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RACE AT WORK CHARTER EXECUTIVE SPONSOR: TOP TIPS TO BECOME A VISIBLE LEADER ON ETHNICITY





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The role of an executive sponsor for race in an organisation is key, but despite this, the [Race at Work 2018 Scorecard One Year on Report](#) demonstrated that only 33 per cent of employees said there was an executive sponsor for equality, diversity and fairness at the top of their organisation. Race at Work Charter signatories commit to five actions:

- appoint an executive sponsor for race
- capture and publish ethnicity data
- board level zero-tolerance on harassment and bullying
- engage managers to promote equality
- attract recruit and progress ethnic minority employees in the workplace.

When appointed, these sponsors provide visible leadership on race and ethnicity in their organisations, driving actions such as setting targets for ethnic minority representation, briefing recruitment agencies and supporting mentoring/sponsorships.

Executives told us that leaders tasked with being a race sponsor within organisations would benefit from support to make the business case for action, engaging with employees and stakeholders and taking targeted action.

With more than 230 employers having signed the Race at Work Charter, we wanted to produce some materials to support executive sponsors in those organisations.

In conjunction with the BITC Race Equality Leadership Team, we have pulled together some top tips for executive sponsors to help them to:

- make the case for action
- engage your people
- set ethnicity targets.

Thank you for taking steps as leaders to make the workplace a more equal place for all. Together we are stronger.

Sandra Kerr CBE, Race Equality Director, BITC



MAKE THE CASE FOR ACTION

The Race at Work Charter commitment number one is to appoint an executive sponsor for race. To be a successful executive sponsor, it is important to clearly articulate the commercial case for change. Top tips for making the case for action:

1 Potential annual boost to UK economy

The government sponsored independent McGregor-Smith Review into [Race in the workplace](#) (2017) found that the potential benefit to the UK economy from full representation of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) individuals across the labour market, through improved participation and progression, is estimated to be £24bn a year, which represents 1.3 per cent of GDP.

2 The commercial case

There are multiple that proves the business case for diversity. The 2018 [McKinsey & Company Report](#) and the [Peterson Institute for International Economics](#) Report find that companies with more culturally and ethnically diverse executive teams are 33 per cent more likely so see better than average profits.

3 Be aware of your customer base

Knowing the diversity of your customer base can help you build the business case for your workforce to reflect your customer demographics.

4 Focus on recruiting

According to the 2011 census, 13 per cent of the UK identifies as BAME. This means that attracting, retaining and developing your BAME talent widens your talent pool. Office for National Statistics (ONS) data shows that 18- to 24-year-olds are 19.1 per cent of the working age population.

5 Diversity and Inclusion attracts millennials

An IPR [survey](#) shows that 47 per cent of millennials are actively looking for diversity and inclusion when sizing up potential employers. Having a deliberate, well-publicised strategy for diversity and inclusion will help attract this key demographic.



FIVE TIPS TO ENGAGE YOUR PEOPLE

A key objective for an executive sponsor for race is to be visible and engage the organisation with the mission for ethnicity equality in the workplace.

Top tips for engaging the people in your organisation:

- 1 Consult**
Undergo regular employee consultations, surveys and focus groups to understand the current situation and how any new initiatives are being received.
- 2 Mobilise leaders at different levels**
Seek to embed champions and ambassadors throughout your organisation at different levels. They can ensure key messages are cascaded across the organisation and provide employees with a local, accessible contact as issues arise, including attraction, recruitment, retention, progression or other identified priorities in your organisation.
- 3 Reverse mentoring**
Consider setting up a reverse mentoring programme, pairing senior managers with employees from diverse minority backgrounds.
- 4 Internal communications campaigns**
Encourage your employees to complete and update all personal details (including ethnicity data) on your data collection systems. This will enable you to establish a baseline of representation in your workforce at every level. You can then form an accurate picture from which to set aspirational targets, monitor ethnicity, pay and measure the impact of any positive actions and interventions.
- 5 Establish an advisory body**
Engage a group of key stakeholders within the business who can provide insight, support and challenge proposed actions and plans. This advisory group should have wide and varied composition, including external representation and representation from relevant employee networks. Consider having a senior board member who owns the agenda as a part of this group.



TIPS FOR SETTING ETHNICITY TARGETS

Another important part of this role for the executive sponsor is to set and implement a strategy to achieve ethnicity targets.

- 1 Data driven**
Use data to engage leaders on the issues to be resolved and use organisational trend data on hires, leavers and promotions to inform targets.
- 2 Realistic but stretching**
Targets need to be stretching enough to deliver the desired change but need to be realistic given the organisation's workforce ethnicity profile, hiring and turnover trends.
- 3 Time bound**
Set clear timeline for target achievement.
- 4 Ownership**
Engage leaders in setting targets for their department that will contribute to the organisation's overall ethnicity targets to drive ownership.
- 5 Engage stakeholders**
Achieving the overall target requires collective action and engagement from other teams.
- 6 Senior leadership commitment**
Leaders need to give visible leadership, explaining why targets are required, why leaders need to engage and to position ethnicity targets as important as other business measures.
- 7 Accountability and responsibility**
Ensure leaders understand they are accountable for delivering on targets and supporting actions. Embed targets into your performance and reward review processes to drive accountability and consider publishing external for transparency and accountability.
- 8 Action plans to achieve targets**
Targets alone are meaningless. They need clear action plans to deliver them.
- 9 Reporting and monitoring**
Provide regular reporting to leaders so they can monitor progress against targets and take prompt remedial actions if not on track.

To access further detail on each of these areas, sign the [Race at Work Charter](#) and [join BITC](#) to access in depth resources and support.

Thank you to the BITC Race Equality Leadership Team for its support in creating this factsheet.

