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When It Comes to Hiring, Now Is the Time to Rethink Your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy

by Cevin Owens | August 20, 2020
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Many corporations are stepping up to take action against racism. Leaders are asking what more they can do to meet the moral imperative of cultivating a workforce that's diverse—and not just across racial lines, but across all marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved communities—and fully support that workforce. It's not surprising, then, that some are questioning whether their hiring and promotion practices are truly inclusive, and whether these practices are actually helping their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. Wherever your organization finds itself with respect to DEI, now's a good time to re-evaluate things. Unless a commitment to DEI is worked fully into your strategy, carrying throughout everything your organization does, you're not doing enough. And that work begins at the top, with how you recruit.

DEI must start with your leadership

Everything that leadership does informs how the organization operates, so leaders must commit to DEI as part of their own personal mission as well as the organization's mission, starting with the hiring process. They must communicate its importance, and build a culture that's open to new ideas—and transparent with regards to whose ideas get heard and who gets rewarded.

Leadership can't exempt themselves from the DEI imperative. A commitment to DEI should be written into each leader's job description before they themselves are hired, and once onboard should be held accountable for their adoption of DEI and support for practices that promote it. And if your workforce is diverse but your leadership is not, you need to be doing more for DEI.

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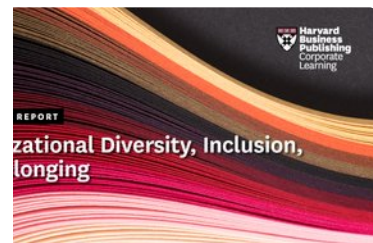


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There are better ways to put DEI into practice

There are better ways to hire. Clarify what it means to your organization to hire a diverse workforce. Analyze where you stand today and what you need to do to get to your goal for diversity. If you want to hire a diverse workforce, but the team doing the hiring all pretty much look alike—similar age group, similar education, similar amount of experience—the task will be harder. The channels in which you recruit should be diverse, and should include diversity-centric resources (like LinkedIn Diversity Groups), conferences, colleges, and job boards.

Take care when you're writing job descriptions, too. In many organizations the hiring managers are tasked with writing them, but haven't been educated on how to do so using inclusive language. There are tools available that identify gender coded vocabulary and language in job descriptions available. Consider the “must have” versus “nice to have” Do you really need employees to have “x” degree and “y” experience, which may rule out some candidates, when what really matters on the job are attributes—resilience, flexibility, an eagerness to learn. The expectation of an individual's commitment to diversity (in line with the organization) should be written into their job description.

There are better ways to onboard and train. Once your new and diverse hires are on board, ask yourself whether your onboarding content encourages individuals to bring their authentic selves to work. Content that's more focused on your organization's way of doing things, and encourages new employees to “fit in” with the majority population of your workforce, may be preventing them from bringing those authentic selves. If you

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really want to reap the benefits of diversity, you'll want your employees to be their authentic selves from the start.

There are better ways to identify and develop your high potentials. Another area to look at is opportunities for advancement for a more diverse workforce. Just as you should be taking a new look at exactly what skills and attributes are really needed for your new hires, you need to take the same critical look at the requirements for promotion.

Diversity, equity, and inclusiveness will continue to grow in importance and value. Does your organization have a solid strategy to address it?

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