

Inclusive Hiring Practices

Differential treatment by race, age, education, and background is still commonplace in hiring. Our approach interrupts the unconscious patterns of behavior that can lead to unintentional bias, helping employers fairly assess candidates and build more diverse and inclusive teams.

Reducing Bias, Elevating Your Team

Integral to our [Results Based Hiring® Process](#) launched in 2006, Staffing Advisors' inclusive hiring practices reach beyond showing a representation of different races, ethnicities, genders, ages, or other demographic factors in your final selection of candidates.

We start with understanding your organization's culture and goals for the position and offer guidance at every step to help you evaluate each candidate's knowledge, skills, and abilities—a [competency-driven approach](#)—while deemphasizing factors that shouldn't affect the hiring decision. Our approach gives you a framework to improve your hiring practices and creates a foundation for building diverse and inclusive teams with each new hire over time.



“We have learned so much from Staffing Advisors about how to improve our hiring practices. They provide helpful support throughout the process, from the supplemental information through the interview process and work sample testing.”

Deborah Santiago

Chief Executive Officer, Excelencia in Education



Relevant Vetting Criteria

At the beginning of your search, we work with you to identify the business results you hope to achieve with your new hire and the competencies most likely to deliver them. We use those competencies to build vetting criteria that guide your entire search.

This ensures any evaluation of candidates is job-related and relevant, leaving out factors that could be discriminatory such as requirements for a specific type of education¹ or experience that are not essential for the job.

“The result was an exceptional hire where the top candidates all commented on their appreciation of a fair and thorough experience.”

Roger Marran

Board Chairman, National Oilheat Research Alliance

Inclusive Job Advertising

We develop a position overview and recruiting message tied directly to the vetting criteria in which candidates can envision how their skills might match the role.

Our position overviews are an appropriate length and use plain language free of jargon,² gender-coded terms,³ or vague attributes. We also include information about your workplace values when appropriate.



“They started by asking us the right questions to make us think about the position we were filling to define success for the right candidate.”

Robert Pinnegar

CEO, National Apartment Association

Fair Market Compensation and Pay Transparency

To ensure fairness, we routinely engage with compensation experts to benchmark salary ranges relative to the current market and we share their guidance with you.

Market value compensation is a building block of equity in hiring. While we understand budget constraints, offering below-market salary while expecting to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds can unintentionally perpetuate cycles of lower pay. This applies to [racial and ethnic groups that have been historically underrepresented and underpaid](#) in various

professions. It also extends to any minority group within a specific industry or functional area, such as women in STEM.

Although we respect each client's practices, we recommend posting salary in job ads because it is widely considered a best practice for DEI and is becoming law in a growing number of cities and states. Fair market pay and salary transparency help to ensure that employees are not underpaid or overpaid based on factors that should not impact pay. [Read our perspective on pay transparency here.](#)



“They challenged our thinking with ‘stretch’ candidates and recommended improvements to our interview practices to increase the diversity in the candidate pool. We also appreciated how they gathered a compensation study to ensure we were paying market rate (a core value for DEI practices).”

Mary Lue Peck
Senior VP, BOMA International

Strategic Recruiting and Outreach

Relying solely on established contacts—the “who do you know” approach—overlooks vast segments of the potential candidate pool because it tends to yield demographically similar candidates. 90% of the candidates we contact for most searches are unique to that search, and only 10% have been previously interviewed by our team.

The senior leaders of our recruiting team (all Certified Diversity Sourcing Professionals) actively

seek networks that may include traditionally underrepresented candidates. We identify groups where experts gather, including graduates of diversity-focused student organizations, professional associations, and affinity groups. (e.g., the American Association of Blacks in Energy, National Society of Hispanic MBAs, Education Leaders of Color, Healthcare Businesswomen's Association, HBCU alum groups, etc.).

Supplemental Information

After our initial screening call, we give promising candidates writing prompts to share job-relevant experience and illustrate their competency in key areas. We encourage hiring managers to use these as a “blind” first interview, reading them before resumes.

This supplemental information deemphasizes resumes, cover letters, and credentials and helps you understand each candidate’s competencies—a more accurate predictor of success on the job.

Many clients say this gives them far more useful information than a resume alone ever could and widens the pool of candidates they would consider.

This step also demonstrates that you evaluate candidates by the same competency-based criteria and don’t rely on demographic factors to include or exclude candidates from the pool, a common diversity hiring practice that often fails.⁷

Structured Interviews

Due to a series of [cognitive errors, faulty opinions, and unexamined biases](#), typical interview practices can fail to attract a top candidate and accurately predict success on the job. Structured interviews delve more deeply into the competencies outlined in the supplemental form to understand the candidate’s role in creating impact, who they worked with to achieve results, and how they measured impact.

We provide interview questions for your team and coach you on conducting a structured interview,⁸ including follow-up questions and a scoring guide. This style of interview reduces the potential for favoring one candidate over another for factors unrelated to skills and working style.

Work Sample Tests

We [recommend giving a work sample test](#) before the second interview and work with you to create one. These shift the candidate from talking about past work to doing a small sample of relevant work.

Interviews favor candidates who are good at talking about work, while skills-based assessments favor candidates who are good at working. Including

both in your process reduces the potential for bias toward candidates with easy confidence or familiar credentials, invites candidates from various backgrounds to showcase their skills, and leads to better quality hires and more diverse teams.⁹ Like the supplemental form, work sample tests send a powerful signal to candidates that you evaluate everyone consistently and fairly.



Communication To Support Your Goals

Through hundreds of successful executive searches, our Client Engagement Team knows the right questions to ask and guidance to offer to ensure an intentional approach to reducing bias at each step in the candidate selection and vetting process. We encourage you to consider your diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and identify what building a diverse team means in your specific context.

Are you seeking diversity of thought, lived experiences, or work experiences? Are you seeking racial diversity, gender diversity, neurodiversity, or other forms? What measurable value do you hope this will bring to your organization and why? Exploring these questions enables us to provide the proper decision support to help you hire a highly-qualified candidate who elevates your team and delivers results.

“Diversity enhances creativity. It encourages the search for novel information and perspectives, leading to better decision-making and problem-solving. Diversity can improve the bottom line of companies and lead to unfettered discoveries and breakthrough innovations.”

— Katherine W. Phillips¹⁰

Senior Vice Dean, Columbia Business School

Advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace



¹ [The Burning Glass Institute's research on how degree requirements have historically contributed toward income inequality and what's changing now.](#)

² [Indeed's best practices for hiring with neurodiversity in mind.](#)

³ [Journal of Personality and Social Psychology's research on gender coding in job ads.](#)

⁴ [American Progress's research on lower paying jobs and Black communities.](#)

⁵ [American Progress's research on lower paying jobs Hispanic and Latino communities.](#)

⁶ [The Pew Center's research on the persistent gender wage gap.](#)

⁷ [Social psychologist and president of Paradigm explores failed DEI policies like the Rooney Rule and shares a framework for driving better accountability.](#)

⁸ [Research on structured interviews from the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.](#)

⁹ [2022 survey on skills-based hiring from SHRM](#)

¹⁰ [Katherine Phillips "How Diversity Makes Us Smarter." Scientific American](#)