



# How to Build a Diversity Recruitment Strategy



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Let's start with a couple of definitions from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM):

*Diversity is defined as "a collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively."*

*Inclusion is defined as "a set of behaviors (culture) that encourages employees to feel valued for their unique qualities and experience a sense of belonging."*

This premise of diversity recruitment is the recognition that employees of varying backgrounds not only enhance the company culture but enrich it. An inclusive workplace not only values difference but celebrates it and fosters an environment of collaboration and respect.

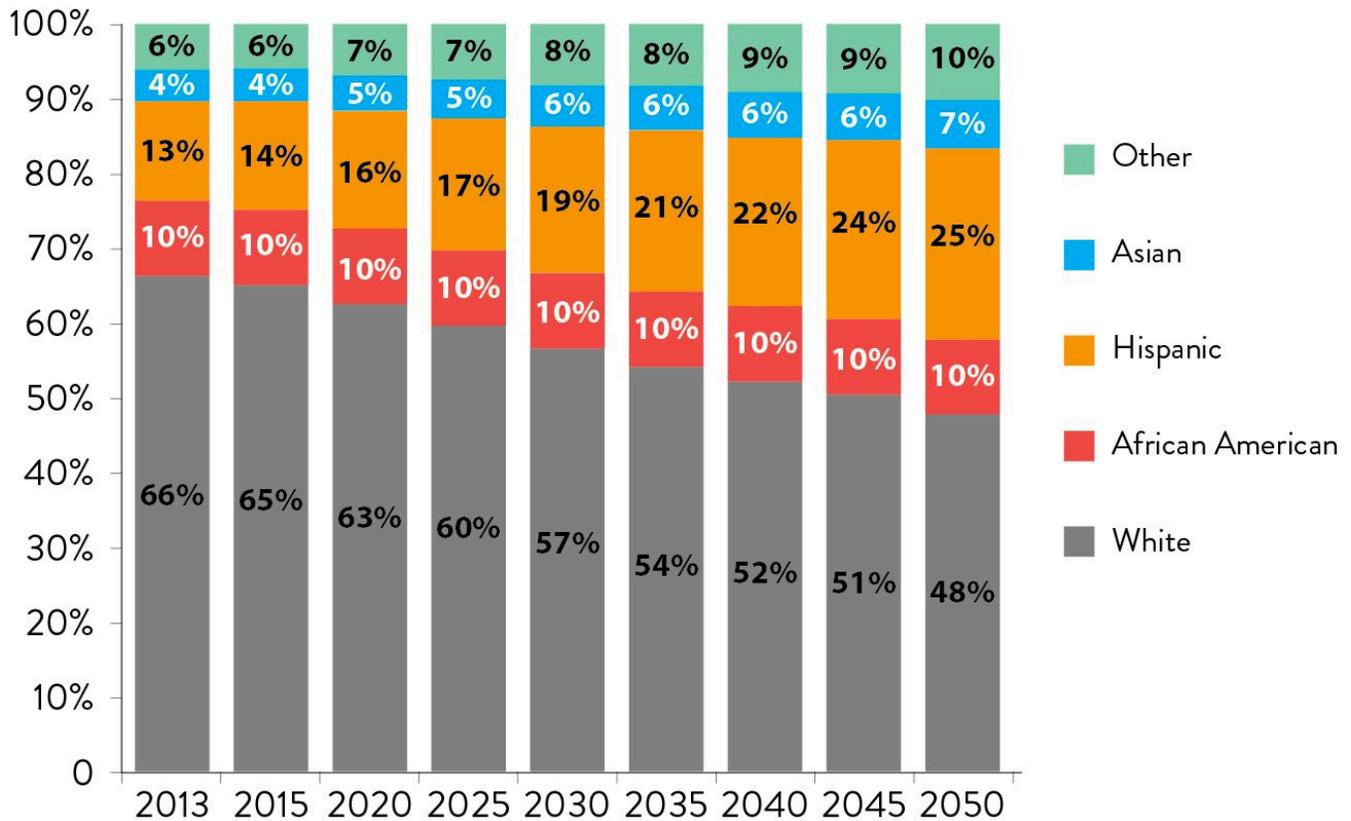
When asked his thoughts on diversity recruitment, Cedric Chambers, Founder and CEO of Jump Recruits, a Diversity Recruitment and Consulting Company said. "Various studies have shown that diversity in the workplace improves performance from a bottom line perspective, but when I think about diversity and recruitment more specifically, I think about the outcome of what comes from diversity recruitment which is a more innovative and engaging culture and a more realistic resemblance of our world today. The only way to have a truly inclusive culture is first to make sure your organization has the right "mix" (diversity) present, which means it must have embraced diversity from multiple perspectives, whether

race, gender, culture, etc."

Establishing a diverse workforce is not a passive process. Organizations need to actively seek and recruit diverse candidates to ensure they are not attracting a homogenous talent pool. There is no shortage of candidates as the U.S. workforce is becoming ever more diverse.

As shown in the chart below, which shows projected increases in the labor force across various racial and ethnic groups through 2050, the percentage of White workers in the labor force will see continuing declines while Hispanics, Asians and the "other" groups are projected to increase their numbers in the labor force most rapidly. As per the Bureau of Labor Statistics, by 2024, Hispanics are projected to be nearly one-fifth of the labor force as a result of the fastest population growth of all the race and ethnicity groups.

## Labor force makeup by race/ethnicity



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce projection of labor force makeup by race/ethnicity

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics by 2020, the number of women in the workforce is expected to increase to 77, 232,000 representing an increase of 6.2 percent from today. By 2025 women will represent 47% the total US workforce. Also, women of color make up 33 percent of women in the workforce. Breaking it down by race and ethnicity, 67 percent of women in the workforce are non-Hispanic white, 13 percent are Hispanic, 13 percent are black, 5 percent are Asian, and 2

percent are other.

As the American workforce becomes increasingly diverse, it is critical that organizations across all industries prioritize diversity recruitment to attract top talent across groups to remain competitive in today's market. Yet, obstacles remain.

## Challenges to Diversity Recruiting

A study by the Society for Human Resource Management shows that one of the most significant challenges to implanting a diversity recruitment program is that 41% of managers are “too busy” to implement diversity initiatives. While it may be true that managers have many responsibilities, this statistic highlights how low in priority diversity hiring is to many senior-level staff. This leaves the talent acquisition team the task of devising strategies to promote an appreciation of diversity hiring across the organization.

racial and ethnic diversity were 35% more likely to realize financial returns above national industry standards. “At the end of the day, a business cares about profit. And the reason a lot of diversity initiatives have trouble getting traction is that they are not in direct line of sight and presented in a way that shows the ROI as it relates to CASH or the businesses #1 performance metric” – Cedric Chambers

***“Building a diverse workforce that reflects demographics of the customer base improves customer loyalty and retention”***

As per Cedric Chambers, “Making sure you have buy-in from the very top of the organization and then communicating that value to all employees of the organization is key to establishing a successful diversity program. Not having management buy-in can be the sole reason your program is not approved or moved forward.”

A second challenge to implementing a diversity recruitment strategy is that managers can be hesitant to form teams of employees from diverse backgrounds out of fear of varying perspectives that may negatively impact productivity. However, research by McKinsey finds that of the 366 public companies studied, those in the top 25% for

Building a diverse workforce that reflects demographics of the customer base improves customer loyalty and retention because they are more comfortable doing business with people who they perceive have similar interests and needs. Tim Stiles, a tax partner at KPMG says, “When we go out into the public, the only thing we really have to sell is our people. What becomes very critical is how our people look to our client base out there. One of the things that we are implementing to drive our resource groups when we go out and talk to clients is [considering] ‘What does that team look like? How are we composing our teams so that they match the individuals we will be interacting with on a day-to-day basis?’

# Diversity and Recruiting

Embracing a diversity philosophy where everyone feels valued, empowered and supported is the most effective way to retain employees which, in turn, becomes a highly useful recruiting tool as employees then become brand ambassadors for the company, spreading the company values to their inner circle. Highly satisfied employees result in higher productivity and improved quality outcomes. This is because a diverse workforce promotes alternate perspectives that result in more creativity and innovation in the decision-making process.

In sum, those organizations that value diversity hiring will experience a competitive edge, not to mention increased employee retention that foster growth and reduces opportunity costs arising from turnover.

## Creating a Talent Acquisition Plan

To foster diverse perspectives in the recruitment process, you first must educate the entire workforce regarding its value. As per Barbara Stern, vice president of diversity at Brookline, Mass.-based Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, ... "Diversity recruitment is a delicate balancing act. Make sure (Staff at all levels of the organization) understand the business rationale for having a diverse workforce," she says, "otherwise diversity recruiting is misunderstood as preferences or affirmative action. Even though that business case is clear, we still have the challenge of making sure that white males and females don't feel excluded from the process, and that they don't feel they're going to lose."



**There are four essential steps to implementing a successful diversity recruitment program:**

1

Create a change management committee and work groups comprised of diverse members. Perform environment scan via surveys and analyze results

2

Articulate the mission and develop company diversity policy

3

Prioritize findings of scan and develop strategic plan. Include objectives and timelines. Create a metrics system to quantify outcomes.

4

Create Implementation Plan and engage internal stakeholders. Set time lines for completion and evaluation.



***Tip: Diversity recruitment should extend to the market research team since different demographic groups bring insight to the needs and wants of their constituency.***

Let's expand on each point:

- The change committee and workgroups are best comprised of members from diverse groups who understand the priorities and concern of their group and can contribute unique perspectives to the process.
  - Before you can initiate a diversity recruitment program, it's important to gain consensus regarding the mission statement among all group members. What are your organization's core values and how do these inform the mission statement regarding diversity? From the mission statement, develop a formal company policy and ensure that all managers and employees have read and understood the value of such a perspective
  - An internal environment scan forms the basis of strategic planning as it provides a method by which committee members can gauge internal opportunities and "threats" (e.g., dissatisfaction/disenfranchisement among the workforce). The scan includes many items: mission and values statement, existing recruitment policies, a brand message as well as staff interaction: employee-employee; employee-manager; manger-manager; manager-external stakeholders (e.g., the board and shareholders).
  - Once you have the results of the scan, the committee can then perform a SWOT analysis from which to design targeted recruitment strategy that optimizes opportunities. The objectives of the strategic plan should focus on creating goals and objectives that address those areas where there is the need for greatest change; e.g., adjusting recruitment process; increasing diversity awareness; improving communication between groups; brand enhancement; manager buy-in. Goals can be created using the S.M.A.R.T approach—specific, measurable, attainable, realistic.
- The final step is to implement the plan across the organization. Below we review specific action steps.
    - Develop initial and ongoing training for management regarding the diversity policy so that they understand the benefits and can discuss the importance of this approach with their teams.
    - Initial and ongoing training for all employees regarding the value of diversity and the employer's commitment to recognizing and valuing the unique perspectives of different groups. This and the management training can be accomplished via a blended learning approach utilizing video instruction with follow-up group discussion.
  - The formation of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) comprised of members of a specific demographic background that can take a direct part in the recruitment effort in three primary ways:
    - ERG members can foster an environment of inclusiveness by reaching out to majority groups and ensuring they are included in the recruitment strategy.
    - Educate employees at all levels of the company that "diversity" is not synonymous with "minority" but includes all underrepresented groups as well (e.g., disabilities, veterans, women LGBT, etc.)
    - Research demographic trends in the labor market and develop a recruitment strategy in tandem with the HR team seeks to address any overlooked groups

- Create a company brand that celebrates diversity. This can be accomplished via the content and visuals on the Careers page of the company Web site; social media pages; annual reports; job posts; job boards, etc. And, we noted above, happy employees make the best brand ambassadors!
- Develop a consistent recruiting process to ensure that unrepresented groups are included in the sourcing strategy and interview process. This may consist of a rethinking of the job descriptions so that the criteria and language foster a diverse talent pool. In an article published by SHRM, Johnny Campbell, owner, and CEO of Social Talent, suggests doing away with the number of years' of experience as women tend to apply for jobs only when they meet 100% of the criteria while men tend to apply if they meet 60% percent. If the job description demands eight years' experience, be 100% certain you couldn't hire someone with six years as you may be inadvertently turning away women.

A 2016 study published by the University of Missouri reversed the findings of a study by Bertrand and Mullainathan a decade earlier that revealed that perceived "white names received 50% more callbacks from resumes than did "black names," regardless of industry or occupation. The study shows unequivocally that persons from minority backgrounds are invited to interviews to a much lesser degree than candidates from majority groups. However, the University of Missouri study shows that this hiring bias has been nearly eliminated by implementing more equitable recruitment practices, such

as the use of interview question templates that all candidates will answer, regardless of background, as well as the use of blind resumes that omit and address.

- Attend In-person and Virtually-based Diversity Job Fairs. Virtual fairs, especially, are a great tool as they provide the opportunity to target a vast talent pool with minimum cost and can be an effective way to reach such underrepresented groups as veteran and people with disabilities.
- Engage in philanthropic activities that promote diversity. While large firms, such as Intel, can invest in technology start-ups run by women and entrepreneurs, you don't need to be a mega-million-dollar company to engage in such efforts. For example, offer internships to students of underrepresented and minority groups or sponsor a science fair for young women to encourage their pursuit of STEM careers.

While the first step in building a successful diversity recruitment strategy is developing the company's policy and obtaining the buy-in of managers and employees, the ensuing steps are not necessarily a linear process but performed in tandem. At every step, it's essential to engage with employees of diverse background and utilize their input to maximize the potential for success with your organization's diversity recruitment initiative.



## Conclusion

Building a diversity-friendly brand enables your company to penetrate new markets that may not otherwise have been available. Internally, employees spread the core value of diversity to everyone in the company, as well as their circles of influence, thereby fostering a culture of inclusion and collaboration—both of which significantly impact employee satisfaction and retention. Finally, diversity encourages innovation in that ideas for new product development can come from those employees who possess keen insight into the preferences and interests of specific demographic groups. In short, diversity is good for business!

At Jump Recruits, LLC, we believe that workplace diversity is the key to new ideas, innovation, and an employee culture that attracts top talent. If you're interested in creating a company where high-quality candidates eagerly line up and where new ideas burst at the seams, email us today at [partnership@jumprecruits.com](mailto:partnership@jumprecruits.com) to learn how we can help you create and implement your diversity recruitment strategy.

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