

Community Outreach and Recruitment

Four Steps to Get To Know Your Community-How to Begin?

Understanding your community and building community relationships is good for your organization in general. It will also provide you with a baseline to begin to measure how closely your organization reflects the diversity within your community. This insight over time will provide some valuable direction for where you can begin to expand your recruitment efforts beyond your usual channels.

<p>Step 1: Do your Homework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an Assessment: Take the time to learn about the community you serve. Look at the Census data to understand the demographics of your service area. Make a list of key community leaders, diverse groups, public services, and businesses that serve them. (See Community Resource Links) These organizations and contacts could help you to create an inclusive posting and/or promote your inclusive posting with communities that will help you build diversity in your organization.
<p>Step 2: Do the Work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach is mainly a one-way communication to share information or generate attention. • Engagement is a two-way conversation and is often more interactive – this is where you have the most to gain. <i>(You may have already been contacted by or met with a representative from an organization of interest. They often reach out to engage with aligned businesses & organizations).</i> • Great outreach will be achieved through active engagement which doesn't happen magically – it takes intentional effort as outlined in step one through four. Effective outreach also takes social skills, a bit of persuasiveness, and salesmanship. Fortunately, there are several guides and resources that can help you excel in determining which form of outreach works best for you. Keep in mind that many organizations you want to connect with are focused on serving members of their community. Respecting their time and expertise is important. In some cases providing an honorarium or gift to cover time and expenses is a welcome way to demonstrate value for their contributions in projects or events. <p style="text-align: center;">Tools and Resources for Inclusive Outreach - Sample Outreach Strategies - Working with Elders</p>
<p>Step 3: Call to Action & Follow Up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary call to action outreach should tell the person/organization or group why you are contacting them. It may be to ask if they are interested in participating in a brief information meeting (virtual or in person) i.e., indicating that you are looking to hire and that you would appreciate insights they could offer to help support an inclusive hiring strategy. It should also include something that demonstrates that you have done some work and know the type of service they provide and why it may be of benefit for them to connect with you and your business/organization. • Include something that prompts the person you are contacting to take some sort of action. For example, you could provide a couple of dates and times to connect, let them know you are open to a time that fits into their schedule. Community organizations, like many businesses, have limited time and resources, so meeting virtually may be preferred by the organization and setting a time limit is important. Let them know that you look forward to hearing from them and if they prefer to send an email with helpful information that would be appreciated.
<p>Step 4: Track Your Results & Update your Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking results is useful in all aspects of marketing, and this is no different in your hiring outreach. • By tracking the responses and results from your various outreach strategies, you will determine what is effective and what you need to change. Continuously improve your outreach efforts to become more efficient. Every business and community is unique. By tracking the results you will find the right combination of techniques and strategies that help you to excel in your outreach strategy while providing the foundation for future engagement and relationship building.

See Additional Ways to Strengthen Community Relationships

- **Adapt Your Materials:** Ensure marketing and educational materials reflect the diversity in your community. If appropriate, have it translated to effectively reach out to different ethnic groups within your community. Partner with a local community group to assist with the translation.
- **Meet with Leaders:** Setup meetings with community leaders to educate them about your business and the services you provide. Talk about ways you can collaborate.
- **Participate in Community Events:** Staff a table at a community fair, take part in parades or partner on an event. Make your business visible in the community. The more your community members see you, the more familiar they will become with you and your business. Get out into the community and meet the people in diverse communities.
- **Business Open House:** Invite members of your community into your business. Let them tour your location and interact with your team. Show them what you do and answer their questions.
- **Presentations:** Reach out to key community groups and ask if you can present at a meeting. Learn about what different groups in your community are doing and how you can partner with them.
- **Work with Local Media:** Partner with the local newspaper to get a featured article or recurring column. Advertise events and volunteer opportunities on your local public access channel. Reach out to local radio stations about your outreach events.
- **Survey:** Send out a community survey. Ask for feedback about your business. See how different members of the community view your business. Find areas for improvement and ways you can connect with your community.
- **Youth Outreach:** Visit schools and educate staff and students on your business. Host events. Attend youth sporting events. Engage the volunteers of the future and foster their interest in your business.