HOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO RECRUIT A MORE DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Diversity.

It might be a challenging topic to tackle, but one McKinsey & Company study suggests a commitment to diversity can steer companies through tenuous times. The management consulting firm took a hard look at financial institution data from past world crises, and it found that banks led by women during the Great Recession seemed to weather economic storms more efficiently and profitably than those led by men. Plus, during the earliest stages of the COVID-19 outbreak, geographic areas headed by women seemed to fare better.

While the benefits are apparent, there are barriers to forming and holding onto diverse teams. Companies that want to prioritize diversity must plan and think outside the box to develop unique recruitment strategies and more effectively create a diverse workforce. By leaning on technology, these organizations can spotlight a diverse array of candidates.

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LOOK TO TECHNOLOGY WHEN HIRING FOR DIVERSITY

If you're interested in improving your organization's diversity by using technology, you may be eager to jump in. First, you'll want to take a few steps to ensure that you're headed in the right direction. The following to-do items will help you ensure that your recruitment and tech stack aligns toward a diverse result.

1. Outline your diversity and inclusion goals.

It's time to do a deep dive: What do diversity and inclusion mean for your company? Write down everything you want to achieve. Your answers will help you figure out which technologies are appropriate and which aren't worth your while.

For instance, you may be tempted to try out a technology that you've heard about from a leader at another company. But the technology might not solve your specific concerns or help you reach your stated goals. Instead of trying to fit your issues to technology, identify your problems first so you can seek out the best technological fit.

How can companies find talented, diverse people who will help scale and grow the organization? In most cases, through sourcing and recruitment.

Recruitment usually starts with some kind of content. Therefore, organizations need to be conscientious when courting diverse talent with verbiage. Words should be relatively neutral and widely appealing. A term as seemingly innocuous as "guys" may turn off some candidates. Additionally, employers should consider **placing advertisements in novel portals and online places** to source nontraditional candidates.

As résumés flood in, software programs can review credentials without the risk of human bias. Potential interviewees can then go through a blind interview process, a protocol that manually removes identifiable characteristics such as gender or age from résumés.

2. Ask stakeholders for buy-in.

As you're improving your recruitment of diverse applicants, include diverse people in your planning team. At our company, we always try to ensure that a diverse group helps us make diverse hiring decisions. This allows us to hear many different viewpoints.

Getting the C-suite to approve any significant initiative is imperative, particularly if you're spending money to improve the technology platforms available to recruiters. Even if people realize and accept that diversity and inclusion are needed at your company, they often won't make changes unless they see that folks at the top have endorsed the efforts.

Interview panels that include diverse workers should also help you be more inclusive in your final selection process. Be sure to explain your technologies to everyone so the entire team is aware of the purpose behind tools like blind interviews and dynamic, AI-based pre-screening bots.

Try to get as many stakeholders as you can from across all verticals at your brand. Remember that not all leaders hold leadership titles. Even if they don't have corner offices, people can still have plenty of sway.

3. Vet technologies that will allow you to reach your diversity goals.

After figuring out your corporate diversity objectives and getting buy-in, start looking at the different technology solutions on the market. Not every vendor will specialize in what you need. Don't get fooled by jargon; ask for specifics.

For example, according to **information culled by CIO magazine,** 43% of diversity technologies focused heavily on reducing bias, while 30% concentrated on constructing channels to diverse candidates. Look for additions to your tech stack that will serve your purpose.

An AI résumé evaluator, for example, is useful because it doesn't rely on gut instincts or snap judgments. Instead, it analyzes documents, scores candidates, and makes recommendations. Some solutions can even drill down into data to explore which interviewers might show unconscious bias when offering jobs.

At Integrity Staffing Solutions, we've also used AI when placing our first virtual OCs in economically diverse locations. We've leveraged the power of AI and machine learning to create equal opportunities for individuals living in lower-income neighborhoods while promoting diversity and fairness.

In other words, technology provides transparency. When figures and statistical analysis are on the table, people are less likely to feel that they're being accused of bias or discrimination. Instead, they may be more open to solutions like additional diversity and inclusion training.

This isn't to suggest that technology is perfect — it's not. Technological recruitment platforms are programmed by individuals who have their own biases. For instance, the software could introduce bias by basing future hires on past hires; if the past hires were mostly men who had specific GPAs from top-tier colleges, the software could assume that recruiting similar performers would make sense.

MAKING DIVERSITY A REALITY

Diverse teams sometimes form organically, but it's more often the result of a concentrated effort. Instead of hoping that your next hires will come from diverse pipelines, take proactive steps to make it happen. Mapping out your diversity and inclusion strategy and then finding supporting technologies will boost the distinctiveness of your cultural fabric — and should give a welcome boost to your bottom line.

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