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Human Resources & Health and Safety



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HR Update April 2016

“Blind” CV Recruitment

The History

In October of 2015, David Cameron announced that he was determined to help remove racism and unconscious biases from the workplace, and that one of the steps being taken to do this was the introduction of Blind CV Recruitment in the Civil Services for all roles below Senior Civil Servant level. This decision has been in the pipeline for a while, as the Government have been concerned about name related race discrimination since 2009. Their concern is not unfounded, there has been a reasonable amount of research conducted over the last few years, which has shown people with “foreign sounding” names are less likely to get a call back for an interview than a person with a “white sounding” name, even if the CVs are identical.

In America, the National Bureau of Economic Research conducted a report called “Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labour market discrimination.” They sent out identical CVs with the only differences being the names. They found that candidates with “white sounding” names received a call back for every 10 CVs sent, whereas the candidates with “African-American sounding” names received a call back for every 15 CVs sent.

A similar study was conducted by the Paris School of Economics. They sent six identical CVs to numerous companies across the country, two CVs had typical French names, two had names which could be

identified as North African, and the remaining two had names which could be identified as foreign but could not easily be associated with a specific country. They found that on average the two CVs with the typical French names received up to 70% more call backs than the other four CVs.

However, the Civil Service are not the only ones to implement Blind CV Recruiting in an attempt to remove this possible bias. Companies such as HSBC, Deloitte, Virgin Money, the BBC, the NHS, Learn Direct, and Teach First are already committed to Blind CV Recruiting for all apprenticeships and graduate roles. UCAS are also scheduled to start name-blind applications for Universities by 2017, in an attempt to prevent bias against non-white sounding names, a prejudice that is most noticeably present at the country's most elite Universities.

How does it Work?

By removing the name from an applicant's CV, any potential name based bias is removed, and therefore the CV is more likely to be viewed objectively. Most people who are against Blind CV Recruiting say that once the candidate gets to the interview the whole process will be flawed because their race will be obvious, but this isn't necessarily true. When we are face-to-face in interviews we are more likely to pay attention to what a candidate is saying and how they are presenting themselves, rather than our prejudices. The idea of Blind CV Recruiting is that it gives people an opportunity to at least present themselves at an interview, and be considered appropriately, rather than never being considered at all.

Does it Work in Practice?

This approach to recruitment is still relatively new, and whilst there is evidence to show that name based bias exists, there isn't enough evidence for us to definitively say whether or not Blind CV Recruitment is the answer to this. However, it could be logically argued that by eliminating something that is possibly limiting your potential talent pool, you are in fact widening it. A larger talent pool is more likely to be a more diverse one, and Blind CV Recruitment could be an excellent way to organically diversify your workplace, instead of relying on positive discrimination which does come with its own problems and pitfalls.

How Can We Help?

If you would like our support with introducing this type of procedure, or any other HR related issue, then please don't hesitate to contact us at hradvice@hasslefreehr.co.uk.

Please Note:

We have recently moved office to: Hassle Free HR Limited, 1160 Elliott Court, Herald Avenue, Coventry Business Park Coventry, CV5 6UB.

Our new Telephone Number is: 02476 992869.