



The 7 E's of Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Talent:

A Resource Guide





Project Introduction

Fostering Diversity and Inclusion is a strategic priority for the Technology Association of Iowa (TAI). A diverse workforce is critical to the long-term success of Iowa’s technology industry. TAI aims to foster a diverse technology community by promoting inclusive workforces welcoming to women, rural Iowans, and minority populations. TAI maintains an engaged Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) committee.

In 2017, TAI’s D&I Committee assumed a large project to interview about a dozen small, medium and large TAI member companies on their diversity hiring and retention practices. From this research, the committee developed a diversity recruitment and retention resource guide for Iowa technology companies. The Resource Guide will be published and shared with Iowa’s Technology Community in October 2017.

Research Findings

- 
 Many of the larger companies interviewed have an established commitment to diversity and inclusion encompassing a written statement, affinity groups for employees, and councils to track progress on these initiatives, etc.

- 
 Smaller-sized and medium-sized companies tend to lack similar programs. While reasons varied, a common thread for companies was not knowing where to start to establish diversity recruitment and retention practices and policies.

About the Resource Guide

The Resource Guide was designed to provide baseline recommendations for organizations seeking to increase representation of diverse groups within their workforces. The guide presents seven recommendations for both recruiting and retaining diverse talent. The recommendations are not sequential and can be implemented by organizations of any size. Every organization is at a different point along their path towards creating an inclusive culture and some recommendations may be more appropriate than others depending on each organization’s current situation.

To improve the quality of the guide over time, TAI is committed to continuing conversations to understand the unique workforce needs of Iowa’s technology employers. Please share your feedback and contact TAI if you’re interested in serving on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Encourage



Retention

Encourage employee opinions and thought sharing

Benchmark employee attitudes and review annually with an employee opinion or satisfaction survey. Studies show that employee satisfaction surveys can increase business productivity and outcomes. Understanding what does or doesn't make your employees happy can help to uncover growth opportunities for the business.



Recruitment

Encourage unconscious bias training for HR recruiters

Encourage intentional focus on diversity for each role you are hiring for within your organization by conducting unconscious bias training with HR recruiters and those involved in the hiring processes. Following the training, have a conversation to dive deeper into cultural differences and specific workplace situations where unconscious bias may be present in your organization.

Educate



Retention

Educate your employees on what diversity and inclusion means to the company

Develop a clearly defined, company-wide definition of diversity. This will help your employees have a deeper understanding of the company's views on diversity and inclusion, creating a standard for the workplace.



Recruitment

Educate your recruits about Iowa and everything your community has to offer.

Those who frequently recruit outside the state find that some recruits become apprehensive upon hearing the suggestion to move to Iowa. Share materials from your local chamber highlighting cultural amenities and fun activities to do in your community.

Emphasize



Retention

Emphasize a strong company culture

Provide opportunities for minority groups to create a support system through employee resource groups. An employee resource group allows groups of employees with similar interests to support one another while bringing to light the issues that affect them as a group and educate fellow employees.



Recruitment

Emphasize the company's commitment to creating an inclusive workplace when promoting your company brand

It is common for recruits at career fairs to ask about company culture. Prospective employees like to know that they'll fit in at the company. Ensure recruiters can speak knowledgeably about the company's diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Engage



Retention

Engage in the community

Connecting to the community is crucial for an Iowa transplant. An employer's community involvement can be a gateway to the larger community for a new employee.



Recruitment

Engage leaders of employee resource groups during the recruitment, interview and onboarding stages

Train and educate internal Diversity Champions throughout the company, and invite leaders to be engaged. Allow your recruits to see themselves reflected in your company during the recruitment process. This means involving employees who are members of the communities you're recruiting.

Embrace



Retention

Embrace uncomfortable conversations

Building an inclusive culture starts with having conversations that might make some employees uncomfortable. Create an environment for these types of conversations to take place. Require unconscious bias training for all employees with follow up discussions to reflect on what was learned.



Recruitment

Embrace continued engagement with potential employees

Many view the success of a recruitment event by the number of hires that occurred as a result. Recruiting outside of the state can be difficult due to competition posed by job offers in coastal regions. Find ways to stay engaged with those recruits and inform them of new openings as they become available.

Establish



Retention

Establish a committee of leaders to support internal diversity initiatives

Leader support for diversity initiatives is vital. Involving members of middle and senior management means that employees will feel more comfortable taking part in any groups or initiatives outside of their normal work duties.



Recruitment

Establish a pipeline with diversity organizations

A great way to build diversity into your talent pipeline is to start recruitment at the high school and collegiate levels. Building relationships with leaders of diversity programs at local high school and college campuses will lead to a strong foundation for your talent pipeline and will increase diversity in hiring for internships, apprenticeships and full-time employment needs.

Evaluate



Retention

Evaluate your progress on the goals you've set

Develop a way to track progress and hold your company accountable goals. Create goals that are measurable and can be tracked over time. Whether it's setting a goal for the number of members in an employee resource group or a measure of employee involvement in diversity and inclusion sessions, you'll want to establish goals that demonstrate internal commitment to your diversity statement.



Recruitment

Evaluate current recruitment pipelines

Understand your current recruitment processes both how and who you recruit. From which sources do you typically hire? What resources do you use for recruitment? Determine how you can incorporate a focus on diversity into your existing recruiting processes to capture a larger applicant pool. Consider how you can think outside of the box to reach new audiences.

The 7 E's of Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Talent:



Retention



Recruitment

Encourage

Encourage employee opinions and thought sharing

Encourage unconscious bias training for HR recruiters

Educate

Educate employees on what diversity and inclusion means to the company

Educate recruits about Iowa and everything your community has to offer

Emphasize

Emphasize a strong company culture

Emphasize the company's commitment to creating an inclusive workplace when promoting your company brand

Engage

Engage in the community

Engage leaders of employee resource groups during the recruitment, interview and onboarding stages

Embrace

Embrace uncomfortable conversations

Embrace continued engagement with potential employees

Establish

Establish a committee of leaders to support internal diversity initiatives

Establish a pipeline with diversity organizations

Evaluate

Evaluate progress on the goals you've set

Evaluate current recruitment pipelines