

Race *in the* Workplace

*Zoom in partnership with TIME for Learning invited **Shaun Harper**, one of the world's leading racial equity experts, to join Zoom's Chief Diversity Officer **Damien Hooper-Campbell** for a multi-part series focused on practical approaches to improving and advancing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion in organizations.*

For many leaders, tackling race in the workplace is challenging, and so they have historically chosen avoidance as their primary strategy. Many executives have little to no personal and professional experience talking about racism, and are afraid of being naïve, making mistakes that make them seem insensitive, or worse, racist.

But since the recent murders of many Black people, including George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, avoidance is no longer an option. The issues of police brutality in Black communities, structural and systemic racism, anti-Blackness, and white supremacy, as well as inaction on long-standing racial problems have come to the fore, and corporations have felt compelled to make internal and external statements stating that they are anti-racist and that Black lives matter.

However, these statements have to be more than just words in a moment of crisis. This can't be a moment, it must be a movement that leads to long-term, demonstrable progress on racial equity goals, and increased value on the lives and professional contributions of people of color in the workplace.

This document will summarize the key takeaways from each episode. To watch or learn more about the other episodes in the series, please visit time.com/raceintheworkplace.

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Essential Takeaways: Episode 3

Recruiting and Hiring Professionals of Color

Reliance on the same recruitment strategies year after year often yields the same outcome: stagnation. And no company wants to be known as lacking in innovation or forward-thinking.

How do you change traditional recruitment approaches to foster an environment that actively seeks professionals of color to hire? In this third episode, we answer this question and offer strategic, innovative methods for attracting a more diverse candidate pool and ultimately hiring greater numbers of professionals of color.

To begin, it is important to note the barriers—or perceived barriers—that keep companies from finding and hiring professionals of color. When asked why they don't have diverse teams, executives generally respond with one or more of the following outward-facing excuses:

- We don't know where to find professionals of color.
- We don't want to slow down our process and figure out how to find and hire them.
- We don't want to lower the bar. [Unfortunately, this is some people's mentality.]

Then, you must understand and reflect on your current recruitment protocols to determine if you are using staid, traditional methods and failing to leverage other innovative recruiting techniques available.

Two Reflective Questions to Ask Yourself

1. What does our company typically do to recruit talented, extremely promising employees of color?
2. What is the most innovative thing our company does to recruit employees in general? Just like the outward-facing excuses above, it is important to recognize that there are also inward-facing factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of professionals of color in the workplace.

7 Explanations for Lack of Racial Diversity

1. **Implicit bias:** In the workplace, one implicit bias is associating particular people with particular roles. It is thinking about who we have generally seen in the C-suite and mid-level management positions and recruiting to fit that description. It is gravitating toward people who look like us, people who come from the same places we come from, and who've had the same career trajectory. Sometimes the people who are doing the discriminating don't even realize that they're doing it—and it is because of their implicit bias.
2. **Explicit bias:** Sometimes we explicitly say we only want candidates from certain universities or companies. We don't want to "lower our bar" by looking for exceptional, promising, or proven talent in lesser-known or less-lauded

organizations. It is important to pay attention to where your company goes to find talent, and why you choose those particular places, as well as where you don't go and why.

3. **Unsubstantiated presumptions:** Sometimes recruiters presume things to be true that might not actually be the case. These presumptions might include explicit bias. For example, the idea that there is no talent to be found at historically Black colleges or state universities.
4. **Passive recruitment:** We assume that if we put the job description on LinkedIn, on our website, and a couple other places, the candidates will come—and it will be a diverse pool from which to choose.
5. **Habitual repetition:** People are creatures of habit. By doing the same thing day in and day out, year after year, you can expect the same outcome—a candidate pool that is not diverse.
6. **Raceless recruitment:** Most companies think that including the obligatory “our company is an equal opportunity employer” statement at the end of the position announcement is enough. By not articulating and unapologetically stating that you are seeking a diverse candidate pool, you don't send the right signal to people of color.
7. **Lack of innovation:** By not seeking out new ways of attracting diverse talent, you are effectively limiting innovation. Since we know the traditional barriers that prevent the effective recruitment and hiring of people of color, we examine ways we can change this.

7 Strategies to Recruit and Hire More Professionals of Color

1. **Test and learn:** Here are two highly recommended experiments -
 - Replace names and educational institutions on candidates' resumes and/or LinkedIn profiles. There have been many studies that confirm that people with ethnic-sounding names are frequently discriminated against in the candidate review process. The solution: Give every candidate the same name or delete people's names and other ethnic identifiers on their resumes or LinkedIn profiles.
 - Create three compositionally different resume and/or interview review panels. Make one panel exclusively white, another people of color only, and a third, a multicultural mix of both. Chances are those three groups are going to advance very different candidates. If this happens in your company, you will know there is an implicit bias and you can begin to take corrective actions.
2. **Solicit stories:** Invite employees of all races and ethnic groups—including white professionals—to share stories of biases they have seen or experienced during the hiring process in your company and other organizations they have worked at.
3. **Explore how your company achieves diversity:** Examine how people of color became employees of your company. What was it about your company that was appealing to them? What compelled them ultimately to apply? How did they find out about your company? Which networks did they use? Studying the trajectories of the people of color in your company will help you replicate and attract a more diverse applicant pool.
4. **Campaign for employees of color:** You must be proactive and clearly communicate to professionals of color that you are interested in having them apply to join your team. Make a recruitment plan, think of a multi-dimensional, race-forward social, digital, and print media campaign using the same methodologies that you employ when you want to market to communities of color.
5. **Implement a “Send Us Your Most Promising” campaign:** Reach out to identify extremely promising students of color from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU), minority serving institutions (MSI), and predominantly white institutions (PWI). Work with recruiters and career centers at those institutions and invite them to send you their most promising students/candidates. If you don't have the budget to visit each campus, go to a city and invite your target universities in the area—and their brightest prospects—to meet your reps at a local hotel. This way you will get to have meaningful conversations with dozens (perhaps hundreds) of candidates. Or, you can always set up Zoom gatherings to connect virtually with large groups of students from these campuses.
6. **Utilize race-conscious recruitment technologies:** Search out and use tech platforms that are designed to aggregate a large pool of professionals of color. For example, prismnetwork.org gives you access to thousands of highly qualified professionals of color with standardized profiles, downloadable resumes, work samples, and private inboxes.

7. **Partner with employees of color at your company:** To help recruit people of color, collaborate with your employees of color for public campaigns, events, and other promotional efforts. Encourage your employee resource groups to use their meetings to brainstorm ways to attract professionals of color to your organization.
 - Have them reach out to both their professional and personal networks. Invite them to share positive stories from your workplace at special recruitment events, etc.—if in fact they have positive experiences to share.
 - These employees should be compensated for taking on this additional labor and affording companies access to their networks of racially diverse professionals.

Innovation is the corporate buzz word—it's what every company is striving for. You should apply this forward-thinking to not just your product and brand strategies but also to your recruitment and hiring practices as well in order to build a diverse organization. For out of diversity comes the best innovations.

Let's not stop now. Check out more info and takeaways from additional episodes of the Race in the Workplace series, in partnership with Zoom and TIME for Learning at time.com/raceintheworkplace.