

# Succession Planning

»» For D&I staff, HR staff, recruiters, talent-acquisition departments, legal staff, diversity-council members, employee-resource-group leaders

## Early Talent Identification/External Recruiting

Getting a diverse pipeline to the top of your organization starts with the initial hires 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.

The best practices consistently used by these companies to bring in talent include:

- Working with colleges and universities (and high schools) to develop talent at early ages, especially in fields where gaps exist for underrepresented groups.
- Having strong relationships with multicultural nonprofits and professional associations (including having senior executives sit on their boards).
- Using [employee resource groups](#) to both find and [on-board](#) talented people from underrepresented groups. These groups are also valuable in developing leadership skills and in identifying people who might not be obvious for high-potential slots but who with added guidance and education could become leaders.

Some organizations don't have the luxury of waiting to develop talent and feel an urgent need to get more diversity in senior management. Others are able to do both, focusing on long- and short-term benefits. If your company does hire executives externally and hopes to improve your 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 use "time to fill" to get people into positions.

Many of the companies on our list, particularly those in financial services and healthcare, hire up to 50 percent of their managers externally. As this story, [Diversity's Growing Value to Succession Planning](#), indicates, a company's diversity reputation is critical to external hires, especially more senior people. And successful on-boarding requires a significant effort to help senior people understand the corporate culture, as [Wells Fargo](#) has done.

### Guided Questions for Staff

»» **If you use internal recruiters, do they receive cultural-competency training on a regular basis? Are they 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) for failing to do so.

»» **Are you fully utilizing your resource groups?**

Resource groups are excellent sources of finding talent and making sure people from underrepresented groups are comfortable in the corporate culture once hired. They also provide referrals and role models at job fairs and at colleges and universities.

»» **Are your external and internal recruiters and your hiring managers trained in unconscious bias? Do your recruiters inadvertently turn away talented people because they don't "fit in" or they don't feel a connection?**

Ensure they have training to recognize their own biases and subjectivity.