Slide: Activities at Each Stage of the Talent Life Cycle

Bias enters into the processes and systems of the talent life cycle because these processes and systems are designed by humans with bias. Bias is inevitable. There are proactive actions that you can take to minimize the impact of bias within each stage of the life cycle.

Attract: Explore the factors of what it takes to attract prospective employees-

- **Brand**: What is your employer brand out in the marketplace. What are current and past colleagues saying about their experience at your organization. Check Vault.com and Glassdoor.com, fairygodboss.com, and indeed.com. What does your web site say about it? Is it current? Is it mobile friendly. What images are you using? When potential candidates search on your people, do the faces you see represent your commitment to the employee experience, professional development, and diversity.

- **Job descriptions**: Draft job requirements that outline the position responsibilities but also the values and behaviors that are valued within your organization.

- **Sourcing**: Where do you look for candidates. Connections of current colleagues, LinkedIn, places where diverse candidates hang out online and in person.

- **Interviewing**: Think about the experience of interviewing from your candidates perspective. Who are they interviewing with, how long is the process taking, is the organization reaching out in a timely manner. How are you evaluating them? Do you have a standard evaluation process. Are you asking behavioral questions to ascertain how they respond in difficult situation to ensure alignment with the values and behaviors you appreciated.

Hire and Onboard

- **Select**: How are you evaluating them? Do you have a standard evaluation process. Are you asking behavioral questions to ascertain how they respond in difficult situation to ensure alignment with the values and behaviors you appreciated. Are you offering them a competitive package of compensation and benefits.

- **Welcome**: Develop personal welcome plan: Once the offer is accepted and a start date is specified, what is their onboarding experience. Develop a personal welcome plan. Make their first day fantastic. Get them some branded goodies. Have their computer and access set up before their first day.

- **Integration**: Help them to understand the norms, values and unwritten rules. Give them a list of people junior to senior to meet with during their first few weeks to collect a wide perspective of the culture, dos and donts. Get them a buddy to ask the “stupid questions” that they may not feel comfortable asking the boss.

- **Early contribution**: Give them early success assignment to give them a positive contribution to something that is meaningful within the organization. Have them shadow junior to senior staff to learn how things are done.

Develop and perform
• **Interpersonal:** For the manager, get to know them. Find out what primary motivates them—do you prefer to work independently? Do they want to master a particular skill? Or By purpose - Does understanding how what they are doing contributes to the overall mission of the team and organization?

• **Career development:** Understand what their professional development goals are and allow them to pick one that they can pursue funded by the organizations, whether or not there is direct benefit to the company.

• **Feedback:** Provide feedback often. Coaching point. I really liked what you did...provide specifics...and here is how you can get even better. Provide context for their tasks and assignments. Here is what the client is going through...and here is what it means for you as the lawyer....

**Engage and Retain**

- **Say thank you:** Saying thank you goes a long way.
- **Recognize team members:** “Best performer of the week”
- **Celebrate small wins as a team and group:** Show appreciation with organization sponsored lunches, gamification
- **Solicit feedback and act on it:** Ask what you can be doing to support your team members better. Pick one and act on it.
- **Overcommunicate:** If you think you are communicating enough, double your efforts. Gaining people’s attention is hard with the mgt of numerous comms channels. Do it via email, team meetings, 1:1. Repeat, repeat and reinforce.

**Slide: Actions to Mitigate Bias**

**Attract**

- **Expand pool of applicants.** Engage where diverse lawyers hang online and in person, such as affinity bar associations locally, bar association law student groups. Online, use Twitter and LinkedIn. Many affinity bars have twitter handles. In person, go to local law schools. Many will have affinity law student groups. Many affinity bar associations have conferences.

- **Draft neutral job qualifications.** Make sure you draft job descriptions. Glassdoor has this article and LinkedIn has this one.

- **Blind resume screening.** When you are choosing candidates, remove name. Here are some ways to enact blind screening.

- **Require diverse slates of candidates.** Many organizations are requiring specific targets for diverse candidates for every role. 30 percent is a common target...30 percent of the candidate pool for a role should be diverse.

- **Implement structured interviews.** Develop an structured interview toolkit for first, second round interviews that allows each interviewer to select the questions they want to ask and standardize the interview questions for each interview across candidates. Align behavior questions to the values and behaviors the org admires. Also, develop standard evaluation
toolkit. Going into the interview, interviewers should agree on pre-determined measures of proficiency against the competencies; immediately following the interview, while memories are still fresh, each interviewer should independently review their notes and score the candidate on each of the competencies. These scores should be tied to specific examples the candidate gave to the behavioral questions.

**Develop and Perform**

- **Develop practice-specific benchmarks** and firmwide core competences such as ethnics, leadership, navigating complexity, business acumen, critical evaluation, communication, cross cultural competency, relationships management. [SHRM resource](#)

- **Create a professional development roadmap** and competencies tied to levels or titles

- **Monitor work assignments**, including who goes on pitches and does important, challenging work. Diverse professionals are left out of informal networks, so having one person in each practice area monitoring the assignments of all team members to ensure competencies are being met and challenging assignments are spread across all team members by level

- **Appoint someone who has bias expertise** and whose sole responsibility during performance calibration chats to listen for bias in performance ranking and calibration chats

- **Monitor quality of informal feedback**. Make sure diverse professionals are receiving substantive feedback. “You are doing this really well...what would make you perform even better is...”

**Engage and Retain**

- **Train line managers to give informal feedback.** Dr Larry Richard is an expert on feedback.

- **Train practice leaders and people managers on common ways bias creeps into talent conversations.** Have them ask themselves to write down who are they spending time with, who are they promoting, who are they championing, who are they giving the most important client work to. If all of those individuals look like them, bias is probably creeping in. There is some work to do. One firm at the partner retreat brought Harvard faculty to discuss and used working groups to discuss ways bias creeps in and crowd source ideas about how to minimize it.

- **Fund relationship-building activities in diverse bar associations.** Lawyers of color share that they have to work twice as hard in gaining approval for funding in diverse bar associations because it is not the “typical places for lawyers at the firm to develop business.” If most of the lawyers are white, that makes sense.

- **Amplify ideas from diverse talent in group settings.** If a diverse lawyers states an idea that you think is really good, chime in and say, “I support that idea.” Small, consisten actions like this go a long way.

- **Analyze who is getting the time and attention from those in power.** Have each partner analyze who they are sponsoring, championing, promoting and ask themselves how diverse they are. If there is no diversity, affinity bias is creeping in.
• **Bring diverse talent to tables of power:** Look holistically at who is getting to be in front of clients consistently. Who is getting to participate in the meetings of influencers and power prayers. Diversify who gets to go.

• **Formalize sponsorship for diverse talent.** This is part of the reason formalization of sponsorship is required. Lack of access to informal networks.
Resources

- Neutral job descriptions: [Glassdoor](https://glassdoor.com) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com).
- **Blind screening**
- **Structured interview toolkit**
- **SHRM behavior questions**

LegalExecutiveInstitute.com

- **Feedback**: [Dr Larry Richard, CEO, LawyerBrain Feedback series](http://lawyerbrainfeedback.com)
- **Inclusion**: [Series on Behavior of Allies](http://legal-executive-institute.com)
- **Lawyers of Color**
  - Next Gen Leadership: Advancing Lawyers of Color
  - Case Study: Stinson Leonard Street’s Tactics for Almost Doubling Representation of Lawyers of Color in 2 Years
  - Four-Step Strategy to Retain Lawyers of Color
  - For Legal Employers: 16 Ways to Expedite Advancement of Lawyers of Color
  - Race/Ethnic Diversity: A Multiplier for Law Firm Profitability
- **Women**: Transforming Women’s Leadership in the Law