

What's Diversity Recruitment Without Retention?

The Management Challenge: As corporations increasingly commit to the imperative of creating diverse management and leadership teams, they must find ways to improve retention strategies, or risk losing their most promising up-and-comers. Three global executives offer their perspectives on this pressing issue.

Tundé Johnson, former Senior Vice President,
Chief Compliance and Legal Officer, Adecco Group in Glattbrugg, Switzerland

“Various problems develop when companies lose sight of the individuals who are working for them. Unless people constantly draw attention to what they have accomplished and how ‘great’ they are, the organization easily may overlook their effectiveness. Sometimes managers give employees mixed messages, conveying that promotional opportunities will develop for them at a later time, and then that doesn’t happen. Often, it’s only when people threaten to leave a company that real notice is paid to them, and it may be too late.

To me, the solution must start with strategic HR. The human resources department must facilitate continuous assessment and feedback to individuals, with the objective of helping them develop realistic expectations about career growth and how to achieve it.

Many corporations don’t do a very good job of communication. It’s not just about helping people map out their expectations and career development plans, as important as that is. Companies also need to help employees understand the mission, and ‘social’ as well as economic priorities. When these elements are well articulated, they help improve retention because they pull teams together.”

Brendan Burnett-Stohner,

Vice Chairman, Head of Inclusion Practice, CTPartners in New York

“Retention is a big problem, of course. But for many corporations, there’s another, underlying problem. That is, they just do not have a sufficiently diverse population at all levels of their organizations, which is what they need to build upon in order to achieve successful retention.

That means that they must improve recruitment strategies as well. Companies need to do a better job of ‘seeding’ high-quality, diverse talent into the corporation at all levels, from entry through executive. While that’s happening, corporations should be working aggressively to retain desirable employees by moving them around to positions that will broaden their expertise and experience while exposing them to different, significant opportunities. As part of that effort, corporations should assign them appropriate mentors who are important within the organization.

There’s one more point to emphasize: These are strategies that make sense with every promising employee. After all, men and women who represent the diversity of the global marketplace aren’t looking for anything different from any other person. Savvy retention strategies succeed with everyone.”

Jean-Claude Le Grand,

Global Director for Strategic Recruitment and Diversity, L’Oréal Group in Paris

“Retention is an intense issue, due to the boom of the economy. It is not simply an issue that relates to diverse executives alone. However, for successful global corporations, it is important to have a good balance of ethnicity, gender, religious backgrounds, and so forth, so that our organizations can reflect the psyche of the people who are our customers. Every corporation must struggle to retain employees who help provide that balance while performing their jobs well.

As we struggle with this challenge, some things seem to me to be apparent. Within a company, people want to be treated equally. That’s not the same as ‘equality,’ because, of course, we are not all the same person. We do not perform the same way and do not deliver the same value to our organizations. But companies need to provide people with equal treatment, which includes respect, transparency, feedback, and the opportunities for career development, as appropriate.

It’s also the case, I believe, that people more and more want a good balance between their personal and professional lives. I think that this is true of many young people, as well as many older people. By responding to that desire, companies can improve retention.” ■



Tundé Johnson



Brendan Burnett-Stohner



Jean-Claude Le Grand