectionality, Managing Difficult Conversations, and Being Black in a Corporate World. Each session was hosted by colleagues from Black in Business, with volunteers from across the business.

*Loving that there is space and time at work for us to hear from different backgrounds and identities*

Colleague who attended Pride Month events.

*"Shalom Ascential seeks to enhance the workplace experience for Jewish employees, and those who wish to learn about Judaism, by creating a supportive network that fosters unity, inclusivity, and knowledge sharing within the Ascential organization"*

**Danny Silverman, Shalom Ascential Co-Chair, Spotlight**

*"2022 was a very exciting year for BIB, we continued to grow in our network group especially in the NAM and LATAM region. Although we pride ourselves as being a global employee network group it is also important to have smaller network hubs in the various regions to support our BIB colleagues locally. For the second year running we supported Pride and Empower with delivering Ascential's Got Talent. We also created Ascential's first 'Community week brought to you by BIB', which was a week of curated sessions during BHM UK led by black colleagues. Although quite a rocky start to 2023 we still aim to create safe spaces for BIB colleagues but also continue to amplify the black voice."*

**Black in Business Co-Chairs. Novella Green, Ascential Group, Rose Gyembibi, WARC and Terrell Clay, Flywheel**

*"I set up Latinx because I wanted to build a space for my community where Latinx colleagues felt represented. I also wanted to connect colleagues that share the same culture with one another as many of us are remote."*

**Amy Cortes, Latinx Founder and Chair Flywheel**

*"In 2022, Ascential Pride focused on providing on-the-ground support for our colleagues in their geographies to celebrate Pride their way, and we succeeded in that mission. We marched in Parades across the world, co-produced and planned the second Ascential's Got Talent, and fostered conversations on a lot of important topics like intersectionality, gender, and being out at work. Our next mission is continuing to expand that support to the communities that need it most, and make sure our trans colleagues feel that same impact in 2023."*

**Danny Hoffman, Ascential Pride Co-Chair, Flywheel**

*"We set up EmPower because we want to support women to achieve their full potential professionally and personally."*

*"Our aim is to empower, inspire, and connect at all levels of the organisation. We seek to achieve this by promoting equity, facilitating opportunities for learning and development, influencing company policies and celebrating achievements. We are committed to helping women achieve their potential, no matter what their background or goals."*

**Hannah Donoghue, and Leonie Gonzalez Empower, the women's network, Co-Chairs**



# Diversity data 2022



# Notes on data collection:

The data on the following slides was collected from WorkDay in March 2023. The data was managed in line with our Privacy Policy and individual's anonymity was maintained throughout.

The data was provided on a voluntary basis via WorkDay where colleagues were asked to share their gender, race and ethnicity and sexual orientation.

So far, we do not have a representative data set for either race and ethnicity or sexual orientation. We are therefore not comparing this data to the data we shared in the 2021 D&I report as it would not be an accurate comparison.

To help us get to a representative data set we invite our colleagues to share their diversity data with us on Workday. This is entirely optional, but as you can see from this report, having this data is the foundation from which we can ensure we're focussing on the right actions.





# Gender

99% of total Ascential population have completed their Gender on Workday.

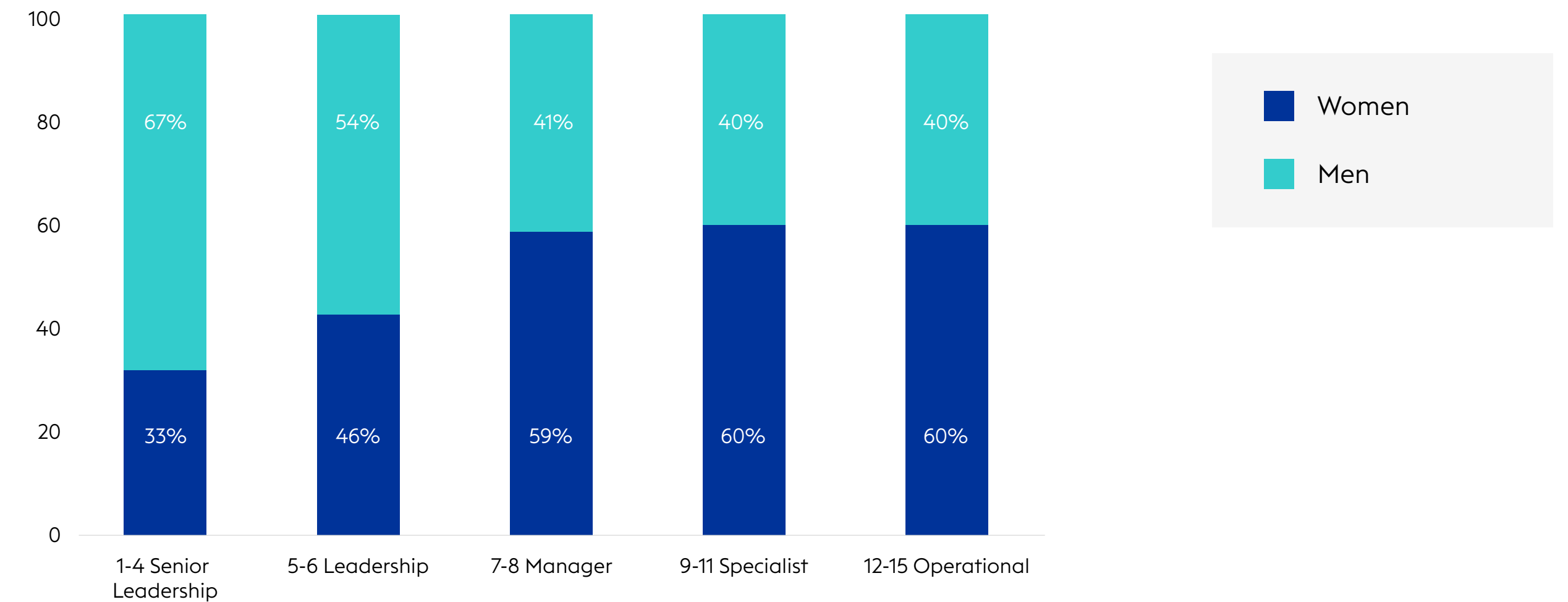
The dataset used for this analysis is representative of the overall Ascential population.

Overall the gender split across the organisation remains unchanged from 2021.

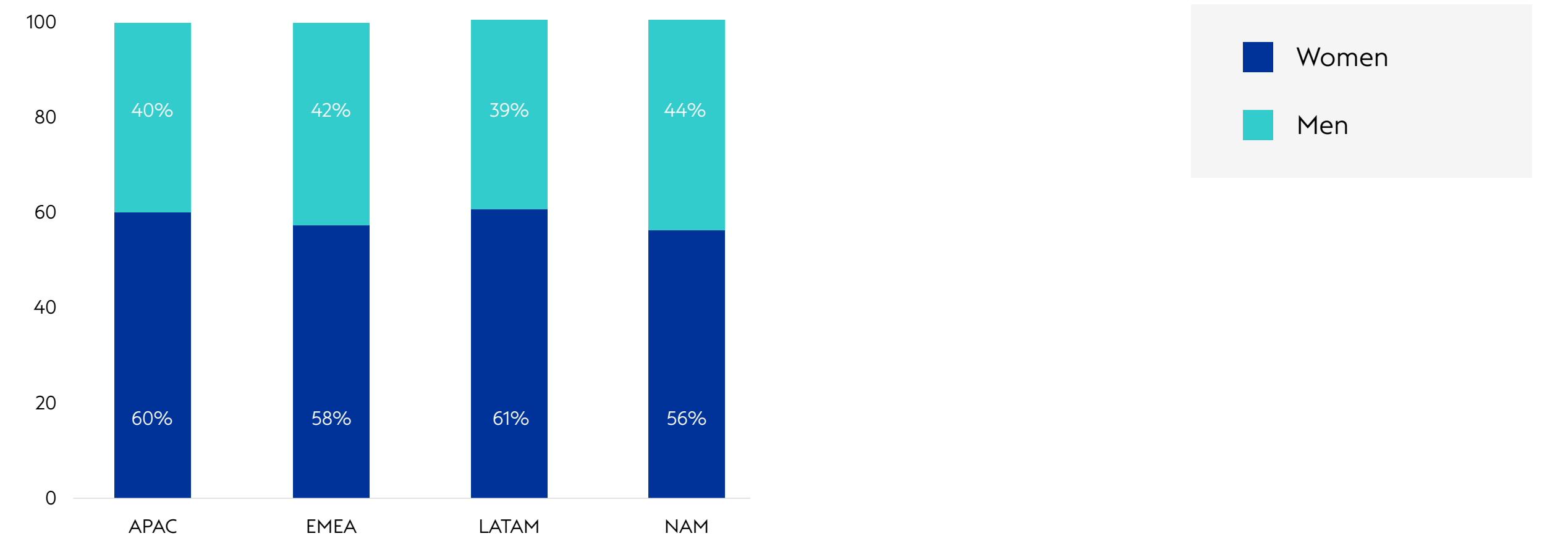
The focus will remain on the Senior Leadership population which remains the organisational level with the most unequal gender split.

The number of people who identify as non-binary was not high enough to be represented in these charts. We continue to work with Ascential Pride to support our non-binary colleagues and make sure their voices are heard and represented at Ascential.

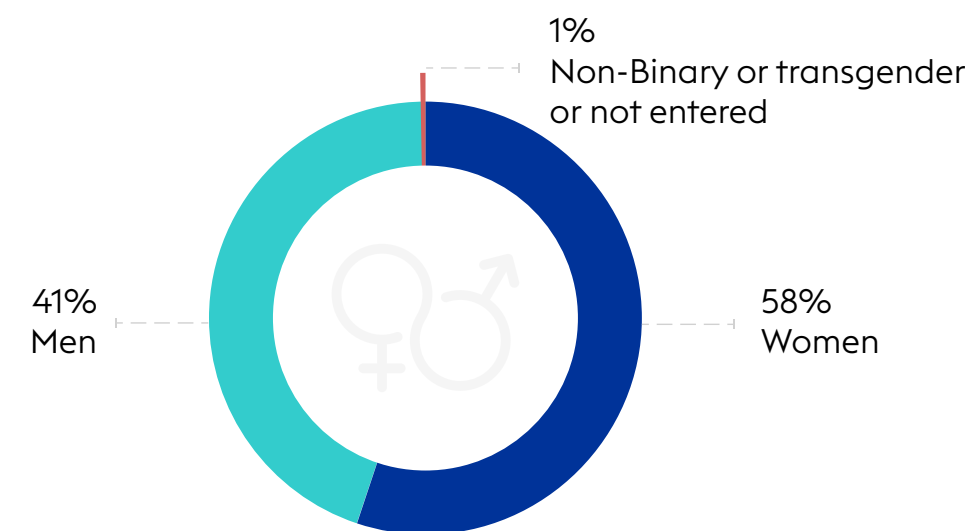
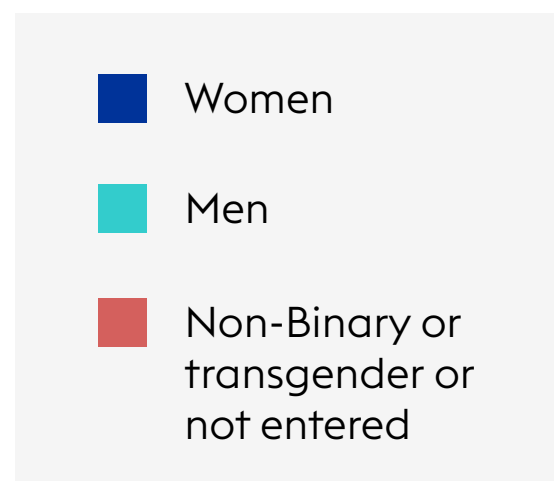
## Gender breakdown by organisational level



## Gender split across our regions



## Overall gender breakdown at Ascential





# Race & Ethnicity

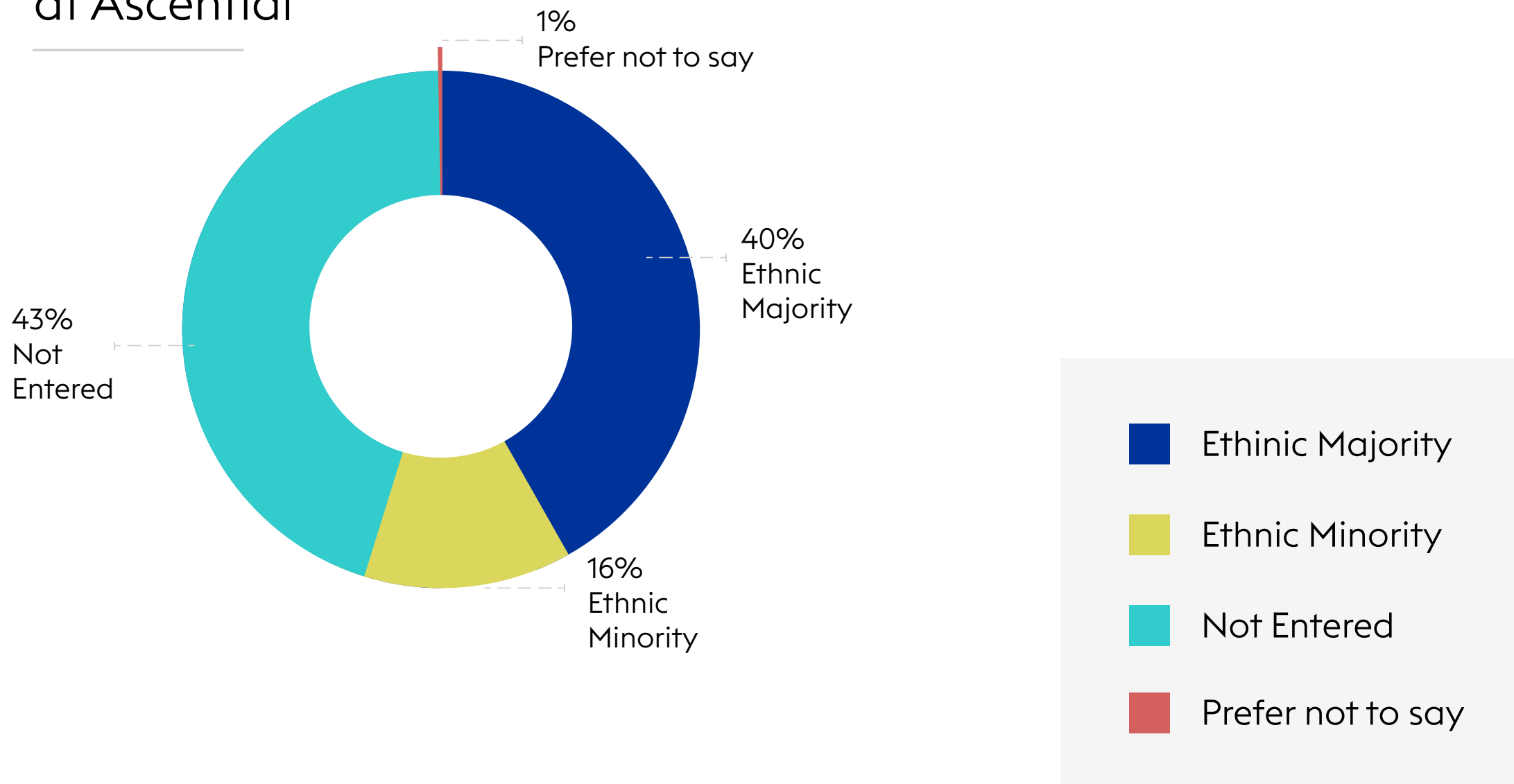
This graph represents 57% of the total Ascential population which is everyone who has completed their race and ethnicity data on Workday.

This data is not representative of the whole population but gives an indication of where focus needs to be given.

We commit to publishing the data we have available to give an indication of our demographics and demonstrate transparency. We hope this encourages further colleagues to share their data so we can focus in the right places.

The terms Ethnic Minority and Ethnic Majority allow us to aggregate data across our regions. Each answer provided in Workday is attributed to either Ethnic Minority or Majority depending on the demographics of the country in which the data is supplied.

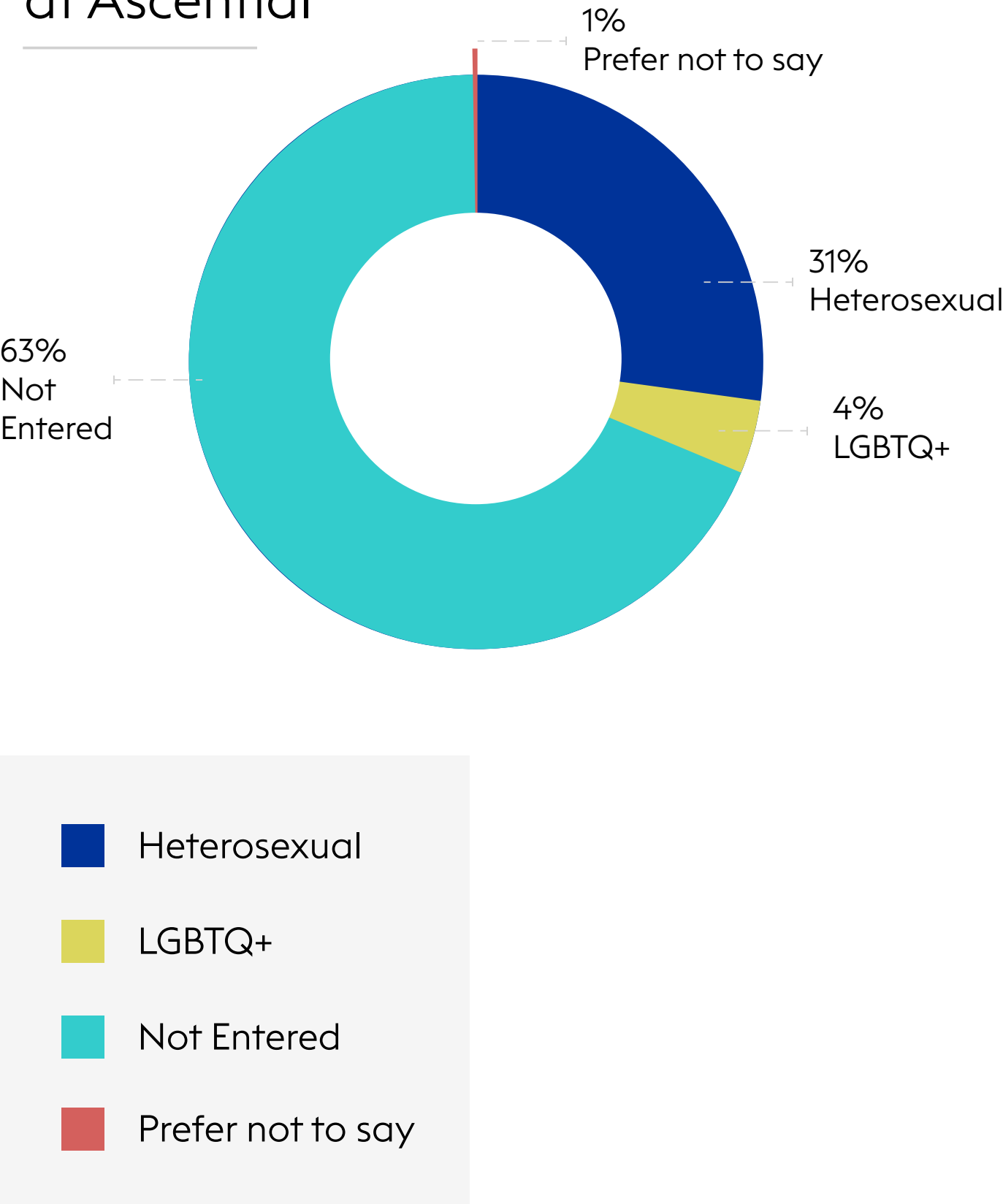
Overall race and ethnicity breakdown at Ascential



# Sexual Orientation

37% of total Ascential population have completed their Sexual Orientation on Workday.

Overall sexual orientation breakdown at Ascential







# ASCENTIAL

Act today, win tomorrow.

To find out more about DEI at Ascential visit the  
Corporate Responsibility section of the Intranet.

Any questions please email:

[csr@ascential.com](mailto:csr@ascential.com)