Inclusive hiring practices

Toolkit for transforming hiring practices to attract and retain diverse talent

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Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
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About this toolkit

Making purposeful strides to attract, recruit, and hire diverse candidates can transform your workforce and solidify your identity as an employer of choice. For example, an increasing number of candidates are considering organizational commitment to diversity and inclusion in their job search. According to Glassdoor's Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Survey, 76 percent of employees and job seekers said a diverse workforce was important when evaluating companies and job offers.[1]

Inclusive hiring practices promote equal employment opportunities, improve the workplace environment, and promote the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences, particularly for candidates and employees with marginalized identities. Additionally, inclusive hiring fosters creativity, innovation, and problem-solving abilities by bringing together employees with a range of backgrounds and perspectives.

This toolkit includes a wide range of resources and best practices for every stage of the hiring process, from the point of candidate interest to the final hiring decision. It also provides tips for overcoming unconscious bias, creating inclusive job descriptions, and improving candidate outreach. It is intended to be useful for anyone involved in the hiring process, from human resource professionals to hiring managers. At the end of each section, you will find a summary of key learnings, reflection questions, and helpful resources.

Context and definitions

We use the acronym DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) throughout this toolkit. However, your organization may use another acronym, including D&I (diversity and inclusion), EDI (equity, diversity, and inclusion), IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility), EDIB (equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging) and others. Your choice of acronym depends on your organization's goals and values.

Below are some terms used throughout the document along with their definitions from CCDI's Glossary of Terms. These definitions will help your team have more in-depth conversations about inclusion in your workplace.

Diversity	Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities, and characteristics we all possess.
Equity	Equity is about treating individuals according to their diverse needs in a way that enables all people to participate, perform, and engage to the same extent.
Inclusion	Inclusion is about the collective. It is about creating a culture that strives for equity and embraces, respects, accepts and values difference.

DEI	An initialism for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Your organization and others may use any number of acronyms including D&I (diversity and inclusion), EDI (equity, diversity, and inclusion), IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility), and others. Your choice of acronym depends on your organization's workforce demographics, geographical location, size, DEI maturity, and goals.
Accessibility	Accessibility is about ensuring that all employees can perform to their full potential. Accessibility includes physical features of the workplace, technology, organizational culture and attitudes, and approaches to reasonable accommodations.
Discrimination	Intentional or unintentional denial of equal treatment, civil liberties and opportunity to individuals or groups with respect to education, accommodation, health care, employment and access to services, goods and facilities.
Equity-seeking groups	Groups of people who have been historically disadvantaged and underrepresented.
Intersectionality	A term coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how social identities may overlap to create compounding barriers for individuals. It is described as a framework for approaching issues from multiple perspectives and understanding how multiple groups, or individuals with multiple identities, may be affected.
Tokenism	Focusing on limited representation of equity-seeking groups for the appearance of being inclusive without any action towards meaningful inclusion.
Unconscious bias	An opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination formed without reasonable justification that prevents a balanced or even-handed judgement.

Reflection questions

- How does your organization define equity, diversity, and inclusion?

- Why is each concept important to your organization?

- Think about your organization's vision, mission, and values – how does equity, diversity, and inclusion fit within these?

Benefits of inclusive hiring

Understanding the benefits of inclusive hiring practices can help build a case for any associated initiatives and gather executive, management, and employee buy-in. Inclusive hiring has many operational, team, and interpersonal benefits, some of which are described below.

- **Happier, more engaged employees:** Feelings of inclusion paired with representational diversity increases employees' feelings of trust and engagement.[2]

- **Better problem-solving:** Diversity expands the range of perspectives present within a team, which improves a team's problem-solving ability,[3][4] decision-making speed,[5] creativity,[6] output quality,[7] and conflict management.[8]

- **Increased profits:** Organizations with ethnic and gender diversity in the top quartile are 36% and 25% more likely to outperform on profitability, respectively.[9] Additionally, organizations with above-average diversity in their top management teams earn 19 percentage points more innovation revenue.[10]

- **Improved reputation:** 76% of job seekers look at the diversity of companies. [11] Additionally, 90% of consumers wish to see organizations engaged in equality, with 78% indicating that they research to ensure the organization is authentic.[12]

- **Enhanced creativity:** In organizations with leadership that is both diverse and competent in diversity, employees are more willing to share marketable ideas, feedback is more readily given and received, and those ideas are more likely to make it to market.[13]

For more information on building a compelling case for DEI initiatives, see the **CCDI Toolkit: Making the case for diversity, equity, and inclusion (PDF).**

Summary

There are many benefits to diversifying your organization's workforce, including:

- Happier, more engaged employees
- Better problem-solving
- Increased profits
- Improved reputation
- Enhanced creativity

Reflection questions

- Why is diversifying your organization's workforce important to you, your team, and the organization?

- Does your team have any hesitations about making this change?

- What, if anything, has prevented your team from making this change in the past?

Helpful resources

Bilingual

- Making the case for diversity, equity, and inclusion (PDF) / Plaider en faveur de la diversité, de l'équité et de l'inclusion (PDF), Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion

- Why Hire Inclusively? / Pourquoi embaucher de manière inclusive? The Inclusive Workplace

- The Benefits of Inclusive Workplaces / Les avantages d'un milieu de travail inclusive, Optez pour le talent

- Workplace diversity: Why it's good for business / La diversité au travail: pourquoi c'est bon pour les affaires, BDC

English only

- The value of belonging at work: The business case for investing in workplace inclusion, BetterUp

- Diversity wins: How inclusion matters (PDF), McKinsey & Company

- Key Insights on Diversity & Inclusion (PDF), HRPA and Diversio

- Building Inclusive Workplaces, CIPD

French only

- Diversité et inclusion : « Chaque entreprise a tendance à recruter des clones », Welcome to the Jungle

Diversity is not inclusion

Increasing your organization's diversity is important, but the work does not end there. Focusing primarily on diversity while ignoring inclusion comes with risks. Without a DEI strategy that emphasizes inclusion, you risk poor teamwork, groupthink, lessened innovation, lower engagement, higher turnover, limited talent pools, and more.[14]

Diversity without inclusion may be perceived as tokenism, which tends to occur when a member of an underrepresented group is added to a team, but the culture has not shifted in a way that enables that person to bring their authentic selves to work.[15] Not only does tokenism harm an organization's credibility and trust in the community,[16] it also puts pressure on employees to be representative of and speak for their minority group.[17]

"Psychological safety" describes when individuals feel safe to express ideas, feelings, and questions or to make mistakes without repercussions.[18] Psychological safety is an essential part of inclusion, and building a psychologically safe organizational culture can help to avoid the previously mentioned risks and more fully realize the benefits of inclusion.[19] Within a recruitment context, your team can build psychological safety by having authentic conversations with candidates.[20] By shifting away from the typical interview process and prioritizing honest and transparent discussions, it allows your team to better understand candidates' experiences, needs, and career objectives.[21]

Measuring and tracking progress

Before making big plans to hire a large number of diverse candidates, organizations should first look inward and be aware of current challenges. Metrics can help you understand where you are and what you need to improve to attract and hire diverse candidates moving forward.[22] In the long term, metrics can help you understand what's working and where adjustments are needed. Below are some ideas of what and how to measure:

- **Diversity of applicants:** Track the demography of the candidate pool through the entire hiring process from initial contact through to resume review, interviews, and hiring.[23] If your organization has difficulties hiring diverse candidates, this can help you identify where these candidates tend to be filtered out.

- **Time to fill:** By tracking the time to fill a position, companies can reflect on their entire hiring process and brainstorm ways to streamline.[24] If a department takes longer to fill their positions, this can help you concentrate your efforts on certain managers or departments.

- **Offer acceptance rate:** This measures the percentage of job offers that are accepted.[25] If a position's acceptance rate is low, this might indicate that your compensation and benefits packages are not competitive.

- **Retention rate:** This measures the percentage of employees who remain with the company over a specific period.[26] If a position or department has low retention rates, this information can help you investigate current managers and their management styles.

Summary

- There are risks related to focusing on diversity and not inclusion. Before making any changes, organizations should first look inward and be aware of current challenges to create a more inclusive workplace.

- Metrics can help you understand where you are in the short term and where improvements may be needed in the long term.

Reflection questions

- Consider the differences between diversity and inclusion. Which is the bigger focus for your organization currently? How can you shift your priorities to focus more on inclusion?

- What are some of the existing barriers to inclusion in your organization?

- How does your team ensure organizational, team, and individual DEI accountability?

Helpful resources

Bilingual

- CCDI Webinar: Advancing inclusive recruitment, hiring and retention / Faire progresser le recrutement, l'embauche et la rétention inclusifs (available to CCDI Employer Partners in the Knowledge Repository)

- CCDI Webinar: Managing bias in hiring / La diversité dans le recrutement (available to CCDI Employer Partners in the Knowledge Repository)

- Creating a more inclusive + equitable hiring process / Pour Un Processus D'Embauche Plus Inclusif Et Équitable, KCI Oser

- Diversity versus inclusion: Why the difference matters / Diversité ou inclusion : une nuance qui fait la difference, BetterUp

- Inclusive human resource practices: Tips for building an inclusive workforce / Pratiques inclusives des ressources humaines : Conseils pour la création d'une main-d'oeuvre inclusive

- Psychological safety in the workplace - good for people, good for business / La sécurité psychologique au travail - indispensable à l'individu et à l'organisation, Desjardins

English only

- CCDI Webinar: Combatting tokenism (available to CCDI Employer Partners in the Knowledge Repository)

- Diversity and inclusion in recruitment (PDF), Robert Walters UK

- Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit (PDF), Employers for Change

- Psychological Safety and DEI, Michigan State University

- The Dangers Of Mistaking Diversity For Inclusion In The Workplace, Forbes

- What is tokenism in the workplace? Recruitee

French only

- Diversité et inclusion en recrutement, de quoi parle-t-on ? Taleez

- L'approche EDI ne doit pas être instrumentalisée au service d'une « diversité de façade », Revue Relations

- La sécurité psychologique : un levier indispensable! Ordre des conseillers en ressources humaines et en relations industrielles agréés du Québec

- Recruter sans discriminer: Guide de l'employeur, Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse

The candidate journey

The candidate journey refers to each stage of the job-seeking process for candidates.27 Each step impacts candidate experience, and organizations have several opportunities throughout this time to communicate a commitment to DEI. The major stages or touchpoints are the point of interest, application, interview, and final decision.

Interest

At this stage of the candidate journey, job seekers become aware of who you are, what your organization does, and what it's like to work there. This process may begin with a social media post, job fair, referral, informational interview, or job advertisement. From this point, candidates start researching your organizational culture, benefits, and employee reviews.

➡ Diverse Job Boards

By posting open positions on a job board targeting a specific community, employers can attract candidates with different backgrounds, experiences, identities, and perspectives. While posting your available role on one of these websites is a great way to start diversifying your pipeline, these 'diversity job boards' are just one recruiting tool in a broad range of recruitment methods that can help you attract candidates from diverse backgrounds.

➡ Employer branding

Finding ways to highlight your organization's commitment to inclusion can help prospective candidates see that your DEI statements are genuine.[28] Some organizations have a dedicated webpage highlighting the projects they have in place. It can be helpful for candidates to hear from your diverse employees in videos and see them in social media posts. Using inclusive stock photos is also a good idea but should only be used if the photos are truly representative of the diversity of the workforce.[29] Below are examples of inclusive stock photo collections:

- **Disability Inclusive Stock Photography**, Disability:IN
- Elevate collection from the Brewers Collective on **Unsplash** and **Pexels**
- **The Disability Collection** from Getty Images, Verizon Media, and the National Disability Leadership Alliance

In addition to the content, it's important that you make your website itself inclusive and accessible. Make sure to use readable fonts and font size, use clear, simple language, and add captions to any videos.[30] For more information, see **Introduction to Web Accessibility** from the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative and **Introduction to Web Accessibility** from Toronto Metropolitan University.

➡️ Employer Resource Groups

Employee resource groups (ERGs) are a great way to show candidates that you are committed to making them feel included once they join your company. They are voluntary, employee-led groups that promote a sense of belonging and support inclusivity within the workplace.[31] There are many benefits of ERGs, including improved visibility and representation of diverse perspectives within the organization, enhanced recruitment, development, and retention of a diverse workforce, and enhanced organizational culture and climate.[32]

➡️ Transparency

Transparency can lead to positive change because it provides accountability.[33] One way to create transparency within your organization and with the public is to publicize your metrics and goals.[34] Some organizations have started publicly sharing their diversity and inclusion journey via webpages or annual reports.[35] For example, BC Hydro has a public webpage sharing workforce diversity data over the past five years along with targets for the future.[36] These reports acknowledge progress that has been made while simultaneously reminding organizations of the ongoing nature of this work. Through these and other methods, transparency can demonstrate a long-term commitment to building an inclusive culture.[37]

Summary

- The interest stage of the hiring journey is where the candidate becomes aware of who you are, what your organization does and what it's like to work there.
- Posting open positions on a job board targeting a specific community can attract candidates with different backgrounds, experiences, identities, and perspectives.
- Highlight your company's commitment to DEI to build your DEI branding. Include overviews of current initiatives, how DEI is an integral part of your culture, and communicate your commitment on your website and social media accounts.
- Make sure your website is inclusive and accessible as possible. For example, include subtitles on videos, use readable fonts, and consider text colours. Use diverse imagery to ensure everyone feels represented.
- Employee resource groups (ERG) are a great way to show candidates that you are committed to making them feel included once they join your company.
- Be transparent with candidates and the public; share your shortcomings and plans in place to address them.

Reflection questions

- How are candidates learning about your organization? What is your reputation?
- How does your company look from an outsider's perspectives?
- Who is underrepresented in your company and why might that be?
- How can you work to increase representation?

Helpful resources

Bilingual

- Diverse job posting platforms and recruitment channels / Diverses plateformes d'affichage des emplois et canaux de recrutement, Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (available to CCDI Employer Partners in the Knowledge Repository)

- How to recruit and hire for a diverse talent pool / Comment recruter un vivier de talents diversifié, LinkedIn Talent Solutions

English only

- Candidate Sourcing Checklist (PDF), Artemis Canada

- Time to Look in the Mirror: Real D&I Progress Requires Honest Self-Assessment, LHH

- Diversity and Inclusion: Be Brave. Be Honest. Do the Work. Dr. Tara Peters on LinkedIn

- How to Create Transparency in DEI Measurement: A Guide for Senior Leaders (Infographic), Catalyst

- Why greater transparency is key to a winning DEI strategy, Fast Company

- Four ways to cultivate diverse candidate pools, The Globe and Mail

- Where to Post a Job Vacancy (PDF), Immigrant Employment Council of BC

- Find and engage diverse talent: A self-assessment to help you get started with inclusive hiring practices, LinkedIn Talent Solutions

French only

- Diffuser vos offres d'emploi, Emploi-Québec

- La transparence radicale, outil d'attraction et de retention, La Presse

- Diversité et inclusion : améliorer les pratiques pour recruter et retenir les meilleurs talents, Indeed

Application

The application stage begins when a candidate applies to a job posting. The information in these postings signals to applicants whether they are a good fit for the position and the organization and vice versa. Be highly intentional and vocal about your DEI commitments by adding statements illustrating your actions, goals, and priorities. Avoid copy-pasted statements and write a message that speaks authentically to your values. Below are examples of DEI statements from CCDI and each of our founding partners, either from their career webpage or current job postings. These examples illustrate the range of these statements and how they have been uniquely tailored to each organization.

- **CCDI:** Please note preference will be given to qualified candidates who further the diversification of CCDI. This may include employment equity designated groups (women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minority groups), but also includes diversity of experience, background, and ideas.

- **Accenture:** We have an unwavering commitment to diversity with the aim that every one of our people has a full sense of belonging within our organization. As a business imperative, every person at Accenture has the responsibility to create and sustain an inclusive environment. Inclusion and diversity are fundamental to our culture and core values. Our rich diversity makes us more innovative and more creative, which helps us better serve our clients and our communities.[38]

- **CBC/Radio-Canada:** CBC/Radio-Canada is committed to being a leader in reflecting our country's diversity. That's because we can only create and tell the stories that connect Canadians, by having a workforce that mirrors the ever-changing makeup of our country. That's why we, as an employer, value equal opportunity and nurture an inclusive workplace where our individual differences are not only recognized and valued, but also extend to and pervade all the services we provide as Canada's public broadcaster.[39]

- **City of Calgary:** The City is committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive and equitable workplace which is representative of the community we serve. We welcome those who have demonstrated a commitment to upholding the values of equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism and reconciliation. Applications are encouraged from members of groups that are historically disadvantaged and underrepresented. Accommodations are available during the hiring process, upon request.[40]

- **Deloitte:** At Deloitte, we are all about doing business inclusively – that starts with having diverse colleagues of all abilities. Deloitte encourages applications from all qualified candidates who represent the full diversity of communities across Canada. This includes, but is not limited to, people with disabilities, candidates from Indigenous communities, and candidates from the Black community in support of living our values, creating a culture of Diversity Equity and Inclusion and our commitment to our AccessAbility Action Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan and the BlackNorth Initiative.[41]

- **Dentons:** At Dentons Canada, inclusion, diversity and equity (ID&E) are not just ancillary values, they are foundational to our business. We believe that ID&E is essential to the shared success of our team and our clients. Our forward-thinking and inclusive culture

supports the professional development of all our people, enhances the leading services we offer to our clients, and informs our commitment to make a positive impact in the communities where we live and work. As a testament to our commitment to ID&E, we have been recognized as one of Canada's Best Diversity Employer's for 12 consecutive years (2011-2022), as well as one of Canada's Top Employers for Young People (2022) for the fifth time.[42]

- **Greater Toronto Airports Authority:** We welcome the world to Canada every day and having a diverse, equitable and inclusive work environment is one of our most competitive advantages. Ensuring that our employees can bring their best selves to work enables us to meet the demands of a challenging global marketplace, drive innovation and provide a warm welcome to people from around the globe.[43]

- **HSBC:** HSBC is committed to building a culture where all employees are valued, respected and opinions count. We take pride in providing a workplace that fosters continuous professional development, flexible working and opportunities to grow within an inclusive and diverse environment.[44]

- **ICBC:** At ICBC, it's our job to make sure the car insurance system works for all British Columbians, today and in the future. If you want to make the most of your skills and expertise while growing your career, we want you. A career at ICBC is an opportunity to be part of a talented, diverse and inclusive team that is driven to serve its customers and community. You can expect a competitive salary, comprehensive benefits and a collaborative work environment. If you are reliable and dependable, contact us today to be part of our talented and diverse team as we work together to create an insurance system we can all be proud of.[45]

- **Ottawa-Carleton District School Board:** Our people serve students, colleagues, families and community partners. We invite people of all abilities, orientations, faiths, ethnicities, races, genders and ages to join us as we create learning and working spaces that honour the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Algonquin people, and respect, value and increasingly reflect the diversity of Ottawa. Your lived experience is an essential contribution to deliver the education every student deserves with dignity.[46]

- **Scotiabank:** At Scotiabank, we value the unique skills and experiences each individual brings to the Bank, and are committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment for everyone.[47]

- **Simon Fraser University:** SFU is committed to the principle of equity in employment and offers equal employment opportunities to all qualified applicants.[48]

- **Sodexo:** Sodexo is committed to Employment Equity and Diversity. We do not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of national origin, race, religion, ethnic group, age, disability, gender, sexual preference, sexual or gender identity, status as a veteran or any other federal, provincial or local protected class.[49]

➡ Job postings

If your team is looking to increase diversity, you may choose to collect applicant demographics. It is important that your team is intentional and only asks what is essential to your DEI goals (i.e., if you are looking to increase the number of women on your team, ask, but otherwise, do not). Please note that the results from your voluntary disclosure may not be completely accurate as some applicants may refuse to disclose. Include a statement explaining the reason for collecting this information, what the organization does with the data, and any steps taken to ensure applicant privacy and anonymity.

There is a recent trend towards pay transparency, with many organizations choosing to include a salary range in job postings. A recent study found that 84% of Canadians would support a law mandating employers to disclose salary ranges in job postings.[50] In the same survey, many participants also reported that salary transparency could increase pay equity for gender (61%) and racial minorities (57%). Consider adding the salary range to your job postings to provide more information for candidates to determine if your organization/role is a good fit for them.

➡ Inclusive language

The language used in job descriptions will either attract or repel candidates due to unintentionally exclusive words.[51] As a result, qualified candidates are reluctant to apply. Idioms, jargon, and acronyms can exclude people without specialized knowledge of a particular subject which may impede effective communication.[52] Additionally, jargon and technical terminology can vary across workplaces, regions, and the world. Milkround's study of 2,000 recent graduates found that 71% of people reported being discouraged from applying to jobs because of jargon.[53] This rate is increasing, with a 21% increase in the average amount of jargon between 2017 and 2019.[54] Plain language is more accessible, easier to understand, and more engaging.[55]

Examples of language that can be exclusive:[56]

Age-related Terms	o "Young and energetic" o "Digital native" o "Calling all recent graduates!"
Ethnic and religious characteristics	o "Strong English-language skills" o "Clean-shaven"
Gender-coded language	o Too many masculine-coded words like aggressive, dominant, etc. o Gendered job titles like "salesman"
Words that discourage disabled applicants	o "Able-bodied" o "Must be able to carry/lift 50lbs."

In addition to language, the requirements listed in a job posting are a significant factor in whether someone will apply. For example, women typically only apply for jobs where they meet 100% of the requirements listed. In contrast, men will apply when they meet just 60%.[57] Think about what is necessary for the job and if there are any ways to use comparable experience in lieu of direct experience. Try to word these requirements in a result-oriented way rather than based on experience or ability. Some examples of unintentional barriers created by job requirements are listed below, along with alternative results-oriented wording.[58]

LANGUAGE THAT COULD CREATE A BARRIER TO EMPLOYMENT	LANGUAGE THAT IS RESULTS-ORIENTED
10+ years' experience in medical administration in a medical specialist's office.	Experience working as a medical administrator, including experience managing patient appointments and requests, and communication with healthcare partners.
Valid driver's license required.	The ability to travel and provide own transportation.
Three years' experience as a tax auditor.	Experience in tax auditing involving a variety of industries, including several complex audits.

Summary

- This stage is when candidates apply to your job posting.
- Highlight your commitments by adding a DEI statement to your job posting.
- If your team is looking to increase diversity, you may choose to collect applicant demographics.
- Providing pay transparency by including the salary range in job postings can help advance progress toward pay equity.
- Be mindful of the language used in your job posting that may be unintentionally exclusionary.
- Make sure requirements are the actual essential requirements.
- Try to word these requirements in a result-oriented way rather than based on experience or ability.

Reflection questions

- Do you believe your organization is truly an equal opportunity employer? Why or why not?
- How does your team track the demographics of people who apply?
- Does your organization include a salary range? Why or why not?
- In what ways have your previous job postings been unintentionally exclusive?

Tools to assess for bias

- **Textio**
- **Gender Decoder**
- **UInclude**

Helpful resources

Bilingual

- Are You Ready for the New Reality of Pay Transparency? / Êtes-vous prêt pour la nouvelle réalité en matière de transparence salariale? Mercer
- How to Write an Inclusive Job Posting / Les étapes pour rédiger des offres d'emploi inclusives, Hire for Talent
- Tips to write an inclusive job description / Conseils pour rédiger une offre d'emploi inclusive, Randstad Canada
- What Finance Leaders Need to Know About Pay Transparency / Transparence salariale : ce que les chefs des finances doivent savoir, ADP

English only

- Inclusive Language in the Recruiting Process: Attracting Diverse Applicants, Indeed
- Should salary ranges be included in job descriptions? Visier
- How to build a more inclusive hiring program (PDF), Monster
- Transparent Commitment to D&I: Inclusion Statements in Job Ads, Sarah Cordivano on Medium
- Research: The Unintended Consequences of Pay Transparency, Harvard Business Review

French only

- Oui à la transparence salariale! Mais jusqu'où aller et comment? CRHA
- Inclure le salaire dans les offres d'emploi, oui ou non ? Culture RH
- L'affichage d'une offre d'emploi inclusive (PDF), Roseph

Interview

During this stage, employers conduct interviews to assess each candidate's fit for the position.[59] Although common, the traditional interview approach is not the most efficient way to filter applicants.[60]

Interviewers tend to favour people who are similar to them.[61] This affinity bias may result in a preference for a candidate who is similar to the interviewer over one who is not, regardless of who is better suited for the job.[62] Below are some ideas to combat this and other biases within the interview stage of your hiring process.

➡ Check your bias

Recognizing your bias is an essential part of addressing it. Encourage your team to reflect on their bias and take the time to reflect on your own. Every interviewer should take unconscious bias and general interview training before conducting an interview.[63] Interviewers should be trained on questions to avoid and topics that may be prohibited due to their relation to protected grounds.

Establishing a panel that includes a diverse set of colleagues can ensure any personal unconscious biases are mitigated, help you to consider an applicant from a broader perspective, and make a more informed decision.[64] When creating a panel, it's a good idea to evaluate what efforts your interview panel members have made within your company to contribute to DEI as they are less likely to show bias.[65]

➡ Accommodations

People with disabilities face systemic barriers and discrimination when accessing employment.[66] Candidates with disabilities have the right to receive reasonable accommodations throughout the hiring process, including the interview.[67] This is meant to ensure that your recruitment process is barrier-free and equitable for all individuals.[68] Each accommodation made must be specific to the individuals' specific needs; what works for one person will not work for everyone.[69] It is crucial to remind applicants of this support and encourage them to voice their needs. Below is CCDI's accessibility statement, included in our job postings:

> CCDI in an inclusive workplace dedicated to accessibility. Please let us know if you require any accommodations by emailing **humanresources@ccdi.ca.**

Examples of accommodations

- Requesting a scent-free or reduced scent environment. Some chemicals used in scented products can make some people sick, especially those with fragrance sensitivities, asthma, allergies, and other medical conditions.[70]
- Enabling the presence of an attendant, personal support worker, or service animal. Some people with disabilities need this support to assist them with challenges related to vision impairment, mobility issues, and more.[71]

- Seating interviewers to allow the candidate to see the interviewer's face clearly. Speechreading allows people with hearing impairments to read lips, facial expressions, gestures, and surroundings to help them understand what is being said.[72]

- Selecting a quiet location with reduced ambient noise. A noisy interview can be distracting to neurodivergent individuals, which may lead to sensory overload.[73]

- Having flexibility with interview times. Flexible scheduling enables candidates to find times that work best for them, which may include alternative dates around religious or "non-standard" holidays or prayer times.[74]

- Using accessible formats and assistive communication. Some disabilities can impact a person's ability to communicate, which may require your team to use: Braille displays, large print materials, and amplification systems.[75]

- Providing applicants with formal interview questions ahead of time. This allows neurodivergent people more time to process and formulate an answer.[76]

- Providing options for interview format (e.g., face-to-face, video, telephone).[77] Due to mobility or other impairments, candidates may request to have a telephone interview rather than face-to-face.[78]

➡️ Prepare interviewees for success

Prepare the candidate in advance with information. Include the following in your email invitation:

- **The job posting:** Including a copy of the job posting can help candidates review the position's requirements.

- **Date and time of the interview:** Let candidates know the date and time so they can make arrangements to attend.[79] It might be helpful to send a calendar invitation.

- **Interview format:** Let applicants know if the interview will be in-person, remote or by phone. If the interview is in person, share instructions for when they arrive (e.g., where to meet, parking or transit information, etc.).[80]

- **Title and name of interviewer(s):** This allows candidates to prepare for who they will be meeting.[81] It is common to conduct interviews with more than one interviewer, but too many can be intimidating. Reflect on who is necessary for the panel.[82]

- **What candidates can expect:** It is helpful to outline what candidates can expect from your hiring process, from the number of interviews to the type of questions asked It is a best practice to streamline the recruitment process efficiently.[83] Think about how many interviews are enough to assess a candidate. Remember that for every interview, the candidate needs to make arrangements to attend.

- **Items candidates need to bring:** If candidates need to bring certain items to the interview (e.g., proof of credentials), inform them so they can prepare.[84]

- **Contact information:** Include a phone number and email address, so candidates can contact you if needed.[85]

➡️ Interview questions

To reduce bias, standardize your interview process.[86] Structured interviews benefit candidates because they're evaluated on their skills rather than perceived fit or personality. Create a list of questions aligned directly with what will define success in this role and remove any unnecessary ones. Then, ask each candidate the same questions in the same order.[87]

Behavioural interviewing is a common type of question asked in interviews. These questions often require candidates to reflect on specific events and situations (e.g., "tell me about a time when..."), which can demonstrate their skills, such as critical thinking or problem-solving.[88] Behavioral interview questions should focus less on the past and more on the present; it should be less about who has done a specific task before and more about who is capable.[89]

Questions that put the focus on capabilities instead of direct experience allow your organization to be inclusive of varying backgrounds and perspectives in your interview process.[90] For example, instead of asking, "have you done this task?" try asking, "how would you approach this task?" These open-ended questions allow candidates a bit more flexibility with their answers.[91]

Below, we list some examples of common interview questions alongside a version that has been reworded to be more inclusive.[92]

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTION	INCLUSIVE ALTERNATIVE
"Tell me about yourself."	*"Can you take me through your résumé?"* This is a culturally biased question. Some cultures, and some individuals, may find it difficult to 'sell' their skills.
"What type of work environment do you prefer?"	Ask a question that is directly related to the skills needed for the job. For instance, in a customer service job, you might ask *"can you tell me how you might handle a customer complaint about ..."* This question assumes that the individual has sufficient work experience to answer this question. It also suggests that the employer has a certain type of work environment and may not be open to accommodations or differing work styles.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTION	INCLUSIVE ALTERNATIVE
"Which job have you found the most difficult?"	*"Can you tell me about a time that you had to make a change and how you dealt with that?"* Do not assume that the person has a work history to draw from. By expanding the question to include 'change' instead of 'change on the job', it allows all candidates to address the question.
"What are your strengths?	*"Can you tell me about a time when you were able to complete a project ahead of schedule?"* Ask about a specific strength or skill that you are seeking. Some people have never learned to communicate about themselves in flattering terms and feel that it is boasting. Additionally, newcomers to Canada may have trouble answering open-ended questions and specific questions can help focus their responses.
"We are looking for someone who thinks outside of the box. Give me an example of when you did this."	*"Can you give me an example of how you solved a problem in an unexpected way?"* Some people who are neurodivergent or have disabilities, or people for whom English is not their first language, may be unfamiliar with or have difficulty understanding slang or euphemisms. Use clear language.
"Why did you apply for this job?"	For many people, this might be their first job, or economic necessity might be a primary consideration in applying. This does not mean that they are not the best fit for the position. The best practice would be to not use this question at all, as it is unrelated to the duties of the job.

→ Video interviews

When conducting video interviews, it's important to remember that candidates may not have access to the latest technology at home or could be sharing living spaces with limited private or quiet areas. These factors do not impact how well a candidate could do the job.[93]

Summary

- During this step, you evaluate your candidates based on their interviews.
- Every interviewer should take unconscious bias and general interview training before conducting an interview.
- Accommodation ensures that your recruitment process is barrier-free and equitable for all individuals. Therefore, the interview process should be accommodated for candidates who request it.
- Prepare the candidate in advance with information, such as how long the interview will be, who the panel members will be, and the types of questions that will be asked.
- To reduce bias, standardize your interview process. Only ask questions directly related to the role, then ask the same questions in the same order for every interviewee.
- Questions that focus on capabilities instead of direct experience allow your organization to be inclusive of varying backgrounds and perspectives in your interview process.
- When conducting video interviews, be mindful that candidates may not have access to the latest technology at home or could be sharing living spaces with limited private or quiet areas.

Reflection questions

- How successful is your current interview process?
- What does your team do to make the interview process as accommodating as possible?
- Has your team completed unconscious bias training? How has it changed your interview process?
- What is your team's accessibility plan for when accommodations are requested? (e.g., do you have a budget? Who is responsible?)
- Review your interview process. Are there any changes that can be made to be more streamlined?

Helpful resources

Bilingual

- Adapting your interview process to be more accessible / Adapter le processus d'entrevue pour le rendre plus accessible, Randstad Canada

- Guide to Accessible eRecruiting (PDF) / Guide du recrutement en ligne accessible (PDF), Ontario Disability Employment Network

- Interview Accommodations / Les mesures d'adaptation pour les entrevues, Hire for Talent

- Prepare for an Inclusive Video Job Interview (PDF) / Se préparer pour une entrevue d'embauche virtuelle inclusive (PDF), The Inclusive Workplace

- Recruit and Hire / Recrutement et embauche, The Inclusive Workplace

English only

- Equity Considerations in Virtual Interviews

- How to Conduct Culturally-Savvy Interviews, Immigrant Employment Council of BC

- How To Create an Inclusive Interview Process, Indeed

- Toolkit for Conducting Inclusive Interviews, Hanover Research

French only

- Diversité et inclusion en recrutement, de quoi parle-t-on ? Taleez

- Recrutement et embauche, Ordre des administrateurs agréés du Québec

- Recruter sans discriminer: Guide de l'employeur, Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse Québec

Decision

The last step in the candidate journey comes when a final hiring decision is made and an offer of employment is presented to the chosen candidate.[94] At this point, your team should reflect on your current salary and benefits package. Your organization's total rewards strategy – the benefits, compensation, and other rewards employees receive – should aim to ensure fair and equitable salary levels across your workforce, strengthen your workplace culture, and reinforce your reputation.[95]

➡ Compensation

Some considerations for building an effective strategy are described below.

- **Appoint a compensation strategy manager:** A trained professional should be hired to manage this strategy, but also make sure it stays aligned with DEI best practices[].[96]
- **Find industry-specific compensation data:** This includes information like average annual salary for roles in your industry and average annual salary for roles in your organization to ensure your team is staying competitive.[97]
- **Determine pay levels:** Create different pay tiers for the roles within your organizations to provide transparent, fair, and equitable career advancement opportunities.[98]
- **Define your compensation philosophy:** Your team should have a conversation on the purpose of your compensation strategy to ensure it aligns with your DEI goals.[99]
- **Establish a pay structure:** Decide on the minimum and maximum rates you will pay for every position within your company to create pay transparency. Remember to create clear rules around raises and promotions.[100]
- **Review regularly:** Set up a reoccurring time frame in which to review your compensation strategy to ensure it stays aligned with your organizational values.[101]

➡ Benefits

In addition to salary, benefits play a role in creating and retaining a diverse workforce.[102] Reflect on your organization's current benefits package and consider including the examples of inclusive benefits listed below.

- **Floating holidays:** Offering flexible floating holidays allows employees to celebrate and honour days of particular importance to them or their religion, culture, or ethnic background.[103]
- **Parental leave:** Offering gender-neutral parental leave, including leave for parents of newly adopted children, can help contribute to a positive work-life balance.[104] Please note that it is important to model this behaviour in addition to offering this benefit. Visible "fatherhood champions" are necessary to inspire fathers to take parental leave.[105]
- **Flexible work arrangements:** This refers to flexibility outside of traditional 8-hour days and 5-day work weeks, including flex hours, remote work, or a shortened or compressed work week. Flexibility supports employees with additional needs or responsibilities outside of the office.[106]

- **Flexible benefits:** This allows employees to customize their total benefits package to their needs and can include health and wellness spending accounts, and flexible allocations for things like disability coverage, retirement benefits, and life insurance.[107]

- **Gender-affirming benefits:** Insurance companies often do not fully cover gender-affirming surgeries. Offering comprehensive health benefits for trans and transitioning employees can contribute to employees feeling valued and seen by their employers.[108]

- **Caregiving benefits:** This includes family leave, flexible work arrangements, on-site childcare, or childcare allowances to support employees who are caregivers.[109]

- **Wellness benefits:** This may include support from mental health professionals, on-site fitness centers, and flexible health spending accounts to promote holistic wellness.[110]

- **Professional development (PD):** These benefits allow employees to continue to grow professionally and may include tuition assistance, mentorship/sponsorship/coaching, or PD allowances.[111]

➜ Negotiations

Negotiating salary is not an equal practice due to biases.[112] A study conducted by the University of Virginia showed that despite White and Black candidates being equally likely to negotiate, evaluators who scored high for racial bias believed that Black candidates had negotiated more often than White candidates.[113] As a result, Black candidates were penalized and were offered $300 less in starting salary, on average. While that number may seem insignificant, pay gaps compound, and will grow over time.[114] Your team should discuss the negotiation process to ensure you are not perpetuating this pay gap. Consider adopting a non-negotiations policy for employee recruitment.

➜ Rejection

Show that you value the time of unsuccessful candidates with quick communication. Let candidates know you're not moving forward with their candidacy as soon as possible.[115] When rejecting candidates, genuinely thank them for their time, give them constructive feedback and invite them to connect with you on LinkedIn to keep in touch.[116]

➜ Candidate feedback

Feedback can be a way to improve candidate experience as it provides an opportunity to learn about the process from their point of view.[117] Invite them to complete your candidate experience survey, leave a review on Glassdoor, or share their opinion over the phone. This information will allow you to address any inefficiencies or challenges in the recruiting process to help solidify you as an inclusive employer.[118]

Summary

- The last step in the candidate journey comes when a final hiring decision is made, and an offer of employment is presented to the chosen candidate.

- Develop a compensation strategy to determine how your organization will decide employee benefits and pay to ensure fairness and equity.

- Negotiations can perpetuate inequity due to evaluator biases. Discuss how to approach negotiations within your team and consider adopting a non-negotiations policy.

- Show unsuccessful candidates that you value their time with quick communication.

- Invite applicants to complete an application satisfaction survey to learn about the applicant experience and improve candidate experience.

Reflection questions

- Did your hiring process fulfil your DEI goals?

- Was a candidate from an underrepresented background selected?
  If not, reevaluate your hiring process to assess for barriers.

- How can the organization increase the selection of underrepresented candidates in the future?

- Are your benefits and salary equitable?

- What has been the feedback on your entire hiring process and how can the organization act on this feedback?

Helpful resources

Bilingual

- Hiring Intentions and Best Practices / Les intentions de recrutement et les pratiques exemplaires des employeurs, Hire for Talent

- Turning health risk into value: Are your health and wellbeing approaches inclusive? / Transformer le risqué pour la santé en valeur : Vos approches en matière de santé et de bien-être sont-elles inclusives? Mercer

- Are You Ready for the New Reality of Pay Transparency? / Êtes-vous prêt pour la nouvelle réalité en matière de transparence salariale? Mercer

English only

- Counteracting Negotiation Biases Like Race and Gender in the Workplace, Harvard Law School Program on Negotiation

- How to review benefit plans to ensure diversity and inclusion, Gallagher

- How to Assess Skills and Negotiate Competencies, Immigrant Employment Council of BC

- The role of employee benefits in fostering diversity and inclusion, WTW

French only

- Mettre en œuvre sa stratégie en matière de diversité, d'équité et d'inclusion : commencer par les avantages sociaux des employés, Aon

- Inclusion et diversité : passer de la parole aux actes, Conseiller

- Être une femme nuit dès l'embauche, La Presse

- Rémunération : la transparence est une opportunité, Ordre des conseillers en ressources humaines et en relations industrielles agréés du Québec

Conclusion

There are many benefits to diversifying your organization's workforce, including happier, more engaged employees, better problem-solving, increased profits, improved reputation, and enhanced creativity. Adjusting your hiring process to become more inclusive will boost your company culture and attract the best people for your roles.

We hope this was a useful tool in helping you to evaluate and update your hiring process.

What's next?

Although this toolkit is a great place to start, it is essential to note that DEI is constantly evolving, and so should your recruitment process. Continue to read articles and attend events about this topic so that you are aware of DEI trends and best practices. We also encourage you to engage in or continue consultations with equity-seeking groups on how you can review and improve your organizational hiring practices.

For help with next steps, **view our other toolkits.**

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