Where did your diversity go? The importance of inclusive selection.

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The Diversity Agenda is as huge in scope as it is important in its objective. With great scope comes a great challenge. One particular challenge for diversity is that the very characteristics we want to celebrate are often the most susceptible to misjudgement, misinterpretation or even discrimination.

Nowhere is this more tangibly observed than during candidate selection, where direct judgement is essential to differentiate between candidates. Whilst 2016 has largely focused on attracting more diverse populations to apply for jobs, the next challenge is selecting candidates through methodologies that enable everyone to shine in front of potential employers.

While no single group is more capable than any other, it's worrying how easily a diverse applicant population can be transformed into final offers going disproportionately to the same old majority group.

The question is, where exactly did your diversity go? The answer could well be a series of 'inclusivity gaps' across some of the most well-known stages of selection. Here are some key points to consider for employers looking to identify and close these gaps.

Criteria

The best way to design your assessment criteria (competencies etc.) is to conduct rigorous scientific interviews and focus groups to define what 'great' performance looks like. The key to making it all more inclusive is to include representatives from diverse backgrounds in this process. If not, the majority group will have a bigger say in what 'great' looks like and this will make it much easier to demonstrate these attributes during selection.

Online testing

Psychometrics are powerful predictors of performance, but some (e.g. ability tests) may possess more adverse impact*. The inclination is to simply remove them, but that also removes their significant value. An effective solution is to combine these tests with softer behavioural measures (personality questionnaires or situational judgement tests) to reduce overall adverse impact at a given stage. This balances adverse impact with predictive power and generates a broader picture of capability earlier in the selection process.

Selection

Any exercise you set has the potential to hinder a specific group's performance. This is often due, for instance, to western concepts shaping the content. But the key is to pilot your exercises with representatives from diverse groups so you can make direct changes to any content that makes it less accessible to different groups of candidates.

Evaluation

People Analytics involves analysing performance data at every stage of selection. This highlights where certain tasks, questions or even your assessors, are making it more difficult for a particular group to progress. Armed with this knowledge, you can make yet more informed adjustments to enhance inclusive selection year-on-year, every year.

By focusing on some of these 'inclusivity gaps', you could see your diverse applicant population retain identical ratios between minority and majority groups at the final offer stage. What a fantastic achievement for diversity.

To hear more about how we assist organisations with diversity and inclusion, please fill in the contact form below or email info@cubiks.com.

*Adverse Impact is defined as an unwanted and unanticipated result of taking a particular action. In the context of business employment decisions, an adverse impact refers to a disparity in selection for hiring or promotion that disadvantages individuals of a particular race, ethnicity or sex.

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