



# Promoting Diversity & Equity Through an Inclusive Hiring Process

BEST HIRING PRACTICES

## Promoting Diversity & Equity Through an Inclusive Hiring Process



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Companies are more committed than ever to developing a workforce that promotes Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). However, building a team that reflects these values requires true dedication and thoughtful work. The challenges and complexities of such a nuanced topic can, at times, feel too intimidating or uncomfortable to confront. Time and again, it's been easier to avoid or ignore these ever-changing issues. Though difficult, gaining a better understanding of DEI is needed to grow and maintain a balanced and effective workforce.

The work starts with your hiring process and examining what steps you and your team can take to cultivate a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

### Remove gendered language from your job posting

Whether we're conscious of it or not, many words carry [gendered connotations](#). For example, using words like "rockstar," "ninja," or "superhero" might seem like a fun way to promote your job posting, but you may be alienating your female candidates in the process. As a result, the most qualified candidates may not apply to your open roles

because they are turned off by the language you've used.

An unconscious filter at the beginning of your hiring process will bottleneck any DEI initiatives, so it's important to take a critical look at how you're presenting your company to candidates from the start. Emphasize experience and skills over academic or professional degrees. Keep your list of requirements concise, as studies have shown that [women typically only apply to jobs if their skills line up 100% with the requirements listed](#), whereas men will apply for a job even if they only meet 60% of the qualifications. Avoid using superlatives such as "expert" or "superior," and focus more on descriptive words that actually apply to the role.

Your initial job description determines the makeup of your candidate pool. It's paramount that your description reflects your company values and culture. Ensuring your language remains neutral and inclusive will naturally expand and diversify your candidate pool.

## Implement a structured interview process

Once you reach the interviewing stage of your hiring journey, it's important to keep a standardized and controlled process in place. Establishing a predetermined set of questions allows you to compare candidates fairly based solely on the quality of their answers, eliminating the possibility of unconscious bias.

Video interviewing can be a useful tool for standardizing the interview process and allowing all candidates an equal opportunity to be seen and heard. Utilizing a standardized evaluation system (like a 5-star rating) included in your video interviewing software ensures each candidate is rated fairly and consistently among your hiring team members. Each applicant is reviewed against the same set of standards and hiring team members are not able to see a candidate's current rating until they have submitted their own, ensuring an unbiased compilation of candidate feedback.

Internally, structured interviews create a streamlined hiring environment for the entire hiring team, ensuring candidate assessments are efficient, fair, and accurate. Recorded video interviews can be shared with multiple colleagues and hiring stakeholders, allowing the candidate to receive a fair evaluation from a team of people and eliminating the potential for one person's personal bias to impact the decision-making process.

Maintaining a fair and consistent interview experience will help advance your DE&I goals and ensure you hire the most qualified candidate for the role.

## Extend your shortlist

Consolidating your shortlist to a few qualified candidates seems like the natural next step for a streamlined hiring process. Typically, for both internal and external hiring, you've already decided on a handful of applicants to focus on. These lists are usually compiled from a combination of networking and partiality, and whether consciously or not, often result in these candidates receiving more attention and favoritism. However, narrowing the focus of your informal shortlist can be detrimental to your DEI efforts.

For example, when you're looking to fill a position in a typically male-dominated role or industry, you'll automatically associate men as more suitable for that role. Therefore, your natural inclination will be to focus on male candidates based solely on prevalence. Your informal shortlist will unintentionally eliminate women from consideration simply because of your unconscious associations.

To combat this, try extending your shortlist to include 2-3 additional candidates. Research in the [Harvard Business Review](#) found that when a shortlist was extended, the number of female candidates in consideration went up by 33%. Extending, and as a result diversifying, your shortlist often produces a more fair and effective hiring experience. [Additional research](#) found that when a final candidate shortlists has only one minority candidate that candidate has close to zero chances of getting hired. However, a "two in the pool effect" makes a tangible difference. Similarly, including just one female candidate on your list causes a shift in the status quo. As a result, the woman or minority often became the favored candidate.

This shift [can be explained](#) by the propensity of the human brain to think more creatively the longer you brainstorm on a particular problem or task. Extending your shortlist will help challenge your preconceived notions around what your candidate should look like based on the qualifications and credentials you desire and help remove unconscious biases from your hiring process.

## Establish accountability among your team

Even if you already have a solid system of diversity in place at your company, there's always room to improve. Your team needs to have a clear process outlined with well-defined expectations in order to achieve your DEI initiatives. Holding your team accountable is critical to your continued success.

Start by keeping your conversations about diversity open and honest, and make sure your team feels comfortable talking about it. Create a common language within your organization with shared definitions.

Take a hard look at how final decisions are made and who is making them. No one is exempt from the new system of accountability. You might face more resistance the higher up you go, but this work is important. You need your leadership team to model the company's stance on diversity in the workplace.

Invite managers, directors, and C-suite members to participate in the conversation and ask questions without judgment. Allow this time to be educational rather than confrontational. Even leaders need tools to examine and overcome implicit biases. Have research available to support why diversity in the workplace is beneficial and what barriers you've uncovered in your organization so far.

To effectively improve diversity in the workplace, it's critical you ensure accountability is present at all levels.

## Remain intentional with your efforts

You've put in the work to create effective change within your organization, now it's time to remain intentional about your ongoing efforts.

Create a system for ongoing education. Stay committed to growth and development. Don't let diversity in the workplace be a passing fad. Keep diversity top of mind by continuing to offer resources, workshops, and support. Make sure your data is updated, and work to improve your metrics.

Post more open roles to job boards that support underrepresented groups to ensure you stay actively reaching out. Look into hosting networking events to remain engaged with these communities.

And don't forget to keep a pulse on your team. Continue to incorporate new ideas and voices as you strive to build a better and more diverse future for your brand.

This list is by no means a one-size-fits-all solution for each individual company or organization. But to initiate meaningful change, actionable next steps similar to the ones suggested here are necessary in order to establish a more inclusive and diverse workplace.

[diversity in the workplace](#)

[Hiring Inclusivity](#)

[How to be inclusive when hiring](#)

[How to craft an inclusive interview process](#)

[How to create a diverse & inclusive culture through hiring](#)

[How to hire for diversity](#)



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