Putting Your Inclusion Strategy into Action

The Inclusive
Workplace

"Where do I start?"

"How can I bring my organization on board?"

If you work in a large organization with multiple locations, it can be hard to know how to get started with inclusive hiring. Here are some helpful steps.

Steps for hiring inclusively

STEP 1   Hire!

STEP 2   Repeat step 1.

This may be oversimplifying things, but hiring inclusively is quite simple.

- The best way to create a more diverse and inclusive organization is to hire inclusively.
- The best way to get started is to do it.
- The best way to learn is by doing.

Recommendations

There are a number of best practices for implementing organizational change and creating an inclusive workplace. **(*These recommendations are for corporations or organizations with multiple locations; however, a business of any size may benefit from this information.)**

Get motivated

- Get motivated by the business benefits. There are many business benefits of inclusive hiring—Ready, Willing & Able Benefits.
- Identify motivators for change for your organization.
  - What motivates us to hire inclusively?
  - Why should we?
  - What are the benefits?

Partner and collaborate

- Partner with organizations that have direct connections to a diverse talent pool of candidates, such as local employment agencies and Ready, Willing & Able.

- Collaborate with these organizations. Reach out. Ask questions. Take advantage of their programs and services. Ask for their support.
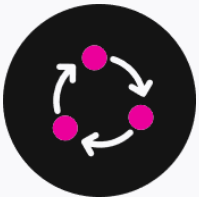
Bring people on board

- Get the entire company involved. Creating an inclusive workplace is a shared responsibility. Generate a collective commitment.

- Link diversity and inclusion to the values of your organization.

Explore your existing or anticipated hiring needs

- Explore your hiring needs. What jobs are you looking to fill now and in the near future?

Commit to creating a workplace that can adapt and evolve

- Commit to establishing an inclusive recruitment and selection process and working environment.

- Commit to being flexible, creative, and collaborative in order to build more inclusive and accessible practices that will have widespread organizational benefits.

Develop goals

- Develop measurable goals to capture the results of your commitment and work. We know that what gets measured gets done. Share those goals throughout the organization so everyone can work toward them together.

- Identify data and metrics that can be used to track your progress toward your goals.

- Share, track, and report progress toward goals with the organization.
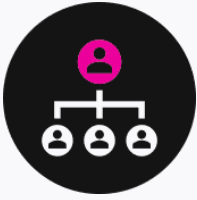
Set the tone from the top

- Showcase commitment from leadership to creating a more inclusive workplace. Setting the tone from the top builds employee engagement and establishes a vision for the organization.

Designate a lead

- Designate a corporate lead (for example, if you have staff or a team that is responsible for leading diversity and inclusion initiatives at your organization). This person oversees and takes internal responsibility for your commitment to inclusion.

- This person may support the development or implementation of an inclusive workplace policy that's designed to guide management and employees in meeting your organization's performance objectives.

Develop a playbook

A playbook is your organization's approach to getting things done. Develop a playbook in order to ensure communication, collaboration, and accountability across locations and departments.

- Identify local leads (within management and Human Resources) who are responsible for implementing any changes to hiring.

- Establish training opportunities for local leads (and other staff) to build confidence, capacity, and enthusiasm about changing hiring practices to be more inclusive.

- Communicate inclusive hiring decisions and practices to everyone involved in the hiring process.

- Develop a process for considering candidates for other open roles (if not a good match for the role they applied for).

- Establish a clear process for informing employment agencies that you have job opportunities available that can support inclusive hiring.

- Establish mechanisms for communication between store locations (for example, internal leads).

- Establish regular, scheduled opportunities for the corporate lead to share inclusion updates (for example, to share statistics, successes, and learnings, or to troubleshoot barriers).

- Ensure transition plans are in place for local leads (for example, corporate lead, local lead) so knowledge and processes aren't lost if there's a role change.

Generate organizational awareness

- Establish an annual awareness campaign to build and maintain staff knowledge and engagement about your organizational commitment to inclusion. This will also showcase your commitment to inclusion to your customer base.

Communicate regularly

- Share successes and learnings.

- Create regular, scheduled opportunities to communicate at the local and corporate levels.

- Discuss how to create and sustain an inclusive workplace long-term.

- Share new approaches.

- Refine existing approaches.

- Improve recruitment and selection processes, onboarding practices, and workplace practices.

Consult with employees with disabilities

- Involve and consult with employees with disabilities to help you create accessible and inclusive approaches to hiring.

- If you have an Employee Resource Group for persons with disabilities, consult with its members.
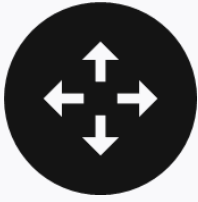
Drive change

- Change can start with you. It doesn't matter where you are situated in your company's organizational chart or what your role is—you can play a role in creating change.

- Reach out to a local employment agency or program that specializes in inclusive employment and arrange for a team lunch and learn.

- Create or join a committee to discuss and take steps to create a more inclusive workplace.

- Talk to your Human Resources department and share your interest in being a mentor to new employees who are on the autism spectrum or who have an intellectual disability.

The path to inclusive hiring can start today. Having new ideas, building partnerships, gathering data, and having a plan for the steps you'll take is a great way to get started.

Sources

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2. Hire For Talent. (n.d.). What is an Inclusive Workplace Policy? Hire For Talent. https://hirefortalent.ca/main/toolkit/inclusive-workplaces/174-what-is-an-inclusive-workplace-policy

3. Ready, Willing, and Able. (n.d.). RWA Course #3: Inclusive Talent Management Practices Part 1: Building an Inclusive Talent Pipeline. Ready, Willing, and Able. https://readywillingable.ca/employers/rwa-works/