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Implementing Diversity

Implementing diversity should not be an onerous task for employers. In most cases it actually evolves naturally as employers respond to the constant changes in the global labour market. You will find when you actually review your current practice you may actually be a 'diverse employer' and not realise it!

To help promote and implement diversity in the workplace, there are 12 key areas you could examine to help you attract, develop and retain the best possible employees. Also see the Sample Diversity Audit from www.susescotland.co.uk

1. Advertising
2. Recruitment and Selection
3. Application Forms
4. Shortlisting
5. Interview process
6. Retention & Progression
7. Pay banding
8. Training & Development
9. Organisational Culture
10. Equal Opportunities
11. Dignity at Work
12. People Friendly

Source: Diversity Management - Developing Potential

1. Advertising

When advertising a vacant post use plain language and be aware of any stereotyping in the advert. Use positive language to attract applicants with softer skills and good work experience. Be proactive in adopting positive action strategies to encourage applications from under represented / marginalised groups.

2. Recruitment and Selection

Examine your current recruitment and selection process and ensure it is 'Equality proof'. Are there any elements of the process that potentially filter out disadvantaged / marginalised groups? Make sure you don't eliminate a talented individual

who could help bring new approaches and ideas to your business.

3. Application forms

Application forms should be designed to elicit the information you need for the applicant to perform the job i.e. abilities and attributes. Be aware of hidden filters in the form asking for information on age, gender, ethnicity, disability etc. Do not ask the applicant to attach a photograph as this acts as an immediate unconscious filter to the selection panel.

4. Shortlisting

Your recruitment decisions should be as objective as possible by ensuring the selection criteria is robust and explicit i.e. a scoring system that is reflective of the evidence shown on the application form.

5. Interview Process

Address any attitudinal barriers that the interview panel may have by providing some diversity and equality training prior to the interview. Try to avoid making assumptions about potential employees i.e. age, physical attributes, culture etc. Ensure a transparent system is in place to record the panel's feedback - this should build on the scoring system developed for shortlisting. Provide an opportunity for candidates to get feedback on their interview performance.

6. Retention & Progression

These are two of the key areas in supporting existing staff and helping you become an 'employer of choice'. Training and development of existing staff is more cost effective than ongoing recruitment costs. Look at the skills and potential of existing staff for internal promotion. With some development, they can be a major asset to the organisation.

7. Pay banding

Ensure that there are clear guidelines regarding parity of pay. This should take into account both European and National legislation. Make your pay banding/grading visible by providing accessible information and data about grading systems and ensuring they are free from discrimination and do not undervalue the work being carried out.



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8. Training & Development

Promote progression routes within your organisation at the induction phase. Make workforce development accessible to all members of staff by providing a support system to enable staff to continue / take up professional career development.

9. Organisational Culture

Develop systems to benchmark equality and diversity within your organisation and set guidelines to measure progress. Aim for diversity integration within all day-to-day activities until it becomes the standard culture of the workplace.

10. Equal Opportunities

More employers are now identifying themselves as Equal Opportunities Employers, therefore it is important when developing your policy that it demonstrates how you comply with legislation, both European and National, that you are committed to Equal Opportunities and treat all applicants and employees the same, irrespective of race, age, gender, religion, sexuality or disability. It should be promoted to all staff and made available in easily accessible formats.

11. Dignity at Work

A Dignity at Work policy should aim to create a workplace which recognises and respects individual differences and which rejects harassment as destructive to the recipient, the harasser and the organisation.

12. People Friendly

The changing demographics of the workforce mean more women and older workers will play a significant part in the workplace of the future, therefore organisations need to take a positive approach in creating a culture of work/life balance. When developing a flexible working policy consult widely with staff to ascertain their needs and preferences. You can do this through a staff satisfaction survey and focus groups. Make sure Managers receive some training on how to develop and manage a flexible workforce. Make the policy widely available to employees - this could be included in the induction process or staff handbook.

Remember: you do not have to have numerous policies for every area of practice. One clear concise policy or Equal Opportunities statement which considers everyone's roles and responsibilities is a great starting point.

Further Information

You will find further advice and guidance from the following web addresses:

www.susescotland.co.uk

www.equalityhumanrights.com

www.acas.org.uk

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

www.cipd.co.uk

www.dti.gov.u