

**BEST PRACTICES  
COMPENDIUM**

# **Embedding DEI in Early- and Mid-Career Talent Acquisition**

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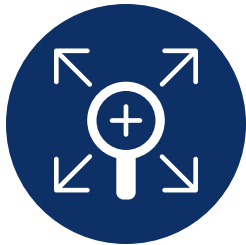


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# The Case for DEI in Talent Acquisition

The goal of every talent acquisition team and hiring manager is to hire the best people for the company's needs. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts help companies achieve this critical goal in two ways.



Benefit #1

## HOLISTIC SOURCING

Hiring the best talent can only happen when a company is able to draw on potential hires from a variety of sources. Relying on narrow sourcing pools merely enables hiring the best talent from a limited segment of the workforce. Implementing DEI practices in the early phases of the talent acquisition cycle ensures the company is seeking the best talent from a broad pool.



Benefit #2

## EQUITABLE EVALUATION

Once a company is drawing from a wide pool of talent, the next benefit stemming from DEI practices comes from using tactics to make the candidate evaluation process fair, standardized, and free of bias. This step is critical because it helps a company do a better job mapping candidates to opportunities and making strong offer decisions.

Ultimately, incorporating DEI into talent acquisition produces tangible benefits for businesses. Diverse teams outperform homogenous teams, resulting in more innovation and better financial outcomes. For example, a study by McKinsey in 2020 revealed that companies in the top quartile for ethnic and cultural diversity on executive teams “outperformed those in the fourth [quartile] by 36 percent in profitability.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>McKinsey & Company. “[Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters.](#)” May 19, 2020.

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# DEI Throughout the Talent Acquisition Process

The process by which companies attract, source, evaluate, and secure new hires is multi-phased. Each step is critical. Additionally, each step contains opportunities and potential pitfalls when it comes to identifying strong talent holistically and evaluating those candidates equitably. As a result, and to maximize impact, DEI best practices should be incorporated in each phase of the process. These phases are outlined below, and the menu of best practices found on the following pages aims to touch on tactics that can be incorporated throughout the talent acquisition lifecycle.



## Early- and Mid-Career Hiring

This best practice menu focuses on tactics that help to embed DEI principles in recruiting for early career and mid-career positions. While some of these approaches may also apply to executive and board recruitment, talent searches for those levels would require additional strategies to ensure a diverse pool of candidates and unbiased candidate evaluation.

## Methodology: Learning from One Another

The best practices outlined in this resource were compiled using primary and secondary sources. IRI culled through DEI research and articles to draft the initial set of best practices. Importantly, however, that was only an initial step. IRI conducted interviews with DEI and HR leaders from its member companies throughout 2022 to further refine the initial list by adding additional best practices in use across the industry. As a result, this menu of DEI talent acquisition best practices reflects many of the tactics currently in use.

That is not to say that this menu is exhaustive. New strategies are being tested regularly as companies innovate and try new ways of embedding DEI into their talent acquisition process. If your organization has a best practice to share, please contact IRI by emailing Christina Brady at [cbrady@irionline.org](mailto:cbrady@irionline.org).

# Use Cases for Best Practice Menu

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We recommend two use cases for the menu of best practices found on the following pages:

## Use Case #1

### **IDEA GENERATION**

Circulate this best practice menu among team members to surface new ideas for consideration and implementation.

*Questions for consideration:*

1. What DEI goals is my organization trying to achieve?
2. What part of the talent acquisition process are we focused on improving?
3. What changes would yield the most impact in achieving our DEI goals for talent acquisition?

## Use Case #2

### **BEST PRACTICE GAP ANALYSIS**

Conduct an audit to identify the tactics from this menu that are in use and those that remain opportunities.

*Questions for consideration:*

1. Are the tactics currently in use having the desired impact? Why or why not?
2. Do we have best practices in place across all stages of the talent acquisition process?
3. What changes to our current strategy would yield the most impact on achieving our DEI goals for talent acquisition?

# DEI Best Practices for Early- and Mid-Career Talent Acquisition

**Phase 1** **STRUCTURE**

Tactic	Description	Benefits
<b>Dedicated diversity hiring program for entry and mid-level roles</b>	<p>Team or workstream focused specifically on diversity hiring is put in place to make sure it gets time and attention</p> <p><i>Implementation tip: Diversity hiring for senior-level and executive roles requires its own strategies. Create a separate dedicated hiring program for senior talent if that is a focus for your organization.</i></p>	<p>Holds specific teams or people accountable for doing the work needed to diversify hiring</p>
<b>Coalitions or association partnerships that support DEI recruiting goals</b>	<p>Active work with coalitions focused on DEI talent acquisition and/or with associations that represent communities typically underrepresented in the company's workforce</p> <p><i>Implementation tip: Consider organizations like the <a href="#">Coalition for Equity in Wholesaling (CEW)</a>, the <a href="#">Financial Alliance for Racial Equity (FARE)</a>, and the <a href="#">Association for Wholesaling Diversity (AWD)</a></i></p>	<p>Tackles representation from an industry level and provides additional support for individual company efforts</p>
<b>Diversity hiring goals</b>	<p>Representation, process/activity, or organizational goals established to measure the success of a company's efforts</p> <p><i>Implementation tip: Transparency and communication is key to the success of this tactic. Goals that are not shared with hiring managers and business leaders are more likely to fail.</i></p>	<p>Provides concrete measures of success and a means of establishing whether current tactics are working</p>
<b>Adverse impact reporting</b>	<p>Evaluation done to measure the impact of unfair or biased hiring on protected classes</p>	<p>Mandatory for companies under the jurisdiction of the EEOC</p>

## Phase 2 SOURCING TALENT

Tactic	Description	Benefits
<b>Infuse DEI in branding and marketing messages</b>	<p>The company's commitment and approach to DEI is well communicated through public channels in a way that resonates with a wide spectrum of potential hires</p> <p><i>Implementation tip: Company policies, structures and goals related to DEI should be easily locatable on the company website, including a statement of executive-led commitment to DEI principles.</i></p>	Candidates see the company's values and have a sense for the company's culture
<b>Recruiting programs at HBCUs, HSIs, TCUs, and military schools</b>	Partnerships established for recruiting purposes at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and military schools	Engages institutions that serve diverse populations for the purpose of building the company's talent pipeline
<b>Require candidate pool diversity</b>	<p>Standard in place that at least 30 percent of candidates interviewed for any open role are from underrepresented groups</p> <p><i>Implementation tip: Presenting all candidates at the same time improves the likelihood that all candidates will be evaluated equally and no preference will be given to candidates seen early in the process.</i></p>	Ensures that diverse candidates are explicitly sought out and considered for hire
<b>Job descriptions revamped to appeal to broader candidate pool</b>	Job descriptions rewritten to focus on skills (not experience), communicate the importance of DEI to the organization, promote corporate culture, make salary transparent, and otherwise align with how different employee populations evaluate job opportunities.	Qualified candidates less likely to opt themselves out because they do not think they meet the requirements of the role
<b>Blinded resume review</b>	Names, college/university, address, and other identifying information is removed or redacted from the resume during the candidate evaluation process	Addresses the bias associated with names, colleges, addresses, etc.
<b>DEI internship programs</b>	Dedicated programs established to expose a wide range of talent to our industry and available career paths	Increases awareness of our industry as a compelling place to build a career

### Phase 3 CANDIDATE EVALUATION

Tactic	Description	Benefits
<b>Structured candidate evaluation</b>	<p>Interview questions, processes, and criteria are standardized such that each candidate for a particular role is evaluated the same way and held to the same bar</p> <p><i>Implementation tip: Ensure that questions allow for consideration of out-of-industry and non-traditional experience that might otherwise exclude qualified candidates.</i></p>	<p>Decreases the biases that play into candidate evaluations by ensuring each candidate has the same opportunity to share strengths and experiences</p>
<b>Committee-based hiring</b>	<p>Candidates meet with a panel of interviewers</p> <p><i>Implementation tip: Precede interviews with a meeting to establish the criteria and priorities for hiring to secure panelist alignment.</i></p>	<p>Provides multiple perspectives on a candidate's qualifications for the job</p>
<b>Mandatory manager training on unconscious bias in recruiting/hiring</b>	<p>Those involved in hiring at any level receive regular education about unconscious bias, where it can be found in the talent acquisition process, and how to avoid it</p> <p><i>Implementation tip: Must be repeated regularly to ensure learnings are incorporated and used.</i></p>	<p>Helps hiring managers identify the best talent for their open positions</p>
<b>Offer acceptance rate analysis and optimization</b>	<p>Outcomes analyzed to determine if there are different offer acceptance rates among different populations of candidates and, if so, what is driving those differences so that offer delivery can be optimized to improve acceptance rates</p>	<p>Improves the company's ability to secure top talent at the final stages of the hiring process</p>



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