

# The Ultimate Guide to Building An Equitable Top-Of-Funnel Pipeline

Learn from experts on how to attract untapped talent and build a diverse top-of-funnel pipeline.

**untapped**

# Intro

Building a diverse workforce starts at the top.

Top-of-funnel pipeline that is.

It's plain and simple, if you're not building an equitable top-of-funnel pipeline, you're not going to build a diverse team at your company or hit your diversity recruiting metrics.

What's not plain and simple is how to build an equitable pipeline of talent.

Thankfully, we recently co-hosted a webinar discussion with four Talent leaders and experts in DEI to have an authentic discussion around problems and challenges recruiters and hiring teams face in diversity recruiting.

We've captured the key takeaways from their discussion and developed this useful guide to help you on your journey to building a diverse top-of-funnel pipeline.

## Who should read:

- Recruiters
- Talent Leaders
- DEI Practitioners

## What you'll learn:

- Steps to recruit & attract untapped talent
- How to reduce barriers of entry for untapped talent
- Guidelines for creating an inclusive hiring process

## Tools in this guide:

- Hiring Initiative Worksheet
- Employer Branding Checklist
- Inclusive Hiring Process Scorecard

## Featuring These Four Experts



**Sean Cervera**  
Head of Diverse Tech  
Leadership Recruiting &  
Programs at Facebook



**Tariq Meyers**  
Chief People Officer  
at Untapped



**Jennifer Tardy**  
Chief Executive Officer at Jennifer  
Tardy Consulting, LLC and Expert  
Career Coach Partner at LinkedIn



**Emil Yeargin**  
Head of Talent  
at Gusto

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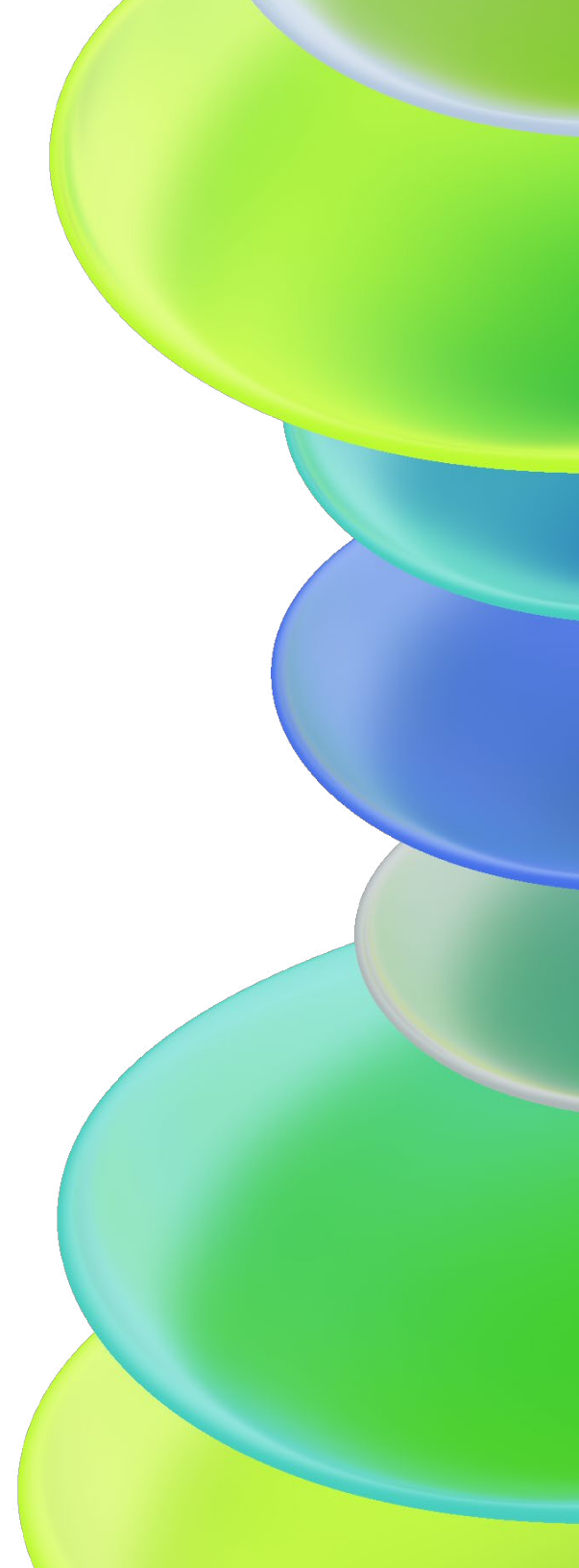
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## Step 1

# Ask The Right Questions First

How do you reach and attract candidates from untapped backgrounds? And, more specifically, how do you do this from a pipeline perspective?

Emil Yeargin, Gusto's Head of Talent, suggests approaching this problem like any other scientific problem—by asking the right questions. Emil shares that you and your team should be asking, “What does your job description contain? Have you leveraged tools to reduce gender bias? Are the minimum qualifications impossible to live up to?” He shares, for example, “Does your social media manager need 20 years of experience? The advent of social media is relatively recent. It just doesn't make any sense.”

Think about all of the ways you are creating barriers to entry for your candidates. By requiring unnecessary levels of education or specific certifications, you may be reducing the ability of folks from untapped backgrounds or who come from non-traditional backgrounds. This can then decrease their confidence to apply, which is inherently cutting off that pipeline of exceptional talent.

A good rule of thumb is to run through all of the important questions: who, what, where, why, and how.



### Expert Tip:

Instead of only focusing on skill-based gaps, ask yourself what problems will this role need to solve.



It's important to tell a holistic story that will appeal to a wide range of candidates and find the appropriate channels to tell that story. Think through where you are posting the roles, are you cross-posting across different platforms, and most importantly, are you meeting people where they are relative to the job. As Emil explains, "If I'm looking for a mechanic, am I posting on LinkedIn? No, that's not going to be the smartest place to put it."

Another important thing to consider is the application process and often this part gets overlooked. Your team should be examining how long it takes for candidates to apply. You'll want to make the process as easy and simple

## **“Reaching and attracting a diverse pipeline requires a high level of intentionality.”**

as it can be. Emil explains, “Does it take 30 minutes? If I upload my resume, is it going to be weirdly formatted, and is going to look poorly on me? Are you making it easy for folks from a wide range of backgrounds to apply? Are you making it accessible and everywhere that you can?”

To sum it all up, you need to be deliberate, thoughtful, and thorough. It starts by reviewing how you are attracting untapped talent and questioning all the parts of your process. Given how competitive the market is right now, it's important to make sure you're not cutting corners or short-handing anything.



## Questions to ask

### Who

Who is being left out of your job description?

Who has received proper education and unconscious bias and interview training?

### What

What tools does your team leverage to minimize bias?

What are your hiring goals?

### Where

Where are you posting your job opportunities?

Where are you showcasing your organization's commitment to DEI?

### Why

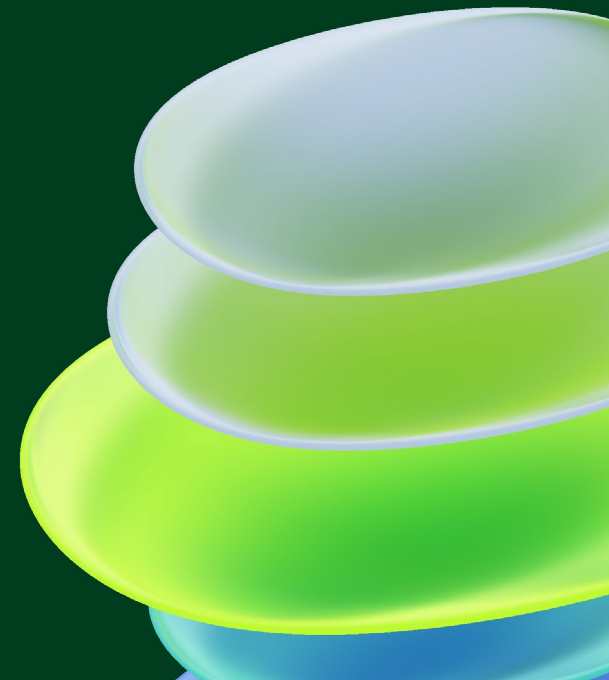
Why should untapped talent want to come and work at your organization?

Why is this role open?

### How

How is your team reducing bias?

How are the minimum qualifications for a role decided upon?





## Step 2

# Establish An Inclusive Process in Advance

If you want to attract historically excluded talent, you'll want to make sure there is an emphasis on having an equitable process first. Sean Cervera, Facebook's Head of Diverse Leadership Recruiting and Programs, says it best when he says, "Inclusive sourcing depends on an inclusive process."

"You can spend all day sourcing incredibly diverse powerhouse talent. But at the end of the day, if your process isn't inclusive, the talent isn't going to navigate."



## What Is Inclusive Hiring?

Inclusive hiring involves embracing diversity and intentionally seeking out candidates with varying backgrounds that offer a wide range of experiences, qualities, and viewpoints. It involves eliminating biases by making sure the process is equitable and there is a level playing field.

## Scorecard

# Is Your Hiring Process Inclusive?

See where you stand with your hiring process with this scorecard. How inclusive is your process? What are your strengths? What needs to be improved?

Rank yourself from 1-5 on the following items:

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

### We have clearly defined diversity, equity, and inclusion at your company.

Unfortunately, organizations don't always take the time to define what DEI means to them. Make sure your workforce understands what diversity, equity, and inclusion mean to your organization so that you can create more transparency. Once you have your clear definitions, explain how each word relates to your work culture.

### Our team is properly educated and trained.

Your recruiting team and anyone involved in the hiring process should go through unconscious bias training. But it shouldn't end there. Make sure your entire organization has the proper training to be able to create an inclusive environment once you get untapped talent in your organization. Everyone at all levels should understand the different types of hiring biases and know how to prevent them.

### We review every job posting for inclusive language.

The language you use in your job posting can have a huge effect on the talent you are attracting or vice versa. Are you using language that will turn away historically excluded candidates? Are you alienating anyone with the words you are using? A tool like [Textio](#) can help you reveal the hidden gender bias in your writing. It will suggest alternatives so you can recruit from the widest possible pool of qualified candidates.

### We have created a diverse interview slate.

Imagine what it's like for a candidate to go through an interview panel without seeing anyone that looks like them. It can be discouraging for untapped talent. By forming a diverse interview panel, you'll have different voices at the table determining if a candidate is a good fit and you'll be providing candidates with a much better hiring experience.

### Our application process is designed to be inclusive.

If your application process isn't inclusive, you're going to be losing top-tier talent from the start. Be inclusive and thoughtful when providing selections for candidates to choose from under gender and race/ethnicity. Refrain from using idioms and slang, as you may be catering to a specific group and being insensitive to another. Lastly, ask for feedback from your workforce on how to improve your application process.

### We fully prepare our candidates for the interview panel.

Untapped talent may feel the effects of imposter syndrome, so it's important to set every candidate up for success. You can do this by preparing them by offering them detailed information on the interview process. Share who they will be meeting with, what questions will be asked, or what each interviewer will be focusing on, and how to best prepare.

### Our career website is accessible.

When creating your careers page, you'll want to keep four categories in mind when making it accessible: visual access, motor ability, audio access, and cognitive ability. If you want to ensure that your efforts are inclusive in all areas, you'll need to examine them through different lenses, such as, through your content, your images, any forms you use, the way your site is coded, etc.

## Let's review your score!

### Score

30-35

You have created an inclusive hiring process! Great work.

25-30

You are working towards creating an inclusive hiring process, but some aspects still need improvement.

20-25

Perhaps you're excelling in some areas but ignoring others. You haven't optimized your hiring process to be fully inclusive.

15-20

Your hiring process needs to be improved and you are potentially missing out on exceptional untapped talent. Rethink your process and make it more welcoming.

0-15

Your current hiring process is not inclusive enough. Use this list as a jumping-off point to create a more equitable process.



### Step 3

# Invest in Employer Branding with an Emphasis on Action

What applicants look for in an organization has evolved. And it should come as no surprise that candidates are looking for companies that invest in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Sean Cervera reveals, “When you have marginalized groups navigating a recruiting process, even allies, they want to see what we’re doing as a company in regards to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.”

Don’t just invest in employer branding and leave it at that. You’ll want to make sure what your organization is publicly communicating is honest and transparent.

Sean explains, “if you haven’t made this commitment, if there’s no strategy, if there’s no honest, transparent commitment to this work, that is going to be a huge, no, no. It’s a huge red flag to a lot of candidates that are navigating the process.”

It isn’t enough for candidates to see a company’s DEI statement on a career website. They want to see action.

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As your organization is thinking about employer branding, it’s important that your team doubles down and invests in communicating how your company has been walking the walk with DEI. Showcase how your company is committed to this work. What will happen if you don’t? Sean reveals, “I’ve seen many times candidates have pulled out of the process because there isn’t this level of commitment to this work that candidates need to be seen, felt, and heard.”



**70% of job seekers**  
want to work for a company  
that demonstrates  
a commitment to  
diversity and inclusion

According to a survey from [The Manifest](#)

### Checklist

## 5 Ways To Weave DEI Into Your Employer Branding

- ☐ **Partner with organizations** that are committed to helping underrepresented communities
- ☐ **Showcase the diversity** of your organization and the different lived experiences on your company’s blog and/or social media channels
- ☐ **Don’t just limit yourself** to the generic “an equal opportunity employer” statement — highlight what your organization is doing to create a diverse and inclusive workforce
- ☐ **Create a landing page** on your website dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion (use this [example from Asana](#) as inspiration)
- ☐ **Brand internally** — don’t forget the power of word of mouth. Make sure your employees are happy and thriving at your organization to better leverage employee advocacy

# Be Mindful of Language

There is so much power in language and it's important to be extremely mindful of what words we are using. As Jennifer Tardy, Diversity Recruitment Trainer states, "The language that we use within an organization can either move all of us along or can leave some of us behind."

One of the words that Jennifer draws attention to is the word "diverse." She explains that whenever she is talking to employers about how to use this word, she tends to start with a crash course.

She explains, "I always say diversity means different. Diversity is not because of me. Diversity is because of us. Diversity has to be in context to a group."

We love how our friends at [Culture Amp](#) explain it, "Diversity is a relational concept. It shows up in the composition of teams and organizations, and it is measured based on a collective whole." People are not diverse. A single person cannot be diverse.

When Jennifer hears well-intentioned questions or statements using the language,

"this diverse person," she suggests changing the language to be more inclusive. When developing your message, ask yourself: "Can we change the language to be more effective in what we're trying to say?"

What word should you be using instead of "diverse"? One word Jennifer loves is "untapped." She adds, "It shows that something is happening to a group." Another option is using the word historically underrepresented populations or marginalized groups.

Words to use instead of:

**diverse**

**untapped**

or

**historically  
underrepresented  
groups**

or

**historically  
excluded**

Language also plays a vital role in defining your goals better. The more specific you can get the more intentional you can be. In a [Harvard Business Review article](#), Rakshitha Arni Ravishankar shares, "We often hear companies say they want to hire diverse employees and create diverse cultures. But what does it mean when someone says diverse? Are they talking about different genders? Sexualities? Ethnicities?" By being more granular with your language, your company can have a more targeted and strategic approach to achieving its hiring goals.

Rakshitha goes on to say, "Take the term 'diversity hire.' Using that word without understanding what it means is a mistake. That word often comes with a loaded social connotation that this person has been hired to simply fill a quota. Even when it's unintentional, it leads to unconscious biases about this person. Basically, it takes away from the skills, talents, and strengths that this individual brings to work. This kind of microaggression is also why marginalized groups continue to be absent or feel excluded from D&I conversations."

## Step 5

# Name the Problem

Before any problem can be solved, there has to be recognition and an understanding that the problem exists. Nobody can deny we have a [diversity problem within tech](#) (and beyond). And the organizations themselves need to solve this problem, not their employees.

So when there is a lack of diversity within an organization, the first step is acknowledging that a problem exists. The next step is being really specific about where you are underrepresented and where you'd like to increase representation. Jennifer Tardy recommends that one of the things an organization should prioritize is thinking about where there is underrepresentation, really having that conversation, and being able to say, "we are underrepresented in this area and are going to increase representation in this area."

One way to name the problem is to be [data brave](#). Being data brave means having candid conversations about who isn't in the room and even more candor about why they aren't there. To be data brave means, like every other business practice, having a rich understanding of your company's demographics so that you better understand where you should direct your equity efforts. To be data brave means understanding your pipelines and who is in them (and how certain demographics progressed through them) so that you are better positioned to make interventions when you know the biases that are creating barriers to opportunity.

If you don't name the problem, you won't be able to name the opportunity.

## Worksheet

### Diversity Hiring Goals

Create specific diversity hiring goals to ensure accountability and impact. But what metrics should you be measuring?

**First, you'll need to know your baseline metrics. Take a look at some of your current data:**

**What percentage of applicants who are applying to your open roles are from underrepresented groups? (Tip: look at these metrics at all levels: roles, departments, seniority level, etc)**

**What percentage of candidates being interviewed are from untapped backgrounds?**

**What percentage of offers are being made to historically overlooked candidates?**

**What percentage of hires are being made to untapped talent?**



Having a good understanding of your own performance is a great start, but it will only get you so far. How do you know if your numbers are above industry averages or falling behind? By comparing your metrics to companies of similar size and industry, you can identify what is achievable, what areas need improvement, and where you are outpacing your competitors.

### **Want to see how your top-of-funnel metrics compare to your competition?**

To help, we've aggregated data from our customers spanning startups to Fortune 500 companies with brands including Lyft, Airbnb, Headspace, Figma, and Roblox, to showcase top-of-funnel diversity recruiting benchmarks. You can use [this report](#) to compare your top-of-funnel pipeline against others to see where your strengths and weaknesses are.

Next, you'll want to get even more granular when looking at your pipeline of talent. Remember, if you don't measure it, you can't improve it. Tracking gender and race/ethnicity throughout your entire hiring funnel is going to be instrumental in identifying areas for improvement. If you understand, track, and visualize how candidates progress through each stage of your hiring process to pinpoint disparities.

Once you know which areas need improvement, you'll be able to make specific and targeted goals. For example, let's say after analyzing your current workforce, you see there is a lack of female representation.

### **Need help uncovering barriers?**

*Get a personalized demo and learn how Untapped can help you gain visibility into the diversity of your applicant pool so you can effortlessly source, engage, and hire diverse teams.*



# Change How You Are Looking For Talent (And How Talent Finds You)

To build an equitable top-of-funnel pipeline, you want to be deliberate about where you are looking for talent and vice versa, how candidates find you. Where are you sourcing candidates? Have your team's sourcing strategies stayed the same or are

they evolving over time? What type of recruiting events are you utilizing? Where are you advertising your job posting? Change up your strategy if you want to discover new untapped talent.

## Checklist

### 5 Ways to Change How You Find and Attract Talent



#### Be Strategic With Where You Promote Your Open Positions

Diversity Practitioner, Jennifer Tardy shares, "One of the key things that I tell people to do is begin posting your positions in locations that are overrepresented in the areas where you are underrepresented."



#### Utilize Job Boards for Undersourced Talent

Posting job openings on job boards that are focused on helping underrepresented talent can help your team find a wider range of candidates.



#### Find talent through organizations focused on serving underrepresented populations

Identify organizations that are connected to untapped talent and partner with them. Make sure that this partnership isn't one-sided though. Find ways you can help amplify their organizations while they are helping you amplify your open roles.



#### Reverse Engineer Your Process

Ask your employees that are a part of that untapped community where they consume things. When they are looking for jobs, where do they look? You can reverse engineer some of this by talking to your audience.



#### Collaborate with educational institutions serving historically overlooked groups

Are you searching for talent that went to the same five universities? Go beyond the universities you are familiar with. Establishing internship programs and partnering with schools, like HBCUs, is a great way to find top-tier talent.

# Job Board Resources for Undersourced Talent

**[Diversity.com:](#)** Diversity.com is a 100% Black family owned small business headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. We strive to provide a means for diversity employers to find the best candidates for any job position, with a particular focus on attracting talent in the science, technology, education, and medical fields.

**[Hispanic/Latino Professionals Association \(HLPa\):](#)** Each year the HLPa matches the Nation's Top Hispanic / Latino Talent with America's best organizations by identifying and listing quality organizations who are currently hiring and have a commitment to diversity & The Hispanic / Latino Community.

**[Fairygodboss:](#)** Fairygodboss helps companies increase gender diversity by connecting your organization with qualified female job seekers and driving more female applicants.

**[BlackJobs.com:](#)** Their site features the latest well-paying job opportunities for Black job seekers from companies who are sincerely dedicated to diversity hiring. Ultimately, their goal is to help reduce the high rate of unemployment in Black communities.

**[Black Career Women's Network:](#)** Black Career Women's Network (BCWN) is a national career development platform dedicated to fostering the professional growth of Black women.

**[DiversityJobs:](#)** The #1 Diversity Job Board, their site unites employers dedicated to DEI with talented, diverse job seekers. Attract applicants of color, women, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, veterans & more.

**[The Mom Project:](#)** The Mom Project is committed to helping women remain active in the workforce at every stage of their journey, and they are proud to work with employers who are committed to designing and supporting a better workplace.

**[Power To Fly:](#)** PowerToFly was founded by Milena Berry and Katharine Zaleski to fast-track economic equality by upskilling and connecting underrepresented talent to roles in highly visible sectors.

**[Pink Jobs:](#)** A website to list LGBT-friendly job roles from pro-equality partners.

**[abilityJOBS:](#)** Since 1995, abilityJOBS.com has helped hundreds of thousands of job seekers with disabilities connect with leading employers. Additionally, abilityJOBS maintains the largest resume bank of candidates with disabilities.



# Conclusion

Building a diverse workforce isn't going to happen overnight. This will require thoughtfulness, intentionality, and optimizing your hiring strategies. Thanks to the expert advice, you now know the steps you need to take to maximize your diversity recruiting efforts.

To see change and to recruit untapped talent, it starts with expanding how you currently recruit talent. Adjust everything—where you post open roles, the language in your job descriptions, how you set up your interview process, how you source talent, and how you utilize employer branding. By taking these proactive steps, you'll be able to maximize your efforts and set up an equitable candidate pipeline.

If you can master building an equitable top-of-funnel pipeline, you're setting your company up for success.

We'd love to partner with you on your journey to building a more equitable top-of-funnel pipeline. Schedule time to chat with one of our team members today.

# Change up your current processes.

