



# A Recruiter's Toolkit to Speak Up for Inclusion™

“For us, diversity has long been a gateway to the world, and to success. At a time of both challenges and opportunities in the world, rather than turn inward, we believe that there’s a growing need to shine a light on diversity & inclusion.”

**Dave McKay, RBC President & CEO**



# Content

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Section One: Introduction	3
Why do we need a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce?	3
Speak Up For Inclusion...What can you do as Recruiter?	3
Section Two: Addressing our Hiring Bias throughout Recruitment Process	4
Your first Hiring Strategy Meeting with Hiring Manager	4
Screening Resumes	5
The Interview Process	6
Feedback and Offers	7
Section Three: Recruiting from Diverse Communities: Facts & Tips	8
Indigenous Peoples	8
Persons with Disabilities	9
Newcomers to Canada	10
LGBT+	10
Ex-Military/Veteran – Not Your Typical Talent Pool	11

# Introduction

## Why do we need a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce?



**RBC's value of 'Diversity & Inclusion' allows us to 'Simplify. [Be] Agile. Innovate.'**  
Our world of work is increasingly complex. Increased complexity requires diversity of thought.



**People go where they are celebrated, not where they are tolerated**  
An inclusive work environment attracts and retains the 'Best Talent' – it is 'How we will win as one RBC'.



**To avoid Groupthink**  
A condition which can lead to groupthink is group members having similar social backgrounds. Highly diverse groups are, therefore, much less likely to engage in groupthink.

Source: Fast Company, "How to make a better Business Case for Diversity" and RBC's Collective Ambition

## Speak Up For Inclusion™...What can you do as Recruiter?

As recruiters, we have a unique opportunity to speak up for inclusion in our day-to-day interactions with the hiring managers and the businesses we support. Throughout the whole recruiting cycle, from the first hiring strategy meeting to onboarding, we play a pivotal role championing diversity and inclusion and help build a diverse workforce.

This toolkit is built to enable and equip recruiters with the D&I knowledge needed to both check our own blind spots and champion inclusive hiring with our businesses and candidates. It also includes some useful resources, content and messaging.

# Addressing our Hiring Bias throughout Recruitment Process

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The first step of addressing hiring bias is to acknowledge that everyone has biases. It's part of being human. We tend to favour people who are more like us than those who are the 'same'.

When we bring bias to the recruiting process, we potentially lose the opportunity to bring the most qualified candidate to the role and to bring diversity of thought to the organization. Becoming consciously unbiased is a journey and the journey starts with ...



## Your first Hiring Strategy Meeting with the Hiring Manager

When a hiring manager contacts you for an open role, you, as a recruiter, can consciously use your first hiring strategy meeting to educate the hiring manager on the importance of building an inclusive team and bringing diversity of thought to the team. Here are some things to keep in mind during your conversation:

- **When the hiring manager asks for “the right fit,” ask what that means?** Encourage the hiring manager to think about what the role really requires (capabilities, responsibilities etc.) vs. what the person should have in terms of where they went to school for example.
- **Be thorough in understanding what the must-have skills/experiences/qualifications are for role.** Is the job description truly a list of must-have skills or are some “nice to have” with the potential of excluding candidates?
- **Ask about the current team dynamic** and encourage the hiring manager to think whether they have diversity of thought to bring different perspectives.
- **Promote inclusive recruitment programs** as a sourcing option (where available)

# Screening Resumes

Beware of the common biases that accompany traditional resume screening:

## ✘ Accomplishments

Quantifiable accomplishments are often considered a key factor in assessing the quality of a candidate's past work.

However, an *absence of accomplishments does not mean the applicant is not a top performer.*

- **Newcomers** may downplay accomplishments due to cultural norms.
- **Young persons** may omit significant non-work achievements they do not think are relevant.

## ✘ Education

Educational credentials from known institutions may be given preference over lesser known schools or individuals who have not completed certain formal education.

Yet, many qualified applicants *have equivalent work experience or training required* to succeed in the role.

## ✘ Employment Gaps

Gaps in a candidate's career or short periods of time spent in different positions may cause the individual to be seen as unreliable or uncommitted.

However *many strong applicants do not have a traditional career path.*

- **Women and Persons with Disabilities** may have career gaps due to family or medical commitments.
- **Newcomers** may have had to take numerous jobs before finding a suitable position.

## ✘ Spelling Errors

Grammar or spelling errors can lead to the immediate rejection of a resume or the perception of poor written communication skills.

Consequently, highly qualified candidates for whom English is a second language may be overlooked or put at a disadvantage. *The weight given to spelling and grammar should reflect the requirements of the job.*

- **A Newcomer** may not have fully mastered English, but still possess all knowledge and skills needed to do the job.

Look beyond standard resume formats to find exceptional talent. Finding those with unique perspectives, experiences and abilities drives diversity of thought and is critical for innovation and progressive business strategies

## ✔ Growth

Instead of measuring growth through career advancement alone, *look for progress within roles* including increased responsibilities and new skill development.

## ✔ Transferrable Skills

*Both formal and informal skills* developed through past work experience and volunteer activities may indicate that an applicant has the ability to do the job even if they have not yet had the opportunity.

## ✔ Results

Achievements may not be explicitly stated. Focus on past projects, initiatives and the results achieved in an applicant's past positions as *implicit evidence* of a high performer.

## ✔ Experiences

Look for *related experiences* instead of very specific experience such as Canadian work experiences or a certain number of years' experience. There are substantial benefits to hiring a candidate who can learn the job and *bring additional diverse experiences* to the role.

# The Interview Process

## Common Bias

### Physical Appearance

First impressions are often based on physical appearance. If a snap judgment is made based on a candidate's physical appearance, the interview will be clouded and the candidate never given a fair chance.

- ✘ For instance, a candidate may not be able to afford clothes to dress sharp for the interview but may still possess the skills and experience necessary to excel at the job.

### Language/Speech

The questions asked and the way in which they are phrased during an interview can have a significant impact on how a candidate fares during the interview process.

- ✘ A newcomer could be the perfect candidate but lengthy, open ended questions could be challenging to a newcomer who is trying to learn a new language.

### Stereotyping

Forming generalized opinions based on your personal beliefs about how people of a certain gender, religion, community, appear, think, act or feel.

- ✘ Assuming a man would be more suitable for a manual labor position than a woman because of physical stature.

### Similar-to-Me Error

Picking a candidate based on characteristics they share with you rather than job related criteria. We are naturally drawn to individuals who are similar to us and often forget the need for different personalities/ characteristics.

- ✘ Choosing an able-bodied candidate who shares your passion for sports over a person with a disability.

## 3 Ways to Avoid Bias

### 1. Structured/Standard Interviews

- Conduct a structured interview asking the same questions to all applicants reduces the chance of bias.

### 2. Panel Interviews

- With a panel, interview several candidates along the diversity spectrum to ensure there are no biased questions being asked that could arise from a one-on-one interview.

### 3. Multiple Interviews

- Have candidates meet with qualified individuals (e.g. hiring manager, supervisor of position looking to be filled, a current employee in the position) to meet and question each candidate.
- Having multiple interviews gives different perspectives and opinions eliminating the likelihood of bias if interviewed by one individual.

## Interview Do's and Don'ts

### Do's

- ✓ Use clear/concise words
- ✓ Ask scenario-based questions
- ✓ Practice active listening when facing language barriers
- ✓ Be mindful of other social/cultural norms

### Don'ts

- ✘ Avoid lengthy questions
- ✘ Do not ask about age, race, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry, marital status, etc.
- ✘ Don't ask leading questions

# Feedback and Offers

## Successful Candidates

Important cultural, gender and ability differences are often overlooked at this stage which can be a barrier for a candidate's successful transition into a new role. To ensure offers of employment are equitable across gender, race and ability, we must be aware of unfair bias in the following areas:

- **Negotiation** – Men, women and persons of different cultural backgrounds employ different negotiating styles. A particular negotiating style should not be favored or allowed to cause unnecessary disparity between offer packages.
- **Availability** – Women with families may be perceived as having dual roles and competing responsibilities. Assumptions should not be made about one's dedication or need for flexible hours.
- **Accommodation** – Persons with Disabilities are often subject to discrimination due to the perceived time and costs associated with providing necessary workplace accommodations. Employers should not assume certain accommodations will be required.

## Unsuccessful Candidates

Providing useful and specific feedback to unsuccessful candidates is an important phase of the selection process. Effective feedback will help applicants understand areas of weakness and assist them in future job competitions.

### Helpful

- ✓ **Specific** – Offer targeted advice on the required skill(s) the applicant did not demonstrate successfully
- ✓ **Clear** – Keeping comments concise and to the point will reduce the chance of confusion or misinterpretation
- ✓ **Objective** – Always relate the feedback to the selection criteria. If poor verbal communication skills are a factor – discuss the reason in context of the job responsibilities
- ✓ **Constructive** – Suggest areas where an applicant might wish to gain additional skills or varied experiences. Recommend useful resources if possible
- ✓ **Positive** – The overall tone should be positive, emphasizing the strengths and attributes of the applicant

### Unhelpful/Inappropriate

- ✗ **General** – Comments that are too vague are discouraging and do not provide direction on areas that need development
- ✗ **Long winded** – Feedback that is verbose and unfocused can trigger emotional responses and arguments
- ✗ **Subjective** – Feedback such as “we had other more qualified candidates” may be too vague to help the candidate learn from the interview.
- ✗ **Inconsiderate** – It is essential to choose your words carefully to ensure they are fair and considerate, and that feedback is given in a timely manner
- ✗ **Negative** – Weaknesses should never be discussed without offering suggestions as to how they may be overcome

# Recruiting from Diverse Communities: Facts & Tips



## Indigenous Peoples

When we are recruiting Indigenous talent, it is important to approach the recruitment process with empathy and cultural awareness. Keep in mind that Indigenous peoples have their own unique cultures and histories.

We encourage you to take a consultative approach to understand Indigenous candidates' need for both personal career development and opportunities that will allow them to give back to their community.

## Key Facts

- Currently, there are only two growing populations of the Canadian labour force: new Canadians and Indigenous Peoples
- 56% of the Indigenous peoples live in urban areas
  - Largest is in Winnipeg, representing >10% of the population.
  - 80% of all Indigenous peoples live in Ontario and the four western provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.
- 3 Canadian Indigenous groups: First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
  - Over 600 recognized First Nations governments or bands; 50 different languages
- 48% of Indigenous population <24 years old (31% for non-Indigenous population)
- Indigenous peoples with post-secondary education increased from 23% in 1986 to 48.4% in 2011 (62% for the rest of the population)



## Preparing for the Interview

- Beware the common biases that accompany traditional resume screening.
- **Achievements:** Indigenous people may downplay accomplishments due to cultural norms and might not include all the accomplishments as their *thinking tends to more community focused vs individual focused*.
- **Employment Gaps:** Indigenous candidates **might have work experience gaps due to community commitments or family responsibilities**, which sometimes might not even be directly family related as they might be raised by someone in the community instead of a family member.



## Conducting the Interview

- Ensure that whoever is conducting the interviews and making the hiring decisions has *working knowledge of Indigenous issues past and present*. It is encouraged that interviewers take an **Indigenous Awareness** training course before the interviews.
- If it is a targeted Indigenous hiring initiative, consider having someone from the community sit in on the interviews to help create a safe interviewing environment.
- Level of eye contact may be different when working across cultures.
  - Too much from the interviewer may create an uncomfortable environment.
  - Too little from the interviewee should not be considered a sign of lack of confidence or dishonesty.
- When conducting telephone interviews, some Indigenous accents can come across with little intonation (can be mistaken for lack of personality) or hesitant, when most likely it is because they are being serious and thoughtful in responding.

## Recruiting from Diverse Communities: Facts & Tips



### Persons with Disabilities

When recruiting Persons with Disabilities (PWD), it's important to *focus on the person you are interviewing*, not the disability. At RBC, we accommodate everyone that needs accommodation to perform their work, which includes our employees as well as contractors, interns, co-op/summer students, etc.

### Key Facts

- Persons with Disabilities (PWD) are the largest and fastest growing minority globally.
  - Globally, 1.27 billion people with disabilities (20% of total population)
  - Over 70% of disabilities are invisible
- 90% of Persons with Disabilities rate average or better on job performance.
  - Almost 60% of employers spend nothing at all on accommodations
- Persons with Disabilities, plus their friends and families, control 53% of global disposable income, which is the market size of China



### General Tips

- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen or ask for instructions on how to proceed.
- Ask the interviewee if they require any specific accommodation such as wheelchair access, a quiet place in which to be interviewed, an interpreter, etc. If you're unsure about how to provide the accommodation, ask the interviewee.



### Tips Specific to Different Accessibility Needs

- **Interpreter/Companion/Aide present:** During the interview, speak directly to that person and maintain eye contact rather than interacting directly with an interpreter or companion.
- **Hearing Loss:** When talking with a person with a hearing loss, be sure to face them and do not cover your mouth when you speak. Place yourself so that you face the light source and are not backlit. Wait to speak until the person is looking at you.
- **Visual Impairment:** When meeting an interviewee who has a visual impairment, identify yourself and others who are with you. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
- **Difficulty speaking:** Listen attentively when you are talking with a person who has difficulty speaking. Be patient and wait for the person to finish speaking rather than correcting them or speaking for them. Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty doing so. Instead, repeat what you believe was said and allow the person to respond.
- **Assistive devices:** A wheelchair or another assistive device is part of the person's body space. Do not lean or hang on a person's wheelchair.
- **Service animals:** Service animals and guide dogs are working. Do not make eye contact, praise, talk to or pet the animal as it is distracting for the animal and owner.
- **Autism/Anxiety disorder:** If the interviewee discloses to have autism or anxiety disorder, *offer to switch the interview format into a more relaxed setting* such as a coffee chat to allow the candidate to best showcase their ability.

## Recruiting from Diverse Communities: Facts & Tips



### Newcomers to Canada

The Canadian workforce will significantly depend on immigrants in the next 15–20 years, and we have an opportunity to brand RBC as an employer of choice for newcomer professionals globally and attract the top talent in the market.

### Key Facts

- By 2031, immigrants or the Canadian-born children of immigrants will make up 78% of Toronto’s workforce and 28% in Canada overall.
- Immigrants today make up 65% of Canada’s net annual population growth. Almost 100% of Canada’s net population growth will be through immigration by 2035.
- Unemployment rate for university educated immigrants are 5 times higher than those born in Canada.

### Preparing for the Interview

- People from certain cultures might not be comfortable talking about their personal achievement in the interview, but you can also *make fair assessment of their capability by asking them how they have contributed to the success of a team project.*
- Some newcomers are not comfortable negotiating compensation, but it doesn’t mean they won’t take a better offer from a competitor. Educate your hiring managers to *pay by skills and experience*, not years of experience in Canada.

### Conducting the Interview

- Instead of asking for Canadian/North American experience, *focus on the skills/expertise needed for the job* and whether the candidate has demonstrated this capability.
  - When we favour one candidate vs another, ask the question why? “Is it because one is more qualified or I am more familiar with the schools and companies on one resume?”
- Is “exceptional communication skills” really a *must-have or nice-to-have for the role?* Immigrant applicants might not speak English perfectly or have an accent, but does it prevent them from performing their job?
- Be mindful that direct eye contact in certain cultures is not encouraged and is a sign of disrespect vs in North America it is a sign of honesty and good body language in communication.



### LGBT+

Promoting an inclusive work environment with your candidates can happen through your language: talk about your ERG group (if you have one), use gender neutral terms, and highlight involvement and commitment to the community.

### Key Facts

- Roughly 8 million (3.8%) adults are lesbian, gay, or bisexual and nearly 700,000 are transgender, bringing the LGBT+ population to around 9 million.
- 35% of employees increase productivity after coming out;
- 48% report homophobia at work.

### Inclusive Language for Interviews

- Personal pronouns need to be respected: you cannot always know what someone’s preferred gender pronoun is by looking at them. Ask someone for their preferred pronoun when meeting them (i.e. he/she/they). This may take some getting used to and mistakes may happen. An easier-to-remember solution is using ‘they’ as a personal pronoun for someone until they correct you.
- Use “partner” vs. “wife/husband”. Even if a person isn’t LGBT+, they may have close connections to the community. Language can be powerful so use terms like “family” in place of “mom and dad”.
- It’s okay to make a mistake with language. If you make a mistake or say the wrong thing, own it, sincerely apologize and ask to be corrected.

## Recruiting from Diverse Communities: Facts & Tips



### Ex-Military/Veteran – Not Your Typical Talent Pool

Ex-Military are under significant pressure to transition quickly and smoothly to civilian life. However, they face numerous challenges that increase the difficulty of their career search.

Ex-Military and employers may not know how to translate (either through interviews and/or resumes) military experience, skills and training to civilian roles or specific job openings. In addition, employers may be subconsciously biased against hiring Ex-Military because of a perceived lack of cultural “fit.”

An Ex-Military’s experience has equipped them with a unique set of values and transferable skills that can make them unique and valuable talent in an organization and benefit our business.

### Key Facts

- 5,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces are released from service every year.
- There are over 100 occupations in the military.
- Canada has an underemployment problem for Ex-military personnel.
  - Many struggle in the transition of finding meaningful civilian employment, despite the government spending an average of \$500K – \$1MM of funds and resources training each member of the Canadian Armed Forces.

### Military Traits

- Have witnessed the dynamics of leadership in action and understand how to manage people in order to achieve results, regardless of circumstance
- Focus is on the team and achieving the common goal and success is measured by whether the mission is accomplished with minimum loss
- Some leaders also have hundreds to thousands of soldiers reporting to them and manage multi-million dollar budgets
- Have to constantly adjust their plan as situations change all the time. They are used to acquiring and applying new skills quickly under high pressure with limited resources.
- Well trained in accomplishing missions in less-than-perfect situations
- Need to overcome hardships and trauma and excel even in the face of harsh environments
- Are required to work with and for whomever happened to be serving with them regardless of educational background, ethnicity, culture, values, goals, etc. They also operate cross cultures and international boundaries
- Receive frequent advanced technical training to equip them with skills and knowledge needed to accomplish missions.

### What’s In It for Our Business

- Leadership
- Build effective team and lead team with integrity
- Assume high level of trust in team
- Strong organizational commitment, low attrition/turnover
- Ability to lead large projects/initiatives and deliver on time & on budget
- Ability to learn and adapt – great change agents
- Quickly learn new skills and adjust to new situations
- Easily adapt to organizational change with positive attitude
- Perseverance and results-oriented
- Resiliency to overcome challenges to achieve success, especially where intermediate or terminal failures are likely to be high (e.g. new product development, early-stage ventures/work-roles, sales, etc.)
- Exhibit a high level of cross-cultural awareness, diversity, and sensitivity
- Ability to build and lead a high performing team with diverse background
- A competitive advantage under increasing globalization of the business environment
- Technology Savvy
- Ability to link technology-based solutions to organizational challenges



Note: For the purpose of this document, and due to variations in legal definitions and terminology, the term “minorities” refers to: Visible Minorities in Canada (defined as per employment equity guidelines as persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour); Ethnic Minorities/People of Color in the U.S. (defined as ethnic or racial groups); and Ethnic Minorities in the U.K. (defined as populations of non-European origin and characterized by non-Caucasian status).

#### 2020 Trends Sources

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