



DiversityInc
MEETING IN A BOX

Best Practices From The DiversityInc Top 50

Recruitment, Mentoring, Resource Groups

This month, we are giving you the latest trends, data and best practices on recruiting a diverse and talented workforce and the proven ways to retain, engage and promote that talent, including mentoring, sponsorship and use of resource groups. We also recommend you review our Web Seminar on [Best Practices From the DiversityInc Top 50](#) featuring [EY](#) (No. 4 in the [DiversityInc Top 50](#)) and [Merck & Co.](#) (No. 12).

For D&I Staff, HR Staff, Recruiters, Talent-Acquisition Departments, Diversity-Council Members, Resource-Group Leaders and Executive Sponsors

1 RECRUITMENT: THE BEST TALENT PIPELINE

The first step in creating an inclusive and diverse workforce that mirrors the marketplace is recruitment. It's often the biggest hurdle as recruiters and hiring managers can let their own unconscious biases get in the way of bringing in new talent.

Companies on the DiversityInc Top 50 use [proven best practices](#) to increase their recruitment—and on-boarding—of talent from underrepresented groups. It doesn't in any way mean lowering "qualifications"; it means looking at each applicant holistically and hiring people who can succeed in the organization and bring fresh approaches.

The best practices consistently used by these companies to bring in talent include:

- Ensuring that both internal and external recruiters and all hiring managers receive cultural-competence training.
- Mandating diverse slates that mirror the geographic availability whenever possible, certainly for management positions.
- Working with colleges and universities (and high schools) to develop talent at early ages, especially in fields where gaps exist for underrepresented groups.
- Having strong relationships with multicultural nonprofits and professional associations (including having senior executives sit on their boards).
- Using [resource groups](#) to both find and [on-board](#) talented people from underrepresented groups. These groups are also valuable in developing leadership skills and in identifying people who might not be obvious for high-potential slots, but with added guidance and education could become leaders.

Guided Questions for Staff

Are you fully utilizing your [resource groups](#)?

Resource groups are excellent places to find talent and to make sure people from underrepresented groups are comfortable in the corporate culture once hired. They also provide referrals and role models at job fairs and at colleges and universities. Many companies have used resource groups to set up mixers/speaking events to introduce people from their communities to executives at their companies, even when there are no job openings.

Are the people who are making hiring decisions receiving cultural-competence training? What is the diversity of the hiring/recruiting staff?

Examine the gatekeepers who decide who gets seen and whether they are representative of the population and have had sufficient training to understand how their own biases and backgrounds impact their recommendations.

Are you evaluating your relationships with nonprofits and professional associations?

The types of relationships that yield valuable recruits are personal. While writing checks benefits nonprofits, getting involved on their boards or in their leadership creates lasting relationships that will help in your recruiting efforts.

2 TALENT DEVELOPMENT/MENTORING/SPONSORSHIP

Once you have the talent on board, are you fully realizing potential? DiversityInc Top 50 data show that even at progressive companies, people from underrepresented groups often have higher rates of voluntary attrition. Why do they leave? Usually because they feel their chances of getting to the top are slim to none, and because they don't perceive the corporate culture as welcoming.

DiversityInc Top 50 data show a direct correlation between increased management participation in formal, [cross-cultural mentoring](#) programs and increased diversity in executive levels. Mentoring is the most essential way to make a direct connection with senior executives and to help high-potentials from underrepresented groups realize their full potential. The cross-cultural element enables both the mentors and the mentees to better understand each other. Having cultural-competence training for both mentors and mentees is increasingly important, as are metrics to assess the success of the relationships.

Increasingly, organizations also are emphasizing [sponsorship](#) or political advocacy, particularly for women, Blacks, Latinos and Asians. The prevailing logic has been that unlike mentoring, sponsorship cannot be "arranged" by the company or diversity/HR staff because you can't force someone to lobby for another person. But increasingly, companies like [Deloitte](#) (No. 11) and [Dell](#) (No. 37) are formalizing sponsorship by requiring their senior leaders to take on protégés from these underrepresented groups; giving them toolkits and training to help them succeed in the relationships; and monitoring and measuring the outcome.

Guided Questions for Staff

Is your mentoring program effectively reaching high-potentials from underrepresented groups as well as white men?

If the percentage of managers in your organization who participate in formal, cross-cultural mentoring programs is low (or not rising as high as others in your industry), look at several factors—where you are offering mentoring (is it only at headquarters?), how you are communicating the opportunity, whether your senior leaders are involved, and how you are measuring and communicating success (in terms of engagement, retention and promotions).

Have you considered sponsorship?

If so, is it totally informal? Are you giving sponsors opportunities to be exposed to potential protégés from underrepresented groups? Are you offering cultural-competence training to make them more effective? Educate your executives and protégés on the [difference between mentoring, sponsorship and coaching](#) and help them succeed.

Are you monitoring retention?

In many industries, such as professional services, talented people tend to leave before they get to the top. If this is more true of people from underrepresented groups at your company, you need to find out why. Your resource groups, engagement surveys and exit interviews are the best places to start.

3 EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCE GROUPS FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Increasingly, progressive companies such as those in the DiversityInc Top 50 use their resource groups to find, engage and develop talent. Resource-group participation has increased from X to X over the last six years and the emphasis on talent development has magnified.

Resource groups offer a critical way to develop leaders, especially from underrepresented groups and those who may not have the obvious qualifications to move into management. Cross-functional and cross-business-unit positions are excellent ways to train future leaders of the organization, and working with executive sponsors gives group leaders exposure to senior leadership and can lead to mentoring and sponsorship relationships.

In addition, resource groups are the best ways to ascertain employee engagement and address retention issues specific to one demographic group. Cultural programs such as [Kraft's JumpStart](#) help acclimate people from underrepresented groups to the corporate culture. ([Kraft Foods](#) is No. 18 in DiversityInc Top 50.)

Guided Questions for Staff

Are your resource groups open to everyone?

Are they inclusive of all employees, including hourly/remote workers, who could be your next generation of leaders? Make sure you are clearly communicating the opportunities for leadership in a resource group and helping leaders who are stretching in new roles to maximize their potential.

Are your resource groups helping with diversity training?

Like Kraft's JumpStart, good training is culturally competent and sensitive to the needs of underrepresented groups. Use them to understand what works in your company and what needs attention.

Are you communicating your resource-group successes? If nobody knows what your groups are doing to help develop talent, they won't get more money and more corporate resources to increase their efforts.

**NEXT
MONTH**

Disability Employment Awareness Month for all employees and **Executive Diversity Councils** for D&I staff, executive-diversity-council members, resource-group members, and HR, communications and legal staffs.