

The Great Resignation: Creating a More Diverse and Inclusive Philanthropy Team

The Great Resignation could actually be re coined The Great Reflection, as a plethora of employees and organizations assess purpose and meaning. If organizations reassess culture and retool definitions, this period of time could actually serve as a lightning rod for change and growth. Philanthropy organizations had already identified the need to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive (DEI) workforce. Now those same organizations may start to understand a healthy, inclusive culture is an imperative—perhaps the only way to navigate and triumph during this time. Here is a condensed checklist of things you can do to build inclusivity:

- Retain rather than *regain*.** Retention is a far better tactic than losing and gaining diverse candidates. Statistics continue to reflect an increasingly high level of turnover among women and people of color during the Great Resignation. When in doubt, focus on retention and employ core tactics to keep your best candidates. Competitive wages, strong benefits, growth opportunities and flexibility can address individual needs.
- Embrace opportunities and referrals.** While it may seem counterintuitive, some of the best organizations encourage their high performers to express when they might be exploring new opportunities. The organization may find internal growth roles. They may also provide an outstanding current job reference while asking for referrals to best refill the position. While not all organizations will embrace this practice, it does reflect the younger generation's view of cyclical employment and encourages strong employees to stay or return. Also, encourage your employees to refer their connections who are not only qualified but also fill diverse opportunities.
- Develop engaging recruiting initiatives.** When evaluating the need for growing your philanthropy organization, identify roles and responsibilities. Modernize and diversify your recruitment marketing through social media, blogs and various platforms. Recognize that organizations are attempting to attract some of the same candidates so you must differentiate and promote your brand, mission and core values.
- Instill DEI as a strategic priority.** Determine clear goals, metrics and outcomes. Incorporate policies, processes and [practices](#) so they are embedded within the philanthropy organization, instilling the fabric for the culture of inclusion and belonging.

- **Lead from where you are.** While a great deal of discussion swirls around the role of leadership and tone at the top leadership level, recent [Wharton research](#) reflects the critical role of middle managers in developing a more inclusive workplace. Middle managers are central to employees' work experiences, and they often provide the impetus to DEI and talent strategies within core practices. If you haven't already, it's time to train up this leadership level to help lead your DEI charge.
- **Provide employees with a variety of mentor and sponsor opportunities.** Best practices in employee development reflect individualized plans that are specific, timely and relevant. Younger and more diverse candidates reflect a much greater likelihood of success and retention when paired with peers and mentors, coupled with necessary resources.
- **Encourage and embrace board support.** Board members are often viewed as the external face to the community, bridging between the organization and potential donors. However, board support for a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion is pivotal to developing key messages, partnership opportunities and stakeholder engagement. Make this a recurring agenda item for discussion at board meetings to assess and enhance board support in this area.
- **Provide education and training.** Training should include diversity, equity and inclusion modules for staff in a dynamic and affirming delivery method for all employees. DEI is so much more than a compliance initiative and is now viewed as a vital KSA (Knowledge, Skills and Abilities). According to a [2021 Gallup survey](#), 57% percent of US adults in the workforce would be interested in an "upskilling" program, focused on learning a new skill. Include DEI training in all your educational programs.

In *Diversity Wins*, McKinsey reflected the [business case](#) for a more inclusive and diverse employee base is stronger than ever, revealing companies with ethnically diverse workforces experience 36% higher returns. While there are much deeper discussions to be shared around developing and retaining talented diverse candidates, progressive philanthropy teams have already begun to assess and improve upon their organizational culture to be more inclusive, diverse and equitable.

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