Improving Workforce Diversity

As Minnesota becomes more diverse, it is important to have the workforce match that. Here are tips for how to hire and retain a more diverse workforce. Diversity is not just in race and ethnicity, but also in gender, sexual orientation and more.

Benefits of Increasing Diversity

There is a strong body of research that shows a variety of benefits of having a more diverse workforce, these include:

- **Better Customer Experience**: Research shows that customers are more connected to organizations that are more diverse.
- **Less Groupthink Leading to Better Decisions**: Organizations that are more diverse produce better outcomes, producing higher profits.
- **Increased Innovations**: Research has shown that diverse organizations are more likely to innovate than their counterparts that are less diverse.
- **Improved Employee Experience**: Employees who come from diverse backgrounds have been found to feel more comfortable at work when they are in an organization that is more diverse.

Hiring to Increasing Diversity

These are steps that you as a hiring manager can take to increase the diversity of your workforce. These can be implemented without changing a union contract, getting county board approval or a major overhaul of your hiring system.

- **Adjust Required/Preferred Qualifications**: This does not mean lowering job qualifications, instead putting less in the required category, and more in the preferred. This allows more applicants to be considered. Additionally, accepting equivalent experience for a degree will allow for more potential candidates.
- **Use Inclusive Language in Job Postings**: Include a qualification like “commitment to creating a positive work environment by advancing equity and diversity.”
- **Use Targeted Postings**: Find posting locations that cater to diverse candidates. Continue to target sources for previously hired diverse candidates.
- **Complete More Interviews**: By bringing more candidates in for interviews the number of diverse candidates who are interviewed increases, as does the likelihood of hiring a diverse candidate.
- **Diverse Interview Panel**: Ensure that each interview panel has at least one diverse interviewer. This will make diverse candidates feel more comfortable and counteract implicit bias.
- **Language Qualification**: Include a qualification around speaking a language of people served by the agency.

Retaining Diverse Employees

Once diverse employees have been hired it takes work to retain them so that the workforce can grow more diverse. Using these steps can help ensure higher retention rates:

- **Create a Mentorship Program**: After hiring diverse employees ensure they receive mentorship to create connection with other employees. The mentors do not necessarily have to match the employees’ background.
- **Create Affinity Groups**: Giving diverse employees a place to connect with other diverse employees increases the retention rate of employees.
- **Ensure Minority Employees Feel Comfortable**: Ensure that diverse employees feel comfortable while in the organization. Also, complete exit interviews with outgoing employees to understand their reasons for leaving.
For Further Information

Read The Itasca Project | Our regional competitiveness depends on broadening opportunities for a more diverse and inclusive workforce

Visit The Society of Human Resource Management | has a library of resources on diversity and inclusion hiring and retention practices.

Notes

If you wish to share your ideas and inquires on summaries of other emerging topics in human services, please email results@umn.edu