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Q: What are the elements of a successful minority recruitment program?

Women, members of racial/ethnic minorities and individuals with disabilities are simply not present as coaches, managers and administrators to the same extent as they are represented in the general population. The African-American female is in double jeopardy. She is discriminated against by her gender. She is discriminated against by her race. African-American females represent less than 5% of all high school athletes, less than 10% of all college athletes, less than 2 % of all coaches and less than 1% of all college athletics administrators. This data is scanty and old so the situation may be worse.

Following are actions that every manager should consider to improve minority recruitment and the retention of minority employees:

1. **Baseline Data**. We must acquire and maintain baseline data: an annual report card. We must know:

- participation by gender and race
- participation within race by gender
- employment and salary data by gender and race
- employment and salary data within race by gender

We cannot measure progress without such data. If we don't maintain such data, discrimination hides in the closet, going unnoticed and unaddressed.

2. **Use of Search Committees**. We must insist on search committees of diverse composition for every managerial position. These positions are key. Research shows that employers hire people who look like themselves, people they are comfortable in relating to. This is how we can increase the chances that change will occur.

3. **Grant-Making Standards**. For non-profits that award grants to other organizations and sponsors and advertisers who support amateur sports, organizations should adopt positions refusing to fund any organization that does not have a program in place to address the issue of diversity in sport. Athletics departments aren't perceived as grant-making entities. However, encouraging every coach to scholarship summer camp participants from lower socio-economic and underrepresented groups has the same impact.

4. **Reaching Out**. We must recognize the double standards applied to minorities by majority administrators who say, "I can't find qualified minorities", "It was too small a pool of qualified minorities" or "Only two minority candidates applied". We must recognize the realities of our own biased hiring practices if we are members of the majority - how we unintentionally favor majority applicants. Employees fall into many categories other than fully qualified and experienced. There's the young go-getter with hustle and potential. Non-profit organizations often cannot afford to play the marketplace and offer higher salaries. It is okay to go on the basis of recommendations of people we know and trusted others. There's nothing wrong with giving someone a chance and making a change if you have made a mistake. If financial resources are not an issue, searching for recruiting the most successful minority prospect in the marketplace to consider the position should be the goal.

5. **Commitment to Act**. If a manager is serious about the problem, he or she will make a commitment and stick to it. There will be at least one minority employee at every employment level in the organization and potential minority talent will be stocked for development in internship and entry level positions. The manager will commit to offering marketplace salaries for senior staff professionals, will take a chance with entry level and middle managers and will commit to a large minority internship program.

6. **Retention**. Managers need to recognize the importance of social and professional support structures and other factors contributing to retention. Employees should be taught how to recognize common practices that contribute to gender and race discrimination inside the organization. Does everyone get invited to go out for a beer on Friday after work? Are all employees given leadership development opportunities on internal committees? Does the Athletics Director take everyone out to dinner or invite new staff home for dinner?

7. **Mentoring**. Managers must personally act to mentor minority employees and create such an internal program within their organizations.

Most important, at some point, 'doing' must take the place of 'talking' about diversity. Change happens one person at a time, one decision at a time and with one action at a time.

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Topics

Staff Building / Diversity

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