Ensuring Diversity in the Interview Process

August 2015

John Deere is evaluating how we can improve the number of diverse candidates who reach the interview phase of the hiring process. We are looking to benchmark with companies who have successful processes in place to ensure that diverse candidates are included in the interview process.

1. Do you have such a process in place?
2. If so, please explain the process.
3. Would you be willing to speak further with us about your process?

Any additional information or thoughts are welcome.

Gail Henderson, Deere & Company, August 5, 2015

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<tr>
<th>COMPANY, CONTACT NAME</th>
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<td>Dot Foods&lt;br&gt;Pam Kelly&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:pamela.kelly@dotfoods.com">pamela.kelly@dotfoods.com</a></td>
<td>1. In development.&lt;br&gt;2. Our candidate comparison model. This forces hiring managers to review data before making a hiring decision, removing some subjectivity from the process. This change helped as much as anything I have seen. The process forces managers to review data and either hire the person with better data or be prepared to explain their recommendation. Has reduced hiring/promoting people that we know &amp; are comfortable with.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;To ensure the selection of diverse talent, these are some of our focus areas:&lt;br&gt;a. Reduction of bias in the selection process-Dot Foods is in the process of reviewing our HR policies and practices carefully to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement.&lt;br&gt;b. Broader recruitment efforts- In addition to the above we have increased community partnerships and are exploring opportunities where we can impact career readiness and employment interviewing/testing skills.&lt;br&gt;c. Evaluate and Measure-Created in-house sourcing tools and dashboards to better</td>
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RECRUITING PROCESS

The HR Council recommends using broader recruitment efforts to increase organizational diversity (Diversity at Work: Increasing diversity through improved recruitment and hiring practices, HR Council, August 2015).

- **Build relationships** with cultural groups and organizations that work with diverse communities.
- **Promote the organization** as a viable place to work.
- **Create barrier-free job descriptions:**
  - Separate essential and non-essential qualifications
  - Focus on what needs to be achieved (not how it will achieved)
  - Use plain language (rather than sector-specific or HR jargon)
- **Avoid subjective terms** in the recruitment process, such as ‘best cultural fit.’ This can unknowingly exclude qualified candidates without gaining a deeper understanding of their potential contributions to the organization.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

Before the interview

- **Don’t take on the entire hiring process by yourself.** We all have subconscious prejudices we might not even be aware of. By involving your hiring team or even specific department heads, you can reduce the chances an unconscious bias in one individual will dramatically sway a hiring decision (4 Tips to Hire a More Diverse Workforce, Huffington Post, January 2013).
- **Develop a clear and consistent set of guidelines** for everyone involved in the hiring process. Use a consistent and formal application process. Clearly explain the entire process to candidates to shape realistic expectations and reduce misunderstandings (Diversity at Work).
- **Consider having one employee responsible for receiving résumés.** This person can block the names of each candidate from those involved in the review and assessment of potential candidates (Diversity at Work).
  - Ex: Recent research shows that many Canadian employers show a bias towards traditional Anglophone names, likely making assumptions about language skills, values, and experience. Replacing names with candidate numbers for the résumé review phase removes this name bias.
- **Focus on skills and qualifications.** Before starting the hiring process, you should know exactly what skills your ideal candidate should possess. This way you can focus on tangible and measurable aspects of the candidate, like their ability to perform the skills necessary for the
job. If you focus on measurable attributes, you’ll be less likely to let gut feelings or subconscious prejudices sway a hiring decision (4 Tips to Hire a More Diverse Workforce).

Arranging the interview

- **Provide consistent and clear information** to all applicants about the selection process (Diversity at Work).
- **Determine if applicants have any accommodation needs** when scheduling interviews. Ensure the interview site is accessible (Diversity at Work).
- **Be informed of holy days of different religions** to avoid scheduling interviews at these times (Diversity at Work).

Interviewing

- **Standardize your hiring process.** Brainstorm a set list of questions to ask candidates and then make sure you ask every candidate the same questions. It’s also a good idea to take notes on each candidate’s answers. This way, you can weigh the answers against each other to remove any chance of a biased result (4 Tips to Hire a More Diverse Workforce).
- **Ask questions that focus on ‘how’:** How will the applicant apply his or her skills, how will he or she handle a particular situation, etc. (Diversity at Work).
- **Careful use of vocabulary** is recommended in order to avoid or rephrase words that could have different meanings in other cultures or languages (Diversity at Work).
- **Check assumptions around body language** and other non-verbal communication. Be aware of culturally influenced behaviors and communication patterns that may impact how a candidate is perceived during the interview process (Diversity at Work).
- **Be aware that many disabilities are invisible.** Avoid generalizations based in race or ethnicity. Do not assume that a person’s appearance defines their nationality or cultural background (Diversity at Work).

Hiring

- **Know what discrimination is...** It is important to know the regulations from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in order to ensure your company is staying compliant.
  - The EEOC has plenty of valuable information and guidelines which can help you better understand what hiring discrimination looks like in order to guard against discriminatory practices.
  - Do not assume discrimination cannot happen at your company. The best way to guard against hiring discrimination is to be informed.
- **...And what it isn’t.** It’s just as important, however, to understand what are not discriminatory hiring practices. After all, in today’s tough labor market you don’t want to cut out useful tools that can help you snap up the best people before your competitors.
  - Ex: Using online video in the hiring process is 100 percent compliant with all EEOC regulations and can really save you both time and money (4 Tips to Hire a More Diverse Workforce).