

What Works: Data Collection and Strategic Planning for Recruitment

Transcript

Maureen McGough: Now we're going to switch over. I know we're at time, so I totally understand if folks need to hop off and we will be recording this session as well. But I do want to hear from Officer Terry Cherry of Charleston who's heading up their recruitment there and is really sort of using a data-driven approach to understanding where and how assessment processes are impacting diverse applicants.

Terry Cherry: Hi everybody, my name is Officer Cherry. So, what's important that I think you should get out of what I'm about to say is that data research drives innovation and it also makes the foundation for progress. So, we capture demographic data from the point the applicant puts in an application all the way through the process. And I can break out the process if somebody is interested. But we look at each phase of testing to see if there's any gender disparities or racial disparities.

Another aspect that's important to this is having a recruitment team and then having a supervisor—like Sergeant Gibson who's mine—that really cares about data and research driving recruitment. So, people that are actually in recruitment I think should have a passion and interest in data and research because that's really what drives the initial innovation to attract women, is what we're talking about, but women and minorities.

Something else that's important is having a strategic plan. I've run into a lot of agencies that I talked to that don't really understand the need for a business plan. Recruiting policing, it's changing. You know, we're on the cusp of innovation, and to stay competitive, build your brand, get the competitive landscape, and grab the talent that you want, you have to understand that you're competing both in the policing sector but also in the private sector, with private business. And in order to get people to want to do this, you have to create an environment that's real.

And in that, I mean in our recruitment plan, we added a section that's about progressive policies and minorities and women want to work for an agency that supposedly pushing for progress externally and the new policing movement and change within policing, but also have an internal culture that supports women.

And a lot of agencies say that they do this. But then when the females get into that agency and they realize that that's not actually what's happening, they leave. And then what happens is that you've built a brand of dishonesty, and so, women go out and they talk, and they learned that this organization isn't what it says it is. Because everybody's, you know, pushing women and minorities. But you have to actually create an internal culture that's pushing for the change of policies as it relates to describing dress and clothing. Is it, you know, gender nonspecific or are we being specific about gender, about promotional process, about opportunities within the organization?

Also, you have to have executive leadership support the data, the research, the drive for change. I'm very fortunate even my chief and my deputy chief are on this call right now because they're really dedicated to

making progress for women and minorities, and you know, pushing for recruiting. We're doing really well here in Charleston, and I think that has a lot to do with the support—the understanding that innovation is necessary, using data and research to push that forward, and then creating a safe place and using forward-thinking as an actual recruitment tool to attract women and minorities. And it's been very successful. So, that's sort of a elevator pitch of what we're doing.

Maureen McGough: Just a hearty “Amen!” to all of that. And so, Terry, I know a lot of what you described, particularly around collecting demographic information very early in the process is not necessarily happening across the board. If anybody has any questions about sort of how you were able to implement that, and sensitivities, and how you decide which demographic information you're capturing in which you're not. Do you mind if they reach out to you and just sort of chat through that?

Terry Cherry: Sure. Yeah, Sergeant Gibson is the go-to as well as reference to data. He'll tweak what we had, so he and I have been working together to sort of drive that data initiative.

Maureen McGough: And then the other thing I want to flag is Officer Cherry shared some really compelling language from a strategic plan in Charleston that really sort of tied the importance of improving representations of underrepresented groups to improve public safety outcomes. So, if you're sort of struggling to figure out how to integrate that into your overall strategic plan, I think Officer Cherry is a great resource for that as well.