

## BLACK BUSINESS MATTERS

# How to Implement Diverse Hiring Practices

By DERRICK COLEMAN

A diverse workforce has numerous advantages, such as increased profitability, higher employee engagement and a boost to overall innovation. However, many companies may not know how to recruit a diverse workforce. This is where targeted hiring practices can help.

To achieve diversity, companies must reduce the unconscious biases that plague hiring practices. Minorities and women still struggle to be hired and climb the corporate ladder, but by being conscious of who they are hiring, companies have the ability to close that gap.

Countless companies struggle with creating a workplace that welcomes minorities and women the same way as it does white men, who continue to be the majority in C-suites and other senior roles across industries in the U.S. Targeted hiring practices are effective tools that can be used to move towards not only equality in the workforce but also to improve profitability and company culture.

## MITIGATING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Everyone has biases — they are products of life experiences, interactions and backgrounds. They come in all shapes and sizes. However, what is not okay is when people do nothing to combat them, especially during the interview processes.

When companies fail to address bias, it not only limits the potential of diversity in the workplace but also limits the company itself.

By not purposefully setting up mechanisms to cope with those biases or neglecting to hold themselves accountable to those processes, companies stifle their ability to root them out in the first place. That is where targeted hiring comes in — strategies like blind hiring and utilizing a scorecard are powerful tools to combat the biases that kneecap diversity efforts.

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## IMPLEMENTING BLIND HIRING PRACTICES

Blind hiring practices are one of the easiest first steps companies can take to eliminating biases. It is simple: when recruiters remove identifying details from a candidate's resume such as name and college graduation date, they are naturally able to focus more on a candidate's experience and qualifications.

Unconscious biases related to gender and race melt away when a person's name is removed, and the unproven correlation

between age and ability is wiped away when there is no graduation date. These two results alone will lead to inviting a more diverse group into the interview process.

A recent Harvard Business Review study showed tangible results of blind recruiting. When the Hubble Space Telescope solicited applications for joining the crew, women were

One option is interview scorecards. In traditional interviews, a hiring manager might sit down for an hour-long conversation with a candidate and trust their “gut feeling” when they leave the room. By using a scorecard that standardizes the questions asked and the qualities demonstrated, hiring managers can eliminate some of the biases that exist in recruiters' subconscious.

By changing a qualitative process into a quantitative one, companies can begin to keep data on their hiring practices and compare ratings and scorecards of a single candidate, thereby finding a median score among decision-makers and avoiding bias groupthink.

Additionally, whenever possible, companies should include a diverse interview team. Including diversity in the hiring team can help lessen unconscious biases as well as help talent feel more comfortable and at ease.

Creating diversity in the workforce is not always simple, and it is hard work that is without a perfect solution. But by taking these steps and being purposeful about inclusive hiring practices, companies can sow the seeds that will make diversity prosper.

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chosen at a higher rate when their names were removed from submissions. Additionally, when orchestras had candidates audition anonymously, the number of women chosen went up by 20 percent.

## QUALITATIVE VS. QUANTITATIVE SCORING

Blind hiring might get diverse candidates in the door, but how should companies address biases that might present themselves during an interview?