



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE:

4 CRITICAL QUESTIONS TO ASK



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The notion of highly diverse and inclusive teams that foster belonging and integrated perspectives have come to be viewed as essential to the success and health of businesses.

This is wise, both supported consistently by studies and by an increasing sense that inclusion and human decency are closely aligned with great companies and their commitments at all levels.

For nearly three decades, BrainWorks has proudly sourced and placed diverse talent across a variety of roles and industries. As part of our ongoing journey, we return frequently to four simple, yet powerful questions to ensure that our diversity, equity, and inclusion programs continue to strive to fulfill our values as an organization.

This writing represents a collection of those four questions and includes practical steps to address and improve upon them so your business can build a meaningful diversity, equity, and inclusion program.

QUESTION 1

ARE YOUR RECRUITING EFFORTS TRULY UNBIASED?

For those who are not in historically marginalized groups, unpacking and unlearning behaviors and inherent biases that are nearly invisible requires substantive and sustained efforts.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Extensive research has shown that we use different sections of our brains to process interactions with those who are similar to us compared to those who are different. We create unconscious stereotypes. Within microseconds, we judge people without even noticing most of the time.

This repeating process creates unconscious biases that eventually shape our judgments about character, skills, and ultimately, whether or not we should hire someone.

HOW TO APPROACH IT

To overcome this invisible barrier, it's critical to recognize when we experience these unconscious biases that plague even the best intended hiring managers. When unconscious bias is brought to awareness and met with commitment, the odds of successfully hiring qualified diverse employees increases.



SOURCING TOOLS

When searching across databases to find qualified talent, the human mind will often unconsciously filter out talent based on preconceived notions. To eliminate this, use a sourcing tool that leverages artificial intelligence to search for qualified talent – regardless of race, orientation, gender, and ethnicity. This provides hiring managers with bias-free candidate pools.

BLIND INTERVIEWS

Blind interviews are a fantastic method to help reduce the chance of unconscious bias during the screening process. It works by removing information like gender, name, religion, and others to help hiring managers judge candidates based on skills.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

Expanding your knowledge on the topic of unconscious bias opens up new perspectives. Here are a few books we recommend exploring to increase your awareness:

- **The Memo** by Minda Harts
- **Biased** by Jennifer Eberhardt, PhD
- **How to be an Inclusive Leader** by Jennifer Brown
- **Pushout** by Monique W. Morris
- **We Can't Talk About That at Work! How to Talk About Race, Religion, Politics, and Other Polarizing Topics** by Mary-Frances Winters

QUESTION 2

DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO SOURCE DIVERSE CANDIDATES?

Successfully locating diverse talent is not typically something that occurs overnight. It requires developing deep relationships with diverse networks and maintaining a commitment to advocacy, inclusivity, and belonging.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Advocacy, inclusivity and belonging are both aligned with human and corporate dignity and are also proven through study to create better business outcomes.

**DIVERSE COMPANIES HAVE
HIGHER REVENUE**

Source: *Forbes - A Study Finds That Diverse
Companies Produce 19% More Revenue*

19%

HOW TO APPROACH IT

There's a wide-variety of strategies you can deploy to better identify top differentiated talent across the race, orientation, gender, ethnicity, and additional spectrums of difference. Two of the leading approaches to engaging and discovering diverse talent are the do it yourself (DIY) strategy and the outsourced method of hiring a search firm that specializes in hiring diverse talent.

DIY

As with most DIY projects, they require research, hard (but meaningful) work, and the willingness to put in the effort. Listed below are a few strategies you can test out now to improve your accuracy of finding diverse talent:

- ✓ Network with diverse groups on LinkedIn, at conferences, or even online during a webinar.
- ✓ Encourage employees, friends, and families to recommend any diverse connections for open or upcoming jobs.
- ✓ Offer internships or scholarships to diversity-focused organizations

PARTNER WITH A SEARCH FIRM

Recruiters, headhunters and other various staffing professionals generally have a massive network of candidates they can leverage at any point to find very selective candidates. Many businesses looking to build out their diverse workforce will often rely on the experience of a search firm to find, vet, and hire diverse talent.

QUESTION 3

DO YOU PROVIDE AN INCLUSIVE AND INVITING ENVIRONMENT?

Knowing where to find diverse candidates is worthless if you don't first provide an environment for them to thrive in. Ask your current employees if they feel supported and included at your firm with an anonymous survey. Regardless of outcomes, there's always room for improvement in the inclusion department.



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WHY THIS MATTERS

Statistically and morally speaking, providing an inclusive and inviting environment is a no-brainer. In just three years, companies that have a highly inclusive culture notice 2.3 times more cash flow per employee (Built In, 2020). It turns out that when employees have a deep sense of belonging and feeling valued, that business outcomes match those experiences.

67%

**OF JOB SEEKERS SAY
DIVERSITY IS AN IMPORTANT
FACTOR WHEN CONSIDERING
A JOB AT A COMPANY**

Source: [Glassdoor - Recruiting a Diverse Workforce](#)



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HOW TO APPROACH IT

Once you've found and qualified suitable candidates, you'll need to inspire them to join your company, which can be a huge barrier for homogenous offices. Here's a few practical steps you can take now to make your office more inclusive to everyone:

- ✓ Ensure every job description mentions that you are an all-inclusive employer
- ✓ Show pictures of diverse professionals on your website, blog, and social media
- ✓ Attend, sponsor, and support diversity, equity and inclusion events & nonprofits
- ✓ Develop a specific web page solely dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion at your company
- ✓ Create a variety of thought-leadership blogs, e-books, guides, etc. on the topic of diversity, equity and inclusion
- ✓ Champion diversity, equity and inclusion as a core value of your organization



QUESTION 4

ARE YOU ACTIVELY LOOKING TO IMPROVE YOUR DE&I PROGRAM?

As with many culture change initiatives, our best efforts in executive leadership have the longest lasting and deepest effects when executive leadership is constantly aiming for improvement, especially with diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Increased productivity, morale, customer and client engagement, professional satisfaction and ultimately top line and bottom line results are all just a few of the many benefits that arise from a meaningful diversity, equity and inclusion program.

HOW TO APPROACH IT

Continue to take impactful action around diversity, equity, and inclusion, and make a genuine effort every day to improve it. Consider joining us in September and October at the BMM conference www.bettermanconference.com, one of several diversity, equity, and inclusivity conferences BrainWorks leaders attend annually.

Our sincere goal is that you found this to be helpful, informative, and inspirational on your journey to hire more diverse talent. If you need any help, or have questions around hiring diverse talent, we'd love to connect!



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ABOUT BRAINWORKS

BrainWorks is a prominent boutique Executive Search firm offering a 29-year track record of successfully sourcing and placing diverse talent. By harnessing proven strategies and leveraging a diverse candidate pool, BrainWorks helps businesses of all sizes find, attract, and ultimately hire talented, diverse staff.

We value inclusion, belonging, respect, and dignity in everything we do.

Contact us today to fulfill your diversity hiring needs.

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