eBook

Inclusive hiring strategies for everyone at your company

Practical advice to bring your DE&I recruiting efforts to life

greenhouse

Contents

Introduction

The role of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) in talent strategy has never been more important. The way your team attracts, recruits and hires a diverse candidate set can boost your competitive advantage and solidify your identity as a great employer. Candidates are now taking a closer look at companies' composition and commitment to DE&I when evaluating offers – 86% of job seekers say a company's diversity is an important factor.

But who is responsible for building and maintaining inclusive hiring practices? Too often it is yet another responsibility added to recruiters' already lengthy to-do lists. Like any strategic initiative, prioritizing DE&I should be a shared responsibility and not left solely to a single team to drive. That's why we're sharing these inclusive hiring strategies that support everyone at your company, including your recruiters, hiring managers and business leaders. Everyone from your executives to the people on your hiring panels have a part to play and a responsibility to be as inclusive as possible.

While there are no shortcuts on the journey of embracing and operationalizing DE&I, we hope these strategies will be your compass and companion as you catalyze your work in this area. Recruiting, interviewing and selecting talent with an equity and inclusion lens will distinguish your company as an employer of choice for talent that will come from increasingly diverse backgrounds in the years to come.

Our goal with this eBook is to provide actionable advice and solid strategies for people in every department and role. We invite you to start with Part 1 for some self-reflection to see where you are today. Next, you can choose the sections that are most relevant to you and dive in. Here's a quick overview:

- For hiring managers and interviewers: Strengthening interviewing skills and questions
- For recruiting teams: Recognizing and addressing biased behaviors in hiring
- For business leaders: Prioritizing DE&I
- For everyone: Creating an inclusive candidate experience to build stronger, more diverse teams

Of course, feel free to read the entire eBook if you'd like to get the big picture of promoting DE&I throughout your organization. Let's get started!

Take a self-assessment of your current state

Before jumping into specific tactics, we encourage you to work through this self-assessment.

Let's start with a hypothetical scenario focused on inclusion: Imagine you are the hiring manager tasked with hiring a head of diversity for your company. A finalist candidate asks you the following questions. How would you answer? And how would you rate yourself and your process on based on those answers?

Remember, the point of this exercise is to be honest with yourself and accurately describe where you are today.

Scorecard ratings key

- ❌ Strong no
- 👎 No
- ➖ Mixed
- 👍 Yes
- ⭐ Strong yes

Questions	Scorecard rating
Do you actively evaluate your hiring process to compare your inbound (direct applicants) and outbound (sourced passive candidates, referrals) talent?	❌ 👎 ➖ 👍 ⭐
Give a 1–2 sentence definition of "culture fit" and examples of how it shows up at your company. If your company indexes hiring decisions against this definition, do you educate hiring teams (with examples) so that everyone is aligned on what a "misfit" is? If so, how often? If not, why not?	❌ 👎 ➖ 👍 ⭐
How well does the team assess the predictive validity (how candidates perform once they join your company) of your interview process? How does your team incorporate data or feedback from people managers to test how interview methods (questions, assessments) correlate with performance and how do you use that data to refine the process?	❌ 👎 ➖ 👍 ⭐

How much of a premium do recruiters at your company place on recruiting talent from your industry? How might the lack of diversity in your industry reduce the chances of building a diverse pool?	❌ 👎 ➖ 👍 ⭐
What does interviewer education look like at your company right now? Which components are included? What criteria must employees meet to become eligible to interview?	❌ 👎 ➖ 👍 ⭐
How does your company define and measure interviewer effectiveness? If an employee is not meeting expectations, what remediation or learning opportunities does your team offer to improve their skills in hiring?	❌ 👎 ➖ 👍 ⭐
Which hiring source (referrals, your career page, LinkedIn, etc.) has the highest yield/conversion of candidates you hire? With that source, how does your recruiting team integrate targeted marketing to communities that are underrepresented in your company?	❌ 👎 ➖ 👍 ⭐
How does your recruiting team engage with employee attrition/first-year churn data? How have you used it to refine your hiring (and onboarding, if your team owns it) process? Do you segment that data by demographic (race, gender, etc.) and if so, how does that impact your recruitment marketing or sourcing strategy?	❌ 👎 ➖ 👍 ⭐
How does your recruiting team determine, articulate and differentiate minimum and preferred qualifications in your job posts?	❌ 👎 ➖ 👍 ⭐

What did you learn from going through this exercise? Does anything jump out as a particular strength or area for improvement? Use your answers to launch conversations with others in your company who are committed to DE&I.

Strengthening interviewing skills and questions

Hiring managers play a critical role in recruiting. Not only do you make the final call about who gets hired, but you also shape the approach to interviewing and guide your team through the evaluation process.

Have you ever received unclear or insufficient feedback from interviewers? Or feedback that wasn't aligned with your expectations of the interview focus?

Using consistent questions and evaluation criteria significantly reduces the likelihood that your interviewers will rely on snap decisions when interviewing candidates. This structured approach to hiring helps you make more informed decisions about your next hire.

We suggest the following approach:

Step 1: Select the focus attributes you'd like interviewers to assess

Step 2: Write custom questions that test for each focus attribute

Step 3: Create rubrics for your interviewers to measure the quality of a candidate's responses relative to the scorecard

Step 4: Train your interviewers on taking notes that are rooted in evidence, not inference

Now let's go through each of these steps with some examples to get you started.

Step 1:

Select the focus attributes you'd like interviewers to assess

What are the skills and qualities a candidate will need to be successful in this role? If it's an existing role, you may already have a clear idea. If it's a new role, you might need to start with your best guess based on the responsibilities the role entails and refine it over time. In either case, spend some time talking to members of your team, your recruiting partner and other company leaders to pinpoint the required skills.

As a rule of thumb, we recommend coming up with three to six attributes per specific category, such as cross-functional collaboration, people management and technical ability. The SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based) is useful for keeping interviewers on track.

Step 2:

Write custom questions that test for each focus attribute

Once you have your list of focus attributes, you'll want to write questions that help interviewers test for those qualities.

3Ps of interviewing

We created the Purpose, Process and People model to help categorize interview questions into three tiers:

Purpose questions help you identify what motivates a candidate and assess alignment with your team and/or company's values.

Process questions help you measure how a candidate solves problems, thinks creatively and manages projects and deadlines.

People questions help you determine how a candidate would interact with others in your organization and how they demonstrate emotional intelligence in the workplace.

Purpose
(who you are)

Process
(how you work)

People
(how you collaborate)

How do you translate focus attributes into interview questions? Look for ways to dig in and get detailed information based on specific situations.

Here are a few examples to get the ball rolling. We chose one attribute for each of the 3 Ps: learning and continuous improvement for Purpose, managing multiple priorities for Process and collaboration for People, with a set of sample questions for each attribute.

Purpose – Identifying what motivates a candidate	
Attribute	**Sample questions**
Learning and continuous improvement	Name three things you've done in the last few years to grow in your career. Describe a time when you proactively sought out feedback to improve your productivity or effectiveness in a role. • What led you to seek that feedback? • How did you determine the appropriate individuals to ask? • How did you apply the feedback you received? • How do you keep those learnings in mind in how you work today? Discuss an example of feedback you received that you did not agree with. • What was the feedback? • Why did you disagree? • How did you communicate with the person that shared it with you?

Process – Measuring how a candidate gets things done	
Attribute	**Sample questions**
Managing multiple priorities	Describe a time when you needed to delegate a project or task to someone on your team who you did not trust, in order to prioritize something else on your list. • What was the deliverable and why did you need to delegate it? • What made you skeptical about this person's ability to execute? • How did you navigate the tradeoff between delegating and completing it on your own? Give me an example of a time when you needed to manage up because your workload had become unreasonable. • What circumstances led to this? • How did you negotiate which deliverables needed to be prioritized or shared with someone else? • Did you encounter any pushback? If so, how did you manage it? Tell me about a time when you were trying to meet a deadline, but were interrupted and did not make the deadline. • How did you respond?

People – Determining how a candidate interacts with others	
Attribute	**Sample questions**
Collaboration	Describe a situation where you and your manager (or another leader at your company) disagreed on the approach to take on a project or deliverable. • How did you evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches? How did you know yours was the better option? • How did you communicate your position to your manager? How did they respond? • What was the outcome? Tell me about a time when you worked on a project and a peer was not meeting expectations. What actions did you take? • How did you balance the tradeoff between holding the person accountable and completing the work yourself? Share an example of a time when your emotional intelligence helped you in collaborating with someone who had a completely different communication style.

Step 3:

Create rubrics for your interviewers to measure the quality of a candidate's responses relative to the scorecard

Now that you have your focus attributes and interview questions ready, it's time to consider how you'd like interviewers to score their responses.

This is the rating system we use at Greenhouse – feel free to make changes or use it as is:

❌	👎	➖	👍	⭐
Strong no	**No**	**Mixed**	**Yes**	**Strong yes**

We recommend creating rubrics for interviewers so they know how to assess responses for every question they ask during the interview.

Here's an example rubric for assessing responses to: "Tell me about a time when you were communicating with someone and they didn't understand you. What did you do?"

❌	👎	➖	👍	⭐
Strong no	**No**	**Mixed**	**Yes**	**Strong yes**
Provides an unclear description of the relationship dynamic/context and struggles to outline their summary of the situation to the interviewer.	Offers an indistinct summary of the intended message and does not acknowledge any unique relationship dynamics/added context that may have contributed to the communication breakdown. Does not take accountability for their role in the communication breakdown (for example, "I don't see why they didn't understand") and has not demonstrated how they learned from this situation for future conversations with the person or others in the workplace.	Offers a vague depiction of the situation (the message they were looking to convey, the relationship with the other person and where the miscommunication occurred). Provides a loose outline of the steps taken to identify a plan to remedy the communication breakdown OR a cursory summary of what they learned from the experience. Demonstrates empathy for the other person but does not leverage it in articulating their strategy for revising their approach for follow-up conversations.	Clearly defines the intended vision of the message for the other person and discusses where/how the message was lost in translation. Acknowledges any unique or relevant relationship dynamics that might have contributed to the message not being clearly interpreted. Demonstrates empathy in identifying the source of the communication breakdown and holds self accountable for identifying an alternative way to communicate with the person. Clarifies any subsequent steps in preserving and/or growing the relationship with the person and added measures taken in adjusting communication (delivery, style/approach) for other conversations.	Clearly defines the intended vision of the message for the other person and discusses where/how the message was lost in translation. Acknowledges any unique or relevant relationship dynamics that might have contributed to the message not being clearly interpreted. Demonstrates empathy in identifying the source of the communication breakdown and holds self accountable for identifying an alternative way to communicate with the person. Clarifies any subsequent steps in preserving and/or growing the relationship with the person and added measures taken in adjusting communication (delivery, style/approach) for other conversations. Considers the experience a learning opportunity to iterate and situate their communication style to match the expectations of the audience.

Step 4:

Train your interviewers on taking notes that are rooted in evidence, not inference

Finally, you'll need to hold interviewers accountable for capturing detailed, objective notes from every interview.

It's important to note that, without coaching, interviewers probably won't know how to do this. You can help them by providing detailed examples of what you're looking for.

Here are some sample scorecard notes:

Rating	Notes
Strong yes	Lucia discussed her experience in her current role as Director of People, where she is currently responsible for recruiting/hiring (8 roles to be filled within the next 2 months in their DC, Ohio and Atlanta markets), coordinating logistics (flights, lodging, meals, programming) for an upcoming national new hire orientation (15 attendees) and planning for the company-wide (150 ppl) offsite retreat. For hiring, she mentioned how she schedules phone screens at various intervals throughout the day and commits to taking notes on the call and scheduling next-round interviews with hiring managers. Structures days around certain "work blocks" where she knows what needs to get done and will communicate if things are either taking longer than expected or if there are roadblocks, and collaborates as needed to find solutions. Mentioned that she is a huge fan of automation (Google Calendar's DNS blocks) and keeps a scrolling list of to-do items. Shared that strong relationships with hiring managers made things a lot easier with scheduling/process and that the orientation went off without a hitch. Team retreat was a multi-month effort and the team enjoyed the experience more than the previous year, both programmatically and logistically.
Yes	José shared about working as a Program Manager with a youth-development nonprofit and how they were tapped to work on special projects from the Chief Program Officer on top of navigating a complex situation with their school partner and how they've been "getting their feet wet" by working with the development team on an upcoming funding proposal. Their answers lacked some detail (didn't provide a backstory about the relationship with the school partner "things have always been tense but I've been trying to remain positive") but were overall solid in how they'd tried to use time-tracking software to set alarms for when it was time to pivot and focus on a different task. They did mention that the team was short-staffed and that was why they decided to step up and take on more responsibility even though they knew it would require additional work on their end, and being more organized. Talked about how they have regular syncs with the CPO to offer updates on their progress. Also set up a weekly 2-hour block to work on/edit the funding proposal as they're interested in "developing muscle" in fundraising.

Mixed	I gave Janet a "mixed" here because I wasn't convinced that her approach toward balancing multiple projects was actually impactful or effective, despite her laying out all the different steps she took. We talked about her experience as a second-year teacher (at a brand-new school) juggling making parent calls, grading, lesson planning and her responsibilities as a self-appointed sponsor for the school's LGBTQ+ student association. She talked about how she was able to use a calendar and alerts in her phone but when probed, admitted to having dropped a lot of balls with grading student assignments since she was more focused on lesson planning and being present for the student group. Admitted that she could have done a much better job with balancing her schedule and being more realistic with her bandwidth but also shared that she got feedback from her Assistant Principal that she may need to scale back with the student group. Again, she's capable of being proactive with taking on a lot but I don't think I have enough evidence to say yes or no on her ability to manage it all effectively and course correct as needed.
No	Morris shared an example of a time when, as an Account Manager, he had to navigate renewal conversations with three different customers but spent the majority of the time discussing how he wasn't able to secure two of the renewals after focusing too heavily on one customer. I probed to learn more about his approach/technique and he said that "everything was urgent, so I didn't really have an opportunity to prioritize as much as I could have." I probed more and learned that he hadn't responded to key emails from his customers and had assumed that since they'd renewed in the previous year that they would do so again. Did admit to learning from the experience but I'm not convinced that this example showcased his ability to do so with ease.
Strong no	Damon struggled to give a clear response but from what I could glean, he has had a difficult relationship with several hiring managers (HMs) in his most recent role as a full-cycle recruiter and would often drop balls (forgetting to add notes, double scheduling phone screens and not turning around job posts quickly enough to match manager expectations). He mentioned one scenario where he had challenges working with one HM and blamed them for the issue. When I probed, I learned that Damon had neglected to ask about the candidate's salary requirements, placing the HM in a tough situation where they had to communicate that the candidate's expectations were 20% higher than the budgeted amount. Damon attributed the breakdown as an "oversight" and shared that James (the HM) was "not very likeable, according to other recruiters that worked with him before" and that he "knew it would be an issue" working with him on this new req.

Pro tip:

Encourage interviewers to structure their conversations with brief intros (the longer the intro, the greater the odds that an interviewer will base their decision on likability rather than merit). Explain to your team that they are evaluating candidates based on what they can contribute, not popularity.

Sharing examples like these will help your team know what you're looking for. Review interviewers' feedback regularly. Ask probing questions about any comments that are vague or excessively inferential. Encourage them to anchor their decisions in the key takeaways of your interview rubric.

While the steps outlined above might be a pretty significant shift from the way your team has been approaching interviewing, making these changes to your interview process can help mitigate bias and open the door to qualified candidates from a broader range of backgrounds.

Remember that you don't have to do this all on your own – your recruiters are your partners throughout this process. Be sure to seek their advice and input on attributes, interview questions, decision-making criteria and any other area where you need a little extra support.

Recognizing and addressing biased behaviors in hiring

As a recruiter, you're responsible for the tools and processes that shape hiring in your organization. And when your company commits to inclusive hiring, a hefty portion of the responsibility will also fall on your plate.

Promoting inclusion often begins by looking at your hiring process and putting systems in place to mitigate bias. When you limit the role bias plays in decision-making, you can open the door to candidates from traditionally underrepresented groups.

In this section, we'll offer a broad overview of how to recognize and address bias in hiring.

Recognizing biased behaviors in hiring

How can recruiters help their organizations mitigate bias in the hiring process? You can start by understanding when and where bias is likely to pop up. We've summarized some of the research and collected a few resources to help you begin your exploration of this topic.

As you read through the points on the next page, do any problematic aspects of your existing process surface? If so, make a note to dive deeper into those topics. We'll share some ideas in the next few sections to give you a jumping-off point.

- Jargon and superficial language in job posts can discourage women from applying and perpetuate inequality

- Over-indexing on referrals from a homogenous workforce (typically with less-diverse networks) can close the door for people of color and women

- Measuring talent through academic or employer history (both have low predictive validity on job performance) limits access for candidates excluded from those networks

- People of color and women are more likely to receive offers if another finalist shares their identity

- Low-diversity interview teams may signal larger issues for candidates from underrepresented groups

- Resumes with more "white-sounding" names are more likely to be advanced in the hiring process

- Candidates are often evaluated on their perceived ease in assimilating or fitting into the culture, rather than their capacity to perform in the role and add to the company's culture

- Traditional, unstructured interviews are highly vulnerable to bias – without consistent criteria or rubrics, poorly trained interviewers make impulse-driven decisions when evaluating candidates

- Interview notes are often scant, high-inference or based on likability, rather than objective with examples that validate advancement or rejection

- Gender pay gaps persist in part because women fear reprisal for initiating salary negotiation (from other women and men) and compensation disparities are even wider for women of color

Addressing biased behaviors

Bias is a mental algorithm that can be disrupted through conscious behavior change. Effective and inclusive hiring isn't so much a skill as it is a collection of habits that can enable more inclusive outcomes and change company cultures.

Here are some practical steps you can take and tools to try out based on the observations you noted earlier. We've divided these tips by pipeline stage (sourcing, screening, selecting and hiring).

Sourcing

- Clarify the attributes you're looking for (capabilities, performance objectives, etc.) during your kickoff meeting using a structured hiring template

- Consider partnering with text-augmenting software like Textio, TapRecruit or Gender Decoder to expose and change the words that may disrupt diversity at the top of your funnel

- Solicit referrals for underrepresented talent (with added financial incentive, if possible) as an important DE&I initiative that can also lead to greater retention and lower reports of workplace inequity

- The recruiting platform Gem recommends using diversity salient strategies like targeting talent from bootcamps or affinity-based organizations like TransTech Social and the National Society of Black Engineers

- Audit your job posts to determine which requirements are essential and which are extraneous, remove jargon and focus on producing (and disseminating) content that appeals to the widest net possible

- Use Boolean searches in LinkedIn to find overlooked talent by searching for alumni of colleges with high diversity indices or affinity-based organizations like fraternities, sororities and cultural interest groups

A simple structured hiring template

Want to add more structure to your hiring process? Here are a few questions and points to consider next time you open a new role.

Who are you trying to hire?

- Role name
- Department
- Who will this person report to?
- What business objectives are you trying to meet with this role?

How will you evaluate the candidate?

- Skills
- Personality traits
- Qualifications

What will the interview process look like?

- Define the interview stages (application review, phone screen, hiring manager interview, etc.)
- Decide which qualities will be assessed in each stage
- Plan out the questions or assessments for each quality

Screening

- Based on your structured hiring template, design an effective scorecard and create clear evaluation criteria that your interviewers can discuss in their roundups to make informed, objective decisions when assessing candidates (see page 21 for a quick introduction to scorecards)

- Ensure your focus attributes are specific, measurable, attainable and relevant to the role(s) you're recruiting for

- Consider integrating your company's performance management competencies (if possible) when determining focus attributes if you have difficulty developing new ones

- Using the performance outcomes for the role, develop a bank of behavioral and situational interview questions that match the complexity of the role

- Define the range of answers for your questions, from exemplary to unacceptable, and train your interviewers on how to document their feedback in the scorecard

- Mitigate opportunities for late-stage interviewers to be influenced/biased by previously submitted scorecards

- Train members of employee resource groups (ERGs) to participate as interviewers to ensure a balance of perspectives

- Evaluate whether leveraging skills-based hiring makes sense for your company

- Work samples or assessments have the highest predictive validity for job performance and grading them anonymously can help mitigate bias

Selecting

- Assessments like Predictive Index can help you identify candidates who can balance out your team

- Establish clear, consistent candidate evaluation criteria for your interviewers to adhere to as a part of a structured hiring process

- Train your interviewers with proper interview prep material, use focus attributes to eliminate redundancy and require detailed, low-inference and objective interview notes for every attribute assessed

- Review all interview feedback, ask probing questions about vague or inferential comments and encourage interviewers to anchor their decisions in the key takeaways of your interview rubric

Hiring

- Audit your compensation structure to ensure that salaries are at market rate and determine your thresholds for salary negotiation, regardless of the candidate

- Be transparent about your compensation philosophy and consider not allowing anyone to negotiate compensation to drive pay equity

- Review comments from candidate surveys to measure candidate experience and leverage the data to make iterations where necessary throughout your process

Scorecard essentials for everyone

Scorecards are fundamental to structured hiring. Consistent candidate evaluation helps mitigate interviewer bias, reduce total interview time and drive a more evidence-based decision framework for selecting the right talent.

Here's a high-level overview of scorecard essentials.

Creating attributes

Aim for at least 3–6 mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive focus attributes per category for your scorecards. Consider integrating the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based) framework to ensure your interviewers are enabled to measure what matters.

Building interview questions

Collaborate with hiring managers to design custom interview questions for each attribute deemed necessary for success in the role. Aligning these questions to your scorecard focus attributes enables your interviewers to make informed decisions that can more accurately predict job performance.

Establishing a decision-making framework

After developing your focus attributes and interview questions, be sure to define evaluation expectations for interview teams. Ideally, each attribute-aligned question will include a specific rubric that outlines what interviewers should look for in candidate answers and assessments. You can adapt this scorecard rating system to suit your company.

Strong yes is an exemplary response that clearly addresses each element of the question with distinct examples (if appropriate).

Yes is a solid, acceptable response that addresses most or all elements of the question with clear examples.

Mixed is an inconclusive response that may partially address the question but does not provide the interviewer with evidence about the candidate's capabilities. A mixed rating does not equate to "I don't know" – when an interviewer doesn't have enough evidence, they should leave the attribute blank.

No is an unacceptable response that ignores most or multiple elements of the question.

Strong no is an extremely unacceptable answer that doesn't address the question at all and/or contains a comment that conflicts with your company's culture. Beyond that, answers may blatantly disparage others, former employers, communities, etc.

Prioritizing DE&I

Forward-thinking business leaders (like you!) are actively focused on elevating their DE&I practices – not only to ensure that their teams accurately reflect the demographics of their local population, but also to create a work environment that offers equitable opportunities where people of all identities can thrive.

Traditionally, business leaders have looked to recruiting teams to shoulder the work of diversifying the candidates moving through their hiring pipelines. However, great business leaders understand that DE&I is a company-wide commitment, starting from the top – at Greenhouse we call this the Talent Maker mindset.

In a world where 57% of employees believe their companies should improve diversity among their internal workforce and 86% of job seekers actively seek out companies with diverse employee bases, proactively building inclusive hiring practices to allow for a better diversity of hires isn't just the right thing to do – it's the smart thing to do.

McKinsey found that companies in the top quartile for racial/ethnic and gender diversity were respectively 35% and 15% more likely to have financial returns above the national median for their particular industry. That means being great at hiring today is about a lot more than how quickly you make a hire. It's also about exercising inclusive hiring practices and having diversity on both sides of the interview process, among your interviewers and your candidates. It's about business leaders getting involved with DE&I to generate meaningful outcomes. No matter how valiantly a recruiter works to fill the top of a recruiting funnel with underrepresented candidates, if hiring managers don't similarly prioritize inclusive hiring, those candidates will inevitably leave the funnel – whether by choice or through the adverse impact of unconscious bias.

Let's explore some of the ways that Talent Makers can boost DE&I in their hiring strategies.

Great leaders lean into color consciousness, and create spaces to celebrate each employee's experience and unique intersectionalities.

Before focusing externally, look internally at your own company

Diversifying your team isn't only about bringing in a new hire who can add a new perspective. It's just as much about creating an environment that allows that new hire to share their perspective and feel heard. Some leaders may skirt conversations around identity – by claiming to be "colorblind" when it comes to race, for example – but great leaders lean into color consciousness, and create spaces to celebrate each employee's experience and unique intersectionalities.

Ask questions

What does all this mean through the lens of hiring? As you start thinking about how to source underrepresented candidates, answer these questions:

- Why would a candidate from an underrepresented group want to join your team?

- How would you articulate your commitment to supporting and advocating for them as a manager?

- If you were releasing a public statement or articulating your company's commitment to equity in response to/in solidarity with a societal movement, how would you differentiate your company from other organizations in a way that's authentic?

- More importantly, how will you hold yourself accountable over time for driving the changes you want to see?

Next, take a hard look at the demographics of your team. Determine the following:

- Which demographic groups – including, but not limited to, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, industry experience, seniority, education, socioeconomic status and ability status – are represented?

- Which groups are you lacking or are underrepresented?

- Look for patterns in the profiles of the people you've hired up to now – do they imply an inclination toward a certain personality type, background, set of qualifications or even race/ethnicity?

- If so, how are you justifying that?

- Could you inadvertently be screening for privilege (think preferred schools or degrees) rather than for ability and potential?

Have the conversation

It's time to invite your team into the conversation. This can be the uncomfortable part, especially if you're in an environment that doesn't have a precedent for such dialogues. Actively sharing why you're prioritizing DE&I will signal its importance to your team, help address any discrepancies and start building the muscle for healthy conversations on topics like race. You'll also drive new awareness and behaviors that can have outsized impacts on who you hire by influencing your interview panels to be more open-minded and provide better interviewing experiences to underrepresented candidates.

Finally, collaborate with your people operations or HR team to review current department demographics based on self-reported employee data. This will lead to informed discussions about which groups to focus on when diversifying hiring pipelines, which ties back to your goals around having better representation among your employees.

Write your job descriptions/job posts through an inclusive lens

One of the most important pieces of content you'll author as a leader is a job description for a role on your team. It's the first touchpoint candidates have with your team, and it directly impacts who does – and doesn't – engage in your interview process.

Here are tips on how to make your job descriptions more inclusive – and more attractive to the candidates you're targeting:

Identify and rework inherently biased language

Countless job descriptions contain language that is gendered, which can skew your talent pool before you even interact with candidates. Platforms like Textio leverage artificial intelligence to help remove gender bias, business jargon and other phrases that reinforce stereotypes in written content.

> One of the most important pieces of content you'll author as a leader is a job description for a role on your team.

Examples of unintentionally biased language

Textio writes, "A language pattern is considered gendered if it statistically changes the proportion of men and women who respond to a job post containing it." Their research reveals that in jobs where a man is hired, the original job post averages almost twice as many masculine-tone phrases as feminine. In jobs where a woman is hired, Textio finds the exact opposite: there are twice as many feminine-tone phrases as masculine in the job post. Here are a few common phrases that exert this type of bias effect:

Masculine-tone	Feminine-tone
Exhaustive	Transparent
Enforcement	Catalyst
Fearless	In touch with

Describe goals and growth opportunities

Focus on describing the exciting goals and clear objectives of the job rather than listing day-to-day responsibilities that aren't tied to outcomes. This will not only inspire candidates, it will also help them decide if what they'll own and learn in your job is aligned with their career goals.

Questions to answer in your job description

- What are the goals and outcomes you want this person to achieve?
- What are the success metrics being tracked and the desired outcomes?
- What does growth look like on your team when someone delivers quarter over quarter?
- Who will this person be actively collaborating with?

Focus on skills over requirements

Carefully consider each requirement you're adding to your job description. Can you shift your focus away from a specific number of years of work experience or required degrees and move toward a candidate's abilities? Could you take it a step further and include verbiage that encourages candidates to apply even if they might not have all the necessary qualifications?

Consider adding an inclusivity statement

Is your job description unintentionally scaring candidates away? Research shows that women tend to only apply for jobs when they meet 100% of the requirements. One way to encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply is by adding an inclusivity statement to your list of qualifications. Jobs are filled 6% faster when the description includes an inclusion message or EEO statement. Here's the Greenhouse version (it's the last item in the list of qualifications): "Your own unique talents! If you don't meet 100% of the qualifications outlined above, tell us why you'd be a great fit for this role in your cover letter."

Get other opinions

Continue to iterate and socialize your job description. Share it with someone who's currently in the role or someone who represents an underrepresented demographic group to learn if there are better ways to position the content. Incorporating feedback from different perspectives is key to eliminating unintentional biases in the language.

Use structured hiring to mitigate unconscious bias

Now that you've communicated your focus on diversity and published an inclusive job description, you might think most of your work is behind you. After all, isn't the process mostly in your recruiter's hands from here? Not just yet. Once you have candidates entering your hiring pipeline, your commitment to equitable and inclusive hiring practices will really be put to the test.

Once you have candidates entering your hiring pipeline, your commitment to equitable and inclusive hiring practices will really be put to the test.

Here are a few important things to keep in mind to stay accountable to your commitment to DE&I:

Screen in, over screening out

When reviewing resumes, use the framework of screening in, rather than screening out. While certain jobs will have hard requirements – an engineer might need fluency in a certain coding language to perform in their job – many employers are placing less emphasis on a strict set of resume qualifications when determining who to move to the next stage and thinking about how they can invest in training people who have potential but don't have specific qualifications.

When conducting interviews, many hiring managers get understandably nervous when considering candidates from backgrounds that are not currently represented on their team. That behavior is often grounded in similar-to-me bias and perpetuates homogeneity. Pay close attention to how you and your interviewers react to historically underrepresented candidates and actively exercise open-mindedness. Your best hire may be the person who is different from everyone else your team has hired in the past.

Use the same criteria

To create an even playing field, assess all candidates against the same hiring criteria that you've determined is necessary for the role, which is the core of structured hiring. Similarly, make sure each candidate is answering the same interview questions from your interviewers. This allows your interviewers not only to focus on relevant areas to assess, but also to compare candidates in a data-driven and fair way in the event you're choosing between several finalists.

Diversify your panel

Finally, consider your interview panel. Which demographic groups are represented and which are not represented? Do you have a panel of all men? Of all the same ethnicity or race? Of all millennials? If the answer is yes to any of these scenarios, how are you planning to address this elephant in the room with candidates who identify differently? Put yourself in their shoes and be prepared to clearly explain why creating a more diverse team is a priority for you.

Own your influence

As a leader, you have the ability to influence others through your words and actions. Consider the ways you can demonstrate your commitment to DE&I. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Sponsor an employee resource group and commit to helping them achieve their goals

- Attend diversity sourcing events and invite coworkers to join you

- Refer candidates from overlooked/underrepresented groups to open roles throughout your organization

- Look for local organizations you can partner with – perhaps you can sponsor a hackathon, offer an internship or otherwise support their mission

- Ask for feedback and suggestions – your team might already have some great ideas about how to prioritize DE&I

Measure wins by progress and improvements

If you don't already have an extensive DE&I program at your organization, figuring out where to start can be challenging. Who we are informs everything we do – who we hire, what we observe, where we live, how we communicate – and it can be tough to know where to focus when checking our own potential biases. However, starting with a deep reflection of your hiring process is a way to take ownership of your responsibility as a business leader to prioritize DE&I. Your commitment may not produce immediate results, since company demographics aren't something that can change overnight, but your efforts will drive meaningful and positive change in the long run with respect to who you hire and advocate for in your company.

Creating an inclusive candidate experience to build stronger, more diverse teams

Every person in your company – regardless of their job title – can contribute to inclusive hiring. Whether they're making referrals, interviewing candidates or talking to prospects, their actions can have an impact on candidate experience. That's why it's essential to be intentional about the role everyone plays.

Here are a few ways to create an inclusive candidate experience:

Structured hiring

Structured hiring is an approach where selection decisions are based on evidence, not emotion. Leaders align the role to a business objective and build a rigorous and objective interview process, through conversations, assignments and the like, that can be used to predict job performance. Candidates are asked consistent questions that connect back to specific attributes required for the role and interviewers evaluate responses against a defined rating system in the interview scorecard.

In previous sections, we covered how hiring managers and recruiters can partner to implement structured hiring. Remember that rolling it out to your entire company will take time and effort. Everyone involved in the interview process will need to be trained on things like how to conduct interviews, take notes and score candidates. Consider integrating this training into new hire onboarding, team offsites or manager professional development to ensure everyone stays up to date.

Hiring Maturity success story: Neil Casey, ThoughtWorks

In this limited podcast series, Greenhouse President and Co-founder Jon Stross sat down with talent leaders from leading companies to discuss their Hiring Maturity journeys. Listen in as Jon invites Neil Casey, Global Head of Sourcing and Strategic Hiring at ThoughtWorks, to discuss building an inclusive hiring process at scale.

Defining and hiring for culture add

Over the past several years, we've seen companies move away from assessing candidates on their "culture fit" because this term can lead to homogeneous hiring. But many companies still want a way to determine whether candidates are aligned with their values. This is where "culture add" or values interviews can come into play. Culture-add interviews also give candidates the chance to meet people from other teams and departments to get a broader sense of your company culture.

If culture-add interviews are part of your hiring process (or you want them to be), you'll want to consider the following:

- Who conducts culture-add interviews? What is the selection process like for identifying these interviewers within your company and training them?

- Which questions does the culture-add interview cover? How do you define great, acceptable and unacceptable answers?

- How often will you revisit and update this process?

Explore the Greenhouse DE&I feature set

Take structured interviewing to the next level with solutions that enable recruiters, interviewers and hiring managers to operationalize and scale fairer hiring practices. Here's a brief overview of the Greenhouse DE&I feature set:

Data collection and reporting – Track self-reported applicant demographic data throughout the hiring funnel (from sourcing to offer) and measure pass-through/drop-off rates

In-the-moment interventions – Reminders that nudge users to slow down and avoid instinctive mental shortcuts that aren't rooted in evidence or tied to job-relevant criteria

Structured decision-making – Added guardrails that support a more objective selection process

Encouraging an inclusive approach to employee referrals

Employee referrals are a great way to get everyone involved in the hiring process. It's exciting to have a hand in shaping the future of your company while helping someone in your network land their next role. But certain groups tend to benefit from referrals more than others, which can lead to more homogeneity.

The good news is that referrals don't automatically lead to homogeneous hires, according to research by DE&I consultancy Paradigm. They partnered with Pinterest to determine why employee referrals tend to be homogenous. Is it because people's networks are truly that homogenous or is it due to pattern-matching bias (employees are looking around at their coworkers and only thinking of people who are similar to the existing team)? Paradigm found that when a leader asked employees to be more mindful about diversity when offering referrals, especially people of color and women, it made a tangible impact over the following six weeks. So be sure to encourage employees to consider diversity when making referrals.

DonorsChoose takes a data-driven approach to DE&I in their hiring

DonorsChoose's challenge: Develop a hiring process that aligns with the organization's commitment to DE&I in their work in education

DonorsChoose has a high standard for their DE&I hiring efforts and wanted to intentionally drive a more diverse candidate pool. To do so, they had to prioritize gathering better data on diversity in their hiring pools. Without that data, conversations between the People and Talent team and hiring managers felt uninformed and ineffective.

DonorsChoose wanted data at their fingertips to drive their DE&I hiring efforts. The Greenhouse DE&I feature set offered them a robust set of tools. Since turning on custom demographic reporting, the DonorsChoose team has seen an improvement and recognized that now 58% of the candidates who have made it to the face-to-face interview stage at DonorsChoose have identified as people of color.

Conclusion

We recommend sitting with these strategies for a few days rather than immediately jumping into action. Take time to reflect on your next steps and collaborate with your internal partners in order to create the optimal DE&I hiring strategy for your company.

Remember that when it comes to DE&I, there's no "end state" to arrive at. We're all on the same journey of curiosity, listening, progress and discovery.

If you'd like to do further reading or research on any of the topics we covered, we've curated a list of recommended reading for you.

We are your partners and allies and stand beside you in this work and will help you as best we can. All of us at Greenhouse are committed to bringing about lasting change and we will be your partner in creating a more equitable hiring process so you can build more inclusive, stronger teams.

Recommended reading

DE&I strategy	Creating an Effective Diversity and Inclusion Program
DE&I strategy	Hiring Diverse Candidates is Not Enough – It's About Keeping Them
DE&I strategy	Toward a Racially Just Workplace
DE&I strategy	Why So Many Organizations Stay White
DE&I strategy	Do Your D&I Efforts Include People with Disabilities?
Hiring	If There's Only One Woman in Your Candidate Pool, There's Statisically No Chance She'll Be Hired
Hiring	A Data-Driven Approach to Hiring More Diverse Talent
Hiring	How to Alter Your Hiring Practices to Increase Diversity
Hiring	Research: How Speech Patterns Lead to Hiring Bias
Intersectionality	Do Your Diversity Efforts Reflect the Experiences of Women of Color?

Recommended reading (continued)

Sourcing	Could This Be The Secret To Hiring More Women And People Of Color?
Sourcing	Diversity Sourcing Strategy: 3 LinkedIn Search Tips from Boolean Master Glen Cathey
Sourcing	How to increase workplace diversity with employee referrals
Unconscious bias	Managing Unconscious Bias: Strategies to Manage Bias & Build More Diverse, Inclusive Organizations
Unconscious bias	50 Ways to Fight Bias
Unconscious bias	12 Unconscious Bias Examples and How to Avoid Them in the Workplace
Unconscious bias	Harvard Project Implicit Association Tests

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software and services, and large partner ecosystem –
so businesses can hire for what's next.

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