

Recruitment Strategy Through an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Lens

One of the most common pitfalls when employers start to explore an increased focus in equity, diversity and inclusion as part of their overall recruitment strategy is the expectation that traditional recruitment processes are inherently fair and equitable to all. Unfortunately, the traditional strategy tends to incorporate individual and structural bias towards socially dominant groups, and the fallback phrase 'equal opportunity' sets a low-bar for achievement, and can lead candidate evaluators to devalue diversity and view it as a liability due to the interpretation as a principle of not seeing colour, gender, ability and status. Equity is a scale, not a line, and equal opportunity does not translate directly to "equitable" when measured against privilege. Often, candidates from Indigenous, racialized or marginalized ethnocultural and socioeconomic identities do not have the same world views, realities, equal experiences, and backgrounds by virtue of their identity, and this should be considered. The bias that explicitly or implicitly filters out diversity of the candidate pool can be found in each phase of the recruitment cycle; from planning to candidate selection. Having a comprehensive strategy can greatly increase the margin of successful outcomes, and is part of an over-arching transparent communication strategy to proactively increase workplace culture and drive employee engagement.

To develop that strategy, start with asking yourself some fundamental questions:

- *Do you currently have a workplace culture that welcomes diversity in its' many forms?*

It's important that the work environment both promotes and ensures cultural and psychological safety for current staff and potential candidates, especially in workplaces where the demographic is fairly homogenous from socially dominant groups, rather than diverse.

- *Do you have current training programs that promote cultural awareness and an understanding of EDI?*

Systemic bias can occur with all individuals, and without education and understanding, employees form their own conclusions. As equity does not mean equal, without transparent and clear direction in this area, conflict can arise. An example of this might be perceived inequity towards socially dominant groups because there is an assumption of more leeway, less skill set requirements or more flexibility to other marginalized groups.

- *Do you have current policies or practices that promote inclusivity for all individuals?*

If you plan to recruit based on cultural competencies, consider if the organization promotes retention; examples may be stat-trading for individuals who don't practice Neo-Christian

holidays, or accommodating traditional periods of religious observance or cultural hunting/gathering. For those who may be differently abled, are there programs such as remote and flexible work, or other alternatives that can accommodate them?

In addition to the above, consider your postings through an EDI lens. As a best practice, balance between the baseline requirements for the role and the flexibility, accommodation and investment that can be made into candidates. Ensure that minimum qualifications don't include experience or education that could be learned on the job, as the criteria in this area often creates a systemic bias towards candidates who have international or limited experience based on socio-economic barriers. Identify Bona Fide Operational Requirements within the description itself, and carefully consider where accommodations can be made. Promote language that is culturally and gender inclusive, and avoid blanket equity statements; instead, craft meaningful language that shows your commitment to inclusivity in your business.

Lastly, remember that a key element to reformed recruitment planning for equitable outcomes is a customized approach to expanding your network and measuring progress, so don't stick to only one channel, but instead, as appropriate, consider local, regional and national avenues, employee resource groups, social media channels, foundations, Indigenous Nation or Multicultural Society employment counsellors, and diversity and inclusion community agencies in addition to your website or traditional posting avenues. This may seem like additional work, but you could see a significant return on the investment once you let go of reliance on homogenous network familiarity bias and proactively meet candidates from underrepresented communities where they are at.

If you are looking to review your current strategy, or develop a new one, go2HR can support you in this area with recommendations and resources. Check out our EDI content at: <https://www.go2hr.ca/human-resources/equity-diversity-inclusion-edi>

Questions, need more help? Give me a shout and I'd be happy to assist you!

**CONNECT WITH
CHRISTIE BLAQUIERE**

Regional HR Consultant, Cariboo Chilcotin
Based out of Williams Lake
cblaquiere@go2hr.ca | 604.633.9787 ext. 237

