

# How to diversify your recruiting pipeline

Jul 27, 2020 · Cat DiStasio



Diversity and inclusion programs are no longer enough. They're still necessary, and a worthwhile initiative for companies of all sizes in all industries. Around the world, people are demanding equity and justice for women and people of color, and employers have a lot of power in that sphere.

Many diversity initiatives don't work because they focus on [outlawing bias](#) and fail to promote social accountability. Your organizational culture may already reward people for doing the right thing but if hiring managers don't have much contact with women and people of color, you'll never reach your diversity and inclusion goals. The only way to increase diversity in your organization is this deceptively simple concept: hire more diverse candidates.

As most recruiters know, this is easier said than done. Your best chance at improving the diversity of your hires is to start at the beginning, and work to attract and engage with diverse job seekers. Here are three key strategies to help diversify your recruiting pipeline.

## Make diversity part of your employer brand identity

Right now, as Black Lives Matter protests are ongoing in all 50 states, many people are looking to companies to learn about their policies and commitment to racial justice. This yearning extends to employers and their hiring practices. Advertise your commitment to diversity hiring and let job seekers know what steps you're taking to hire more diverse candidates. Incorporate this messaging into your recruitment marketing efforts, and make sure this is about walking the walk as much as you talk the talk. Be prepared to answer critical questions about your stance, and remain open to making course adjustments along the way if you encounter actionable feedback.

This level of transparency helps associate your employer brand with a commitment to equity and justice, but it may be a difficult task if your organization is not very diverse. Nevertheless, it's important to let job seekers know you are paying attention, [setting goals](#), and implementing plans to achieve them.

## Value experience over education

Requiring a four-year degree for every position in your organization is fast becoming an antiquated idea. In many fields, this is because on-the-job experience keeps job seekers on the cutting edge of innovation that academia hasn't caught up to. For organizations committed to making more diverse hires, it makes sense to evaluate each candidate's skills and abilities for positions that do not truly require a college degree. Black and Latinx Americans [obtain college degrees at a lower rate](#) than white Americans and are often [passed over](#) even when they do have degrees.

Dropping degree requirements doesn't just help you hire more diverse candidates. It can improve the quality of your hires across the board. The [Harvard Business School report Dismissed by Degrees](#) revealed that 61% of employers passed on applicants who had the right skills and experience simply because they didn't have a college degree. Instead of drawing the line at academic achievements, be willing to consider candidates with relevant work experience and non-traditional credentials (such as industry certifications).

Of course, many jobs require a level of technical acumen that a college degree is meant to represent. If you're recruiting for positions like this, consider conducting skills testing as part of your candidate evaluation process. This can be as simple as asking candidates to solve work-related problems or engaging with a [software-based skills test](#) tailored to the job requirements. Whichever you choose, take measures to ensure that your skills testing is as unbiased as possible.



## Partner with diversity groups

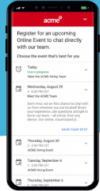
Another highly effective way to diversify your recruiting pipeline is to meet candidates where they are. Create partnerships with diversity groups that work with job seekers with your desired skills and experience. Diversity groups can help you advertise job posts with their network, and hosting virtual career fairs with diversity groups improves your pipeline. Look for diversity groups that are industry- or role-specific for best results.

As you consider your relationships to these diversity groups, make sure you're giving as much as you're receiving. Find other ways to support diversity groups to strengthen your employer brand, such as through donations and sponsorships or even scholarships, if you're working with student organizations.

## Building relationships without bias

You won't be able to create a diverse and inclusive workplace by simply making rules against discrimination or setting diversity hiring goals. Transforming your organization's culture isn't an overnight project. But with continued commitment and conscious communication, you can begin attracting and engaging with more diverse talent by adopting these simple strategies today.

For more insights on improving diversity in your organization, download our ebook [How to Increase Diversity in the Workplace](#).



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