DIVERSITY IN TECH

READINESS, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TOOLKIT FOR COMPANIES

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READINESS AND RETENTION

Know What You Don't Know

If you're reading this, you've probably acknowledged that you aren't sure how best to solve your organization's diversity problem. That's an excellent first step! Now be sure that as you move forward, you rid yourself of any preconceptions you had about diversity in tech and how hard it is to achieve. Once you do this, it's amazing how many doors you can unlock.

Link Diversity to Your Bottom Line

Instead of trying to appeal to people's sense of equity, make sure they recognize the benefit of diversity to the company's bottom line. Research on the benefits of diversity to individuals and organizations abound, and the best way to get buy-in is to show (through careful measures over time), how diversity has impacted your own company for the better.

Use Metrics to Identify Organizational Needs

There is no one-size-fits-all strategy to increase and retain a diverse workforce; diversity initiatives must be carefully tailored to your company based on its mission, work and products as well as the current organizational culture and demographics. To identify where you are, what your goals should be, and how far you've come, we recommend performing several basic assessments at regular intervals:

- Evaluate the current demographic composition of your company at different levels and within different units.
- Examine employee attitudes regarding diversity -- broken down by demographic categories and rank -- to help identify some of the obstacles to diversity as well as individuals who can serve as champions for D&I initiatives.
- Perform a comprehensive analysis of your workforce flow to identify where the leaks and blockages are in your hiring and promotion pipelines.
- Review complaints and legal activity regarding the employment practices in your company to identify any trends.

- Explore the formal and informal resources employees utilize and/or are aware of including mentors, educational opportunities, and meetups. This can assist you in determining what formal programming you might implement to ensure all employees have the same advantages.
- Comprehensively evaluate any diversity initiatives you have in place. This should include:
  - Multiple measures of the programming inputs that are offered including the number of events/activities sponsored, budgets, number of designate staff assigned to assist with the programming
  - Measures of who participates in these programs, how often, and what constrains some from participating more fully.
  - Analysis of the relationship between programming inputs, participation, and outcomes for different demographic groups to identify attitudinal, behavioral, and organizational changes that are associated with this programming.

Establish A Diversity Committee and/or Hire A Chief Diversity Officer

Diversity committees and diversity officers can positively impact the racial and gender diversity of organizations by developing initiatives and ensuring they are executed and communicated properly. In order to increase the likelihood of success, diversity managers and diversity committees must be senior level positions or comprised of senior level employees who's opinions and authority will be taken seriously by peers, subordinates, and persons outside your company. Research indicates that line managers and executives are more successful than human

resources at owning diversity initiatives and holding others accountable.

Carefully Frame Diversity Initiatives

The efficacy of diversity initiatives, depends in part on how they are framed. They should be understood as <u>opportunities rather than impossible goals</u> as the threat of failure diminishes performance and flexibility. Consider emphasizing the valuable insights and expertise employees from different backgrounds bring to the table, and how work groups can <u>use this as a resource</u> to rethink tasks and redefine products, strategies and business practices to advance the work of the company.

Develop a Comprehensive Diversity Strategy and Avoid Issuing Diversity Reports Laden with Excuses

Diversity plans should be based on a foundation of concrete goals, with frequent evaluations and an analysis of where you are now. The specific objectives you delineate should be based on a comprehensive assessment of your company and translated into targets that can be assessed and revised as time goes by. These goals should be reinforced by clearly articulated justifications based on current demographic patterns in your company. Avoid, issuing a diversity report that is loaded with excuses for why your company is not diverse. Instead, acknowledge the lack of diversity as a problem, restate the business case for diversity, and talk about what you are doing to change it.

Require Accountability and Incentivize Inclusion

Promote cooperation among diverse team members by structuring tasks, incentives, and appraisals in ways that foster a group approach. Reinforce the importance of diversity to the company's bottom line, and ensure that team membership is equally if not more important than individual performance.

Avoid Unconscious Bias and Other Diversity Trainings That Do Not Provide Tangible Ways to Mitigate Organizational and Procedural Biases

The diversity training industry is estimated to be worth $8 Billion, yet <u>research</u> indicates most trainings, particularly ones emphasizing individual biases, are ineffective and can actually backfire. Trainings should not normalize biases or focus how individuals can cut back on their prejudices. Instead, trainings should provide concrete tools for different actors to lessen their effects within the company.

SEARCH AND RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

Mandate Diversity in Every Search Your Company Conducts

The composition of candidate pools affects not only who is available to fill a position, but how hiring managers and search committees evaluate applicants. <u>Studies</u> show that whatever demographic group comprises the majority of a pool is likely to be selected as the favorite candidate, and that the odds of hiring a candidate from a particular demographic group increase exponentially with more representation in the applicant pool. Companies must take heed to ensure the slate of candidates in any search is genuinely racially diverse.

Analyze Leaks and Blockages in the Search and Hiring Pipeline

A key step for organizations that wish to diminish the effects of biases is to identify where leaks and blockages occur in the application and hiring processes. A variety of mechanisms including applicant tracking systems can be used to:

- Identify how applicants from different demographics enter the application system to help understand what mechanisms are most useful for attracting candidates of color
- Track candidates as they move through the application pipeline to identify which points tend to block diverse hires from moving forward and whether specific units or individuals are more likely to reject or negatively assess candidate of color more frequently than the organizational average.

Structure the Interview Process As Much As Possible

Job interviews are highly prone to interviewer prejudice and can result in biased scoring systems and interview protocols. Structured interviews minimize the discretion of interviewers and the amount of bias they can exercise in the hiring process. As a starting point, we recommend employing the following four features to structure your interviews:

- Require interviewers to share and explain their assessments of candidates to motivate individuals to form more accurate assessments.
- Ask all candidates the same series of pre-determined, job-relevant questions that assess the knowledge, skills and abilities most closely related to the work in question.
- Have each candidate interview with multiple interviewers to decrease the weight and use of individual biases.
- Provide training to all interviewers to make sure they correctly apply the components of structured interviews.

Diversify Your Search Committee

The diversity of the search committee itself can be a key mechanism for increasing diversity. <u>Research</u> shows that the likelihood of making a diverse hire is positively related to the diversity of the search committee. Among other things, including at least one committee member that is of a different race than the majority of the search committee serves as a type of check and balance in the evaluation process.