

REVIEWING JOB PROFILES

“Different People” lives up to its name in at least one respect. Unlike most EQUAL projects, this DP does not address individual target groups such as people with disabilities or migrants it focuses on organisations themselves! The DP believes that “Europe is already very diverse, and the extent of this diversity can only increase. There have to be structural changes in organisations, if they are to handle diversity and to operate successfully in the future!”

This DP has developed a list of critical success factors “for the optimal use of diverse talents in favour of customer service, profit and/or results of the organisation.” One of the critical success factors focuses on consolidating diversity principles in the whole organisation - in all different departments and in all procedures - and this also covers selection procedures.

In order to adapt selection procedures, two organisations in the DP had to go through various steps. Firstly, the project managers, who are at the same time HR staff, compared their old selection procedures and brainstormed about where to go from there. Both organisations had measured the diversity of their employees, and in both organisations they wanted more a diverse work force in the future - women in higher positions, people with other ethnic backgrounds and more young people, older people and people with disabilities.

If you want your selection procedure to be fair and appropriate to many different types of candidates, you have to reconsider your requirements. Are all the abilities and skills that are outlined in the job descriptions still really necessary?

A whole process of rethinking and redefining was initiated to identify those competences that the post holder must possess, as distinct to those that would be a bonus, and then to prioritise all of these. For example, does the applicant really have to write perfect Dutch? - can a blind person with the same competences also fit into this particular function? - does age really matter? – will someone who speaks Turkish or Arabic be the best person to deal with Turkish or Moroccan clients?

As a result, this complete redefinition of selection criteria produced new functional profiles or job descriptions containing only those skills and abilities that were necessary to ensure that the job would be performed in a manner that would favour the customer service, profit and/or results of the organisation. An immediate outcome in one of the organisations was that two people over 45 years of age were recruited. For one of them this was a total change of sector and occupation – from being a production worker in the petrol-chemical industry to becoming a job coach!

This approach to selection and recruitment is now firmly embedded in both organisations, as is the principle of diversity management. The possibilities of transferring the tools, guidelines and instruments developed will be discussed in the coming months. There is still some doubt about whether these are directly applicable to other organisations but, at the very least, they provide a practical example and an indication of the implications of introducing diversity management.

DP in ECDB: NL-2001/EQA/0037	TP in ECDP: TCA-148
Contact Person: Olivia Andiel	E-mail: o.andiel@seba.nl
DP Web Site: None	TP Web Site: www.diverse-reflections.com