

Chapter 4

Recruitment and Retention

Facilitator Notes

Chapter 4 explores equitable strategies for hiring and retaining diverse talent in architectural practice. It emphasizes how organizational culture, systems, and leadership behaviors impact both the recruitment pipeline and long-term engagement. The guide also examines how bias, inequity, and lack of support at pinch points can cause attrition, especially for those with nondominant identities.

What this guide includes:

- Definitions and key components of equitable recruitment and retention.
- Factors influencing engagement and attrition.
- The impact of identity, bias, and pinch points on career trajectories.
- Actions for individuals, managers, and firms.
- Discussion scenarios and reflection prompts.

Use this outline to:

- Reflect on barriers and opportunities in recruitment and retention.
- Consider workplace systems that support or hinder inclusion.
- Equip participants to recognize and reduce bias in hiring and promotion.
- Identify concrete steps to strengthen talent pipelines.

Suggested Pre-Read:

- To maximize engagement and discussion, participants should read the corresponding chapters one page, [Executive Summary](#).

Corresponding Learning Objectives

Attendees will be able to:

- Define recruitment and retention and explain their connection with equity, culture, and firm sustainability.
- Identify common career pinch points and systemic barriers that contribute to attrition.
- Describe how inclusive management practices and engagement strategies support talent retention.
- Apply individual and organizational actions that promote equitable hiring and advancement.
- Carry out legal and ethical responsibilities related to recruitment and retention.

SLIDE 2 THE GUIDES FOR EQUITABLE PRACTICE: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Talent is the lifeblood of any practice, and attracting and retaining talent is essential for the health of the profession overall. Engaging all employees in equitable and inclusive practices will help to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and is an essential means to success for firms of all sizes and types.
- This guide outlines the importance of recruitment and retention in architecture, describes ways that help recruit a diverse workforce, and offers strategies for retaining employees through equitable practices at the individual, firm, and professional levels.

Notes

1. **Why is this topic important to you or your firm?**
 2. **Set expectations for rules of engagement.**
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SLIDE 3 WHAT ARE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION?

- Recruitment is the practice of attracting new talent by actively searching for, interviewing, and hiring candidates for a firm. It is key for both continuity and expansion of knowledge throughout the profession and for generating new ideas and diverse viewpoints in the practice of design.
- Retention results from keeping people engaged in the workplace by ensuring that they have what they need to succeed, including access to workplace support structures that help with career advancement and maintain harmony between work and life.

Notes

1. **What makes someone stay? What drives them away?**
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SLIDE 4 THE VALUE OF ENGAGEMENT

- Engagement = high satisfaction, growth opportunities, aligned values, meaningful work that lead to retention, innovation, and firm resilience.
- Disengagement = low satisfaction that leads to low productivity, burnout, turnover, and expense to the organization.

Notes

1. **What helps people feel engaged?**
2. **Discuss how management behavior directly influences engagement.**

SLIDE 5 PINCH POINTS AND BARRIERS

- Industry challenges: Losing employees to other industries due to demand and salary; the culture of long hours; the long path to licensure. Career pinch points (career stages when progress is most likely to be hindered): education, attaining licensure, caregiving, reaching a glass ceiling.
- Inequity and bias: Women are hired at lower rates into entry-level and managerial jobs. They are also less likely to be promoted to manager-level jobs. Discrepancies are greatest for women of color.
- Underrepresented groups are more likely to be an “only,” feel less psychological safety in the workplace, and experience increased scrutiny.

Notes

1. **When did you face or observe a career pinch point?**
 2. **What support helped, or what was missing? Did you observe differences in the levels of support offered?**
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SLIDE 6 WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE**Notes**

1. **Review each example of what good looks like. Make a check mark next to practices that you can find in your firm or organization, a question mark for those that you are not sure of, and a minus for those that are missing.**
 2. **Which areas are strong, which are you not sure about, and which areas are weak?**
 3. **Ask for volunteers to share examples.**
 4. **What can you do to influence change?**
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SLIDE 7 ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION (INDIVIDUAL)

- Know your values and workplace needs.
- Be aware of federal rules regarding recruitment and workplace harassment. Know what types of questions are appropriate for interviews and what types of behaviors are allowed and prohibited in the workplace.
- Seek perspectives provided by varied experiences and mentors both inside and outside of your firm.
- Avoid burnout by using offered flexible work options- flexible work hours, vacation time, work from home. Be aware of how firms culture views this and aim to normalize.

Notes

1. **What would help you thrive more fully?**
2. **How can you model inclusive behavior?**

SLIDE 8 ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION (FIRM-LEVEL)

- Analyze current hiring practices and alignment with representation goals. Promote identity-blind processes.
- Neutralize bias when evaluating employees for promotion or retention.
- Actively look for positive examples of employee contributions and potential, inclusive of different types of contributions.
- Establish structured onboarding and outline paths to leadership and promotion.
- Deploy employee engagement and satisfaction feedback tools.
- Clearly communicate firm culture and goals.

Notes

1. How do your systems reinforce or challenge bias?
 2. Who has access to leadership and opportunity?
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SLIDE 9 CONSIDER SCENARIOS & REFLECTIONS**Notes**

1. Select a scenario from the chapter that you feel will resonate with the group. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Discuss the discussion prompts in small groups and share with the full group.
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SLIDE 10 NOW WHAT?**Notes**

1. Ask participants to write one **SMART** goal related to improving recruitment or retention.
2. Give everyone the option to share.
3. Suggest they check in with a peer or accountability partner one month later.
4. If you have specific resources, committees, or additional worksheets you can promote those here.