



Paul Harty
Chief Solutions Officer,
Sevenstep

Data and Diversity

Analyzing talent acquisition data can build visibility and accountability into D&I initiatives.

With Paul Harty, Chief Solutions Officer, Sevenstep

Organizations of all sizes and across all industries struggle to maintain a diverse and inclusive workplace—but talent acquisition data can help them drive a more strategic approach. From identifying moments of bias to making a case for needed technologies, hiring data can give HR leaders the insights needed to overcome the obstacles that hold them back from true diversity. Here, Paul Harty, chief solutions officer at Sevenstep, shares some best practices for HR leaders looking to enhance their D&I approach with data.

Q How can HR leaders drive D&I initiatives at their organizations with the help of TA data?

A The first steps to driving D&I in any organization are looking at the data to understand the make-up of the current employee talent pool, identifying areas of success or improvement, and having a strategic discussion with senior leaders about responsibilities. When analyzing the diversity of current employee populations, it is important to segment the data by level, by role, and by department. You will find that certain areas perform better than others, and you will need to identify why. None of the strategies to improve D&I are going to be a blanket effort that fits every role at every level.

Another best practice is to be clear about each team's responsibilities around D&I and incentivize behaviors that promote diversity hiring. For example, HR and talent management should generally be held accountable for retention and promotion metrics, while talent acquisition's primary responsibility is to make sure they are driving the best possible diverse candidates into the organization. If you hold TA accountable for driving diverse talent, then the metrics that are going to be the most useful for setting goals and incentivizing performance are going to be quality metrics around attracting and engaging the right candidates. If TA goals are set using time to hire, you are not likely incentivizing the right behavior.

Q What diversity metrics should TA teams analyze?

A It is not enough to measure the total percentage of diverse people in your organization—talent acquisition teams need to take a close look at every step of the hiring process and identify moments of drop-off. This should start with how many candidates the TA team is passively and actively attracting, what strategies are working to bring them into the organization, and how many of those candidates are progressing to the screening, interview, and hire stages.

Following all of those funnel steps will give you good insight into the kinds of policies, procedures, or trainings that need to happen within each of those processes. For example, you may find unconscious bias in the recruiter screening process, with an abnormal number of diverse candidates rejected during their screens. Using this knowledge, you can introduce interventions like unconscious bias training or technology that evaluates candidates more fairly.

Post-hire, it is important to look at retention and internal mobility rates among diverse employees. Once a baseline is established, HR leaders can identify variance in the data to decide where to focus their D&I training efforts across departments and senior leaders. If one particular department promotes 30% of its diverse candidates over a 36-month period whereas another only promotes 2%, it could be a talent

management or hiring manager bias issue, but you will have to dig deeper into the data to really understand the root cause.

Q How can hiring managers leverage TA data to overcome unconscious bias and measure the true potential of an employee?

A Step one is to invest in tools that optimize job descriptions for hiring managers to be more inclusive. You want diverse candidates to easily find roles and feel that the positions are built inclusively. Step two is to present every candidate to a hiring manager in a formatted way, using templates to limit unconscious bias. Also, investing in a methodology that systematically scores candidates can eliminate some of the opportunities for bias that come from a loosely defined process. And of course, engage diverse hiring teams and implement diversity training around unconscious bias in interviews.

Q What tools would you recommend to better analyze and gain insights from the data?

A In addition to the tools mentioned above, I would recommend a technology that can aggregate disparate data. For example, our Sevayo Insights tool pulls in data from multiple sources of the TA and onboarding process and aggregates it into one dashboard providing an empowering picture to your entire talent ecosystem.