

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP CASE STUDY: HOOTSUITE

Hootsuite is a global social media marketing company, with 200,000 paying customers and millions of users around the world.

The company sees inclusive workplace practices as critical to ensuring its workforce is healthy and productive, and is committed to creating a diverse and equitable environment where everyone feels included.⁹⁰ They believe this approach helps to deliver the best products because they are built by, and meet the needs of, the diverse communities they serve. The company, which operates in 13 different countries, implements a tailored approach to inclusion needs in each region through partnerships with global and local organisations, third-party research and employee engagement.

Recruitment

Setting, tracking and re-evaluating objectives has been key to driving progress and making a positive impact across the organisation. In the beginning of 2021, Hootsuite set a target to recruit close to 400 new employees globally in the first quarter, with 70% from underrepresented groups. They came incredibly close to achieving this goal, hiring 319 new people with 68.8% recruited from underrepresented groups (Women, Black, LGBTQ+, Asian, Latinx, Indigenous people and Neurodivergent individuals). Prioritising a diverse workforce at all levels, Hootsuite also took conscious action to increase its board member diversity in 2021, resulting in a board with 57% of members identifying as from an underrepresented group.

The company is also keen to address unconscious bias across its hiring processes. Through the recruitment journey, the company has implemented a policy in which potential new recruits – as well as internal candidates – must meet with several diverse interviewers (up to seven) throughout the interview process. While this has slowed the recruitment timeline, Hootsuite intentionally took this approach to mitigate bias and improve decision-making, citing it has “slowed down to speed up.”

Gender remains a persistent issue in tech, with women and non-binary individuals largely underrepresented across the industry. To address this, alongside tracking data and participating in events to increase its visibility as an inclusive employer, the company partners with external

organisations like SheHacks and Girls Who Code to offer mentoring programmes to aspiring young people. As well, the company has established a partnership with Pride at Work Canada to support hiring and recruitment efforts.

Retention

Hootsuite is committed to creating a welcoming, safe and equitable environment for its workforce and has implemented many measures to work towards an equitable environment, including recognizing and addressing pay equality. In 2020, Hootsuite signed the Unbounce Pledge for Parity, adding its voice and actions to organisations prioritising pay parity around the world. In 2021, the company achieved pay equity (ensuring employees of different genders and racial and ethnic backgrounds were being paid similarly for equal work) and is proud to continue reporting pay equity for 100% of employees today.

Hootsuite has also set retention targets across the organisation, with the goal of retaining 80% of its underrepresented groups. To help accomplish this, it has launched Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to strengthen its internal and external EDI work and connect with employees with lived experiences across the underrepresented groups. The ERGs include members from its community as well as allies, who are valued as changemakers across the whole organisation. The ERGs work on education, awareness and advocacy, bringing in speakers to tell stories of lived experiences to others across the organisation, as well as sharing those of Hootsuite’s own people. This has been instrumental in creating a greater sense of connection and shared empathy across Hootsuite’s workforce.

In addition, following listening exercises with employees, Hootsuite began rolling out new benefits offerings country-by-country based on employees’ unique needs. For example, benefits were adjusted in North America to provide better access to mental health resources, gender affirmation surgery and fertility treatments.

“If you can see it, you can be it. So the more these young people and young women can see that there are underrepresented groups represented at companies like Hootsuite, the more chance there is that they are going to pursue that path.”
- Tara Ataya, Chief People and Diversity Officer, Hootsuite.