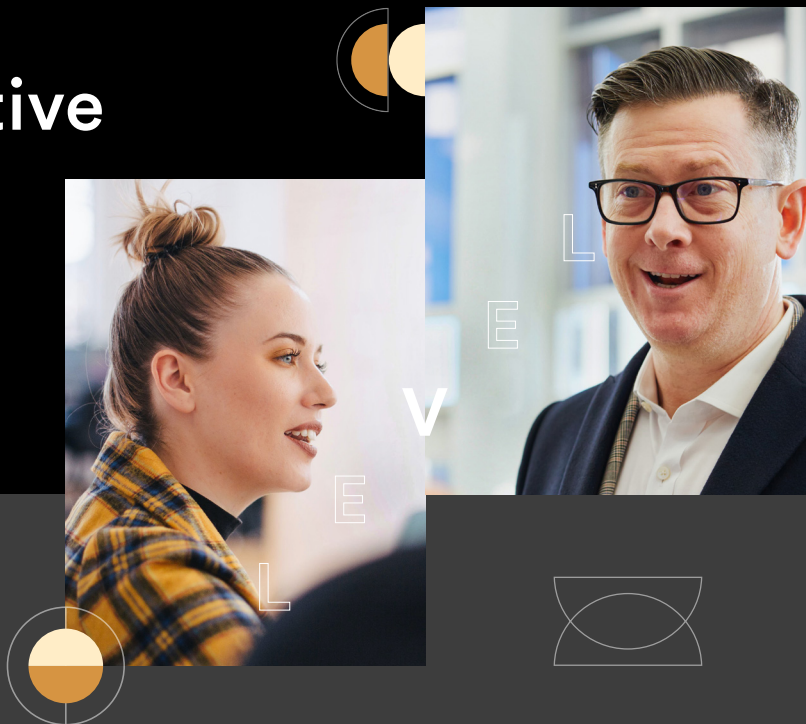# Gathering Objective Evidence to Determine What Is Working

The Level Project

Accelerate Equality. Accelerate Success.

What's included?

This document provides guidance on how to verify if your talent attraction policy is working by using objective evidence to track and monitor progress in converting candidates to employees.

Introduction

There are a lot of different things that you could do to attract more women to your business. However, it can be difficult to determine which are the right strategies for you and to recognise if they are working or not. Often, businesses choose a strategy based on less than objective reasons – what employees are asking for, what competitors are doing – but they fail to verify that these actions will best address their specific challenges in relation to attracting and hiring female candidates.

1. Identify the challenge

As a first step, conduct an analysis of your hiring data at each stage in the process. This is detailed in "Eliminating Bias in the Hiring Process". A template is also provided to support your analysis: "Data Analysis Template". Use these tools to determine where you have lower representation of women in your attraction and recruitment pipeline and address that challenge.

2. Ongoing data tracking

Use the resource "Metrics by Talent Flow" and the "Data Analysis Template" to conduct an initial data analysis. Having completed this, you will have identified the challenges and implemented the suggested strategies; continue to monitor pipeline data to track if representation is changing. These metrics would ideally form part of an ongoing senior leader scorecard, allowing the business to track if the agreed approach has been adopted.

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What else might you track?

In addition to ongoing data tracking, there are several ways in which you can assess if your gender-balance work is having an impact on new recruits. It is not enough to hire more women; you must also ensure that they are fitting in and find the culture welcoming. This will not happen if the onboarding process and/or internal culture do not match the picture that candidates were sold by your de-biased attraction methods.

Here are some ways you might assess if the women joining your organisation are successfully fitting in and if they are finding that the internal culture matches the interview experience.

1. Employee engagement surveys

Employee engagement surveys are used by organisations to gauge employee feelings on several key issues at a point in time. They can provide invaluable information on the perception of men and women in your organisation as you will typically be able to compare the results by gender. If, for example, men express greater engagement than women at the end of their first year in the organisation, you may need to address the onboarding process and assess what might be driving a lack of engagement among women. One action you might take is to implement listening sessions with women who are in the organisation less than 18 months. These sessions can be positively focused, asking about their experiences in the organisation and asking them for suggestions on support that would help them to fulfil their potential.
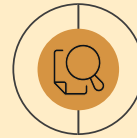
ASKING FOR INPUT

Drilling down on the output from an engagement survey is a positive action to take where you are trying to determine what might be driving a result, however, be prepared to act! Whenever you ask for employee input you must be prepared to listen, report and act as a result, otherwise you will increase the disengagement of those who have given you input and potentially drive something even more damaging than people leaving the organisation – disengaged employees staying in the organisation!

2. Completion of probation

The onboarding process should be complemented with a six-month to one year probation period, during which time the individual and the organisation determine if they are a "good fit". Monitoring successful probations by gender will provide useful insight. If it emerges that men are more likely to successfully complete probation, then leverage "Using Focus Groups to Assess Employee Perceptions" to conduct focus groups with men and women within their first year to gather more information on how their experiences may vary. Presuming that all new employees go through the same onboarding process, you are looking for differences in some of the following areas:

a. What informal training or mentoring is being received?

b. How engaged is the manager with the individual?

c. Did the core job criteria match the work the candidate has been doing?

d. Are they forming relationships with others on their team?

e. What is the diversity profile of their direct colleagues?

f. Have they developed a feeling of belonging[1] with the rest of the team?

Results from this exercise can be fed back to managers to highlight the importance of the employee experience in the first year in retaining diverse candidates.

3. Don't wait for the exit interviews

Offset challenges by encouraging and training managers to get to know their new employees, what they enjoy and what their career ambitions are. Too often we underestimate the power of the relationship between a manager and an individual to retain and engage our employees. One practice to try, are entry interviews, described here:

"In the first week on the job, managers sit down with their new hires and ask them about their favourite projects they've done, the moments when they've felt most energised at work, the times when they've found themselves totally immersed in a state
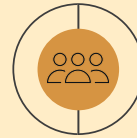
BELONGING

Belonging is a relatively new term associated with diversity and inclusion, but it relates to a very old concept. Do your employees and colleagues feel like they are part of the team? Do they feel their ideas and contributions are equally valued as those of their peers? Do they feel they are equally valued and developed by their line manager? One dictionary definition highlights the key concepts to consider: "Belonging is a sense of fitting in or feeling like you are an important member of a group". Whether you choose to use the word belonging in your company or not, your efforts to hire more women will be in vain if they do not feel like they belong when they move from candidate to employee.

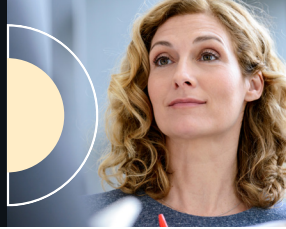**of flow, the passions they have outside their jobs."[2]**

Again, the principle here is for managers to engage with their new team members before they decide to leave because they feel they don't belong in your organisation.

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[1] Belonging is a sense of fitting in or feeling like you are an important member of a group.
[2] hbr.org: Why people really quit their jobs

4. Conduct good exit interviews

When someone leaves the organisation, see
this as an opportunity to gather feedback,
by asking the questions suggested in point
two above. The information gathered from
a successful exit interview can feed into
manager training and form part of the success
metrics of your gender balance efforts in
hiring. It is very important that the person
conducting the interview should be a neutral
party, not the individual's line manager. The
key with gathering exit interview data is to be
consistent and to use the information that you
learn. It is a lot of effort to expend if you are
not going to use the output.

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