

Developing an Outreach Strategy

Most federal contractors are aware of Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) mandates for EEO and affirmative action. A critical component of those mandates is performing the outreach necessary to recruit from under-represented groups such as veterans or individuals with disabilities. The government's increased scrutiny of the effectiveness of outreach efforts is changing the way companies approach their diversity recruitment and outreach strategy.

A successful outreach strategy builds on your affirmative action plan and company goals for hiring. A well-executed outreach plan should not only cover the necessary actions for compliance, it should also lead to the development of new sourcing channels and ultimately to greater diversity in your candidate pipeline.

Components of an Effective Outreach Strategy

In order to develop an effective outreach strategy as part of your diversity recruitment efforts, it is important to:

- **Identify** the scope of your outreach efforts and organizations that are relevant to your industry and targeted groups;
- **Engage** with strategic organizations in a thoughtful and compelling way;
- **Track** your efforts, not just for compliance purposes but also to capture learnings from those efforts; and
- **Assess** the effectiveness of your strategy by focusing on the ROI of your outreach efforts.



Identify Scope and Target Organizations


Starting with your AAP goals and hiring plan is key to prioritizing how to target your outreach. In addition to those inputs, you should think about the scale of your desired outreach, relative to your hiring plan, and any existing company relationships, though Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or community outreach programs, which you could potentially leverage.

STRATEGIC INPUTS		KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK	
	AAP Goals	Which under-represented groups should be the focus of your outreach efforts?	
	Hiring Plan	What types of roles and level of seniority are critical to your hiring plan?	
	Scale of Outreach Effort	Will you take a localized, customized approach to outreach or look for national organizations with local chapters?	
	Existing Partnerships	How can you repurpose and leverage existing relationships with non-profit or community-based organizations?	

Campus hiring and internship programs provide a great opportunity to engage with diverse talent through schools such as historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and industry-specific programs focused on nurturing junior diverse talent.

Engage and Focus on Quality


Developing and nurturing these new channels can lead to long-term hiring success. You don't need a lot of relationships if you have the right relationships.

BEST PRACTICES	KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK
 <p>Make your first outreach attempt compelling.</p>	<p>When you make initial contact with an organization, how can you frame your ask in a way that helps them achieve their mission?</p>
<p>Focus on quality, not quantity.</p>	<p>Which organizations are responsive and how do you build on that initial engagement?</p>
<p>Meet organizations where they are.</p>	<p>How can you support their events?</p>

Engaging with your identified groups can mean a phone call to an existing contact, email outreach to relevant groups, participating in their job fair, or extending an invitation to your company-sponsored networking event.

Track and Measure Your Efforts


Tracking your outreach efforts will not just keep you in compliance with OFCCP regulations, but will allow you to measure the ROI of your outreach strategy.

BEST PRACTICES	KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK
 <p>Track all outreach efforts in a single, accessible place.</p>	<p>Which roles in your organization will be responsible for outreach and how will they track their efforts?</p>
<p>Use a consistent tracker template.</p>	<p>Aside from basic information about outreach activities, what are the key aspects of each outreach activity that you want to capture across the organization in order to assess ROI?</p>
<p>Ensure that you have a way to track which candidates are referred via your outreach partners.</p>	<p>How can you direct outreach partners to job listings in a way that will ensure that you can track engagement effectively?</p>

If you track outreach efforts across multiple tools, don't wait until the end of a plan year to compile these efforts into a consolidated report, as you may realize that details were captured inconsistently across sources.

Assess and Revise Regularly

Ongoing assessment of your outreach efforts are the final critical component of any effective outreach strategy. Be sure to capture the effectiveness of your efforts, the results they produced, and where improvements might be made for future outreach.

BEST PRACTICES	KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK
 <p>Review your efforts on a quarterly basis and analyze the value of each partnership against goals.</p>	<p>How many candidates are you getting from each outreach partner? What is the quality of those candidates?</p>
<p>Assess the organizations yielding actual hires, in order to understand the drivers behind the higher conversion and better inform your outreach with other partners.</p>	<p>How many hires are you getting from each outreach partner? How can you replicate strategies for future efforts?</p>

Document your assessments, positive and negative, focusing on insights that will inform other plans for outreach.

AJE provides our customers with a database of over 9,000 contacts and events to target for outreach, tools to assist in outreach activity, and tracking and reporting to meet OFCCP requirements. Contact us to learn more.