



ROBERT WALTERS WHITEPAPER

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN RECRUITMENT

ROBERT WALTERS

INTRODUCTION: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN RECRUITMENT

Employers are increasingly coming to recognise the strong business case for improving the level of diversity and inclusion within their workforce.

By recruiting professionals from a range of backgrounds at all levels of seniority, businesses gain access to a wide variety of viewpoints and perspectives. Companies with staff from a broad range of backgrounds have been found to outperform firms with a less diverse workforce¹.

By attracting and retaining a diverse range of staff, businesses can identify opportunities and explore new solutions. Developing, implementing and promoting a diversity strategy is the challenge employers now face.

Securing the most talented professionals will require employers to take on a new, innovative approach to access more diverse talent pools.

This research paper, based on a survey of over 450 employers, will examine new tools and technology that can help businesses reach new sources of talent, explore strategies to develop a company culture that embraces diversity and address the hurdles faced when creating a collaborative, diverse workforce.

¹<http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>

ABOUT ROBERT WALTERS

Robert Walters is a specialist professional recruitment consultancy, working with businesses of all sizes as a trusted recruitment partner.

With an international network of offices spanning 27 countries, we are perfectly positioned to help you find the very best skilled professionals. In the UK, we recruit specialists on a permanent, contract and interim basis, in the following areas:

- Accountancy & Finance
- Banking & Financial Services
- Executive Search
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Legal
- Procurement & Supply Chain
- Projects
- Secretarial & Business Support
- Tax
- Treasury

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The Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion is the UK's leading employer network covering all aspects of equality and inclusion in the workplace. In addition to supporting employers, our role is to influence Government, business and trade unions, campaigning for real practical change. Website: www.enei.org.uk Twitter: @en4ei

KEY STATISTICS

DO BUSINESSES BELIEVE DIVERSITY IS IMPORTANT?



of employers say that increasing diversity in their workforce is a priority



yet almost half of employers do not have programmes in place to attract diverse candidates

73%

of employers believe diversity is important to encourage creative and innovative thinking within the company

STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGING COLLABORATION IN A DIVERSE WORKFORCE



78%

COMPANY SOCIAL EVENTS



53%

MENTORING PROGRAMMES



47%

CHARITY PROJECTS



34%

DIVERSITY TRAINING

45%

of employers believe their current recruitment tools are ineffective at helping diverse candidates find their company

WHICH DEPARTMENT DO BUSINESSES THINK SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING A DIVERSITY STRATEGY



SENIOR MANAGEMENT

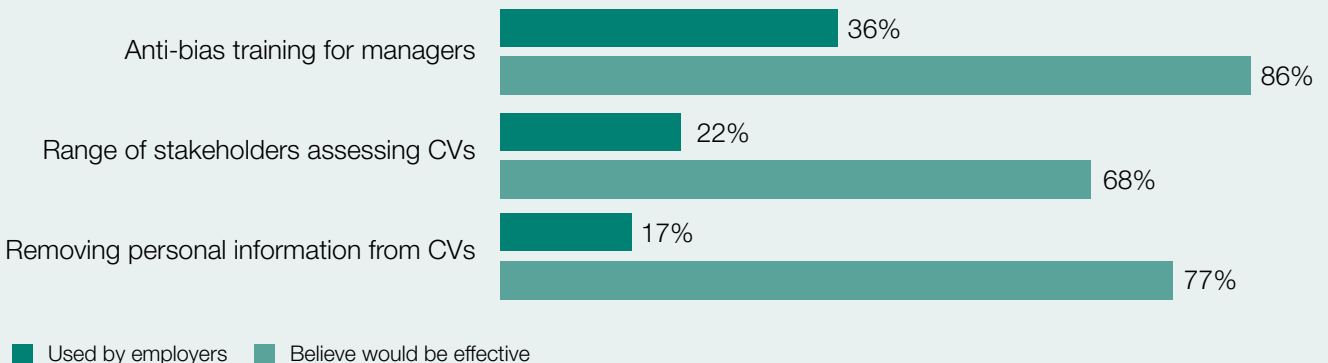


HR



MARKETING

Strategies for reducing unconscious bias





UNDERSTANDING WHY DIVERSITY IS IMPORTANT

While the advantages of a diverse workforce are increasingly recognised, developing and implementing strategies to build one remains a challenge for business leaders.

Studies have shown that a diverse workforce can improve the bottom line of a business¹, lead to happier and more productive teams² and drive innovation among employees³.

To reap the benefits of a diverse workforce employers must ensure that recruitment strategies reach candidates regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or socioeconomic background.

Despite 85% of employers and hiring managers saying that increasing diversity in their workforce is a priority, just half have programmes in place to attract, develop and retain an inclusive workforce, and 45% do not have any means of measuring the diversity of their workforce.

Almost three quarters of employers believe that a diverse workforce is important to encourage creative and innovative thinking within the company and more than half believe that having a diverse workforce helps introduce staff with unique skills into the company.

Over two thirds of employers also believe that it is important that the diversity of their workforce reflects the diversity of the community that they work in and more than half said that embracing diversity was essential to ensure that they were doing business ethically.

However, despite employers widely recognising the benefits of increasing diversity within their workforce, less than half have a programme in place to attract candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds.

1 - Diversity, Social Goods Provision, and Performance in the Firm - Massachusetts Institute Of Technology - <http://economics.mit.edu/files/8851>

2 - The diverse organization: Finding gold at the end of the rainbow - Ryerson University - <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/hrm.20459/abstract>

3 - Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce - Forbes - http://images.forbes.com/forbesinsights/StudyPDFs/Innovation_Through_Diversity.pdf

85%

of employers say increasing diversity in their workforce is a priority



Janine Blacksley
Associate
Director
at Robert Walters

“

The business case for building a diverse workforce is supported by numerous academic studies, with research showing that diverse businesses are more productive and more successful. It is vital that employers communicate this information to hiring managers, as well as clarifying how the company diversity strategy will work and how it can be implemented effectively.

”

WHY DO EMPLOYERS VALUE DIVERSITY?



73% of employers say diversity encourages creative and innovative thinking



67% believe that diversity is important so that their workforce can reflect the community they operate in



54% say diversity is crucial to ensure that they are doing business ethically



51% believe diversity helps introduce staff with unique skills into the workforce

45%

of employers do not monitor employee diversity



CASE STUDY



A major law firm headquartered in London has set up an online recruitment portal which enables them to monitor the diversity of applicants across gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, social background, religion or belief and disability. This data can be monitored across each stage of the selection process but is kept anonymous and cannot be traced to a single individual. Analysing this data allows the law firm to determine where barriers exist to diverse talent entering the business and so take steps to address these issues.

61%

of employers believe partnering with diversity organisations can help them reach broader talent pools

CASE STUDY

A large financial services company celebrated International Women's Day in 2016 by hosting seminars and partnering with the Wealth Management Women's Employee Networking Group and the Women's Business Alliance. Doing so illustrates the company's commitment to gender diversity and gives them the opportunity to connect with female professionals through networking events.





DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE BUSINESS CULTURE

Businesses that work to actively ensure they are appealing to a broad range of candidates will mark themselves as an employer with an inclusive approach to recruitment.

However, less than half of businesses (43%) have a strategy in place to ensure their brand appeals to candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds.

There is also a lack of consensus over who is responsible for developing the business' brand and culture to appeal to a diverse range of candidates. 56% of businesses believe that senior management should take the lead, while over a third (35%) believe that responsibility should lie with the HR department. 9% believe that the marketing department should take primary responsibility for developing this strategy.

PARTNERING FOR DIVERSITY

Working with non-profits or other organisations which focus on improving diversity in workplaces can help businesses learn how to appeal to a more diverse range of jobseekers.

61% of employers believe that by doing so they can reach broader talent pools and 54% believe that these organisations can help advise them on best practice for diversity strategies. However, despite the widely acknowledged benefits of such partnerships, just 32% of businesses have one.



Habiba Khatoon
Associate Director at
Robert Walters

“

Employers need to identify which areas of the business are responsible for different aspects of their diversity strategy to ensure that it works effectively. Confusion over who is responsible for developing and implementing a diversity strategy is easily resolved but frequently creates a serious barrier to achieving change.

”

CREATING A COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY

For businesses to reap the full benefits of a diverse workforce it is essential that they take a collaborative approach to inclusivity. When developing the principles and processes for implementing a diversity strategy, employers should include staff from across the business and at all levels of seniority.

WHICH DEPARTMENT DO BUSINESSES THINK SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING A DIVERSITY STRATEGY?



SENIOR MANAGEMENT



HR



MARKETING



HELPING DIVERSE CANDIDATES FIND YOUR COMPANY

Achieving a diverse workforce is dependent on helping professionals from a range of backgrounds find your company. However, many employers focus their recruitment activities on platforms and channels that are likely to deliver candidates from similar backgrounds.

While recruitment consultancies can be highly effective at helping employers connect with a more diverse range of candidates, more than half of businesses do not currently ask recruiters to provide diverse shortlists, potentially missing out on the opportunity they offer to access more diverse networks.

Employers should also consider how job adverts are worded, taking care to ensure that the language used does not imply that you are looking for a candidate from a particular background. Proofing tools or glossaries available online can help identify words or phrases that may subconsciously put off professionals from certain backgrounds from applying.

Incentives for existing staff to refer new candidates to the business can also be an effective tool for reaching potential employees. However, almost half (47%) of employers do not use referral schemes to source new staff. By ensuring that your existing staff are aware that you embrace diversity and inclusion as a business you may be able to reach candidates from a broader range of backgrounds.

52%

of employers do not ask recruitment consultancies to provide a diverse shortlist



Ahsan Iqbal
Associate Director at Robert Walters



Ensuring that a diverse range of candidates can find your company does not mean abandoning traditional recruitment channels. If these tried and tested methods have succeeded in attracting top talent to your organisation, neglecting them would be counterproductive. Instead, by introducing new approaches to complement usual recruitment channels, employers can ensure that they have the widest and most diverse range of candidates to choose from.



RECRUITMENT FAIRS

Over a third of employers make use of university job fairs to source talent, but only a fifth promote themselves at job fairs for non-university graduates, limiting the range of potential candidates who are exposed to their company.

University vs non-university recruitment fairs

Recruitment days at universities		36%
Job fairs for non-university graduates		21%

SOCIAL MEDIA

While more than three quarters of employers advertise roles via LinkedIn, far fewer make use of other social platforms which may represent distinct user bases. As a result, neglecting these other social platforms may prevent firms from reaching the most diverse range of candidates.

Use of social media for recruitment

	Twitter		20%
	Instagram		2%
	Facebook		17%
	LinkedIn		76%

73%

of employers do not have websites which are accessible to candidates with disabilities



CASE STUDY



A major professional services firm used a gaming app to source 200 apprentices in 2015 after finding that when recruiting for entry-level and junior roles they were disproportionately attracting candidates from particular universities and schools. The company has said that the gaming app is able to effectively identify key skills, such as innovation, that the business needs without putting off candidates from more diverse backgrounds in the way a traditional application process might.



EXPLORING NEW RECRUITMENT TOOLS

As candidate behaviour evolves, employers must adapt to new recruitment tools in order to increase the range of candidates they reach.

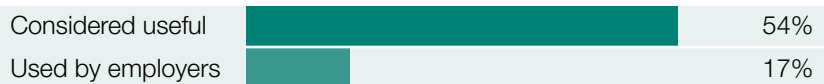
However, businesses have been slow to adopt the new tools available to them. As a result, acting quickly to make use of these technologies and developments can give employers early-mover advantage when tapping into more diverse talent pools.

Proofing tools to identify biased language, web crawling technology which finds potential candidates through their online profiles and gamification techniques can all be used to help businesses expand the range of potential employees they can reach when recruiting.

45%
of employers believe their current recruitment tools are ineffective at helping a diverse range of candidates find their company

TOOLS TO RECRUIT MORE DIVERSE CANDIDATES

Proofing tools



Proofing tools can identify language in job adverts or job descriptions which may discourage applicants from certain groups.

Web crawler software



Web crawler software trawls networking sites, gathering data on jobseekers from a range of sources to determine who meets the requirements for a role, allowing employers to find candidates beyond their usual talent pools.

Gamification techniques



Elements of gamification in the recruitment process can encourage applications from candidates who would be discouraged by traditional recruitment processes, by identifying core skills in a way that engages applicants.

Accessible website



While employers recognise that a website accessible to those with disabilities would be effective in helping them access new talent pools, just 37% currently have a website with this functionality.



81%

of employers recognise that unconscious bias can impact their hiring decisions



REDUCING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Employers may need to address unconscious bias among their own staff; assumptions which they make about the suitability of a candidate during the recruitment process based on factors which are not related to the role such as age, gender or background. Given the significant impact these biases can have on how hiring managers will assess candidates, countering them should be considered a priority.

81% of employers recognise the potential that unconscious bias has to impact decisions, potentially leading them to miss out on top calibre professionals.

Finding techniques to overcome or reduce unconscious bias should therefore be a priority for employers. However, while there is widespread support for strategies designed to address unconscious bias, relatively few employers use them in practice.

42%
of employers do not use any strategies to reduce unconscious bias when recruiting

Strategies for reducing unconscious bias



Phill Westcott
Director at Robert Walters



By acknowledging the impact that unconscious bias can have on their hiring decisions, managers put themselves not only in a good position to attract the best candidates but also to ensure their decisions with regard to long term staff retention are as objective as possible.



Removing certain information from CVs, such as the name and gender of the applicant or the name of the school they attended, can help employers minimise the impact of unconscious bias by forcing hiring managers to focus solely on the applicant's qualifications and experience.

By having CVs assessed by a wide range of stakeholders across the business, including staff at the same level of seniority as the applicant, employers can ensure that the broadest range of perspectives are gained on the applicant's suitability.

Anti-bias training can also be highly effective, allowing managers to identify areas where they may have their own unconscious biases, helping them to approach recruitment more objectively.



IMPROVING DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP

While employers often struggle to source candidates from diverse backgrounds across all levels of seniority within the business, 71% said that finding diverse candidates for senior roles was more challenging than achieving diversity at more junior levels.

For more junior roles where required skills and experience may be less specialised, or where membership of certain professions has become more diverse, finding diverse candidates is often less challenging. For senior positions on the other hand, finding applicants who meet the stringent requirements of the role while still ensuring that candidates are drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds can be difficult.

This difficulty in finding senior professionals from diverse backgrounds is reflected in the fact that 60% of professionals believe that there is a lack of diversity in business leadership in the UK.



Lucy Bisset
Associate Director at
Robert Walters



To successfully create a more diverse workforce at senior levels, hiring managers should be open to considering candidates from varied professional, industrial and national backgrounds. Creating a talent pipeline to ensure that junior employees from all backgrounds are given opportunities and training for future leadership roles is also essential as a long term solution.



WHY IS IT DIFFICULT TO IMPROVE DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP?



47%

LACK OF SUITABLY QUALIFIED CANDIDATES FROM A RANGE OF DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

The greatest challenge employers face when trying to source professionals from diverse backgrounds is a lack of suitably qualified candidates applying for the roles.



35%

AN OVERALL LACK OF DIVERSITY WITHIN THAT PROFESSIONAL FIELD

Over a third felt that the crucial problem came from professions as a whole not attracting a diverse range of people, severely hampering the effectiveness of any diversity strategy.



19%

OVERCOMING ATTITUDES WITHIN YOUR OWN ORGANISATION

A fifth of respondents cited issues overcoming attitudes within their own organisation as the biggest barrier to recruiting candidates from diverse backgrounds into senior leadership roles.

19%

of employers struggle to overcome attitudes within their organisation when looking to hire diverse candidates for senior roles

CASE STUDY



An international professional services firm based in London has made use of mentoring schemes to improve diversity at senior management level. Due to a relatively small number of senior managers coming from diverse backgrounds within their own team they have partnered with other organisations. This allows them to connect high potential staff from diverse backgrounds with mentors who are also from diverse backgrounds and can offer advice and support on achieving career development.



ENCOURAGING COLLABORATION IN A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

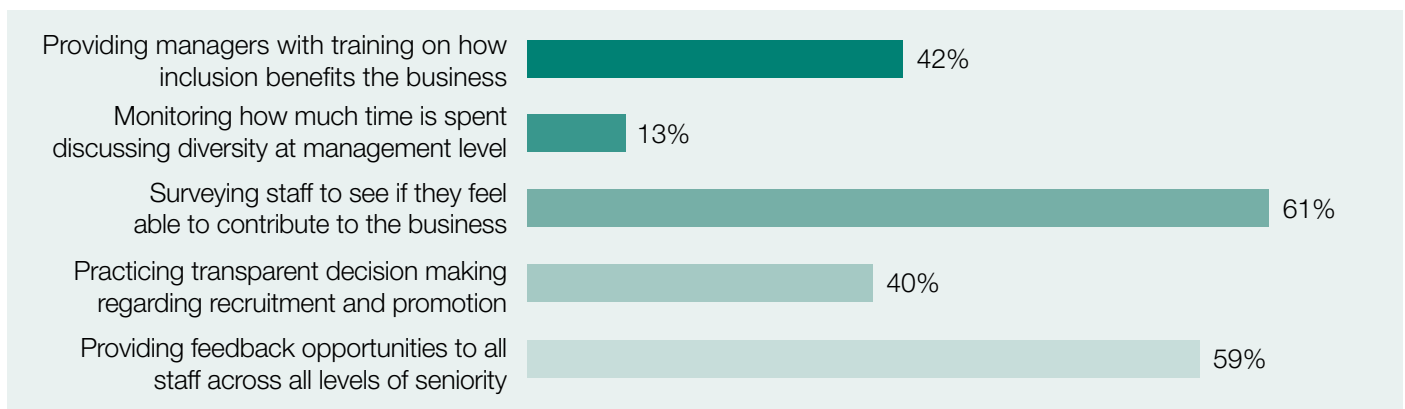
Recruiting professionals from a diverse range of backgrounds has the potential to introduce valuable insights and perspectives into a company. However, achieving cohesion and collaboration between team members within a diverse workforce may be more difficult due to the wide range of perspectives and opinions involved.

Developing strategies to encourage collaboration within a diverse workforce is therefore vital for employers looking to take advantage of the benefits that diversification can bring.

The most popular strategies to encourage collaboration within a diverse workforce are company social events (78%), mentoring programmes (53%) and charity or other non-work related projects where staff from different backgrounds are given the opportunity to work together (47%).

34%
of employers provide managers with diversity/sensitivity training

Strategies used by senior managers to ensure a sense of inclusion within the workforce



James Murray
Director at Robert Walters

“

Employers must recognise the potential challenges that a diverse workforce can bring and have a strategy in place to overcome them. By doing so they can ensure that their workforce remains cohesive and is able to collaborate effectively while still gaining the advantages, such as a broad range of perspectives and ideas, that a diverse workforce can bring.

”

CAN A DIVERSE WORKFORCE MAKE COLLABORATION MORE CHALLENGING?



YES



NO



DON'T KNOW



13%

of employers monitor how much time is spent discussing inclusion and diversity at senior management meetings

CASE STUDY



A major global insurance group received recognition in 2016 for its work to create a culture of diversity and inclusion. The company has set up a Diversity Steering Group with representatives from all main departments to help develop and refine diversity and inclusion strategies, as well as a group-wide Global Diversity Council connecting a network of diversity managers and specialists from across the component businesses. These efforts have seen 87% of the firm's employees agree that the company has created an environment where people from diverse backgrounds can succeed.



KEY FINDINGS



1 Recognising the value of diversity

Employers increasingly recognise the benefits of a diverse workforce, but still face challenges in implementing recruitment strategies that will achieve this. Taking on staff from varied backgrounds can improve innovation, increase productivity and grant new market insights. By adopting new strategies and tools to broaden the talent pools they recruit from employers can gain an edge over their competitors.



2 Collaborate to build a diversity strategy

There is widespread confusion over where the responsibility lies for developing a diverse recruitment strategy. Senior managers, HR and marketing departments will need to collaborate to ensure that any strategy is effective, with clearly defined goals and desired outcomes to measure success.



3 Be prepared to open up new recruitment channels

Employers are broadly aware that their current recruitment strategies may be ineffective at helping applicants from diverse backgrounds find their company, but many persist in using channels for recruitment which deliver similar candidates. Consider whether non-graduates or jobseekers who may possess unique skills will be found through your usual channels.



4 Consider which tools can help you connect with diverse talent

Technology can offer new and effective tools to employers looking to diversify their workforce, but adoption has been limited. Researching new approaches such as gamification, bias language proofing tools and web crawler software could help employers looking to diversify their workforce. Once the tools most relevant to your business have been identified, employers can focus on incorporating them into their recruitment processes.



5 Take steps to counter unconscious bias

The majority of managers are aware of the potential impact unconscious bias can have on their decisions and are enthusiastic about the effectiveness of many simple strategies to mitigate it. However, approaches such as assessing CVs blind (removing information on gender, name etc) and ensuring a range of stakeholders have a hand in selecting candidates are still rarely adopted.



6 Develop strategies to achieve diversity across all levels

Achieving diversity at senior levels is generally perceived to be more challenging than sourcing diverse candidates for junior roles. Many employers regard a lack of suitably qualified candidates for senior roles as the most significant hurdle to achieving diverse business leadership. This highlights the importance of creating a talent pipeline which is inclusive of professionals from all backgrounds, as well as considering professionals from overseas for high level positions and those with a background in other industries who possess transferable skills.



7 Encourage cooperation and collaboration

To reap the benefits of a diverse workforce, employers must ensure that they are able to achieve collaboration within their team. This means providing opportunities for professionals from diverse backgrounds to work together as well as ensuring that all staff feel that their voices and opinions are taken into consideration by senior managers.



ABOUT THE ROBERT WALTERS INSIGHT SERIES

This whitepaper is the eighth in the Robert Walters Insight Series. The Insight Series is a range of thought-leading whitepapers aimed at assisting employers in their recruitment strategies and helping them address key talent management issues. To register your interest in future topics, please email contact@robertwalters.com

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To discuss this whitepaper, request other titles in the Insight Series or talk about your recruitment needs in more detail, please contact your Robert Walters recruitment consultant, email us at contact@robertwalters.com or get in touch with one of our offices below:

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