How to Make Your Organization More Diverse in 9 Steps
Recruiting diverse leadership requires thoughtful strategy
August 25, 2017 Lola Butcher

Most health care leaders want their organizations to be more diverse. So, where do they start?
Paul Bohne, managing partner and co-leader of Witt/Kieffer's health care practice, and Mike Supple, executive vice president at B.E. Smith, share insights from their years of recruiting health care leaders.

1   Make a strategic plan for increasing diversity throughout your organization with measurable goals. "There's a difference between 'hoping for' more diversity and matching aspirations with intentionality," Bohne says.
2   Make a commitment. "This isn't something you can turn on and off," Supple says. "It requires the support and the financial resources necessary to monitor the program and make changes as needed to achieve results."
3   Start at the top of the organization, the bottom and everywhere else. Diversity in the C-suite is insufficient. The value of diversity must be embedded in all levels of an organization, in all programs and within the culture.
4   Create a diverse selection committee. Members of a homogeneous group are likely to only consider people who look like themselves.
5   Walk your talk. "So many times I see this: An organization will bring in a panel of diverse candidates, but when it comes to crunch time, they do not go with a diverse candidate," Supple says. They choose what he calls a "safe" candidate, meaning one who looks like the individual he or she is replacing.
6   Do not assume that progress will happen as the health care workforce becomes more diverse. Need proof? The vast majority of health care employees are female, but women do not dominate health system C-suites and boardrooms.
7   Do not engage in window dressing. "As a recruiter, I can vouch for the fact that it is hard to retain and recruit diverse leaders if they sense that their 'participation' is only symbolic," Bohne says. "They expect meaningful, rewarding roles and will take their talents elsewhere if need be to get them."
8   Mentor for success. "Women, minorities and other diverse individuals who move into board and executive roles need support and consultation from [people] who can show them the ropes," Bohne says.
9   Check yourself. Use employee engagement surveys to see whether your organization's diverse workers are truly engaged with the health system, Supple says.

How (And Why) to Increase Organizational Diversity Posted by Greg Kedenburg
Increasing diversity seems to be a goal shared by most companies these days. The concept of
rounding out your workforce by adding more diverse employees is not a new one, but the
recent surge in the number of companies claiming to be committed to diversity raises the
question of how many of them are truly invested in the cause and how many are promoting the
idea, but not taking appropriate steps to become a diverse workforce. Unfortunately, some
organizations do fall into the latter category, adding 'Diversity' to their list of corporate values,
but not taking the right steps to achieve diversity.

These organizations are missing out because there are direct, demonstrable benefits to
increasing a workforce's diversity. There are many companies that genuinely strive to make
themselves more diverse, but the process behind this transition is not always clear or obvious.
Below are some steps that can help guide the introduction of diversification efforts into a
workplace.
Why Bother With Diversity?

Making the short term investment to bring in employees with varied backgrounds, life
experiences, cultures, and perspectives has a visible impact on an organization's bottom line. A
more diverse workforce leads to a greater share of the industry's customer base, as having
employees from varied cultures and backgrounds allows you to connect more effectively with
customers from those same areas. In a similar vein, diversity leads to a higher quality employee
base, as making a point to recruit from a larger base of individuals leads to a higher chance of
finding the most qualified applicants.

This translates into lower involuntary turnover, as there isn't as much of a need to let go of
poor performers if there aren't as many of them in the first place, saving money on costs
associated with frequently hiring new candidates. Finally, diversity can impact incumbent
productivity levels, as the diffusion of new problem-solving strategies and perspectives that
come with having employees from different backgrounds leads to the adoption of those
strategies and solutions by others, increasing overall effectiveness. In the context of the bottom
line, not following through on diversity efforts translates to leaving money on the table.

How to Begin

When the order comes down to 'diversify our workforce' without additional input, the prospect
of tackling such an important but poorly defined undertaking can be daunting. Fortunately,
there are some basic steps that can help begin the process.

1) Communicate the Reasons for the Initiative

Before beginning any major organizational initiative, it's critical to explain the reasoning behind
it to those that it will affect. This could include the incumbents, department leadership, or
other stakeholders. The key is to be transparent and explain how you believe it will benefit the

company in the long run. Being honest with them and not trying to keep your cards unnecessarily close to your chest will help gain buy-in and decrease any potential resistance.

2) Determine Appropriate Areas for Focused Efforts

After help getting other internal proponents on board, the next step is to figure out where exactly the best areas for increasing diversity would be. Should you focus on encouraging current employees with diverse backgrounds to share relevant experiences or thoughts on how processes can be improved? Or should you try to revamp aspects of your hiring system to bring more diverse individuals on board? The latter option is a popular choice as hiring is rather constant in most organizations, and slightly tweaking an existing process that already serves one purpose to now serve two can help reduce potential waste of resources.

However, there is a fine line to walk when planning to increase diversity through hiring. Many hiring managers tasked with bringing in more diverse employees can overreach, meaning they may overlook other aspects of an applicant simply because they may be a more diverse candidate. This cannot be allowed to occur, as it can open organizations up to legal risk. To avoid situations such as this, make sure to update all job descriptions you're currently hiring for with the most current requirements and qualifications.

Ensure that job analyses have been conducted to define the requirements for success on the job. This way, you can align your selection process and decisions around the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the job effectively. Conducting up to date job analyses and creating job descriptions against which to compare a large and diverse applicant pool will help to ensure you bring in candidates who are both diverse and well qualified.

3) Monitor Vigilantly

After you've put in place your proposed solution for increasing diversity, be vigilant about overseeing it. Listen to any and all concerns, fix issues in real time where possible, and take note of how the process can be improved for next time. Taking the time to understand all of the pros and cons will show that you've done your homework, and give your superiors the confidence needed to allow the solution to be ramped up in terms of scale.

These are just a few general ideas and strategies aimed to get the diversity ball rolling. While absolutely an admirable endeavor, 'increasing diversity' can be a somewhat ambiguous task, so using these steps as a jumping off point will help build a solid foundation for a worthwhile organizational initiative.

The Ultimate Hiring Manager's Guide
Tags: legally defensible, Job Analysis
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Cultural Diversity BINGO

Find Someone Who...

Has visited another country	Speaks more than one language fluently	Has been misunderstood by someone different than him/herself	Can name at least three different religions	Can name at least two amendments in our Bill of Rights
Is married/ partnered with someone of a different culture	Has been to a bar or bat mitzvah	Knows what a Quinceañera is	Has had their first or last name mispronounced	Has eaten baklava for dessert
Has cooked a meal from another country or culture	Can perform a dance from another culture	Dresses in clothing unique to their culture	Has a name with religious or cultural significance	Was born in a different country
Has watched a movie in a language other than English	Celebrates Kwanzaa	Attended an event of another person's culture	Previously received training or learned about diversity	Has parents who understand different cultures
Has more than one race in his/her family	Has been threatened with physical harm because of their religious or cultural background	Sings in a choir	Has visited a Native American reservation	Has attended a wedding ceremony of a different culture or religion