

*How To*

# Recruit and Retain Diverse Talent

By Dr. Lisa Aponte-Soto



# *How To Recruit and Retain Diverse Talent*

Diversity in the workplace has become a priority, especially in healthcare settings where having a diverse culturally “competent” workforce can literally save lives. We have come to understand the value of racial and ethnic diversity for fostering equitable health care practices and outcomes. For example, hiring personnel who can communicate in the appropriate language helps ensure the safety of patients and reduce adverse events. Diversifying your talent pool is also important for promoting cultural sensitivity, which lends to being compassionate towards your clients or patients regardless of their background. This means that they each approach interaction as an opportunity to serve and that they acknowledge that the client or patient is more than just a billable number, but rather a person with a family of their own who cares about and loves them.

It is important that employers know that diversity is much more than checking a box and meeting a quota. It is much more than hosting the culturally themed office potluck. It is ensuring that you have staff that are representative of the communities you serve, and hence attuned to the community’s cultural nuances. It is investing in each employee, their skills, talents and perspectives as a valuable contributing member of your team. Below are a few tips to support employers recruiting and retaining diverse talent.

## OUR TIPS FOR BUILDING A DIVERSE TALENT POOL

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### 1. INVEST IN DIVERSE TALENT

The emphasis here is that hiring and retaining a diverse team is an investment that requires a full commitment to and value for each of your employees and their professional growth and development. Your thoughtful planning will yield higher return on your investment in terms of productivity, innovation, efficiency and outcomes.

### 2. PROVIDE COACHING AND MENTORSHIP

Enlist seasoned professionals to serve as not just mentors, but coaches and sponsors to emerging employees of color. This will help provide guidance and support for your staff, particularly more entry level staff to flourish into leadership roles. Research indicates that cross-cultural relationships can be more beneficial to emerging racial and ethnic “minority” leaders.

### 3. FACILITATE STRETCH OPPORTUNITIES

Another valuable way to help staff develop further is by facilitating opportunities for team members to stretch into roles and projects that will allow them to build new skills. It is important to be intentional about extending these opportunities equitably.

### 4. CREATE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Creating safe spaces where employees of color can establish support systems and contribute to improving processes will help them feel supported and help your organization retain staff. However, organizational wide growth cannot occur in a vacuum. You should also create spaces for all staff to learn together cross-culturally about what practices will help advance the organization as a unified and culturally “competent” place.

### 5. OFFER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Organizations need to offer opportunities for staff to participate in formal professional development workshops and training. This includes providing the resources to participate in these events as well as paid time off to attend these. When feasible, you can also explore in-service training opportunities that will save on travel expenses and provide a wider reach for staff to engage in co-learning.

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Serving clients and patients in our communities requires investing in a pool of talented diverse staff. The investment of fostering a cadre of diverse employees extends beyond the support systems and coaching. It requires a commitment in each employee's growth and development by providing the necessary training, resources, climate, and opportunities for personnel to succeed and thrive professionally. It is an investment with exponential benefits for you, your clients, and your staff. Simply put it is good business where everyone stands to win!

#### *HAVE A SPECIFIC PROJECT IN MIND?*

Tanoma offers a free 30-minute consultation to prospective clients. We would be happy to discuss your organization and your goals for research, evaluation, or training. Contact Dr. Lisa Aponte-Soto at [lapontesoto@tanomaconsulting.com](mailto:lapontesoto@tanomaconsulting.com)



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is the president/CEO of Tanoma Consulting. She has over 25 years supporting equitable hiring, management, and retention practices of diverse teams across various sectors.

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