**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Part 3: Recruitment and Retention Checklist**

**Getting Started**

Diversity hiring centers around hiring based on merit with special care taken to ensure procedures are free from biases related to a candidate’s age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and other personal characteristics. Such characteristics are clearly unrelated to their job performance.

There is a common misconception that the goal of [diversity recruitment](https://ideal.com/diversity-recruitment/) is simply to increase workplace diversity for the sake of diversity. Its true aim is to identify and remove potential biases in sourcing, [screening](https://ideal.com/resume-screening/), and selection of qualified, diverse candidates. As a result, you can reap all the benefits that come with a diverse workforce.

In the broadest sense of the word, hiring can refer to both external and internal processes. Therefore, when it comes to building your diversity bench strength, you must rely on two separate pipelines, namely external hires and internal promotions.

**Step 1:  Audit your existing diversity recruitment process**

Start by assessing the effectiveness of your current hiring processes and identify any issues that are preventing you from filling the pipeline with diversity candidates. Until you analyze your diversity recruitment and hiring data, you can’t get an accurate picture of how to move the needle.

Data should be used every step of the way to guide your analysis and inform the going-forward strategy.

1. Use the ‘start-stop-continue’ approach to get things started. For example:
2. What are we doing well when it comes to diversity hiring? (Continue)
3. What aspects of diversity hiring are failing us? (Stop)
4. What should we be doing differently or better? (Start)

**Step 2:  Establish goals, but start with a focus on one key metric**

Without goals the likelihood of success is very low. In fact, without goals, there are no measures that define success. That said, trying to overhaul your diversity hiring metrics can be overwhelming. But you don’t need to be overly ambitious. The simplest way to improve your diversity hiring is to pick one metric to improve upon.

For example, maybe it’s increasing the percentage of qualified diversity employees in tech-related roles by 10% within 6 months. Or increasing the percentage of qualified diversity employees on your sales team by 15% within 12 months.

Businesses use such metrics to assess whether they have progressed towards a strategic goal. Metrics may help you pinpoint where bias or obstacles exist. Reviewing relevant data can help you analyze where an issue may occur:

1. Track the demographics of the candidate pool through the entire hiring process, from initial contact, to resume review, to interviews, to hiring. Where feasible, break down the demographics by under-represented groups: women, people of color, people with disabilities, veterans, members of the LGBT community, etc.
2. Track whether the finalist pool of candidates is appropriately represented by diversity candidates. If you are failing at this stage, you will need to rethink your strategy and communicate with urgency. This cannot be an initiative that allows some hiring managers to ‘opt out’.
3. Track performance at the recruiter level, the individual supervisor level, the department level and the organization level.

**Step 3:  Increase divesity candidate sourcing**

There is a good chance that your diversity hiring audit reveals that you’re failing to find and attract enough diverse candidates to fill your pipeline. As a rule, more qualified candidates means more choices, leading to better hires. It is also true that diversity candidates are in high demand so it is important to broadcast your message widely and not extend the length of the overall hiring process. Let’s start with some foundational actions you can take to improve diversity candidate flow:

**1.  Re-word your job postings:** The language you use in your job descriptions helps to attract or discourage diverse candidates from applying to your open role. To attract more diversity candidates, you need to articulate the organization’s expressed desire to promote and foster the principles of DE & I. If it is truly an important part of your culture, why would you force candidates to ‘read between the lines’.  The candidate should also see this reflected when they review your company website.

Using words like “leader”, “rock star” and “competitive” will tend to reduce the number of women who apply, as women may be more likely to characterize their accomplishments as team efforts.  Explicitly stating that the salary is negotiable can reduce the gender gap in applicants.

Since men apply to jobs when they meet some but not all the qualifications, and women generally apply only when they meet 100% of the qualifications, avoid a list of requirements that are actually flexible and focus on the results you wish to see.

Speaking of flexibility, emphasize work-from-home, flexible schedule options and any benefits which speak to supporting women or other diversity candidates.

**2.  Show your existing workplace diversity (or the diversity you aspire to)**: One of the biggest barriers to increasing workplace diversity is that diversity attracts diversity. Candidates visiting your website will be looking for clues about what sort of employer you are. In particular, a high percentage of job seekers use diversity as an important factor when considering companies and job offers.

This is an ideal time to reexamine the images, messaging and videos of your workplace on your website and social profiles. Images and videos of your employees should reflect (but not exaggerate) your diversity.

**3.  Encourage diversity referrals, particularly from minority employees**: In many cases, people’s social and professional networks are made up of people who are demographically similar. Since they are more likely to refer members of their community, you can leverage this network similarity effect by encouraging minority employees to make referrals. Minority employee referrals help increase your diversity hiring with the added benefit of being recommended by those who know your culture.

If you want to supercharge the effort, offer referral bonuses to all employees that refer a diversity hire.

**4.  Integrate diversity training in your candidate sourcing**

* Start by tapping into diverse networks and reach out to diverse candidates where they are – don’t make them look for you
* Identify job fairs, affinity networks, conferences and training programs that are aimed at women and people of color in your field and send recruiters.
* Prior to doing so you will want to train your recruiters on both the objectives (the what) and best practice (the how).

If diverse candidates are not applying to your jobs, you will need to get the word out that your company is a great place to work for women and people of color. Consider offering public talks by women at the company and write blog posts, white papers, and social media articles highlighting the people of color who work there.

*Important implementation tip*: You will need to insist on a diverse pool of candidates for every open position. If the initial pool is largely homogenous, it is statistically unlikely that you will hire a diverse candidate. The odds of hiring a woman (or a person of color) are significantly greater if there were at least two diversity candidates in the finalist pool.

This directive is likely a cultural change that will need leadership support and must be championed by HR and the recruiters. Base a sizable percentage of the recruiter’s performance review on their ability to drive diversity hiring results.

**5.  Implement 'blind hiring' & reduce bias**: Many organizations require managers to blindly look at resumes without names.  There is some research that suggests when managers receive resumes with traditionally “non-white” names, they are more likely to get pushed to the side.

Some industries have reputations for ‘pale, male and stale’ hiring. Blind hiring can help companies hire for talent and skill, not just for cultural similarity.

Try these approaches to add a semi-blind approach to your hiring process:

* Obscure gender, race or demographic information: If you’re looking to mask gender or race, delete candidates’ names from their resumes before sending them over to hiring managers. Names, particularly names that are commonly associated with a certain gender or race, can trigger unconscious biases that can hurt candidates and companies alike. If you choose to obscure candidates’ names, consider deleting other identifying information too, like the names of volunteer associations and colleges since some may indicate race or gender.
* Don’t consider college pedigree: Just because someone comes from a top-tier university doesn’t mean that they are the best fit for your job. By obscuring the education portion of a candidate’s resume, you can let their experience speak for itself. It’s best to pair this strategy with a skills assessment or assignment.
* Avoid reviewing social media profiles until you are looking at finalists for a position.
* Use structured interviews and panel interviews which include diversity interviewers when appropriate.

Though a face-to-face interview is hardly blind hiring, implementing a structured interview process can mimic some of the objectivity blind hiring offers. By asking the same predetermined questions to all candidates in the same order, interviewers can score and judge answers in a less biased and subjective way than they could with unstructured interviews.

Tools and resources to reduce hiring bias:

* [Blendoor](https://blendoor.com/) is a mobile job matching app that obscures the names and photos of candidates in order to combat unconscious bias and facilitate diversity recruiting in tech companies.
* [Gapjumpers](https://www.gapjumpers.me/) combats implicit hiring bias through ‘blind auditions,’ providing assessments and challenges that companies can use to evaluate candidates instead of a classic resume.
* [Textio](https://textio.com/) is a web-based tool that checks job descriptions for words that indicate gender bias. Textio highlights problematic phrasing in a job posting and makes suggestions to help you attract diverse, qualified candidates.
* [The Gender Decoder for Job Ads](http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/) is a single-serve web app that allows you to check your job descriptions and advertisements for linguistic gender biases.

**What are some effective diversity recruiting sites?**

1. [Diversity.com](https://diversity.com/index.php) Diversity.com has been around for 20 years and is one of the premier job posting sites for black and minority candidates. Diversity.com understands employer branding and will help you build your own.
2. [PDN Recruits](https://www.pdnrecruits.com/) (Professional Diversity Network)   
   PDN’s mission is ‘Connecting Diverse Professionals to Employers that Value Diversity’. With clients like Old National, Biogen and Arctic Information Technology, they’re are one of the most trusted diversity job boards in the US.
3. [iHispano](https://www.ihispano.com/) - iHispano is one of seven job boards hosted by the Professional Diversity Network (PDN). It provides a professional network for Latinos that is more engaging and welcoming than a typical job board. The affinity of culture shared by members encourages valuable relationships with peers and mentors who are invested in each other’s success and are happy to help them improve their career skills and their access to opportunity.
4. [Black Career Network](https://www.blackcareernetwork.com/) - Another job board hosted by The Professional Diversity Network. The Black Career Network is a destination for diversity-driven employers and candidates to unite through recruiting events and community groups.
5. [Black Jobs](https://www.blackjobs.com/) - Black Jobs is an independently owned job board that claims to be the largest African American career community online. From Netflix, Amazon and the Oprah Winfrey Network, some of today’s leading employer brands come here to find top talent. The site was created to promote well-paying job opportunities for African American job seekers to help reduce the high rate of unemployment in Black communities.
6. [Hispanic/Latino Professionals Association](https://www.hlpa.com/) (HLPA) - HLPA is an authority on diversity-focused employer brands. It offers a listing section where job seekers can search for top-rated employers by industry. HLPA matches the Nation’s Top Hispanic / Latino Talent with America’s Best Organizations by identifying and listing quality organizations who are currently hiring and have a commitment to Diversity & the Hispanic / Latino Community.
7. [WorkplaceDiversity.com](https://workplacediversity.com/) - WorkplaceDiversity.com has been around for 15 years and with 160,000 Unique Monthly Visitors and over 1 million total page views. It is a minority and veteran owned and operated company.
8. [Fairygodboss](https://fairygodboss.com/) - Fairygodboss offers a women’s career community where candidates can access expert career advice and company reviews to help them make the best choice for them. Employers like GE, Accenture and Salesforce use Fairygodboss.

**Retention Best Practices**

1. **High Demand:** Diverse professionals are always in high demand, as such, they are more likely to be poached. If your culture does not support their values and career growth, these targeted diverse employees will begin to listen to external recruiters and eventually leave.
2. **Measure diversity turnover statistics.**
3. **Prioritize flight risks:**Prioritize your diverse employees based on their position, impact, and their performance. Next prioritize the diverse employees who are most likely to leave. For those individuals, ask their manager to develop a retention action plan.
4. **Personalize your retention plans:**Diverse employees that are targeted for retention should have their own personalized retention plan. Focus on identifying and reinforcing the reasons that these individual employees stay and identifying and removing the frustration factors that might cause them to leave.
5. **Conduct regularly scheduled stay interviews**.
6. **Incorporate** **Individual Development Plans** (IDPs) to foster opportunities for growth and recognition.
7. **Utilize mentors**