



Recruiting Leader's Belonging CHECKLIST

Building a Culture of Belonging
for Recruiting Success

An Inclusive Leaders Group eBook

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INTRODUCTION



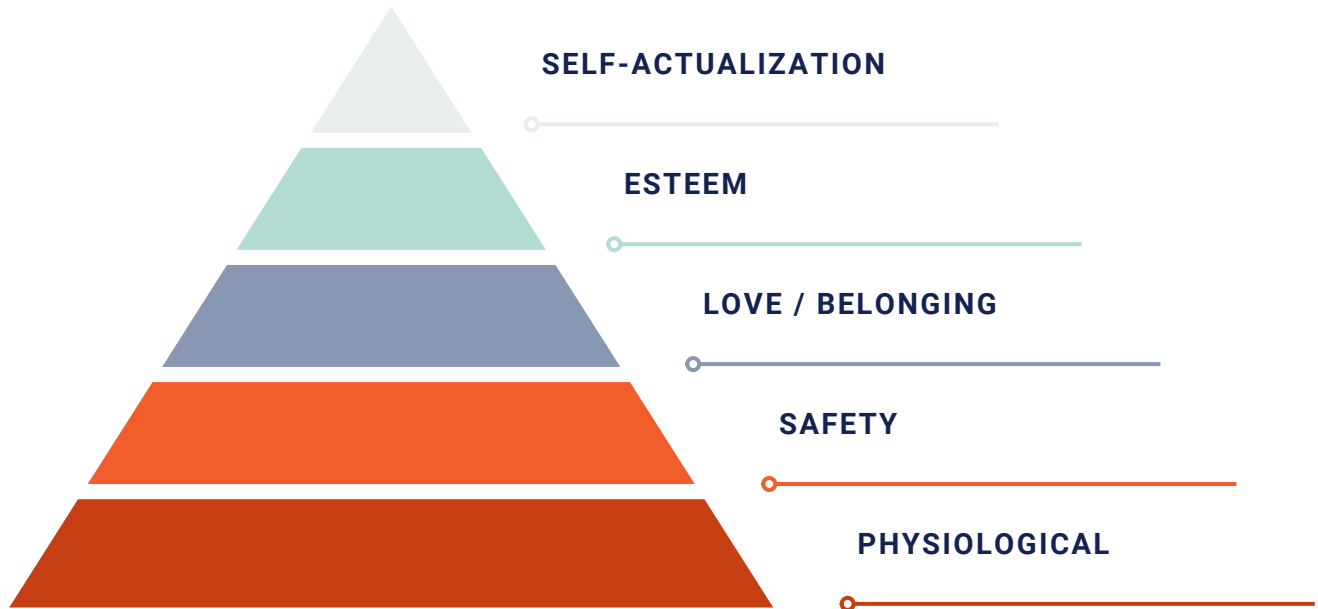
Belonging in the Workplace: What Does It Mean?

Belonging in the workplace is an employee’s sense that their uniqueness is accepted and even treasured by their organization and colleagues. Belonging is an accumulation of day-to-day experiences that enables a person to feel safe and believe that belonging is not simply that employees feel appreciated for the work they do or the role they play in the organization – belonging runs deeper.

Employees who feel treated as an “insider,” and are encouraged to retain their uniqueness within the workgroup, feel a high level of belonging.

This means valuing the various components of an employee’s identity, such as being a parent, being of a particular race or being of a particular sexual orientation. In this sense, belonging is a close cousin to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Belonging at work builds on the work of psychologist Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of needs. For Maslow and other researchers, the need for belonging and love sits in the middle of the pyramid of human needs, above basic physical needs but required before reaching the peak human need of “self-actualization.”



Why should Recruiting Leaders focus on Belonging?



Belonging in the workplace matters because it impacts business performance and employee well-being. Belonging is necessary for bringing out the best of everyone at work. If job candidates don't experience a sense of belonging, they are more likely to feel insecure about their place in the organization and feel less freedom to be their authentic selves. And that insecurity— that fear – undermines their interest in joining the organization.

Research by Great Places to Work reveals that when employees experience belonging in the workplace they are:

- 3 times more likely to **feel people look forward to coming to work**
- 3 times more likely to **say their workplace is fun**
- 9 times more likely to believe people are **treated fairly regardless of their race**
- 5 times more likely to want to stay at their **company a long time** to believe people are treated fairly regardless of their race
- 5 times more likely to **want to stay at their company a long time**

A Sense of Belonging to the recruitment process can enhance the prospect of hiring more motivated and committed employees or, for a nonprofit organization, gaining more motivated and committed volunteers. Recruitment efforts should be built to elicit positive responses from those interested in more than a transactional relationship.

In short:

- Candidates are very diligent and resourceful when it comes to belonging culture information gathering. They take time to research, read company reviews, reach out to people they know inside the company, and even to employees they don't know.
- All candidates want to feel that they belong in the potential employer's workplace.
- Communicating a sense of belonging in the workplace inspires top talent to research that employer and apply for job opportunities.
- To build a sense of belonging, eliminates job candidates feeling "outsiderness"
- It brings everyone on board and demonstrates care through benefits and initiatives.
- Applicants want to be seen, valued, and respected from the very first interaction with a company. They want to join an organization where their voices are heard and they can contribute and collaborate with other team members to build, create, and innovate.
- As a recruiter, you can (and should) weave a sense of belonging into the recruitment process from Day 1 and throughout the attraction, recruiting, hiring, orientation, and onboarding processes.



Your Checklist:

Ten (10) approaches recruiting leaders and teams can use to help people feel that they belong

1 Encourage evolving your DEI efforts to a DEIB strategy

Encourage your Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) and Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) to evolve your DEI strategy to a DEIB strategy. By including Belonging - the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group – to form a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) strategy is at the forefront of current initiatives among businesses, including nonprofits and healthcare organizations. Organizations are realizing that incorporating DEIB into culture and strategy so that an individual can bring their authentic self to work, creates stronger relationships, improves recruiting and retention, and increases profitability.

2 Be sure workplace assessments includes belonging

No matter how much you focus on hiring a diverse workforce, you're not actually moving the needle if your employees don't feel a sense of belonging. Collecting information about engagement at your organization using a DEI assessment survey will allow you to identify strengths and areas for improvement across the organization. It's important to look beyond demographics, using assessment data to uncover what makes a culture truly one of belonging. The data you gather can be a guide for creating an environment of belonging where all employees can thrive.

3 Define your culture and values

Before you start looking for candidates, you need to have a clear and consistent vision of what your organizational culture and values are, and how they align with your business goals and social impact. This will help you communicate your employer brand and value proposition to your target audience, and also assess how well they fit with your culture and expectations. You can use various channels and platforms to showcase your culture and values, such as your website, social media, blogs, podcasts, videos, testimonials, and events.

4 Diversify your sourcing and outreach

One of the most effective ways to foster a sense of belonging and inclusion in your recruiting process is to diversify your sourcing and outreach strategies. This means expanding your network and reach beyond your usual channels and platforms, and tapping into diverse communities and groups that share your values and vision. You can also partner with organizations and initiatives that support underrepresented and marginalized groups, such as nonprofits, associations, schools, and programs. Additionally, you can leverage referrals and recommendations from your existing employees, especially those who belong to diverse backgrounds and identities.

5 Review your job descriptions and requirements

Another key aspect of creating an inclusive and welcoming recruiting process is to review your job descriptions and requirements, and make sure they are clear, accurate, and unbiased. You want to avoid using vague, ambiguous, or jargon-filled language that might confuse or discourage candidates from applying. You also want to avoid using gendered, racialized, or stereotypical terms that might imply preference or discrimination. Furthermore, you want to focus on the essential skills and qualifications that are relevant and necessary for the role, and avoid adding unnecessary or unrealistic criteria that might exclude qualified candidates.

6 Enhance blind hiring

The broken hiring process begins with recruiting. Too often, managers hand recruiters job descriptions with a 'type' of person already in mind. We all fall into certain categories, but as human beings, we can't fully be personified by any one set of attributes.

The keys to recruiting diverse hires are a belonging strategy centered around balanced cultural understanding, exposing candidates to the inclusive and egalitarian nature of the business early on, and developing an approach to answering questions that candidates may have, even before they ask.

Despite its shortcomings, blind hiring is a good practice that, with some tweaks, can support diversity as well as cultural fit within a candidate pool. When it comes to blind hiring, the concern for many is that it won't support cultural fit. However, these concerns can be addressed by centering company culture around inclusion. When given standardized, open-format questions, candidates can demonstrate what they value, without having to reveal who they are in a face-to-face meeting.



7 Don't harbor the candidates

Belonging can be a critical component of creating acceptance and reducing the occurrence of harassment and discrimination. It brings a more human aspect to the equation which reduces the chances of discrimination and harassment.

An interview process that involves current employees is a great way to create that sense of belonging. Unfortunately, many professionals don't expose candidates to the work area at all during the hiring process.

Take them on a tour, show them the unique or beautiful areas of your building as well as the utilitarian spaces like the breakroom. By introducing them to the people they might work alongside and asking them questions about their impression during the tour, you'll create natural conversations.

8 Solicit and provide feedback

Feedback is an essential part of any recruiting process, as it helps you improve your practices and outcomes, and also builds trust and rapport with your candidates. You should solicit feedback from your candidates throughout the process, and ask them about their experience, expectations, concerns, and suggestions. You should also provide feedback to your candidates, and let them know about their status, progress, strengths, and areas of improvement. Feedback should be timely, honest, constructive, and specific, and should acknowledge the value and potential of each candidate.

9 Don't fake it

Sometimes a recruiting team is encouraged to put on a little bit of a show for a new hire. If you encourage your team to impress the new hire to create an illusion of inclusion and belonging that doesn't align with reality, the potential hire can often tell.

Don't try to fake it – always be honest about how your company operates and how the team interacts.

If you're seriously considering a candidate, take them on a social outing with the team during the hiring process. If you're a team of telecommuters, invite them into the group chat or let them sit in on a conference call to see how the group interacts with one another.

Furthermore, don't be afraid to speak candidly about company culture in an interview. Ask the potential hire what kind of professional community they're looking for and how they see themselves belonging on your team.

10 Conclusion: A Call to Action For Recruiting Leaders

To improve trust and belonging in the recruiting process, begin to look at your talent acquisition process from the candidate's perspective. Identify the issues blocking these factors at each stage of the recruiting process. Seek feedback from past and current applicants to gain insight into their experiences. Work collaboratively to identify opportunities for improvement and commit to making at least one change.

In conclusion, as we map out the candidate journey – discovery, application, interviewing, onboarding – it becomes clear that every interaction matters. Communication must be transparent, job applications inclusive, and interviews structured for fairness. The power of human-centered hiring lies not only in its ability to attract diverse talent but in its capacity to shape organizational culture. By building trust, belonging, and equity, organizations can commit to creating transformation, both internally and externally. Together, we can take these transformative steps towards a more inclusive and equitable future.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

GET STARTED



Citations

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