



TIPS FOR THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

Success in recruiting and retaining qualified women candidates for all position levels rest on the organization's training and development programs. Below is a sample of best practices that can help your company begin to conceptualize equity programs.

Representation When Recruiting. Having female employees present when recruiting signals to potential candidates the focus on gender diversity. The same can be said for imagery and word choice in communication materials. For younger generations, the values of the company matters. If diversity is a priority for your company, share this on the company webpage, in marketing materials, and include as a recruitment talking point. More importantly, provide potential recruits with concrete ways in which you are actively addressing equality.

Reducing Bias during Interviews and Performance Evaluations. Much literature exists on how to actively prevent bias from coloring hiring decisions and performance evaluations. Given that if there is only a single female in a candidate pool, there is statistically zero chance she will be hired, it is important to consider the role of bias in the process. For example, conducting panel interviews reduces individual biases and helps better evaluate each candidate's potential. Similarly, joint evaluations prove to be more often based on individual performance whereas separate/individual evaluations are more often based on gender stereotypes.

Mentorships. Many companies do not have formal mentorship programs, but providing guidance on mentoring and creating programs to facilitate mentoring can significantly support a sense of inclusion and provide help in career planning and in developing leaders. One idea is to have a mentor for "check in" and to receive advice as well as providing a formal peer group or "peer buddy" to newer employees who can discuss their relative experience and

can answer questions that individuals might not be comfortable asking others.

Internships. Being strategic in selecting diverse candidates for internships helps these individuals gain valuable exposure and further grows company candidate pools. In this respect, an employer is able to engage the intern in the culture of the company to make sure the opportunity is a good fit for both employee and employer. Working with local colleges/universities, community colleges, and trade schools, it can be beneficial to have qualified speakers from the employer make a guest presentation in business, supply chain management, hospitality, or nutrition classes to highlight the employer in that market. The added benefit to the employer is access to and participation in current education practices and engaging with possible future employees.

Strategic Succession Planning. Taking succession planning and diversity seriously creates a focus for developing new leadership that puts the needs of individuals first. Providing individuals with exposure to different opportunities in the company while providing them with a clear promotional path helps set the stage for developing successful leaders. Challenging individuals to take on leadership roles can only happen if current leaders are challenged to expose and teach individuals about these roles.

Content derived from the Recruitment and Retention of Women: Enhancing Inclusion and Diversity by Emily M. Moscato, PhD, Gerald E. Peck Fellow, Saint Joseph's University in collaboration with the IFDA Women's Leadership Committee.

