

How to Select the Right Diversity Consultant

A checklist for Corporate and Organisational Practitioners (page 1 of 2)

In some cases, your Diversity work requires the involvement of additional resources or outside expertise. But how can you make sure that you are finding the best possible partner or support? This Checklist provides you with an easy tool to manage the search and selection of a vendor in an meritocratic and effective way.

1. Define Project

In the first step, it is important to be clear about your concrete needs and specific expectations, also as a briefing background

Have answers to these questions about the concrete context:

- How is Diversity aligned with your corporate mission?
- Is it part of the executive agenda? If not, whose agenda is it?
- How does the project fit in the overall Diversity implementation process? Which activities have been completed or are currently underway?
- Which are the most important interfaces with other projects or activities?
- What concrete tasks are involved & excluded? What are your expectations? What are the strategic & value drivers?
- What is the time frame and desired outcome/output of the project?
- What methodology will be used to transfer results or to develop internal expertise in your organisation? Which evaluation scheme do you use to calculate the impact of your diversity programs on corporate results?

Define the specific needs for the project:

- What are the main reasons for you to involve a vendor? (Time constraints, lack of internal resources, need for external input, etc.)
- What key competences & experiences are required to fulfil the task?

2. Identify Partners

In this step, identify possible vendors and make a merit-based and case-specific pre-selection of potential future partners or suppliers

Use multiple channels to identify providers with the skills you need:

- Diversity networks (regional, national, sector-specific)
- Referrals of recognised service providers from Diversity leaders
- Contributors to conferences & publications
- LinkedIn and other professional social media
- Consult internal colleagues and the purchasing department to help identify additional potential providers

Carry out a pre-assessment of the potential vendors:

- Do they use a broad, business-related definition of Diversity?
- Have they worked in different industries and with different kind of clients in order to acquire an expert status with insight and experience?
- Do they have relevant working experience in the region or country of interest?
- Do they offer enough breadth in their range of services?
- What professional organizations do they belong to?
- How much current information do they provide on their website?

Establish a first contact with a few selected potential vendors:

- ✓ Check the vendor's client list for a number of well-respected companies
- ✓ Ask how they can handle potential conflict in Diversity interventions
- ✓ Keep in mind that failure and specific successes show the vendors' skills but also experience in ground-breaking work
- ✓ Assess the focus that they have on Diversity-specific implementation & its integration in organisations

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3. Request Proposals

This step will help to set a guideline for your future partner of what your task encompasses and what competences you consider to be of importance

Include the following key elements in your Request for proposals:

- Offer context information that can generate a clear understanding (use results from step 1)
- Describe the task to be completed, along with the scope of the project (use results from step 1)
- Be clear on the requirements to be met, rigidly relating to your analysis (use results from step 1)
- Clearly define the time frame for the project's development (use results from step 1)
- Request samples of feedback or references from former projects (build on your pre-assessment in step 2)

Be transparent in your selection criteria:

- ✓ Provide information about the factors you will consider and how important these are in your assessment
- ✓ Supply the selection process sequence and provide information on the selection committee
- ✓ Never change the selection criteria once the process has been started

4. Evaluate Proposals

In this final step, assess and rank the proposals according to the following criteria along with the criteria you have established in the steps 2 and 3 - then take your final decision

Quality:

- Expertise on the specific Diversity topic of interest
- Demonstration of constant renewal of technical knowledge and skills in the relevant area or discipline
- Reliability of previous work which has been executed on time and within scope
- Referrals of clients

Experience:

- Specific experience in your industry, region or with organisations similar to yours
- Concrete experience with the target audience of your project
- Achievements in previous projects

After finalizing your co-operation:

- ✓ Send notices to the vendors not selected and let them know how they rated on the selection criteria

Your EIMD Team and Network Wish You a Successful Diversity and Inclusion Journey!