To my business colleagues at <https://news.microsoft.com/life>,

Since 2005, I have been a fulltime employee (FTE) or member of the contingent staff (CS) workforce at Microsoft. Having worked in both capacities, I can attest that FTE’s and CS view their roles at Microsoft according to the color of their badge. By excluding the vendor story on the news.microsoft site, over half of the people who make the Microsoft brand what it is, are not represented in the #MicrosoftLife conversation.

Blue badge FTE’s are provided with world class benefits including healthcare, leave, occupational trainings, raises, role advancement, building access, a desk with a chair and more. Contractors are afforded whatever their employer is willing to sacrifice, to remain competitive in the market. Due to the challenging history of Microsoft vs. its vendors, Corporate has pulled away considerably in 2019. CS don’t even have badges anymore. When I have a meeting with my group, I have to log in at reception with my personal email address as a visitor and a new, temporary badge is printed for me. The badge, like a passport, is a symbol of belonging. Some FTEs respond accordingly with dirty looks or rude comments, to vendors who “don’t belong” in open seating areas, even while the work being done by the CS effects the deliverable of the FTE.

Even online, Microsoft has a way of intentionally excluding contingent staff. #Microsoftlife is a perfect example. FTEs using this hashtag enjoy morale events, corporate travel, visits from celebrity speakers, access to parties etc. I left Microsoft in 2007 and was unable to return to an FTE position due to the economic crash. Even after several years of failing to secure a position at Microsoft, I continued applying. I love the culture, the products, the drive and the people. I want colleagues who believe in the products and services we are selling; to make the world better, to connect and empower. I long to be included and told that my contributions are valuable.

Microsoft employs 144,000 people worldwide. There are 18 countries with more people than Microsoft has FTEs. Additionally, Microsoft has 96,000 contingent staff, of which I am one. The vendors I know are diligent, deeply knowledgeable, endlessly creative and loyal. By excluding the perspective of vendors on the news.microsoft site, over half of the people who work every day to create, perfect and refine Microsoft products are invisible.

Microsoft desperately needs to include vendors in the stories about what it means to be a vendor. While respecting the separation between FTE and non-FTE, vendors can share how we are affected by the 18/6 rule, if and when we can access buildings and why certain decisions were made that effect our professional lives. Ask any vendor what they care about and news.microsoft will have an endless supply of what #MicrosoftVendorLife is about. By making this change, Microsoft will do what we do best, continue a legacy of putting people first, strive to innovate and lead by example. Microsoft as a whole, will remember that we have more together than apart.