



# Top 10 Tips

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for Recruiting Difference

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Our differences are our strengths

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# 1

## Challenge your thinking on what a 'superstar' looks like. How do we decide that someone is a superstar?

Think about the people in your team that you consider superstars – why do you have this view? And why do others not fit into this bucket in your head? Is it true that “Some have IT and some don’t” – and is how we judge the ‘it’ factor – actually subjective?

It is our own assumptions, judgements and perceptions that decide what any strength of an individual team member is being paid attention to - and what is being neglected or ignored. If the assumptions match reality, they are a useful guide to effective behaviour – however, we have to remember our natural tendency to confirm our beliefs.




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# 2

## Requiring ONE woman on the short list MAKES NO DIFFERENCE.

We have heard a client instruct recruiters to make sure there is at least one female candidate on the short list – TICK – that’ll fix it – wont it?

But think about it:

- What is the objective of a recruiter?
- It's to get the seat filled and get paid. How does this consciously or unconsciously drive recruiter behaviour?

Think about these questions:

- Are they likely to present the type of candidates who, in their view – FIT – yes cultural fit, based on their perception of your culture?

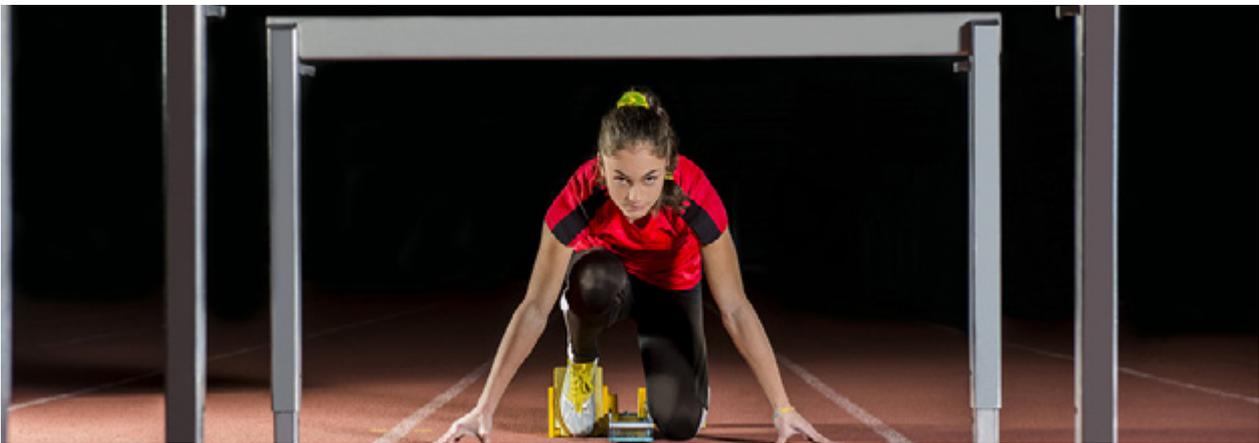
- In pulling together their candidates – do they approach the usual candidate pools – their connections, the people they know? What incentive do they have to cast the net wider from the normal pool – and how can they prove to you that they have?
- Would they take a risk in pushing someone who was different – so different in style, personality, culture, experience, qualification, industry, gender, culture....the list goes on.
- If a recruiter is driven by filling the seat as quickly as possible – does thinking left field happen? Does broadening the candidate pool happen? What do you think?

### 3

## Ask recruiters to send you 'someone who is not my TYPE.'

Interestingly, we were meeting with a client to discuss just this a little while ago – and an executive jumped in and had an 'ah- ha!' moment – he explained that he was hiring for 2 major roles and using a recruiter that he had a lot of faith in – and he said – “I

like her because she always sends me the 'type of person I get on with'” – then as the light bulb went on he said – “ok, I'm ringing her now – I am going to instruct her to give me a candidate slate of people who are not my type! I want her to challenge me – and I want to see the CV's of all those who have applied – not just those that people have selected for me to see. “



### 4

## Recognise the hurdles a candidate has to get through before they even get to you.

Take a closer look at what layers of unconscious bias that an individual may have to conquer in order to make it. Will a candidate who is different and diverse even make it to you? Millions of dollars go to recruitment agencies every year, and because of that, recruitment consultants are diversity gatekeepers.

Unconscious bias works behind the scenes also, subversively undermining diversity and inclusion efforts.

If a DIFFERENT candidate does happen to make it through the process and is presented to the client, the same unconscious bias will be reapplied by the next group of people who review the CV's. And unconscious bias will also play a part in the way the recruitment consultant actually briefs the different candidates for the role prior to meeting the clients, if they get through the sift. Think about the hurdles and layers a candidate needs to jump through before they even get to an interview.

Think about it – are you missing out on great – 'non-standard', 'non bell curve' candidates?

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## 5

### Be open to different types of CV's and career paths.

One of the simplest forms of unconscious bias – a negative assessment of non-standard CV's and career paths.

It's easy to discount a CV that isn't set out in a normal way, or describes a career path that doesn't adhere to the normal move up through the corporate ladder. Unfortunately, the standard CV/career path is set as the norm for the majority good school, good university, good corporate experience (i.e. easy to place with clients from a recruiters perspective).

As an example, CV's from female candidates often don't look like that, because often they have taken a career break to start a family or want to work part-time.

So the recruiter is more likely to exclude female applications, not really deliberately, but in an unconscious way where the recruiter actually feels they are doing the best by the client. They're used to assessing candidates against the "normal" framework of what looks good, and they churn the handle and come up with "the usual suspects".




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## 6

### Add a criteria to your selection process: we need DIFFERENCE in the team because we understand that GROUPTHINK won't get us to where we need to go.

Think about it: Are you missing out on great – 'non standard', non bell curve candidates? The thing about our worship

of the bell curve and standardising – is that the most creative and successful people in the world are NOT even on the bell curve – they are not standard!

So if you want your team to shoot the lights out of it – who should you really be looking for? What steps can you take to make sure you are seeing 'non standard and 'non bell' curve guns? Or are you content to continue to miss out on outstanding talent?

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## 7

### Understand that NAME BIAS is one of the hurdles your DIFFERENT candidate is going to have to overcome.

You may have a string of prestigious degrees and years of experience, but potential employers may never get that far into your résumé if your name sounds foreign, new research has found.

An underlying reason appears to be subconscious discrimination, the researchers suggest: “What we think is happening is recruiters have to go through piles of résumés very quickly. If they see an unfamiliar name, they may get an initial first reaction that they have concerns about whether the person has the social

and language skills the job requires,” said Philip Oreopoulos, assistant professor of economics at the University of Toronto and co-author of the study.

Even if the résumé clearly addresses such concerns of hiring managers, “sometimes they can’t shake that first reaction,” he said. “And that can be the difference in deciding not to contact that very qualified person for an interview.”

According to the research, employers are about 40 per cent more likely to choose to interview a job applicant with an English-sounding name than someone with an ethnic name, even if both candidates have identical education, skills and work histories.

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## 8

### Take ACTION to disrupt the recruitment process.

The fact is, we are all biased, to a lesser or greater degree. And if people in general are biased, the hiring process will be biased too.

Recruitment is a ripe breeding ground for assumptions and snap-decisions.

Firstly, selection is usually based on limited information. CV’s and applications only provide a snapshot of a candidate’s personality and skills, so bias is whispering in our ears even before the first encounter.

Secondly, hiring is often time-pressured, requiring relatively quick decisions. Under such circumstances, bias can exert a strong influence, filling in the gaps in the recruiter’s knowledge.

Furthermore, unstructured and intuition-based interviewing techniques present opportunities for subjectivity and personal preferences.

Following our ‘gut feelings’ may feel right, but it often fools us into favouring people like ourselves (known as ‘in-group bias’), or being drawn irresistibly towards charismatic people (which is called the ‘halo effect’).

## 9

## Conduct detailed and clear JOB ANALYSIS upfront before you start recruiting.

Job analysis provides structure, helping to define clear expectations of what we are looking for in a candidate, by identifying key competencies and performance criteria, important for success in the job. This develops a valid person specification, identifying the key skills and characteristics that will define the future job holder.

Job analysis diminishes biases by clearly specifying what we want to assess in the CV, application and interview. These elements become objective criteria against which candidates can be measured. This should be done before the recruitment starts, ensuring that we adhere to objective selection criteria in spite of any bias that might tempt us to gather less relevant information.



## 10

## Be a COURAGEOUS INCLUSIVE LEADER – challenge and disrupt the current status quo for recruitment – starting with yourself!

Our first introduction to a potential new employee is filled with opportunities to make snap judgements and unconscious evaluations as we have already established. Here are some more strategies for you to consider:

Learn to turn a flashlight on yourself from the first contact you have with somebody.

Consider biases that you may have about the standards you have set for the recruit.

Avoid distractions when talking with potential recruits.

Recognise that short conversations with recruits are likely to accentuate rather than diminish the impact of bias.

Attempt to get a deeper understanding of the person's background and what it took to get him or her to where he or she is.

Get to know somebody more authentically, it will help you get a better sense of his or her potential.

Track your results!