

NNSC – April 18, 2024
Hiring an Excellent Workforce
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Experience

Todd - The Gates Foundation has 2,200 employees. We hire 300-400 people each year (last year 500). Built a robust talent function in the organization (international and US) with 2/3 employees in Seattle and 1/3 globally. Use Textio – take bias out of our documents, Job Elephant, and a CRM.

Julie – Use some staffing services, but most searches done in house. Only posted jobs before I arrived – now we recruit.

Hiring Process

Julie - 16,000 employees at the County in 19 different areas. Searches that are not easy, take a longer time. Generally open 90 days. (see attachment on standard recruitment). Final candidates go on tour together – lack confidentiality. Director search – 3-4 months until final candidates and then 45 days to end of search. Staff gets “voice without a vote”. No rating or ranking of candidates. Mostly video interviews are in person, but if your job is customer facing than in person. County requires 5 references for each candidate – 2 are supposed to be managers.

Todd – Expedited hiring for administrative support role – batch interviewing for those roles. Fill them in 30 days. Vast majority of hiring is get a job description, we post and we pray. Initial 2 week period of recruitment and give to hiring manager to find out if need targeted recruitment or go to search. 60 days extending an offer. If regional office or hard to fill space (drug development or epidemiologists) they take a long time. Have not gone back to in person interviews except for executive roles. Want consistent interviewing – if in person everyone needs to be in person who will be meeting candidates to eliminate bias. Evaluation of references done in past and result is that less than 1% of searches does a reference change the outcome of a search. We do them for executives only.

Succession Planning & Leadership Development

Todd – build or buy talent. We tend to buy talent. No entry level jobs at the Gates Foundation – at least 5 years experience. Don’t stretch hire someone. Succession plans for top level executives – all internal. CEO transfer was internal. Director level (VP) – we engage search firms. Average tenure – 4.5 years. 24 year old foundation. 34% of our hires filled internally. In US, only up to 25% of total workforce is remote (full time). Limited term positions are filled 50% internally (2 week shadowing of the person exiting with an external person). Conflict in hiring – spouses reporting to spouses or a company where Bill and Melinda Gates are shareholders.

Julie – Mostly succession planning for senior level searches. If there is not someone, partner with search firm. 6-8 internal candidates found to be viable in a search – if none found to be viable, than

look external. No one can be full time remote. Almost everyone is hybrid – for equity (correctional officers, public health, bus drivers have to show up). Limited term positions are posted for internal only. 85% are union staff. Hiring processes are different for union or nonunion (different rules for different unions).

Attract people to Seattle – high cost of living

Todd – Gates Foundation redid compensation ranges for all roles. Took years. 2 ranges – national range across all cities if want to be remote. This is a lower range than the premium range (3 cities). \$100,000 range in job postings – hire in first tercile. Compensation is the third question.

Julie – We do a phone screen with most competitive candidates and ask if the salary range is possible for them. The top end of the range will not go higher.

Social Media in vetting

Julie – none in ours. Expectation for quick Google for higher level positions since could hit media.

Todd – LinkedIn – 90% of resumes have their LinkedIn profile. We used LinkedIn Recruiter in addition to CRM. We don't look at Facebook.

How we select search firms

Julie - \$50,000 or more need to go out for competitive bids.

Todd – 6 recruiters handling 300 openings. I was managing 25 searches at one time. We were spending \$3 million on searches – could hire any firm we wanted. With better leadership, built an internal function. RFP process with a bunch of firms and beat them up on fees: ½ firms dropped out of RFP process and now we have a small group of firms. RFP will be released in 3 years.

Removing Barriers to Increase Equity

Todd – 2019 first Chief Diversity Officer for Foundation. 14 recommendations we needed to implement and 2 in talent acquisition. Textio (plug in to CRM – suggesting changes of your job descriptions and then can post it) and audit interview process. Trying to remove the bias from the process. Looked at ourselves, other organizations and consultants. We are better – job descriptions shorter and remove things like Sense of Humor or a degree from a top university. We are stopping the practice of US ex-pats outside the US and hiring people from those countries. We are trying to create an organization where they belong and have affinity and feel like they matter. It is getting better. How did we look at ourselves internally: Surveyed our grantees – how they were communicated to, if felt values and psychological safety. Brought in speakers who told us who did not receive funding for us and told us what we did not want to hear – spoke truth to power. Facilitated sessions with employees and how that influenced their work. Started to see changes in how grantees talk about us and how employees feel.

Julie – Feel good about the progress we are making. King County is richly diverse but huge systemic issues. Takes intentionality, process, training, tools and awareness. Important for every role in the county. Standardized training and practices to reduce implicit bias. Dashboard ready demographics for workforce planning. Resume without names and demographics of candidates getting through the process. Over 400 outreach and marketing venues. Lots of affinity groups in the county once they are hired.