

4 Ways to Create a More Diverse Workplace That Inspires Innovation

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Diversity in the workplace is more than meeting a quota and ticking the box. It's no longer something companies aspire to achieve but rather the norm. Margaret King, Ph.D., director of [The Center for Cultural Studies & Analysis](#), defines diversity as "the state of having as many choices as possible in the way the work team thinks about getting things done and solving problems."

According to the Harvard Business Review, more diverse companies experience increased innovation which results in [19% higher revenue](#) and [2.3 times higher cash flow per employee](#). Companies who are intentional about hiring, retaining and developing diverse talent are [35% more likely to outperform](#) their competitors. This is because diversity brings together different cultures, races, genders, generations and backgrounds to provide new perspectives, ideas and solutions.

However, while many companies are focused on diversity they neglect the [importance of inclusion](#). Diversity and inclusion go hand-in-hand. Companies can hire diverse talent and celebrate ticking the box, but if the people they hire don't feel included or supported they'll quickly become disengaged and are more likely to leave.

How Reimagining Employment Practices Can Advance Racial Justice

Up until now, companies have shied away from prioritizing diversity and inclusion. Many didn't want to expend the energy and resources to fix something they didn't feel was problematic. The turning point wasn't until [Black Lives Matter protests](#) and the [#MeToo Movement](#) gained momentum. Employees and consumers began publicly calling out companies for their discriminatory practices and false promises. This led to consumers and workers boycotting those brands altogether.

Here are four ways companies can create more diverse workplaces that inspire innovation.

Revamp The Recruitment Process

Nothing is more daunting than joining a company where the leadership and management team is made up of people from the same culture. For this reason, diverse employees don't have anyone to look up to that they can relate. As a result, they feel left out and uninspired to contribute ideas and solutions.

Companies admit one of their greatest challenges is recruiting diverse candidates. Unfortunately, interviews are riddled with unconscious bias, subjectivity, inconsistency and a lack of proper interview training. Furthermore, companies are unknowingly repelling quality diverse talent through the language and images they use in their company communications, job descriptions, website and social media content.

Tatyana Tyagun, HR generalist at [Chanty](#), said "tools like [Toggl Hire](#) and [Vervoe](#) let you test candidates' skills first without seeing their name, age, nationality or any identifying information about them." [Predictive Index](#) is another valuable tool that allows companies to identify where diversity gaps exist so hiring managers can fill those gaps with the best talent.

Here are some diverse hiring strategies companies can use to revamp their recruitment process:

- Partner with multicultural professional organizations

- Ask employees to be more cognizant of the people they refer to be women and/or from underrepresented communities
- Seek referrals from diverse employees
- Target and [source diverse candidates through LinkedIn](#)
- Advertise specifically to minority groups
- Blindly review resumes
- Write job descriptions with more inclusive language
- Host discussions or events geared towards diverse candidates (E.g., Microsoft hosts “[Ability Hiring Events](#)” giving candidates with disabilities the opportunity to interview with the tech company; PepsiCo partners with [Allies in Service](#) to ensure veterans have a fair chance at obtaining a position)

Understand Limitations And Embrace New Perspectives

As a workplace culture consultant, the biggest mistake many companies make is excluding their employees from the decision making process, especially diverse ones, and making decisions on their behalf. While C-suite’s responsibility is to make major decisions for the business, companies who involve employees in the decision making process reap a wealth of benefits. When employees feel included, they’re empowered and inspired to make a difference because they feel a personal stake in the outcome.

Allie Fleder, chief operating officer at [SimplyWise](#), recommended to “actively seek minority voices for company decisions. It’s not enough to have a seat at the table.” Leaders need to ensure those voices are heard. By doing so, they’re able to learn first hand the challenges and hardships diverse employees face and gain new perspectives on potential solutions.

Brandon Chopp, digital manager at [iheartraves](#) and [INTO THE AM](#), sets time aside “so that members of leadership are able to meet with our diverse team members one-on-one in order to listen to how they feel and get feedback on how we can make improvements to our company culture. We are also looking to diversify the models and influencers that we work with in an effort to represent all backgrounds.”

Create Pathways For Success With Retention Tools

Recruiting diverse talent is only half of the equation. Companies are often challenged with how to advance them within the organization. Jennifer Walden, director of operations at [WikiLawn Lawn Care](#), asserted “if the entirety of your C-suite and mid-level management consists of white men, you’re sending a message to diverse employees that there’s no real future for them at your company.”

To create equality and equity within the workplace, leaders need to be proactive in how they plan to keep them for the long haul. This requires an action plan with accountable steps on how individuals can get a promotion.

Kimberly Porter, financial expert and CEO of [Microcredit Summit](#), said “advancing diverse talent in the workplace starts with creating an inclusive company culture that will make all employees feel welcome

and supported. This will not only make current employees more likely to refer others to work at the company, it will help limit turn over.”

Recognize And Celebrate Differences

Humanizing the workplace should be something in which every employer strives. Employees are more than the specific skills and knowledge they bring. That’s just a piece of who they are. When companies take the time to recognize and celebrate what makes each individual unique, they’re showing employees they care about them as a whole person. It’s rare, especially with the new generation of workers, that employees are working just for a paycheck. They want their employers to care about them more than the work they do.

A Randstad [study](#) revealed “56% of female workers and 52% of male workers believe their employers could do more to promote gender equality and diversity.” Managers and leadership can do this by recognizing religious practices and cultural habits, being more aware and keeping track of upcoming holidays, asking employees how they plan to celebrate the holiday as well as being respectful of those days when scheduling meetings. By embracing and celebrating differences, companies inspire more innovative workplaces.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/heidilynnekurter/2020/07/22/4-ways-to-create-a-more-diverse-workplace-that-inspires-innovation/?sh=42c8a84034af>