4 Methods to Build a Diverse Team

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Introduction

Diverse teams produce better results. Sound familiar?

This statement, which reinforces the business case for diversity, has been circulated and shared widely during most diversity conversations. McKinsey & Company's 2014 *Why Diversity Matters* research findings revealed that if companies wanted to advance and retain their business advantage, they needed to have a diverse workforce (see sidebar on page 5 for more on this study and its findings).

Major technology companies began releasing their employee demographic data that same year, in 2014, which put a numeric value on what diverse tech talent at those companies, and others, already knew—the industry has an issue. When it came to gender and ethnic diversity, tech companies and startups were admittedly falling short, vowing to spend millions to promote diversity and create a diverse workforce.

Since the initial release of the data, tech companies have started working feverishly to hack the issue, which has resulted in small wins on the gender and racial diversity front. And for some companies, there's been a positive impact on other forms of diversity like sexual orientation, or the gradual change of the faces in tech leadership. However, we still have a lot of work ahead of us. We can strive to formalize diversity efforts, put goal setting into action, and not only place and retain diverse talent, but prime them for leadership roles.

So where do you start?

Good news—you don't have to tackle this alone! The **2020Shift** and **Greenhouse** teams have put together this guide to building a diverse team. We realize that there is no one-size-fits-all plan and no one has totally figured out how to do this perfectly, but it can also be a challenge to know where to begin. That's why we've created *4 Methods to Build A Diverse Team* to support you in your Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) journey. We hope you find this eBook useful. Let's keep the conversation going—we welcome your feedback and comments!

**A QUICK OVERVIEW OF
WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS,
MCKINSEY & COMPANY**

Of 366 public companies analyzed, those in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above national industry medians.

Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15% more likely to have financial returns above their national industry peers.

Companies in the bottom quartile both for gender and for ethnicity and race are statistically less likely to achieve above-average financial returns than the average companies in the data set.

WHY INVEST IN DIVERSITY?

- 8,650,000 jobs: the estimated size of the STEM workforce in the US by 2018. Without diversity initiatives, these jobs will be a lot less available to women and underrepresented minorities than to other groups.[1]

- 67% of active and passive job seekers say a diverse workforce is important to them when evaluating companies or job offers.[2]

- Teams evenly split between men and women earn 41% more in revenue.[3]

- Diverse talent exists. Blacks and Latinos make up approximately 13% and 16% of the American workforce, yet at no major tech firm do they make up more than 5% of employees.[4]

[1] http://www.forbes.com/sites/mnewlands/2016/08/29/why-diversity-matters-in-tech/#26f1a1403a12

[2] https://www.glassdoor.com/employers/blog/50-hr-recruiting-stats-make-think/

[3] http://www.forbes.com/sites/learnvest/2014/12/22/why-gender-diverse-work-teams-are-the-most-productive-and-profitable/2/#14939c7d574f

[4] http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/11/on-a-scale-of-1-to-10-silicon-valleys-lack-of-racial-diversity-is-a-7/412903/

METHOD ONE

Communicate the value of diversity company wide

Start with leadership.

Diversity and inclusion efforts are often reserved for a single segment of the business, and this is why they often struggle to be effective. In order for short- and long-term D&I efforts to work, a concerted effort must be made by an entire company: employees, executives, human resources and/or the People team, and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), among others.

While everyone must do their part, diversity should be championed at the top. Culture and priorities are often signals from the executive team (intentionally or not), and the success of a diversity or inclusion program relies on the right culture.

Here at Greenhouse, when we reached 200 employees, we evaluated our current diversity and inclusion initiatives and crafted both short- and long-term objectives. We outline some of our short-term initiatives below.

ATTRACTING A MORE DIVERSE POOL OF QUALIFIED CANDIDATES BY:

- Partnering with organizations that are also invested in creating diverse professional communities
- Screening for inclusiveness during the initial phone interview process
- Prioritizing diversity in outreach/sourcing efforts
- Optimizing Greenhouse's careers page to better reflect the company's employees and culture

FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT BY:

- Supporting the employee-led Diversity Committee
- Providing unconscious bias training
- Structuring performance management so career ladders are clear and promotions are based on performance

While the majority of the initiatives are driven by the recruiting team, the last three continue to be jobs for the entire company. And all initiatives are supported by Greenhouse CEO **Daniel Chait**, who believes diversity will strengthen Greenhouse.

"

Diversity is a key component to achieving this. However, the issue of workforce diversity can be a thorny one, especially in tech companies like ours. But building and sustaining diverse teams is something I feel strongly about." [1]

[1]https://www.greenhouse.io/blog/4-traps-that-are-holding-back-your-companys-diversity-recruiting

INVOLVE OTHERS

If you're committed to building a more diverse and inclusive company, you'll want to spend some time developing your plan. As a company, you will need a strategic roadmap to ensure that your efforts are structured and measurable. (More on this later.) This approach also ensures that there's accountability and oversight throughout.
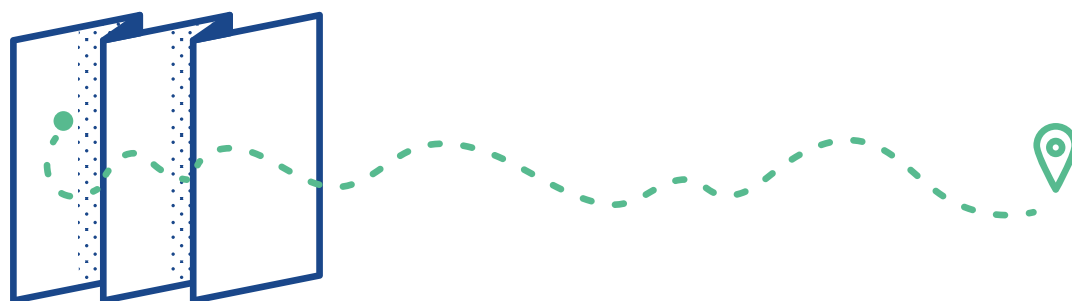
Again, D&I efforts need the support of the People and Executive teams, as well as the Employee Resource Groups and most definitely the founder(s) and CEO.

METHOD TWO

Incorporate diversity into the hiring process

Building a more diverse company begins by taking a close look at your hiring process. The hiring process is where some talent gets discovered—and others overlooked. There are various reasons why that happens, which can include everything from the wording of your job descriptions to a decision to recruit or hire exclusively from Ivy League or "top" schools to an unstructured recruitment and biased interview process.

> *We made a conscious decision over six years ago to focus on building a more diverse and inclusive workforce, and we are now really starting to see the fruits of our labor, especially as it relates to gender diversity," says McCormick.*

As an employer, the onus is on you to review your recruitment and employment practices to ensure you're not only attracting the same kind of talent.

Tarsha McCormick is the Head of Diversity and Inclusion, North America at ThoughtWorks, a global technology consulting firm with over 30 offices in 12 countries. Now at 4,000 employees—passionate, purpose-led individuals, as the company describes them—ThoughtWorks recognized the importance of diversity early on.

TIP

Expect to draft a plan, test, iterate and fail forward.

If you're looking for immediate results when it comes to diversity and inclusion, stop! You're committing to a major endeavor, so it's important not to get discouraged. Start with a few simple steps, like creating a task force, incorporating diversity into your sourcing efforts, or providing unconscious bias training to your employees. This way you'll have plenty of small wins to celebrate!

CAST A WIDER NET

Hiring diverse candidates goes beyond visiting historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), or tapping the typical go-to schools for talent. Ask yourself, who exactly are you targeting?

Tech talent does not only exist in computer science or engineering programs; they also exist in gender studies, philosophy, and history departments, among other liberal arts majors.

For ThoughtWorks, expanding their definition of tech talent created a pathway for more diverse candidates.

"We look beyond the computer science department to find candidates," shares McCormick. "We believe that talent can be found anywhere, and a person's passion and drive for technology doesn't necessarily have to come out of the computer science department. Casting a wider net and looking beyond the computer science department is one approach that helped us increase the number of women and underrepresented minorities in our organization."

ThoughtWorks has made a conscious decision to increase the number of women technologists in its organization. Named one of the 2016 Top Companies for Women Technologists by the

Anita Borg Institute, ThoughtWorks established the Women In Leadership Development (WILD) program to create more women leaders.

Whether a candidate is self-taught or educated through a bootcamp, it's important to recognize that some have a non-traditional educational background. ThoughtWorks University, a two-year entry-level program, prepares such candidates and recent graduates to thrive as tech consultants in their company.
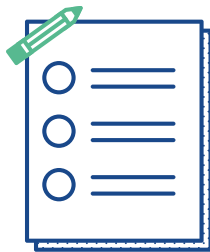
IMPLEMENT A STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROCESS
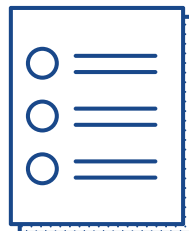
The interview is the most important part of the recruitment process. This means that a "go with the flow" approach will not be effective. While it may seem ideal to approach each interview with flexibility based on the interviewee, this approach allows for biases to come in and will not support you in evaluating each candidate equally. Studies have shown that interviewers tend to favor candidates who are more like themselves, and this is especially true during "culture fit" interviews. To learn more about how bias can creep into the interview process—and how to mitigate this—see Paradigm's *Managing Unconscious Bias* report.

STRUCTURED HIRING OVERVIEW

When creating a framework for structured interviews, consider the following questions:

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⑦ **WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO HIRE?**

Start with a thoughtful, holistic view of your ideal candidate to give clear direction and purpose to the rest of your process. For best results, get a team together to create your candidate scorecard with you. In particular, think more about the skills and traits that will make someone successful in the role, rather than qualifications.

⑦ **HOW WILL YOU EVALUATE THE CANDIDATE?**

Now that you know who you're trying to hire, you can use that information to clearly define the hiring criteria for this job by listing out the required skills, personality traits, and qualifications. What would a candidate need in each of these categories to succeed on the job?

⑦ **WHAT WILL THE INTERVIEW PROCESS LOOK LIKE?**

It's time to design your interview plan and kits for your interviewers. Interviewing candidates requires

A structured interview process begins by defining who you're looking for with candidate scorecards and an interview plan so you focus on the traits that actually matter for performance. A structured hiring process guided by interview kits will help ensure that all candidates answer the same questions and feedback is collected in a consistent, structured way. This approach can greatly improve your chances of making the right hire; help you focus on planning for the future, not just on your immediate needs; allow you to maintain objectivity during the interview process; and provide a legally defensible approach to hiring.

MITIGATE BIAS

Bias and stereotyping can be blatant, but oftentimes in the workplace they're subtle or unintentional. While unconscious bias—"hidden" bias, or bias that we're unaware of—exists in everyone, even the most open-minded individuals, it's particularly harmful during any decision-making process.

Lots of decisions are being made during the interview and hiring process such as who will be the person (or people) to interview the candidate, whether or not the candidate should be moved through to the next stage, and, ultimately, whether the candidate is a solid fit for the company.

a tremendous amount of time from your team, so it's important to make sure that time is well spent. Depending on the role and the size of your team, you may want to begin with application review before moving onto a phone screen, then follow up with skills testing, and finish out the process with in-person interviews. And you can supply each interviewer with a kit so they know what your priorities are for the role and how to assess them.

Once you've answered the questions above, you'll have pinpointed exactly who you're looking for, determined how to evaluate candidates, and decided what the interview process will look like. *Click here to access Greenhouse's interactive workbook to assist you further*!

There are a few ways to try to prevent bias from influencing decision-making during the hiring process. Greenhouse offers anonymous take-home tests so that candidates can be evaluated based on their ability to perform a job-related task rather than on their name or other identifying details.

ThoughtWorks conducts regular unconscious bias trainings and has structured the interview process to mitigate bias, and ensure that candidates are aware that diversity and inclusion are important from the onset through their interviewers.

"To help mitigate unconscious bias, candidates interview with a diverse panel of interviewers," says McCormick. "We want to make sure the candidate interviews with someone who's similar to them— whether that is race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc."

METHOD THREE

Metrics: Create concrete goals and stick to them

You already know the importance of having a plan. Part of that plan includes goals and benchmarks, but you may be wondering how you can even begin establishing those metrics. Start with an in-depth look at where you currently stand and allow that information to help you build out your goals, which will help you measure your progress.

DETERMINE WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT FROM A NUMBERS PERSPECTIVE

Companies can improve diversity through metrics. However, determining which types of metrics are most important can leave recruiters and hiring teams exhausted.

Each company has unique needs that will shape their plan and, more specifically, the metrics needed.

Use the data that you already have on applicants and employees

WHAT IS AN INCLUSION SURVEY?

One form of an employee survey is an inclusion survey, which captures the experiences of employees across an organization. The People data collected from an inclusion survey is then used to help companies create a more diverse and inclusive work environment.

While some companies choose to create this type of survey internally, others, like Trello, partner with an outside organization, or use a data-driven analytics platform such as Culture Amp.

Culture Amp and Paradigm partnered to created an Inclusion Survey designed to show a company how inclusive their organization is right now. **Carissa Romero**, a partner at Paradigm, explains, "We're really excited about this work—focusing on inclusion isn't just the right thing to do from a moral perspective, but research also shows that it's critical for employees to produce their best work."

Questions on the survey revolve around belonging, fairness, demographics, and diversity, among other workplace factors. The inclusion survey is currently free for tech companies to use.

such as breakdown of your workforce by race or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability; source of candidates; retention and turnover rates; as well as leadership makeup. Some of this information will be available to you through the workforce data you provide to the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Any additional diversity data can be captured during the hiring process or through an inclusion survey (see sidebar to learn more about inclusion surveys!).

Click here to learn more about the survey!

METHOD FOUR

Foster an inclusive and welcoming environment

Diversity is one part of the equation, the other is inclusion. Once you get diverse talent in the door, how do you create an environment where individuals from different backgrounds and with diverse ideas and perspectives are welcomed?

Think about how you can create an environment where everyone feels that they can participate fully, their contributions are valued, and they're part of your vision for your company, leadership, and your product.

There are several ways an organization can establish a collaborative and inclusive environment where diversity is truly valued.

HAVE THE UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATIONS

Many people get uncomfortable discussing issues around race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual

orientation, especially at work. However, having open conversations is important to any D&I initiative.

In the wake of difficult local, national, or international issues, diverse employees should have a safe space to open up and share their perspectives. Whether it's prompted by an employee, executive, or Employee Resource Group, this simple act of consideration promotes allyship and fosters understanding within your organization. This can also grow into larger initiatives within the company like a speaker series or monthly town halls.

ThoughtWorkers have engaged in the difficult conversations, finding them important and beneficial to understanding individuals with different backgrounds and lived experiences.

> **We haven't shied away from those difficult conversations because it's really necessary in order for us to understand and empathize with the person who's sitting next to us," says McCormick.**

Unconscious bias trainings can serve as an entry point to these conversations, too; however, open dialogue via an in-person or digital platform is important.

Trello has a diversity and inclusion Slack channel for employees to share their experiences. "You have to show that it's a safe space," says Elizabeth Hall, VP of People at Trello. "How do you do that? You have a CEO, you have top people who may look different than the people who are having the real struggles saying, 'This is a safe place. I'm sorry I don't have all the answers, but I can't wait to hear from all of you.'"

EMPOWER EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are more than networking/social groups. ERGs can provide innovation and growth to a company, impacting business goals directly by presenting direct business goals to the company, hosting much-needed conversations, and assisting to build the talent pipeline, to name a few things. The employee-led groups can leverage their cultural capital to amplify the voices and concerns of the group and the employees they represent, and increase representation and inclusiveness at the company.

SUPPORT THE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE/ COUNCIL

Leadership's support of D&I efforts is crucial, but so is a company's Diversity Committee, or Diversity

Council. Depending on the company, the committee (or council) can be comprised of employees from various segments of the company and a member of the D&I team, the entire team and an executive, or some variation of the two. Regardless of the makeup, their mission is to further diversity and inclusion efforts.

ACTIVELY LISTEN

A lot will be said and shared, so it's important that employees and leadership alike listen intently and engage with what's being shared.

Conclusion

We hope you now feel more confident about how to approach diversity and inclusion at your company. We, alongside ThoughtWorks and Trello, work toward our D&I goals daily, and now you have the framework to build a diverse team at your organization, too.

Remember: Trust in your efforts and keep evaluating your progress.

We hope to hear how your journey is coming along the way, so drop us a line. You'll find our contact info on the following page.

Let's shift the culture of tech together!

20/20 SHIFT

ABOUT 2020SHIFT

2020Shift diversifies technology by teaching professionals the skills needed to find a career they love. Our team has spent years working in the tech space. After experiencing the diversity issue first-hand, we created 2020Shift to support professionals, as well as tech and digital media companies diversify their recruitment process, retain minority talent and provide leadership and skills-based training to the industry's next leaders.

f https://www.facebook.com/2020shift/

𝕏 https://twitter.com/2020Shift

in https://www.linkedin.com/company/2020shift

greenhouse

ABOUT GREENHOUSE

The Greenhouse brand sits at the intersection of people, data, and design. We design tools for people who are growing great companies. Our philosophy is to empower people with the best practices and data needed to build both a great business and great place to work. Companies use Greenhouse to optimize how they interview, hire, and onboard the best talent.

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