

Race for Opportunity

Best Practice Recruitment Tips Employers

Ensuring equal access to opportunities for diverse job applicants

Background

Race for Opportunity's (RfO) June 2011 report 'Race to Progress: Breaking down Barriers' highlighted the need to engage with the UK recruitment industry in light of the research's findings on perceptions of casual racial discrimination from some recruitment agencies when dealing with ethnic minority clients. Prior to this report, RfO had already engaged with employers and recruitment agencies in order to work together to find constructive solutions to the issue of diversifying recruitment in general.

In 2011, as part of the Mayoral initiative to support businesses and strengthen their ability to become more diverse, RfO and Diversity Works for London (DWfL) commissioned a piece of research into job seekers experiences of the recruitment process. 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 those surveyed were:

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

- Applicants observed a number of barriers when applying for jobs. The extent of these barriers were generally considered less when applying directly to an employer than when using a recruitment agency and this trend was observed regardless of ethnic origin. The most commonly mentioned barriers were:
 - Jobs not matching applicant's skills.
 - Issues with job descriptions.
 - For BAME applicants, issues with job advertisements and navigating employer websites were a greater barrier than to white applicants (see figure 1).
- While it should be noted that many respondents worked or were linked to RfO partner organisations, employers were perceived to treat BAME and white applicants equally.
- There were no statistical differences based on preparedness for interview, or satisfaction between BAME and white applicants. However, black applicants were less satisfied with the experience at the assessment centres than applicants from other ethnic groups.

Figure 1: Barriers encountered in getting a job by applying directly to an employer

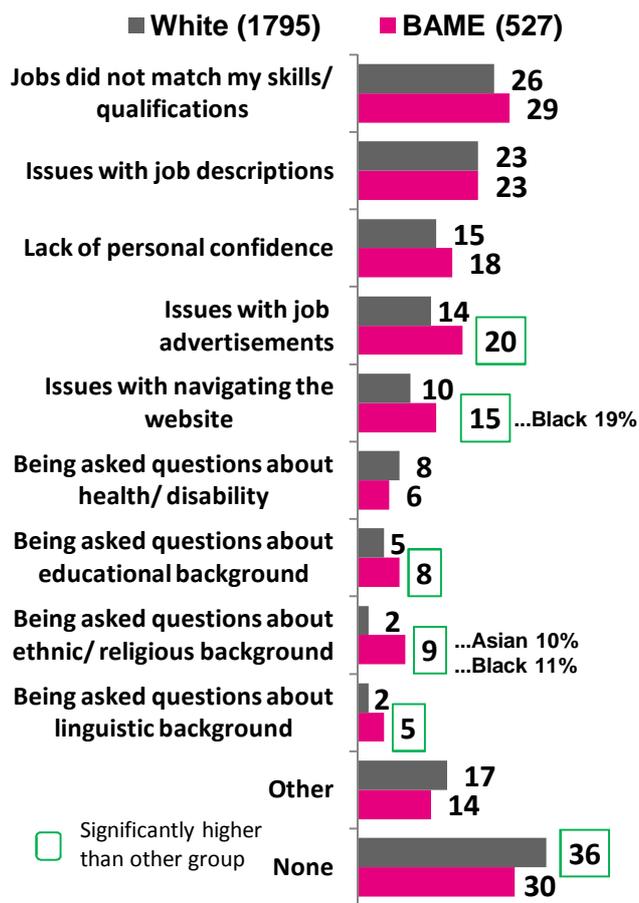
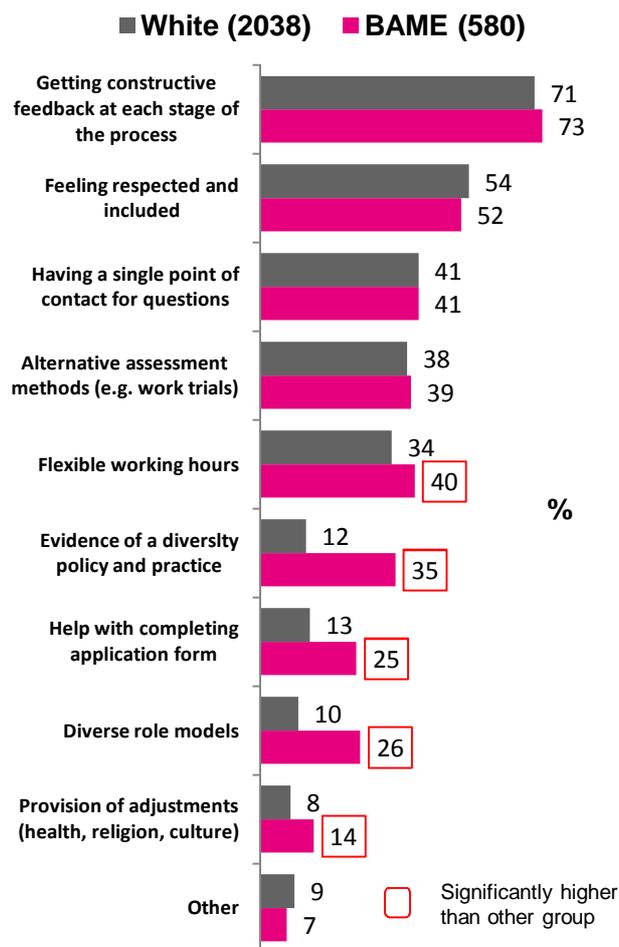


Figure 2: What would make the biggest difference to your experience of the recruitment process?



➤ In terms of what would make the biggest difference to the recruitment experience, the areas mentioned by the most people are the same regardless of ethnic background:

- Feedback at each stage of the process to manage candidates' expectations.
- Feeling respected and included.
- Having a single point of contact.
- The availability of alternative assessment methods (see figure 2).

➤ A significantly greater proportion of BAME applicants also mentioned:

- Evidence of a diversity policy and practice (particularly black applicants).
- Help with completing application forms (particularly Asian applicants).
- Diverse role models (particularly black applicants).
- Provision of adjustments for health, religion and culture.

Top Tips for BAME recruitment

- ✓ The survey revealed that the most popular source used by BAME applicants to look for jobs was the company website. Therefore employers should review their online literature to ensure it is inviting to BAME applicants:
 - Consider including images of BAME people in your materials (role models were seen as particularly important to black applicants).
 - Make sure your company's diversity and inclusion policy can be seen by all visitors.
- ✓ Employers should always provide job applicants and recruitment agencies with clear job descriptions and information on the skills needed for roles.
- ✓ Review your assessment centre processes and check that they are not biased to any particular ethnic group and are accessible.
- ✓ Consider 'unconscious bias' training and or cultural awareness training for all staff involved in the recruitment process to raise awareness of attitudes and to ensure job applicants are assessed on merit and not race.

* BAME = Black, Asian and minority ethnic people.

- ✓ Employers may wish to consider offering job applicants for which English is not their first language assistance with completing application forms.
- ✓ Ask job applicants relevant questions relating to the job vacancy and steer away from irrelevant questioning such as the applicant's religion or culture.
- ✓ Ask recruitment agencies and head hunters to send you a diverse list of candidates. You can include measures on candidate diversity into the key performance indicators in your contract to measure standards of service.
- ✓ Ensure that recruitment agencies and head hunters are aware of your organisations commitment to diversity and inclusion. Ask for evidence as to how they proactively demonstrate their commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- ✓ Consider setting BAME recruitment targets to ensure your organisation reflects the diversity of the community in which it operates. Use the Office of National Statistics (ONS) neighbourhood statistics data to get the population breakdown of BAME people in your catchment area.

For more information

For information about Race for Opportunity's work on diversity and inclusion, please see

www.bitcdiversity.org.uk.

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