PERCEPTION INSTITUTE
Addressing Bias in Hiring & Retention

Best Practices

JOB DESCRIPTION CREATION
- Use language that promotes diversity (e.g. we WANT people from different religions, class backgrounds, etc.)
  - This reduces resume "whitening," where candidates remove cues of racial identity from their resume
- Avoid language that references one gender over another (spokesperson vs. spokesman)
  - Be mindful of that have different meaning for different identity groups (e.g. "dominant"/"competitive", which have gendered meaning)

RECRUITMENT
- Create a list of the job qualifications that matter most, and then identify schools and other places where potential applicants have these qualities
  - Don't rely simply on what is most familiar
- Talk to local organizations with community connections - churches, cultural institutions and colleges that can help connect you with candidates
- Be mindful of the demographics of places you are looking to recruit from - ex. don't go to career fairs at schools with all white students, be thoughtful about the websites you post the position because they may appeal to a particular audience
- Make sure that your recruitment tools (videos, website, etc.) reflect the kind of diversity that you are looking to expand on (i.e. include images reflecting a range of races, genders, ages)

RESUME EVALUATION
- Develop a standard evaluation form with a detailed scoring metric early on – *before you start résumé review*. Use it the same way for every résumé.
- Redefine merit and criteria for success as requiring the specific credentials, rather than focusing on "fit."
  - Set out a standardized set of qualifications
  - Option to use mandatory hiring tests assessing the skills of candidates
- "Blind" the initial review: eliminate information about race or gender from résumés so it doesn't play a role in the decision-making process.
  - Remove names and photos from resumes before reviewing them
- Identify and communicate standards and decision points for hiring to candidates (before the interview)
- Discuss in-group preference and elite bias, which might lead to subtle preference for one candidate but not for another

- o Ex. you might not realize that you favored education over experience *because* you felt a connection to the white candidate with an Ivy League degree rather than the Asian candidate with 10 more years of experience.
  - o This is especially common in ambiguous situations or when 2 candidates have different but equal qualifications

INTERVIEWS
- In advance of the interview, use simulations for conducting interviews to practice and be critical of the process
- Developed a standardized interview script and scoring metric in advance. Use it consistently across all candidates.
- Use structured interviews: every candidate gets the same questions in the same order
  - o Score the questions in real time
- Pay attention to automatic preferences for familiar metrics of status and success (prestige of alma mater, experience at an elite institution, references from existing employees)
- Resist the urge to "go with your gut"

ONBOARDING → INTEGRATION
- Increasing feelings of belonging for newly hired individuals
- Do not undervalue basic orientation + team building workshops
- Be deliberate about mentoring or sponsorship programs for marginalized groups
- Make equal treatment part of code of ethics: reinforce it in practice, so it isn't just on paper
- Review and refine policies to promote inclusion of all identities
  - o e.g. different religious practices: include time or days off for observances and dietary restrictions; gender-neutral parental leave; etc.

INTERNAL DEI APPROACH
- *Pro-equity, rather than anti-discrimination*
- Proactive rather than reactive. Ask employees:
  - o Have you experienced any barriers to success at this company related to your race?
  - o Have you noticed any other obstacles in the way to your success?
  - o Is there anything we can do better to facilitate your success and sense of inclusion?
  - o In terms of mentorship and promotion, do you sense that those happen without bias?
- Create equity incentives for employees
  - o Identify, support and collaborate with effective programs that increase diversity in the pipeline.
  - o Reward employees who volunteer with these groups, create internships and other bridges, and celebrate the stories of those who successfully overcome obstacles
- Conduct anonymous surveys with former employees to understand:
  - o What were the issues they faced?
  - o What steps could be taken for them to consider coming back?

- Whether they encourage or discourage prospective employees from applying for positions at your school and whether they encourage or discourage prospective students/families from engaging with the school.
- Talk about it!
  - Leaders should make it clear that your school environment promotes free speaking.
  - Encourage all employees to speak out against biases
  - Empower all employees to hold each other accountable.

PERFORMANCE RATINGS
- Base promotions on someone's objectively measured performance, rather than the their supervisor's feelings about them.
- Create standardized tools, implement them uniformly.
- *Be mindful of metrics* –self evaluation tools can make it difficult for supervisors to get an accurate view of employee's performance
  - e.g. men are often more comfortable bragging about themselves than women (more overconfident)

RESPONDING TO AMBIGUOUS DISCRIMINATION
- Highlight the importance of being engaged and guarding against shutting down.
- Deep breathing, taking a step back from your thought process, questioning your perceptions
- Avoiding judgements about each other and about themselves, accepting each person's perceptions as their truth.
- Emphasize the importance of empathy.

Sources

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