



Diversity and Inclusion and the McQuaig Word Survey

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The importance of diversity and inclusion in hiring

In addition to complying with human rights legislation to ensure that organizational hiring practices are fair and non-discriminatory, organizations have recognized that a diverse and inclusive workforce supports competitive advantage. Diversity and inclusion activities reflect an organization's commitment to strategies, plans, and initiatives that create a culture of openness and acceptance of others as well as an emphasis on hiring practices that increase access to positions from applicants across gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and other characteristics. In hiring practices, assessments that appear neutral and unbiased increase inclusivity by presenting the organization in an open and inviting way to diverse applicants. In addition, assessments that favour applicants from diverse groups or, at a minimum, do not discriminate against them supports increasing employee diversity within the organization.

How we assess diversity and inclusion in hiring

The main approach to assessing diversity and inclusion in hiring focuses on the outcomes of hiring decisions with respect to applicant characteristics. For example, if after a year of making hiring decisions an organization might realize that only 30% of new hires were women even though they represented 60% of all applicants. Clearly, something went wrong and the hiring decisions were not increasing gender diversity. In addition to hiring rates across groups, average differences on assessments (in favour of one group or the other) or the probability of different personality profiles across groups (again in favour of one group or another) can be used to gauge how well the tool would help (or hinder) increasing workforce diversity.

Diversity and inclusion with personality assessments

All assessments have the potential to hinder or enhance organizational hiring initiatives to increase diversity and inclusion. Assessments are designed to help differentiate applicants to determine who has the best fit of skills to job requirements. In hiring, the critical issue is to maximize differentiation amongst applicants while minimizing non-job related discrimination. Personality assessments as a whole produce the smallest differences between gender, ethnic, and sexual orientation groups as compared to other types of assessments. Therefore, using these tools can support organizational goals to increase diversity. Differences across gender and ethnicity tend to be small on the most common personality measures.

Diversity and inclusion with the McQuaig Word Survey

A considerable amount of research representing a wide range of jobs (e.g. real estate sales agents, business reporters, territory managers, entrepreneurs, financial services employees, telecommunications sales reps, and business leaders) has compared profiles between men and women, ethnic and language groups, as well as different countries. The overwhelming evidence indicates that each group produces a similar proportion of profiles (e.g. specialist, generalist, pioneer, transition, holding back) regardless of job type. This is strong evidence that decisions using the Word Survey profile will not have a negative impact on the hiring rates for women, ethnic groups, non-English language groups, and across countries as each group has a similar probability of being classified within any of the main profile types.

About the author

Dr. Hausdorf received his Ph.D. in Human Resource Management in 1997 from McMaster University (Hamilton) and his Masters in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from the University of Guelph (1990). He is a Professor of Industrial-Organizational Psychology at the University of Guelph and the Managing Partner of Potentia Talent Management Inc. He is a Past-President of the Canadian Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology of the Canadian Psychological Association. In addition, he is a member in good standing with the Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychologists (U.S.), and the European Association for Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP).

