

# Why Cultural Fit Hiring Can Be a Diversity Disaster

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Before you talk about hiring for culture fit, take the time, resources and energy to examine your culture as it is and then develop a vision for the future. Hire for the future culture you want and have a plan to achieve it.

Research by Professor Lauren Rivera from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management found that interviewers often look for potential friends rather than those with the best skills.

If you want to build and retain a diverse workforce that supports equity and inclusion and that will result in breakthrough products and services, stop looking for “best friends” that you can have a beer with. Stop staying stuck in comfort, and stagnation with people who look, act and think like you.

Hiring for “cultural fit,” in an all white or all male and under 40 work environment means the next hires will be white, male and under 40. It means that hiring for “culture fit” in your company will perpetuate bias, racism, sexism and other forms of exclusion.

But if you're willing to transform your culture and how you hire, here are steps you can take now.

## Seven Steps to Hire for the Culture You Want

**Real change needs to be in the mindset** and culture of the organization. It's essential to measure, review and flush out opportunities for systemic bias and discrimination in your business processes.

Continuously take next steps, some tiny and some huge. The whole senior leadership team needs to be involved in how they think and what they do to promote that culture.

**Here are seven steps of many** that you can take to hire for the culture your want. For a longer list, email [Simma@Simmalieberman.com](mailto:Simma@Simmalieberman.com) or call 510.697.8226.

- 1- Examine your culture and the people in it
  - Does everyone look the same?
  - Are you a bunch of “tech bros” who think alike?
  - If you have a diverse workforce, what steps are you taking to nourish, support and retain people different than you?
  - Draw a prototype of a DEI culture in your organization and compare to present day Who is not represented? Who is missing? Those are the new people you need who can take your organization to new heights.
- 2- Find new ways to recruit, interview and on board new employees.
- 3- Take time to develop relationships in advance of need with people different than your organization’s norm. Don’t rely just on the wording of your job posts (but definitely get help making them more welcoming and reflect the values of DEI.)
- 4- Revisit your definition of cultural fit. Think how well candidates will fit the DEI culture you want, not the monochrome culture you have.
- 5- Research and utilize new technologies being used to reduce bias in hiring and know that the technology is not enough. Implement hiring practices that eliminate the bias of the recruiter and that include a diverse panel of decision makers.
- 6- Change your culture, change recruiters and stop using the term culture fit to mean your clones. Be ruthless in your self-assessment and look for people who don’t think like you or laugh at all the same jokes.
- 7- Hire the “idea” candidate who's not afraid to think differently, and not the “ideal” candidate who looks and thinks like you.

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