15+ Expert Tips on Attracting Minority Tech Candidates
INTRODUCTION

Business leaders increasingly recognize the value of building diverse teams, with research firms like McKinsey & Company and Boston Consulting Group observing higher levels of creativity and innovation and — yes — profits, the more diverse and inclusive a company becomes. But while gender and race form the foundation for most corporate diversity and inclusion efforts, there are many different kinds of diversity we need to recognize in order to be truly inclusive, like refugees and persons with disabilities.

We connected with sixteen seasoned HR leaders and hiring managers to learn how they’re reinventing the way they source, recruit, and hire minority tech candidates to increase diversity and turn their workplaces into inclusive spaces.
Finding New Candidate Sources

It’s a well-known saying that if you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten, and the sentiment holds true for sourcing candidates. The first step in attracting minority tech candidates is to seek out new online communities and in-person spaces where people who are different from you are doing good work. Here’s how our experts find new candidate sources:

Recruit from lesser-known schools.

“Of course you’re going to find good talent at an MIT Technology recruitment event. But having a presence at job fairs with lesser-known colleges and universities can bring in a pool of outstanding tech talent that isn’t already being tapped by your competitors. It’s also often home to minority students looking for career opportunities.” - Aurora Bushner, Executive VP at Incentive Technology Group

If minority tech candidates aren’t coming to your website, go to theirs.

“If we have periods where our minority candidate level is low, we attend informal meetups, conferences, and student events near our office. With MeetUp.com and social media, there are tons of ways to find events that align with our company missions. We’ve found many communities and nonprofits that are dedicated to educating, developing, and exposing minority tech candidates skills and we’re so eager to attend these types of events that encourage this type of growth. We’ve made lots of connections and have found some really amazing candidates from getting ourselves out there.” - Ciara Hautau, Lead Digital Marketing Strategist at Fueled

Get offline and into your community.

“The best proactive way to recruit minority tech candidates is to be involved in programs and initiatives in communities that invest in professional development and tech focused learning and training. If you’re planning on just running a LinkedIn search and looking for diverse candidates, you’re already losing the war for that talent.” - David Armendariz, General Manager of the technology division for executive recruiting firm Lucas Group
Changing Your Recruiting and Hiring Habits

Your work isn’t over once you’ve identified new sources for high-potential minority tech talent. You’ll also need to reconsider the way you approach candidates and the messages you’re sending during the application, interview, and hiring process.

**Share your time equally.**

“Be equitable with your time. For example, don’t have coffee with some candidates while not offering time to build rapport with others based on referral status or other factors outside a candidate’s control.” - Michelle Kim, CEO of Awaken

**Write more inclusive job descriptions.**

“A lot of candidates check themselves against the number of qualifications required to fulfill the job responsibilities and don’t apply even if they don’t fulfill one criterion, especially women. When creating job descriptions, clearly mention which requirements or criteria are indispensable to do the job effectively and which skills and competencies are an add-on so that you can attract people from all walks of life. Add words which creates a mental picture of inclusionism, diversity, and acceptance.” - Siddhartha Gupta, Chief Executive Officer of Mercer | Mettl

**Show, don’t just tell, what your company is doing with diversity.**

“Highlight the diversity within your organization. Companies need to show candidates that they not only recognize the need and importance for diversity but also celebrate the fact that diversity is a key component of the overall business culture.” - Will Manuel, President/CEO of Core Mobile Apps

**Be accountable to your peers.**

“Be transparent. Know your numbers and share them with the rest of the company regularly. Accountability for diversity and inclusion efforts has to start at the top.” - Elya McCleave, Founder at Elya McCleave Consulting
Evolve Your Workspace

Creating an appealing opportunity for minority tech talent also extends into building a workplace and benefits package that appeals to individuals in different stages of life. In addition to standard benefits like health insurance and retirement options, put some thought into what will help your minority candidates live their best life outside the office.

Be open to work from home arrangements and allowing employees to choose when they work.

“In a lot of circumstances, working from an office or at a particular time of day isn't a requirement to completing a job. A lot of very talented people don't want to work if they have to show up at an office for various reasons, from home commitments to difficulties communicating, to exhaustion from an office environment. If someone only works well in the morning and late at night for whatever reason, giving schedule and location flexibility will give them the ability to work, while also increasing their ability to work.” - David Selden-Treiman, Director of Operations at Potent Pages

Prioritize flexibility wherever you can.

“We did a company survey with our employees and found that most everyone had kids at home and wanted more flexibility in the workplace. So we put in paid leave policies based on tenure and instituted a more flexible workforce with core hours and it completely changed our workforce dynamic. When we started this really intentional mindset shift around flexibility in the workplace, we had a 29% female workforce and 10% female leadership team. Today, it’s a 44% female workforce and 45% leadership team.” - Wes Burke, Director Human Resources, USA and Canada at Intertek

Design benefits for your unique workforce.

“Benefits are not one size fits all, and they need to be designed for your unique workforce. For example, one of our employee benefits is homeland leave. This unpaid benefit allows employees, mainly Middle Eastern individuals, to visit their families on important holidays while remaining employed and receiving insurance benefits. We also offer free ESL training, and career development courses to encourage employee career and personal development and to prevent turnover.” - Alex Tran, Digital Marketing Strategist with Hollingsworth

Make a path for diversity in your leadership team.

“Minorities are already aware of the social exclusion that comes with being a minority and they are averse to companies that do not have a solid reputation for real diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organization, but most importantly in management. Companies that want to attract minority talent need to avail career paths that enable minority employees to ascend to high-profile projects and leadership positions. In the end, it is not enough to hire one or two minorities here and there; minority candidates must see others like them in those visible, impactful positions.” - Chris Chancey, Owner of Amplio Recruiting

Seek out complex problems to solve.

“Diverse teams are especially good at solving tricky problems where the broad range of experiences and viewpoints will add additional perspectives. Make sure the problems your company is solving are complex and interesting. Then you can recruit the best candidates, many of whom are diverse.” - Jenny Xia-Spradling, Co-CEO at FreeWill
Specific Minority Organizations to Partner With

Every company has a unique local community it can tap into, but there are also online communities that specifically work to promote minority tech candidates and connect them to companies that are hiring.

**Talent Beyond Borders.**

“Talent Beyond Borders is a non-profit organization to help talented refugees get jobs. It came into my sphere when my wife's nonprofit Paper Airplanes (which gives refugees free English language training) tutored a young man, a Syrian refugee, so that he could pass a tech interview. Talent Beyond Borders found him a coding job in Cheltenham UK. These wonderful organizations are doing an immense service to humanity.” - Ken Bodnar, Principal Consultant at Blockchain Associates (Cayman)

**Coalition of Texans With Disabilities.**

“Schedule an on-site recruitment event at an organization like Coalition of Texans With Disabilities (or something similar to your state, like Chronically Capable or abilityJOBS) and bring a hiring manager with you. Go out there and seek the candidates in niche groups and organizations. Introduce them to your brand.”

- Nina Król, Community Manager at Zety.com

**Hire Immigrants Ottawa.**

“Take advantage of the many organizations in your country that support the hiring of top talent in minority groups like Hire Immigrants Ottawa, Canada’s Women in Technology and Communications chapters, and your local Immigrant Employment Council. Volunteering time in these spaces also helps those organizations thrive and continue to serve minority talent.” - Steph Barlow, Director of People and Culture at Iversoft

**Freelance platforms like Upwork and Freelancer.**

“Use global freelancer platforms like Upwork and Freelancer to post job opportunities, then pay candidates a competitive rate. The platforms have remote workers based all over the world, and you will have lots of ways to support minority talent. These kinds of sites tend to also attract top international talent and are worth scouring if you would like to find potential candidates to hire.” - Harsha Reddy, Co-Founder & Editor-in-Chief at SmallBizGenius
CONCLUSION

Thanks to increased awareness of their contributions to companies across all industries, minority tech candidates are in high demand. If you want to attract candidates with diverse backgrounds to your company, you’re going to have to get out of your comfort zone and get creative about how you source, hire, and retain this talent.

Keep Reading:
“Diversity & Inclusion Research Roundup: Top Studies You Need to Know”
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1. Source: comScore Media Metrix, March 2019; 2. Source: Glassdoor Internal Data, September 2018; 3. Source: Google Analytics, Unique users represents peak monthly unique users in CQ1’19

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