

Developing a Talent Pipeline

»» For D&I Staff, Executive Leadership Council, HR Leaders and Business Partners, Resource-Group Leaders, Mentors/Mentees, Sponsors/Protégés

I Succession Planning/Mandatory Diverse Slates

Getting a [diverse pipeline to the top](#) of your organization starts with the initial hiring of those with management potential. Companies on [The DiversityInc Top 50 Companies for Diversity](#) list show consistent progress in their hiring of people from underrepresented groups. For example, their hiring of Blacks, Latinos and Asians was up 16 percent, 36 percent and 25 percent, respectively, compared with last year.

A major concern in succession planning is whether the talented people from underrepresented groups stay and are willing to put in what it takes to move up to the top echelons. Recently, DiversityInc Top 50 companies have been assessing what they need to do to [retain mid-career women](#). And more and more companies are paying attention to their voluntary turnover rates broken down by race, ethnicity and gender.

Some organizations don't have the luxury of waiting to develop talent and feel an urgent need to get more diversity in senior management by hiring from outside. Others are able to do both, focusing on long- and short-term benefits. If your company does hire executives externally and hopes to improve its diversity this way, it's important to require diverse slates and not allow recruiters to tell you that they "couldn't find any qualified candidates" in their rush to "time to fill" positions.

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Guided Questions for Staff

»» **Are internal and external recruiters required to have diverse slates? How far down the line does accountability (and compensation) for increasing diversity fall?**

Consider that if you require diverse slates from either internal or external recruiters, you must specify what those slates are. Some companies require one woman and one nonwhite person for every slate at a certain level and above. Others require a certain percentage of women or nonwhite people based on how many applicants there are. Also, be clear about what the rewards (compensation, promotion) are for meeting these requirements and what the penalties are (demotion, lack of compensation, even dismissal).

»» **Are diversity goals set by your [executive diversity council](#) and formally factored into your succession planning?**

Goals are not quotas, but the adage "What gets measured gets done" is absolutely true. Without goals that address the need for more diversity at the top, organizations remain stagnant and don't push or innovate to make room for more diversity.

»» **How do you handle employees, especially those from underrepresented groups, who aren't included in succession planning?**

Not everyone is a candidate for top leadership. How does your company encourage those it wants to stay—but not be put on the fast track—to feel good about themselves and their role in the organization?