MP INSIDER:

Key Tactics for Recruiting for Diversity

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» Introduction

Many companies are increasing their focus on recruiting for diversity this year, but are unsure where to start. They frequently find that their pool of applicants is lacking in diversity, or they have a hard time attracting and keeping the interest of candidates that they want to target. Tweaking your hiring strategy for more diversity must start farther back than a job posting. To be successful, diversity and inclusion should become a priority in company culture, branding, and marketing materials, too. This eBook will provide resources about why hiring for diversity is valuable to a business, as well as strategies to help with recruiting for diversity. It will also offer tips for successfully building a foundation of strong workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

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" **In our interviews, our recruiters always ask the candidate about their three top priorities in a position. One candidate replied, 'it has to have a strong D&I culture, because that speaks to who I want to be surrounded by.'**

- Jessica Diamond,
VP of Training & Development,
Goodwin Recruiting

4 Reasons Why Hiring for Diversity is Good for Business

Buy-in is important whenever you make major strategic changes at your workplace. If you need help convincing people in your organization to make diversity part of your recruiting and hiring process, here's some information you can share. This will help your team see that recruiting with diversity as a priority is not just about doing the right thing-- it's good business strategy, too!

1. **Retaining and attracting top talent:** Every business's most important assets are their people. To attract and retain top talent, it will be important to start recruiting for diversity now. Millennials and generation Z are the most diverse generations yet. By 2050, US census data indicates that there will be a 50% increase in diversity in the US population. These generations are also deeply concerned with social justice and corporate culture. Winning the talent wars of the near future will be much easier when your workplace is inclusive and diverse.

2. **Corporate culture and innovation:** Too often, organizations hire candidates who seem like a "culture fit." Generally, this means they "fit in" with everyone else and are pretty similar in many ways. Ultimately, this results in the company culture missing out on new, fresh perspectives. Innovation and problem-solving are always easier when people can come to the table with different experiences, education, and mindsets. Hiring for people who will be a "culture add," rather than a "culture fit" can help an organization meet new and exciting goals in their performance.

4 Reasons Why Hiring for Diversity is Good for Business

3. **Reach a wider customer base:** As mentioned above, the US is only becoming more and more diverse. Reach a wider customer base by hiring people who will have a deeper understanding of different communities, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, races, and more. Besides having a better understanding of your (expanded) customer base, it's also good PR. Consumers will appreciate your organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion. They may be more likely to want to patronize you over your competitors.

4. **Corporate responsibility:** Just as organizations have been taking the environment, community service, and charity into account for decades, now it's time to add in social justice. Recruiting for diversity and truly embracing it in your organization is no longer just a "nice to have." It's becoming part of the basic responsibilities of operating a business in the US. Start doing it now so you can incorporate it slowly and organically into your organization. It will be much harder to do if your company suddenly realizes that you're behind the times and must implement new procedures with little preparation.

4 Reasons Why Hiring for Diversity is Good for Business

These successful companies have dedicated efforts to recruiting for diversity.

Microsoft: Their Autism Hiring Program, launched in April 2015, removed one-on-one interviews in the early hiring process and created the "Marshmallow Challenge."

SAP: Autism at Work is a monthlong screening process and workshop for employees who need extra support in developing soft skills, teamwork, communication, and workplace etiquette.

AMC: The Furthering Opportunities, Cultivating Untapped Strengths (FOCUS) Program is dedicated to hiring people with autism and various other disabilities.

Chevron: Works closely with PathPoint, an employment agency that specializes in placing candidates with Autism.

CVS: Works closely with Ken's Krew, an organization that helps candidates with cognitive differences find jobs.

Ford Motor Company: The Ford Inclusive Works program is partnered with the Autism Alliance of Michigan.

Diversity of Experience: The Next Frontier

There are some forms of diversity that are obvious. Race, gender, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation might be front-of-mind for many people. However, recruiting for diversity isn't just about the color of the candidate's skin. One way to make more diverse hires is to drop the required educational degrees normally listed in a job posting. There are many minority groups that can't or don't attend college or graduate school for a variety of reasons: money, upbringing, the places they've lived, disabilities, etc. Opening up a pool of candidates to those without a BA or MA may allow your team to interview people who are still deeply qualified for the role, but come with a whole new set of experiences and perspectives.

One example is candidates with military experience. Many have practiced skills like working in a team, meeting expectations, managing others, etc. However, they may not have obtained a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Posting a job without a required degree on job sites or general websites for veterans is a great way to reach these candidates with new and different work experience.

How can an employer recruit for positions without college or professional degrees? Here are some tips.

4 Tips for Recruiting Candidates Without College or Professional Degrees
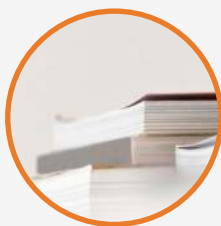
List the requested degree(s) or certifications, then list "or equivalent experience" in the job posting.

Be open to candidates who have unpaid experience, such as leadership in clubs, community service, volunteer work, or internships.

Have interviewers ask questions that focus on the hard and soft skills that a candidate may have gained in their experience outside conventional educational institutions.

Ensure hiring managers review resumes based on the bullets and achievements, rather than just the degree or school name.

How to Improve Company Culture

When companies make recruiting for diversity a priority, they should begin by looking inward, versus outward at job boards and LinkedIn. Employers won't attract quality candidates who are people of color, LGBTQ, etc. if they don't revamp their image and company culture for inclusivity. This may mean significant changes internally. It will also mean carrying out this work frequently, if not regularly. Prepare to commit to some long-term work for embracing diversity at every level of your organization.

"Diversity in the workplace is like selecting people for a chorus who have different musical backgrounds, vocal ranges and abilities. Inclusion means making sure that those different voices are heard, valued, celebrated, and key contributors to the performance.

- Amanda Leonardi, SHRM-CP

" One of our clients recently stressed that they will only hire the best person qualified for the job. In the same meeting, they also emphasized their interest in searching for diverse candidates. These two should go hand-in-hand.

- Jessica Diamond,
VP of Training & Development,
Goodwin Recruiting

8 Steps to Make Company Culture More Inclusive

1. **Revamp employee policies and employee handbooks.** Ensure that intolerant language, jokes, and attitudes are not allowed. Employers should consider trainings if necessary and managers must actually manage to these new policies. Words will be empty and ineffective if they aren't followed up by action.

2. **Create Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) committees and initiatives if they aren't already in place.** Create a committee that is enthusiastic about creating a more diverse workplace. Workplaces can support these committees by creating programs to embrace and celebrate the diversity that's already in the team. (One idea: a floating holiday for workers to take on whatever cultural celebrations and festivals they observe that are not on the typical holiday calendar.) Employers can also ask these committees to help and advise with plans for recruiting for diversity.

3. **Update email signatures:** Allow employees to share their pronouns in their email signatures. Especially if everyone has the option to participate, this can be a powerful change. It demonstrates inclusivity by showing that there are LGBTQ+ allies in the company.

4. **Update company name tags:** Leave space on company name tags for employees and visitors to include their preferred pronouns. Again, this will be a far more powerful change if everyone has the option to participate. This shows externally that there are allies within the company, demonstrating that it fosters an inclusive environment. This can help attract employees who are diverse or who value diversity within their workplace.

8 Steps to Make Company Culture More Inclusive

5. **Discuss goals, perhaps with the entire team.** Employers that want to make a more inclusive workplace will need to set concrete goals to get there. They can start by surveying their current diversity ratios, then project where they'd like to be in the next quarter, six months, or year. It will be helpful to get everyone's support. Employers can share goals with all employees and ask for their feedback. Staff can also help contribute towards these goals by sharing job postings in their own networks. Importantly, employers should create systems to check in and hold their hiring teams accountable for meeting these diversity goals.

6. **Reevaluate the company website and web presence.** Employers should look through everything with fresh eyes, or perhaps even ask an outside party to evaluate for them. The evaluator should ask a few key questions: is everyone that the organization shows on the website the same? Are they all the same age, race, or gender? In addition to the website, evaluators should consider any other place that the company has a web presence. That means LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and social media. If the employer has a diverse team, they can reach out and ask everyone if they'd like to be featured on the website. Workplaces should not single out or pressure people of color, LGBTQ+, differently abled staff, etc. If a workplace doesn't have a more diverse team, one solution is to use stock photos that reflect the diversity they'd like to eventually have.

    In addition to images, evaluators should look at text, including core values, mission statements, etc. Is there any mention of diversity and inclusion? Can it be added organically? If employers have a DEI committee, they may be able to help or give input in updating images and text. The rule of thumb is that if a candidate needs to scour an employer's website, web presence, and marketing materials for any mention of a commitment to diversity, then they will likely be less interested in the company.

8 Steps to Make Company Culture More Inclusive

7. **Consider who does candidate interviews.** During the hiring process, are interviews only conducted by people of the same race, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc.? It's a bad idea to insert somebody into the process simply because they represent some diversity. However, organizations that want to hire for a more inclusive workplace should think about what their interview panel says to candidates. If it's possible to organically include a more diverse group of people, this will certainly help in DEI initiatives.

8. **Ensure that everyone who does candidate interviews can discuss your diversity and inclusion initiatives with confidence.** This cannot just be left to one interviewer. It will make a far better impression on candidates if anybody they speak to can discuss the organization's commitment to diversity. This is usually indicative of the fact that everyone buys into and supports DEI initiatives.

> "Diversity, equity and inclusion is not only a mission imperative. It's also essential in ensuring that a wide range of perspectives, experiences, skills, innovation, and decision-making abilities have a seat around the table in the workplace.
>
> - Amanda Leonardi, SHRM-CP

5 Tips for Candidate-Facing and Hiring Processes

Once you've worked on your culture, your team is ready to change up their hiring strategy to attract more diverse candidates. Here are some tips and resources for candidate-facing processes.

1. **Make game plans with the interviewing panel, HR, and hiring managers.** Employers should ensure that everyone buys into efforts for recruiting for diversity. It would be ideal to get them up to speed on how the organization nurtures a more inclusive environment. They should also be educated on topics like unconscious bias, confirmation bias, and the halo effect. Hiring teams should discuss the idea of a "culture fit" versus a "culture add." Employers can set up "interview teams" of two to help hiring managers keep each other accountable.

2. **Research.** Workplaces can use websites like uszip.com, zipwho.com, the OES, and DataUSA to learn about underrepresented groups in the field they'd like to hire in. For instance, in most areas of the US, nurses are predominantly white and female. A hospital can increase diversity by finding out who else comprises the nursing field. Then, they can use the next step to make extra efforts to reach out to these groups.

5 Tips for Candidate-Facing and Hiring Processes

3. **Reach underrepresented groups via colleges and universities, as well as professional organizations and conferences.** Employers can create partnerships with them if possible and share open roles. For example, with a simple google search, HR departments can find professional organizations for Black professionals in nursing. Or men in nursing. It's also possible to find these groups on LinkedIn and connect with them there. Universities and colleges are great resource, too. Employers can find universities and colleges with a wider minority population and work with their career services department to share job listings. The last option is to look for speakers at conferences. HR departments can try searching for conferences for underrepresented groups in relevant fields. They can look up their programs and check out the speakers as potential resources for sharing their open job listings or referring candidates. They can also reach out to organizers of the conference and ask for their contact list to share open positions.

4. **Use verbiage in job postings to encourage a more diverse candidate pool.** Employers can avoid using gendered words like ninja, rock star, or guru. They should use text that affirms their commitment to diversity and inclusion. Below are some examples:

    [COMPANY NAME] is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment. We are proud to be an equal opportunity employer. [COMPANY NAME] encourages all qualified candidates to apply, including those of any race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status.

    [COMPANY NAME] has committed to promoting racial, gender, economic, and LGBTQIA+ justice in the workplace.

    This position is a 'fair chance' job, and we encourage candidates with a criminal record to apply.

    [COMPANY NAME] encourages candidates with 'lived experience' to apply.

5 Tips for Candidate-Facing and Hiring Processes

5. **Prepare for questions about diversity that candidates frequently ask.** As noted previously, ensure that all interviewers discuss these questions and are ready to answer them. Their answers should not be exactly the same, though. This will come off as disingenuous and rehearsed. Note that some candidates will ask these questions directly, and others will ask them in a more indirect way.

- What are the company's practices concerning diversity and inclusion?

- What is the executive/management team's diversity makeup?

- How many diverse candidates have you hired within the last year?

- Why is diversity and inclusion a concern, or not a concern, for your company?

- What are the expectations of leadership around diversity and inclusion?

- How have diversity and inclusion impacted your organizations bottom line?

Additional Resources

**These websites might be helpful
in a new recruiting strategy.**

Monster.com: This popular job search site now has options to allow job seekers to self-identify as a Veteran or as a diverse candidate on their account.

LinkedIn.com: Job seekers on the site are increasingly displaying their preferred pronouns on their profile.

DiversityJobs.com: This site helps you reach a more inclusive net of candidates.

DiverseJobs.net: Another site serving a wider pool of talent.

Prodivnet.com: This site advertises job openings to a variety of sites focused on reaching a diverse candidate pool.

Jessica Diamond is the Vice President of Training and Development at Goodwin Recruiting and has over 15 years of experience in the hospitality industry. As a member of the Goodwin Recruiting leadership team, she directs internal and external corporate strategy with an emphasis on internal team growth, hiring, onboarding, training and development for all recruiters and employees. Jessica earned her Bachelor's degree from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration. She is a Certified Diversity & Inclusion Recruiter through AIRS/ADP.

Goodwin Recruiting is a full-service recruiting agency that was founded in hospitality. Goodwin Recruiting was built on service, and as they have grown and expanded into a broad range of industries and specialties, that hospitality mentality has remained rooted at the core of everything they do. They are committed to providing highly-personalized services, tailored to each candidate and client they work with. Across all business types, from executives to operators to administrative staff, each Goodwin Recruiting partner has an extensive background in his or her field of expertise. They speak your language, they know the ins and outs of recruiting, and they put their core values first, establishing game-changing partnerships with employers and job seekers alike.

Wire Your Business for Success

MP has been a leading provider of HR and payroll solutions for companies across the US for nearly two decades. We offer a comprehensive suite of products and services delivered in one unified, easy-to-use platform. We support clients as they cultivate excellent corporate culture, improve employee engagement, and strive towards their business goals. Since 2014, MP has been on the Inc 5000 list and has won the Boston Business Journal Fastest Growing Companies Award.

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