

Race for Opportunity

Best Practice Tips for BAME* Job Seekers

Ensuring equal access to opportunities for diverse job applicants

Background

As part of the Mayoral initiative to support businesses and strengthen their ability to become more diverse, Race for Opportunity (RfO) and Diversity Works for London (DWfL) commissioned a piece of research into job seekers experiences of recruitment agencies. The research was carried out by SPA Future Thinking.

The following is a summary of the key research findings from the study of more than 2,500 people who have looked for work in the UK in the last twelve months. It is important to note that the sample is not purely random; it was achieved by RfO member and partner organisations, including recruitment agencies, sending a link to the survey to the candidates on their contact databases.

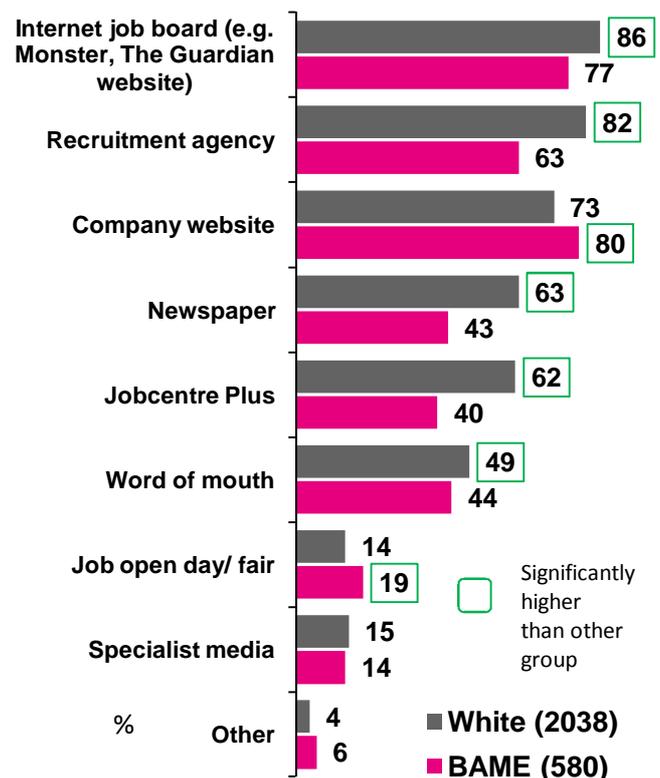
Profile of respondents:

Ethnicity	White	BAME
	2038	580
Gender	White	BAME
	Male / Female	Male / Female
	48% / 52%	42% / 58%
Age group	White	BAME
16-34	35%	47%
35-54	46%	48%
55+	18%	5%
Education	White	BAME
Secondary/A levels	27%	14%
NVQ/Vocational	13%	7%
Diploma	11%	8%
Degree	22%	31%
Post Grad Qual	15%	28%
Professional Qual	9%	10%
Other / Refused	3%	2%

Key findings

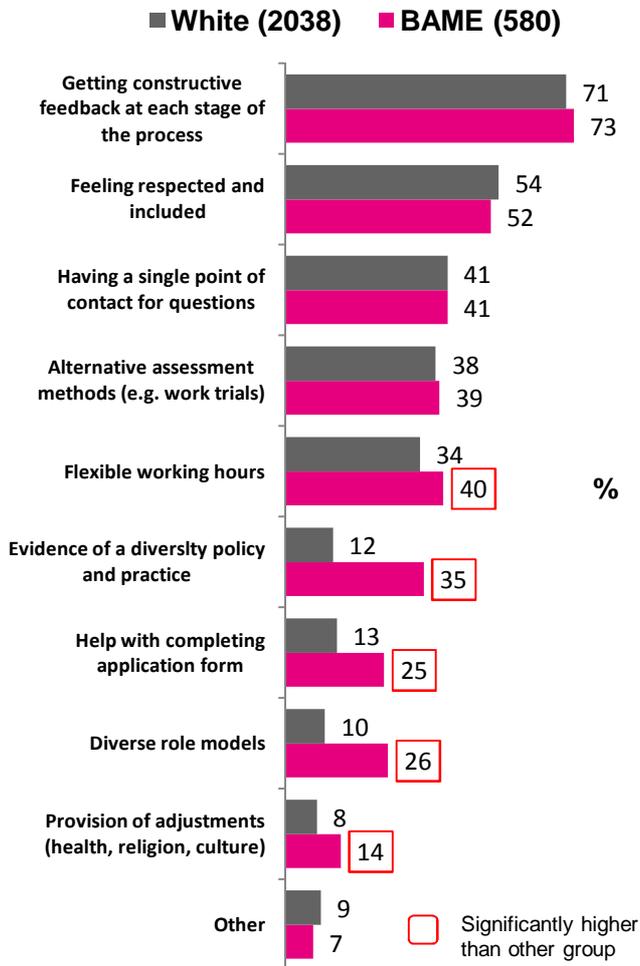
- Nearly three quarters of candidates were looking for full time work and around 30% were looking for part time work.
- White job seekers used internet job boards, recruitment agencies, newspapers, Jobcentre Plus and word of mouth more than BAME applicants, who were more likely to use company websites and job fairs (see figure 1).
- One area where applicants were frequently disappointed was with attending assessment centres as part of their application (particularly black applicants).

Figure 1: Sources used to look for jobs



- When asked, applicants have said that the things which would improve the application process most are getting constructive feedback at every stage of the process, feeling respected and included, and having a single point of contact for questions (see figure 2).

Figure 2: What would make the biggest difference to experience of the recruitment process?



- A significantly greater proportion of BAME applicants also mentioned:
 - Evidence of a diversity policy and practice (particularly black applicants).
 - Help with completing application form (particularly Asian applicants).
 - Diverse role models (particularly black applicants).
 - Provision of adjustments for health, religion and culture.

Top Tips for BAME job seekers

- ✓ The best channels to use may depend on the industry that you are interested in, so it is worth finding out where most of the jobs in your chosen sector are advertised or how people are recruited.
- ✓ Maximising the number of channels you use may help increase your chances of being noticed by potential employers. Keep track of who you have approached.
- ✓ The job market is currently in a down-turn in many industries, linked to economically turbulent times. As such, you may need to apply for a reasonably large number of jobs before you are successful as there are many candidates chasing each advertised post.
- ✓ In such a market it is important to maintain determination and optimism, and to make each application as polished as possible, even when applying for many jobs. Make each application and CV specific to the role you are going for, rather than generic.
- ✓ Ensure any profile/personal statement (often at the top of your CV) addresses your key strengths, e.g. project management experience or the size of budget responsibility.
- ✓ Employers are increasingly seeking candidates who display knowledge of the industry sector, the company and the specific role being interviewed for. Make a point of researching the organisation fully, in particular, its vision, aims and strategy. It is almost impossible to be 'too prepared' for an interview.
- ✓ Ask employers and recruitment agencies to provide clear job descriptions and information on the skills needed for roles that you are applying for – if you need more information, or information in an alternative format, do not be afraid to request this.
- ✓ Employers should also provide assistance with completing the application form or attending an interview - again you should request this if needed.

For more information:

For information about Race for Opportunity's work on diversity and inclusion, please see www.bitcdiversity.org.uk.

Sincere thanks to Diversity Works for London for their support with this work and to all the members of the RIEI Steering Committee:

BT
Clear Company

*BAME = Black, Asian and minority ethnic people.

Deloitte LLP
Department of Health
EHRC
Enterprise Rent a Car
Equal Approach
Home Office
HSBC
Independent Head Hunter – Elizabeth Solaru
Job Centre Plus
Michael Page Int'l
Morgan Stanley
Pertemps
Prudential
Recruitment and Employment Confederation
Race for Opportunity
Sapphire Partners
Transport for London
The Housing Executive
The Law Society

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