

BEACON LEGAL

Specialist legal recruitment

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN LEGAL RECRUITMENT

January 2021



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN THE AUSTRALIAN LEGAL LANDSCAPE

Diversity and inclusion is important in any workplace, but particularly in the legal industry. For years, law has been widely regarded as one of the least 'diverse' professions. Gender diversity is of particular concern - females make up more than half of law firm graduates, but only 30% of law firm Partners. There's also been, historically, a lack of representation of lawyers from middle to lower class socio-economic backgrounds, racial and religious profiles, and LGBTQI+ communities.



30.4% of law firm Partners are female.



23% of hiring managers will reject candidates based on their choice of university.



71% of LGBTQI+ lawyers have experienced sexual or gender orientation bias in the legal profession.

Despite the historical numbers, there's no doubt that in recent years, we've seen a positive shift in the legal profession towards a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

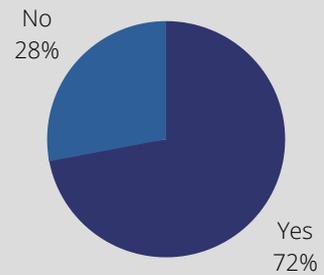
COVID-19 has expedited the shift towards flexible and remote working, leading to greater gender representation in senior positions. Law firms and in-house teams are implementing anti-bias training for managers, aimed at reducing unconscious bias, particularly during the recruitment process. Some companies have also de-identified candidate applications in order to focus solely on the applicant's practical experience.

We've also seen an effort by major law firms to foster an inclusive environment for their LGBTQI+ staff, with most firms now benefiting from the establishment of a Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

We surveyed over 200 law firm Partners, General Counsels and HR Managers to assess their organisation's diversity and inclusion initiatives. Below are some of the key findings.

Is a lack of diversity an issue within your organisation?



Which department should be responsible for leading diversity & inclusion initiatives?



Executive
55%

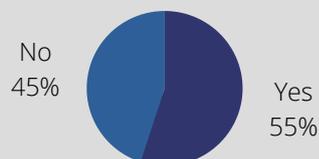


HR
31%

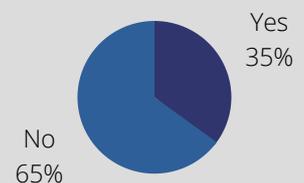


Recruitment
14%

Do you monitor diversity internally?



Do you have a process in place to attract diverse candidates?



ADVICE TO EMPLOYERS - HOW TO ATTRACT AND MAINTAIN A DIVERSE LEGAL WORKFORCE

In conducting this survey, we noticed a genuine willingness on the part of law firm and in-house leaders to promote and manage diversity & inclusion within their organisation. Many, though, were unsure of how to practically implement their ideas, particularly during the recruitment process. Below we've outlined some of our key recommendations based on the findings in this whitepaper.

1

Promote and practice genuine workplace flexibility.

This will increase gender diversity, particularly at the senior level.

2

Establish a Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

A D&I Committee gives employees a voice, and ensures the business remains innovative and open to change.

3

Implement anti-bias training for management teams.

In order to reduce the potential for unconscious bias in recruitment and retention, we suggest all companies actively seek to train their managers in how best to avoid bias in the workplace.

4

Consider diversity targets throughout the recruitment process.

Candidates should always be selected on their merit. That said, studies have shown that considering a diverse array of candidates is beneficial to the recruitment process.

5

Use innovative recruitment tools to attract diverse candidates.

More companies and law firms are using psychometric testing, personality assessments and 'gamification' in their recruitment processes to attract candidates from a range of backgrounds.



Alex Gotch
Director

Alex has 7.5 years of legal recruitment experience in Australia and is responsible for private practice legal recruitment and managing the business. Alex is a qualified lawyer and practised at a Top Tier law firm in London.



Matthew Edwards
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Matt has 6 years of legal recruitment experience in Australia and is responsible for In-House legal recruitment nationally. Matt previously practised at a Sydney based law firm and is a NSW qualified lawyer.



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Aimee has 2.5 years of legal recruitment experience and is responsible for private practice legal recruitment in Brisbane. She is also permanently based in our Brisbane office.



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Jake has 6 years of legal recruitment experience and is based in our London office. He is responsible for sourcing Australian lawyers returning home from London and overseas.



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