



TOOL 3: RECRUITING FOR DIVERSITY



INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is designed by **Vlerick Business School** and **Talentree** with the support of the European Social Fund and the Flemish Government to help organisations in creating a diverse and inclusive work environment. The content of this toolkit is based on learnings we gathered during a project focused on guiding newcomers and companies to fasten the job search and induction process on the work floor. The toolkit consists of 4 tools and is structured as follows:



Tool 1: Multicultural Diversity on The Agenda

By providing facts and figures about multicultural diversity and explaining how it leads to competitive advantage, this first tool helps organisations to build a business case in order to put diversity and inclusion on the agenda.



Tool 2: Building a Diverse organisation: Getting The Foundations Right

This second tool focuses on the critical success factors to build a diverse organisation, the steps towards creating an inclusive company and ways to bring unconscious bias to the forefront.



Tool 3: Recruiting for Diversity

This third tool helps companies to recruit more diverse talent. It focuses on how to set up an inclusive recruitment process and how to tackle bias in recruitment.



Tool 4: Managing Diversity in The Workplace

This fourth tool helps organisations to prepare and manage teams which are becoming more diverse. Next to this, it helps to understand how organisations can provide a great kick-off for the new (diverse) hires.

These 4 tools can be used together or as stand alone tools depending on the specific context of an organisation. Organisations that are just starting with their diversity and inclusion efforts and that are looking to build the business case will benefit from starting with tool 1. Organisations that are further along in their diversity and inclusion journey can jump toward the tool(s) that are most relevant for them. Based on these 4 tools also a training has been developed consisting of 4 modules and accompanying exercise leaflets, through which organisations can deliver an internal training on the 4 building blocks provided in this toolkit. The modules are designed in such a way companies can use them autonomously to set up their own diversity initiatives and workshops.

Although this toolkit is based on the insights with regard to multicultural diversity, many of the insights and exercises can be translated to diversity in general.

You can also download the powerpoint and leaflets made for this tool to roll out a training in your own team or company.

MAIN OBJECTIVE TOOL 3

This tool is the third tool in a series of 4 tools designed to help you create an inclusive and diverse work environment and to reap its benefits in the best possible way. This tool focuses on recruiting for diversity.

You'll learn:

- ✓ How to set up an inclusive recruitment process
- ✓ How to attract more diverse candidates
- ✓ How to tackle bias in recruitment



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1. SETTING UP AN INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT APPROACH

As described in tool 1 'Multicultural diversity on the agenda', the business case for diversity is clear. Though becoming a diverse and inclusive organisation **doesn't just happen on its own**. Companies need to actively attract and recruit candidates from a variety of backgrounds to ensure they're not inadvertently creating a homogenous workforce. Hence, setting up a concrete approach to increase diversity through recruitment is an important element of any diversity and inclusion strategy.

Consider the following steps to **increase diversity through recruitment***:

- ✓ **Define recruitment targets.** Develop and implement a recruitment plan which identifies recruitment goals for diverse talent. For example, a target may be to increase the percentage of new hires with an international background with 5% in the next 6 months, or to increase the percentage of diverse candidates in the pipeline by 15% over the next year. Organisations that are having the most success in broadening their recruitment recognise the tangible impact that targets can make.**
- ✓ **Include diversity in your employer branding.** Employer branding is an important tool to make sure you are attracting diverse talent. Companies that show a commitment towards diversity and inclusion are more attractive for newcomers. Think of it this way: potential employees need to be able to see themselves at your company in order to feel comfortable applying there (see point 2 in this guide).
- ✓ **Add alternative sourcing channels.** Building a diverse talent pool requires companies to explore ways other than traditional methods to attract new talent. There are several possibilities to broaden and expand sourcing channels (see point 3 in this guide).
- ✓ **Identify recruitment bias.** Also in recruitment, bias is known to lead recruiters to make irrational hiring decisions. Because of this, companies might miss the chance to hire the best talent. It's important that companies consider how bias impacts the sourcing, screening and interviewing of candidates and finally, the hiring decisions (see point 4 in this guide).
- ✓ **Make a plan** – and address low hanging fruit first. To start making early wins, decide which areas can be addressed immediately, then evaluate longer term projects and plan accordingly.



Source: *Glassdoor. (2017). RECRUIT TALENT IN TODAY'S MARKET Guide to Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace. Consulted from <https://b2b-assets.glassdoor.com/guide-to-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace.pdf>; **PWC Report (2017). Gaining an edge in the competition for talent: Inclusive recruitment in financial services survey 2017.

2. DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT: START WITH YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND



A first way to get more diverse talent in the pipeline is **to build and promote an employer brand** that supports diversity. In today's competitive global war for talent, standing out from the crowd through a strong and value-infused employer brand is **crucial to attract new talent**.

A commitment to diversity recruitment and hiring helps to set your company apart. The Glassdoor site survey indicates that **two-thirds of active and passive job seekers say that a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers***.

”

Millennials often explicitly check how diverse our team is during the recruitment process. They expect to work in a global setting so the team should reflect this.

”

- Business manager, services company

When it comes to diversity, you have to **let the outside world know that your organisation embraces difference**. Nowadays (potential) employees want more than just state-of-the-art work environments and fun activities at work. People are looking at the bigger picture and as today's world is becoming more and more diverse, applicants consider a work climate that reflects this global trend an important criterion. By **spreading a genuine story** that emphasizes the importance of these topics, your company will have **a bigger chance to become an employer of choice****.

Source:*Glassdoor blog article (2014). What Job Seekers Really Think of Your Diversity Stats. Consulted from <https://www.glassdoor.com/employers/blog/diversity/>; ** Decker, L. (2016). Becoming the employer of choice: Diversity matters. Consulted from <https://deckerdesign.com/2016/11/becoming-employer-choice-diversity-matters/>

2.1. SHOW YOUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

To ensure candidates with diverse backgrounds will feel at home at your company, it's important to show that your company puts **diversity and inclusion high on the agenda**. Here are some ways to show your company values diversity:

- ✓ **Company values:** make sure your company values explicitly or implicitly reflect your focus on and openness to diversity.

” *Diversity & Inclusion is a business imperative embedded in our company values. We actively promote it among our employees, raise awareness, and foster an environment that welcomes and embraces different perspectives, cultures, and diversity of thought.* ”

- Multinational company active both in the consumer and industrial sector*

- ✓ **Show your diverse workforce:** it is important to show diversity in company messaging and communications. For example, you may include photographs of diverse teams and individuals in web and print materials. You can build stories and testimonials of employees with very diverse types of profiles.
- ✓ **Leverage the diversity you have:** the best way to communicate your employer brand to potential hires is through your current team members. Make them ambassadors and involve them in branding campaigns.
- ✓ **Manage your social media:** a lot of job candidates do their research before accepting a job offer (or even before applying for an open position). In a digital era, social media are the information sources candidates rely on to screen their potential new employer. Make sure your social media posts reflect the values you stand for as a company. In addition, don't forget that candidates often look at the LinkedIn profiles of current employees (your ambassadors). Also your overall product and service branding needs to embrace diversity.
- ✓ **Career pages:** in general, companies devote significant resources to building an effective, far-reaching, and compelling online presence. But too often, organisations forget their own career pages. So make sure to build strong career pages with meaningful and engaging content, so candidates don't bounce after being attracted by a great campaign.**

Source: *<https://www.henkel.com/company/diversity-and-inclusion>; **Jobattical. The Ultimate Guide to Hiring International. Consulted from <https://jobattical.com/blog/international-hiring/>

- ✓ **Showcase specific diversity initiatives:** make your diversity initiatives and events visible to everyone within and outside your company by creating content and spreading this via different channels. Content can be visual, written, audio graphic or a combination of these. It could include workforce demographic statistics, pictures taken at diversity events, mission statements, awards your company has won, information about employee resource groups (these are groups of people within your company who share a common purpose, for example striving towards an inclusive workplace). Find a good balance in communicating diversity initiatives: On the one hand, it is great to share your company's efforts. On the other hand, minority and majority groups might not appreciate they are being put in boxes. Have an open dialogue with all stakeholders involved.
- ✓ **Diversity Rankings:** also, try to be among the first movers to be on diversity listings, already popular in the US and UK and currently rising in Europe. These listings get a lot of (media) attention, which is perfect to boost your company image as a diversity-driven organisation.
- ✓ **Authenticity:** it is important to have diversity genuinely woven throughout the entire company if you want to be seen as a diverse company. If this is not the case, efforts could be interpreted as hollow and ingenuine. This will lead to candidates disconnecting during the selection process or even worse after hiring. In other words: employer branding and communication strategies start with your internal practices and policies. Without real initiatives to put diversity high on the agenda and to build inclusive organisations, an employer brand that focuses on diversity is worthless or even harms your company.

Getting started: If your workforce is not diverse yet, a first step might be to emphasise how your brand values community and to show that your company is open and looking for more diversity and new perspectives.



2.2. EMPLOYER BRANDING CASE

The police department of Ghent believes in the power of diversity and wants to be a representative billboard of the city. That's why they put **extra effort in attracting people with a migration background to join the team**.

They have set up a recruitment campaign to address a broader and more diverse public, to attract young talents and to ameliorate the reputation of the police among certain communities.*



The four biggest action points of their campaign are:

- 1 A new jobsite:** which contains information on what it means to work for the police of Ghent. The site gives an overview of all open vacancies and the accompanying selection procedure. It includes tips and tricks for the tests, and gives a clear image of the challenges the person might face during the process.
- 2 Job fair days:** the police organises multiple job fairs where representatives of different operational services, colleagues of the federal recruitment department and representatives of the Provincial Academy for Urgency Services and Local governments are present. They are available to answer all questions that visitors might have. This contributes to a realistic job preview.
- 3 Personnel as ambassadors:** these ambassadors strongly invest in social media, online visibility (including billboards on Spotify and advertisements on Facebook), campus communication, communication in sport and cultural centres... The ambassadors bring authentic stories of policemen (both with or without a migration background) who explain why they were attracted for a job at the police of Ghent and why young candidates should also apply.
- 4 Networking and active dialogue:** the police of Ghent wants to actively stimulate active dialogue between the different communities within Ghent and build a strong network that consists of all population groups.

The campaign frames within the new diversity policy of the police of Ghent. One of the biggest challenges is to **effectively address the increasingly diverse population in the city**. They want to develop a policy with respect for equal chances, one that contributes to the realization of the mission of the police of Ghent – “your police always nearby” – and to a better service for all citizens.

In sum, the diversity policy is based on **four axes**:

- Pursuing **a more diverse workforce**
- Pursuing **an open company culture**, broadening the insights and knowledge about other cultures
- **Strengthening the relation and dialogue** between the communities
- Attention for a **professional work attitude** in political activities and actions

Source: *Politie Gent zet in op diversiteit met campagne '100% (fl)ik' (2017). Consulted from: <https://persuimte.stad.gent/142351-politie-gent-zet-in-op-diversiteit-met-campagne-100-fl-ik>

3. SOURCING DIVERSE TALENT

To find employees in times of talent shortage, companies need to **start looking beyond the traditional sources** and leverage new talent pools. Next to investing energy in a strong and diversity oriented employer brand, there might be some **additional ways to attract and find international profiles**.

When you have **multiple sourcing tactics**, the chances are higher to create a more diverse applicant pool:

- 1 Targeted campaigns
- 2 Niche channels
- 3 Local diversity channels
- 4 Referrals by your employees
- 5 International recruitment



3.1. TARGETED CAMPAIGNS

Use **targeted campaigns** to compete for talent **the way you compete for customers**. When a high-potential employee checks out a company, the first place they go to is increasingly social media. So make sure you use these channels to pull these talents in. **Define new target groups** for recruitment with extra focus on the minority groups you want to hire. **Use contextual advertising**, build applicant job search journeys and check whether influencer marketing might be relevant. Additionally, **LinkedIn** offers great search targeted possibilities, holding the biggest international business community.

3.2. NICHE CHANNELS

Looking for **very specific expertise** you might spontaneously start recruiting internationally based on scarcity. Channels that can support you:

1. Local agencies and international recruitment companies that recruit a niche of scarce profiles abroad and relocate them, often including administration and local language training/complementary skills training e.g. IT, nursing.

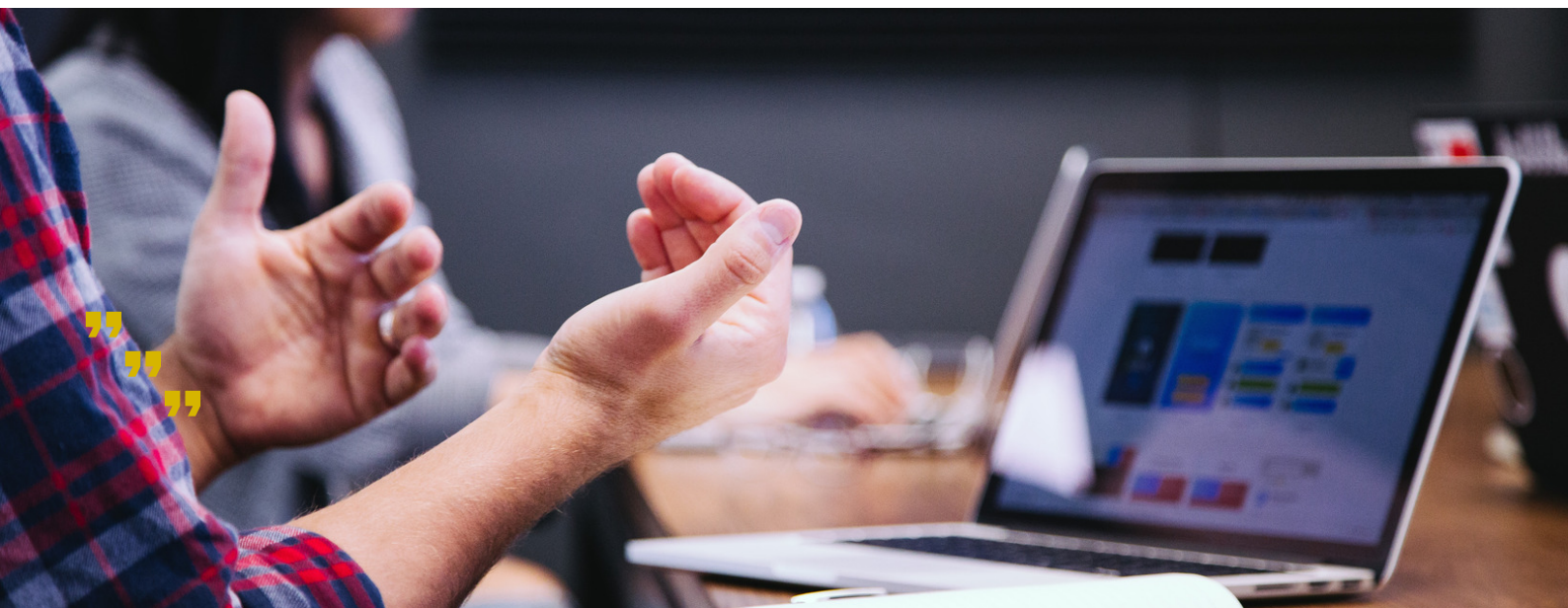
2. International niche job board focused on specific profiles.

3. Acqui-hiring: Acquisition of small companies, not because of their product or service expertise or customer base, but to recruit its employees who have the needed and scarce skillset.

” Because of our rapid expansion, we are facing the challenge of hiring sufficient employees to support our growth. Through acquisition our company is rapidly increasing its R&D capacity in the field of Power Electronics with expertise covering the entire chain from product conception to production support. This contributes to achieving the strategic objectives of our company, namely accelerated EV development and a stronger position in the field of electric and hybrid transmissions. ”

- Talent manager, company in the automotive sector

Inclusion is a “mindset” more than anything, and believing in its value is the first step.





3.3. LOCAL DIVERSITY CHANNELS

One way to get in touch with international talent, is by **targeting minority-specific institutions and associations**. You may need to partner up with local colleges and universities or establish your own diversity networks of professional bodies that have concentrated minority populations. Alternatively, you can work together with sourcing partners who are specifically focusing on diverse talent. In most cases, these potential partners are already in touch with the specific target audience and know more about the context of their network. They can be a catalyst in expanding your talent pool, not only having the right network but also **supporting you to connect to it with the right communication**.

3.4. REFERRALS BY YOUR EMPLOYEES

Since social and professional circles often overlap, **homogeneous personal networks** can have a harmful impact on organisational diversity. Decision makers often have the same educational background, are the same gender and race, and have worked at similar firms. Consequently, they can miss a lot of opportunities. That's why some companies have deemphasized referrals, or at least cautioned against their pitfalls. **But reliance on personal networking is still crucial** to the functioning of certain industries. Once you have a first base of diverse employees you can add their network locally and abroad to leverage your recruitment efforts. Some companies reinforce this by **offering matching fees** when bringing in a new colleague. Other companies build on the sense of community building and minority employees are happy to share open positions to their network to support building a more diverse team.*

Source:*Gompers, P. & Kovvali, S. (2018). The Other Diversity Dividend. Harvard Business Review, July-August.

3.5. INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT

Maybe you have explicitly searched for international mobile talent or maybe your search for specific expertise might have ended with an international hire.

In both cases it is important to **give extra attention to some aspects in the recruitment process**:

- ✓ **Tailor the offer to the needs of the international candidate:** The candidate will make a huge investment moving to a new country: listen closely to what motivates the candidates during the whole process and what he/she might see as thresholds. For example flexible working hours might help to overcome a local support system for the children, a job title might be important to convince a family member, .. Build a job offer that is tailored to the specific priorities, values, and goals of the person you want to hire and be prepared to some back-and-forth negotiating to align the candidate's and company's needs.
- ✓ **Relocation:** When relocating you should not only sell the job, but also your location throughout the whole process. This includes the unique aspects of the location but also cost of living, social security,... Clearly indicate you will support the candidate with all aspects of the relocation process: administration, support for the children and partner e.g. good neighbourhoods to live in, great schools, ...



4. TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

A common argument for hiring a certain candidate is **the “fit” with the team and company**. But “fit” does not necessarily mean hiring someone who is the same as your existing staff. Instead, the concept of “fit” might be better understood by thinking of a jigsaw puzzle, where the pieces mesh together but where each piece is unique and contributes something that would otherwise be missing. A necessary thing to do when you want to recruit in a diverse way is **identifying your own bias**. As explained in the tool 2, everyone has certain preferences—often called biases—and **you might not be aware of them**. Once your biases are out in the open, you will understand whether your image of the “perfect candidate” is affected by your particular ways of thinking rather than the actual qualifications and competencies needed for a position. **Only when preferences are discovered**, you will be able to judge candidates on their individual merits.*



Source:*Harvard University (2013). Recruiting for Diversity. Retrieved from: https://hr.fas.harvard.edu/files/fas-hr/files/recruiting_for_diversity_9.17.13_0.pdf

4.1. COMMON BIASES IN RECRUITMENT

Research shows that **interviewers already make decisions** about candidates **in the first 30 seconds to 2.5 minutes**. There's no denying it, first impressions count and have a decisive impact on how the interview goes and whether candidates get invited for a second interview. After the first impression is made, most hiring managers will then spend the remainder of the interview searching for validation of that initial decision. Something as little as the way a candidate dresses or his/her accent can bring out unconscious bias in the interviewer's mind, which in turn can skew the rest of the interview process. Most hiring managers will think of it as 'gut feeling' but really it's unconscious bias in their interview approach that might cause companies to lose out on very talented candidates*.

The following are some **examples of the unconscious biases** that can affect recruitment at the interview level**:

- ✓ **Affinity bias:** affinity bias is the preference for people "like me." In recruiting this commonly occurs when interviewers rate a candidate with a similar background as themselves more highly than a candidate with a different background, even if that candidate is more qualified.
- ✓ **Confirmation bias:** confirmation bias is when someone forms an opinion and interprets new evidence as confirmation of that belief. An interviewer may start with a preconceived opinion of a candidate based on the resume, and ask questions geared to confirming that belief.
- ✓ **Linguistic penalty:** research shows that a common explanation for the un- and underemployment of newcomers is their professional language level. This is referred to as the linguistic penalty bias, which arises not from a lack of fluency in English/local language, but from the largely hidden demands on candidates to talk in institutionally credible ways and from a mismatch of implicit cultural expectations and negative judgements by interviewers. It is the price newcomers pay when they are labelled as 'different' and fail to talk the way we talk and sound the way we sound.
- ✓ **Conformity bias:** we want to fit in. In a hiring panel, it is possible that one of you has a different opinion to others, but if you notice others responding better to a particular candidate, you are more likely to do the same. You will unconsciously decide to agree with the majority, and be swayed by it.

4.2. HOW TO DISRUPT RECRUITMENT BIAS

- 1) A diverse hiring team
- 2) Inclusive job descriptions
- 3) Blind CV screening
- 4) Assessments
- 5) A structured interview process
- 6) Use of technology
- 7) Evaluate your recruiting approach
- 8) Value ratings

Source:*Jobattical. The Ultimate Guide to Hiring International. Consulted from <https://jobattical.com/blog/international-hiring/>**Agarwal, P. (2018). Here is How Bias Can Affect Recruitment In Your Organisation. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pragyaagarwaleurope/2018/10/19/how-can-bias-during-interviews-affect-recruitment-in-your-organisation/#86656a91951a>

4.2.1. A diverse hiring team

A strong way to strengthen your recruitment process is to **diversify the hiring team** as much as possible. Not only will candidates feel more comfortable, you will also have **unique viewpoints from each of your hiring members**. Bringing just a few talented women or racial minorities into a group is likely to change the relative balance of power. And recent findings suggest that if those individuals make hiring decisions, they will **affect the group's future makeup**.*

4.2.2. Inclusive job descriptions

The job description is the opportunity to make **a strong first impression**. It provides a blueprint for (potential) candidates to imagine their role with a company, encouraging them to, or discouraging them from, applying for a position. The tone, the language, and the details that are included in the description reflects the organisation and its values. Even subtle word choices can have a strong impact on the application pool. With the increasing interest in diversity and inclusion, companies **need to make sure their job descriptions are inclusive too**. Here are **a few simple tweaks** you can make to your job descriptions to do just that**:

- ✓ **Limit job requirements to 'must haves'**. Instead of including all of the “nice-to-haves” that a dream candidate might possess, stick to the “must-haves,” and you will likely see your applications from diverse profiles increase.
- ✓ **Avoid corporate jargon**. An unconscious, but quick way, to turn off candidates is to use a lot of unnecessary jargon in the job descriptions. Insider language is a quick way to make someone else feel like an outsider. Instead of using company-/job specific acronyms, try to inform potential candidates with universal words.
- ✓ **Emphasise your commitment to diversity and inclusion**. If you are already striving to become an inclusive place to work, you can include a specific statement in your job descriptions. While you can simply state at the bottom that you are “An equality opportunity employer,” a statement in your own words is more powerful.



Source: *Gompers, P. & Kovvali, S. (2018). The Other Diversity Dividend. Harvard Business Review, July-August. **Huppert, M. (2018). 5 Must-Do's for Writing Inclusive Job Descriptions. Retrieved from: <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/job-descriptions/2018/5-must-dos-for-writing-inclusive-job-descriptions>

- ✓ **Check your job descriptions for stereotypical words.** Software programs such as Textio Hire, that indicate stereotypical words can help counteract the effect of these words. It would be a possibility to remove them and replace them with something more neutral*. Alternatively you can organise a panel of employees with mixed diverse background to proofread new vacancies and add their suggestions.

4.2.3. Blind CV screening

Resumes contain a lot of useful information for employers, but there might also be **a lot of details that can signal race, class, and gender**. A study revealed that employers are twice as likely to ignore a job applicant's CV if they have an ethnic minority name**. 'Anil' or 'Azzedine' do not get the same chances as 'Arthur'. This shows that people from ethnic minorities are at a disadvantage even before their qualifications have been assessed. **Even the most self-aware hiring managers** can turn away qualified candidates because the applicant didn't fit expectations***.

One way to prevent early rejections based on bias is to use **blind CV screening**. Delete the name and address of the candidate and label resumes by using numbers instead of names. Next to name and address, universities and activities can be hidden as well****. This method helps to include the most relevant candidates in your interview pool, based on their qualifications and **not on demographic characteristics**.

Source:*Bohnet, I. (2016). How to take the bias out of interviews. Harvard Business Review. **CVster onderzoekt: waar begint arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie? Retrieved from: <https://cvster.nl/cv-onderzoek/> ***Staley, O. (2017). How to keep bias out of the hiring process. Retrieved from: <https://qz.com/work/1095637/diversity-and-inclusion-a-guide-to-unbiased-hiring-from-quartz-at-work/> ****Staley, O. (2017). How to keep bias out of the hiring process. Retrieved from: <https://qz.com/work/1095637/diversity-and-inclusion-a-guide-to-unbiased-hiring-from-quartz-at-work/>



Build a checklist for your hiring team

Research suggests that checklists can help reduce the influence of unconscious bias in decision-making. Hence, **creating a checklist for your hiring team is one way to help** the team to approach the screening of resumés in an objective way. Here are some **valuable guidelines to include in your checklist**:

- ✓ **Use agreed-on role criteria before looking for a candidate.** It will keep the hiring team from shifting criteria, which often makes you favour 'expected' candidates, even if they're not the most qualified.
- ✓ **Only screen on the must-have competencies** as you described in the vacancy. Avoid implicit nice-to-have competencies (such as competencies that are typical for the current members of the team, the insiders) .
- ✓ **Don't punish gaps in the CV.** Typically minority groups might have a gap in their CV. This might be due to a life transition such as moving from one country to another, time needed to invest in language training or community building, ... Ask candidates why they have a gap in their CV, don't fill in the blanks yourself.
- ✓ **Don't dismiss a candidate based on the CV layout and built-up:** CV writing has a big cultural signature in the way we layout our CV or in the type of information that is included. For instance, in some cultures more information is better, all competencies are added even if not related to deep experience, ...
- ✓ **Be aware of your unconscious bias:** Foreign names, degrees from universities we do not know, work experience abroad lack a known pattern compared to local candidates.
- ✓ **Language is a competence which can be learned:** Non-natives are often quickly categorised as 'no option'. Check the real need for all relevant languages, including the level needed (such as 'able to communicate with colleagues', 'able to communicate with customers'). Take into account that language is a competence that can be trained, especially for highly-educated profiles who show a steep learning curve once they can practice language on the work floor (and not only in theoretical trainings).

4.2.4. ASSESSMENTS

Assessments are often part of the recruitment process. They are built-in to assess specific competencies in a neutral way - often implemented by an external partner. Research shows **mixed results on cultural bias**, but overall concludes that standardized test bias is not a major source of discrimination*. Nevertheless you can **strengthen the assessment process** by keeping into account the following elements**:

- ✓ **Consider giving extra time for people who are taking an assessment in a language that is not their mother tongue/foreign to them.** You should consider an accommodation in the same way as you would for others who read more slowly, e.g. dyslexic candidates.
- ✓ **Make your instructions clear and unambiguous;** use as few words as you need. For someone who's not able to use their native language, each extra word increases the cognitive load.
- ✓ **Give candidates the opportunity to prepare upfront.** For instance, numerical and abstract reasoning tests are common in Western contexts but are rarely used in some other countries. A first time experience might lower the result and bias the real competence of the candidate.
- ✓ **Give clear instructions for the preparation or during the assessment and avoid jargon.** For example, the instruction "Make a pitch of the company" is more difficult than saying "Prepare a 3 minute argumentation on why the company should by our product/service." A South-American applicant who received the first question during the application process for a job (and who also got the job in the end) asked the assessor: "What do you mean by peach?".
- ✓ **Explain thoroughly how the assessment works and which competencies will be evaluated.** This way candidates who have little experience with assessments know what to expect.
- ✓ **Many applicants have a high level of language proficiency but a low level of cultural knowledge.** Ensure your assessments do not presume cultural knowledge; using case study questions that make assumptions about prior knowledge or context is a common mistake.
- ✓ **If your assessment involves participation or group work, remember that different cultures have different conventions in group communication** – for example about interrupting others or being seen to criticize one another in public.
- ✓ **Make sure you assess the competencies wanted and not assessment/language skills.**
- ✓ **Include work-sample tests and simulations:** the skills required to answer questions well, to describe and speak analytically about one's experience, often differ greatly from the skills which would be required to do the job well. Work-sample tests have shown to be a good predictor of future performance. For instance, applicants for an administrative assistant position may be asked to transcribe an internal memo or to accurately file a stack of paperwork.***

Fairness: a topic that often arises when discussing diversity and recruitment is 'fairness'. Companies are afraid to reverse from negative discrimination to positive discrimination. When discussing this internally, make sure you involve people with diverse backgrounds.

For example: Can applicants do an online competency assessment in their mother tongue or do they need to do this in a common language used on the work floor? Both ways have pros and cons in terms of fairness and will impact the final hiring result.

Source:*Reynolds, C. R. & Suzuki, L. A. (2012). Bias in Psychological Assessment. An Empirical Review & Recommendations. Handbook of Psychology, 2nd edition;**Kleeman, J. (2011). Minimizing bias when assessing across culture and language. Retrieved from <https://blog.questionmark.com/minimizing-bias-when-assessing-across-culture-and-language>***Knight, R. (2017). 7 practical ways to reduce bias in your hiring process. Harvard Business Review.

4.2.5. A STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROCESS

During the interview, it is important to use **a structured question list**. This ensures that all candidates are treated the same and this might even result in a faster and diversifying hiring process. While it's exceedingly difficult to avoid bias as an individual, it's possible to design the interview process in such a way that it becomes harder to skew judgment.

Here are some **very easy-to-apply, but useful, tips** for interviewing every candidate*:



Use a checklist to structure the interview and to focus on relevant attributes. Evidence against unstructured interviews should make any hiring manager think twice. These interviews should not be the evaluation tool of choice; they are fraught with bias and irrelevant information. Posing the same questions in the same order to all candidates allows a clearer comparison between them.

Evaluate candidates in real time by writing all important details down. The protocol should also require the interviewer to score each answer immediately after it is provided. This neutralizes a variety of biases: we are more likely to remember answers with vivid examples, and answers that are most recent. Evaluators who wait until the end of the interview to rate answers run the risk of forgetting an early or less-vivid but high-quality answer, or favouring candidates who have a way with words.

Compare candidate responses horizontally. That is, if you interview five candidates, compare each of their answers on question one, then each answer on question two, and so on. Comparative evaluations not only help us calibrate across candidates but also decrease the reflex to rely on stereotypes to guide our impressions. People are less likely to rely on whether a candidate “looks the part” when evaluating several candidates simultaneously and comparing them systematically.

Wait until all interviews are finished before sharing feedback with the other interviewers. It's best to keep interviewers as independent of each other as possible. Once everyone has evaluated all candidates, the evaluators should submit their assessments before a meeting to discuss an applicant. This allows an organisation to aggregate answers, those one-to-10 weighted scores on questions asked in the exact same order. Assessments with candidates above a certain threshold should advance for further consideration.

4.2.6. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Some organisations are **leveraging technology to root out bias**, better identify and screen candidates and help close the diversity gap. Unilever, for instance, got rid of CV screening and instead uses neuroscience games and Artificial Intelligence (AI) enhanced video interviews. Candidates are asked to play a series of

Source: *Bohnet, I. (2016). How to take the bias out of interviews. Harvard Business Review.

skills*. After these games, the selected candidates are asked to answer some questions by recording themselves. An AI-enhanced video platform analyses the content of candidates' answers, the intonation of their voices, and their body language. Combined, these two technologies help filter the candidate pool before recruiters even see or hear any potentially biasing information about applicants.

Although **predictive hiring technology can help to reduce bias**, one should also **be aware** of its potential weaknesses. AI learns from the information that hiring managers choose to feed it with. It can then be customized to remove certain biases, such as vocal tics, but that also highly depends on human judgment. Take Amazon for instance, who was forced to stop its new recruitment tool after finding out that the system they had built was showing gender bias against women. The recruitment engine was trained to scan through incoming resumes and to observe candidates of job postings over the past 10 years. Since most of the applicants were men - a still very prominent imbalance across the tech industry - the tool preferred male candidates and would penalize resumes that included gender keywords such as "women's golf club member" and also those who went to women's colleges. Ultimately, AI is automating how hiring managers currently recruit, and if they want to correct for past mistakes, they need to be cognizant of them in the first place**.

4.2.7. EVALUATE YOUR RECRUITMENT APPROACH

Building an inclusive recruitment process takes time. The best performing recruitment teams are the ones who **regularly assess their hiring process** to pinpoint the areas that are working and the areas that need to be worked on. Here are some steps you might take:

- ✓ **Make an overview of the full candidate pipeline** and analyse on which moments you lose talents with a diverse background.
Examine this **internally**: what could be the reason of these drop-outs?
Examine this **externally**: contact candidates who dropped out to learn more about how they experienced the process and why they dropped out.
- ✓ **Make a list of FAQs by applicants with a diverse background** to get deeper insights in their needs.
- ✓ **Plan regular reflection exercises** with the recruitment team and hiring manager to discuss the strengths and potential pitfalls in the recruitment process.

4.2.8. VALUE RATINGS

Recruiting people for their values and behaviours in general is important if you want to be a value-driven organisation. It helps to establish a value-driven work culture and ensures your (future) workforce matches these values. Hiring people with diverse backgrounds makes it even more important to have **profound value checks** throughout the recruitment process as diversity often is a company value itself. A great candidate with the right skills may not be able to align his or her values with the organisational values, and this is **a recipe for disaster**— chances are high that a cultural misfit will be leaving the organisation soon. That's why **alignment with company values must be included** in the candidate selection process. It is relevant to use a value checklist during your hiring interviews, to identify those candidates who share the same values as your company.

Source:*McLaren, S. (2018). 3 Ways Companies are Fighting Bias in the Workplace and Hiring Processes. Retrieved from <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/diversity/2018/companies-fighting-bias>;**<https://www.businessinsider.com/hirevue-ai-powered-job-interview-platform-2017-8?r=US&IR=T>

How to identify whether the personal values of a candidate match those of your company?

- List **the values** that your company embraces.
- **Determine values-based interview questions** for each value. Such questions help to find out what your candidates prioritize in the workplace and what drives their behaviour.
- **Think about the answers you want to hear.** For each value-based question, there has to be a set of key criteria that signal “good” answers. Formulating clear indicators maximises objectivity over different interviews.
- **Train your interviewers** to use value-based interview questions to maximise inter-rater objectivity.

” We use a value charter during our selection interviews to find out what they think about our values and whether they have certain points of view which conflict with our values. The candidates need to support our values for 100% if they want to work for our company. For instance, we value gender equality and will check whether the candidate equally cares for this value. ”

- HR director, investment holding company

Values are continuously being translated into actual behaviour. Different values can lead to differences in behaviour. For some professions, it might be useful **to screen a candidate's willingness to demonstrate certain behaviours**

that are necessary for the job. The healthcare and construction sector for example have very clear behavioural policies concerning safety prevention (think of dress codes). If people refuse to follow behavioural guidelines, for whatever reason, this might cause serious problems on the work floor and might even inhibit people's ability to performing their tasks.

Therefore it is useful to **identify crucial work behaviours** and screen them very early in the selection process. Consider them as a hard selection criterium, like having a driver's licence for cab drivers or having a medical degree for doctors to avoid difficult situations afterwards.

” During our intake conversation we use a checklist to discuss all the different aspects that are important for the job. This checklist includes expectations with regard to learning the local language, wearing a headscarf, working in mixed-gender teams, punctuality, serving pork and alcohol for instance. We check whether the candidates are willing to carry out the job according to our company values. ”

- Director, residential care centre



5. TESTIMONIAL CITY OF GHENT

Naomi Mike, organisational psychologist, Department Selection, City of Ghent (Stad Gent) & Public Center for Social Welfare Ghent (OCMW Gent)

The diversity action plan of the City of Ghent and the Public Centre for Social Welfare Ghent (OCMW) was brought to life in 2017. The plan focuses on different minority groups: people with a work disability, people of foreign origin, people aged 50+,... Our ultimate goal is to achieve a workforce that reflects the diverse society of Ghent: our service centres can only provide high-quality service if all layers of society are represented in our work teams.

Specific goals and actions

With regard to people with a migration background, our objective for 2020 is an inflow of employees of foreign origin that counts for 30% of our total inflow. Several initiatives allow us to take steps in the right direction. For example, in our selection procedure we focus on the candidate's competencies and try to avoid giving too much weight to diplomas and other culture-dependent criteria. Furthermore, the language used in our vacancies must be clear, simple and neutral. In addition, we regularly subject our selection methods to a critical evaluation: we screen the adverse impact of our tools to minimise bias towards certain groups. We also organise meetings with civil society organisations that operate in Ghent. By doing so, we gather a lot of information from our target groups' perspective. We also work closely with these organisations to advertise our open vacancies directly to our target groups.

Experiences so far

As a result of the diversity plan, our organisation is more consciously thinking about diversity and is more aware of the importance of diverse teams. We are all striving towards one common goal, which creates a sense of unity. Another success story is the introduction of annual vocational trainings: paid internships we offer to



vulnerable job seekers in collaboration with VDAB. This year we offered vocational internships to 8 people of foreign origin and 2 people with a work disability. Overall reactions of line managers, colleagues and trainees were very positive.

Lessons learned

It is still difficult to determine the minimum language requirements. As a government agency, we are bound by language legislation: as all formal communication is in Dutch, every person who starts working with us must have a decent level of Dutch. However, we do not want to set our expectations too high and, as a consequence, miss talented people.

What advice do you have for other companies?

Developing and implementing a sound diversity plan costs time and must be coordinated by one or several dedicated employees who are working on diversity projects full time. That's the only way to encourage the entire organisation to participate in our diversity initiatives. In addition, we have benefited a lot from engaging directly with our target groups through the civil society organisations. Gaining primary information is crucial to roll out a sustainable and effective policy that builds on mutual trust between the various stakeholders involved.

6. INSPIRED BY

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