



THE CALDWELL INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP APPROACH

TALENT TRANSFORMS

At Caldwell we believe people are the greatest sustainable difference for organizations. Our very purpose is to enable organizations to succeed by helping them identify, recruit and retain the best people, and we find real satisfaction in helping clients and candidates thrive by connecting the right person to the right company and role.

Diversity, equity and inclusion (“DEI”) are at the forefront of our client conversations, and our employees’ expectations drive our internal progress. We and our clients recognize that diversity has been proven to positively impact bottom-line results.

At Caldwell, we take DEI seriously, and have implemented an approach to cultivate more diverse and inclusive workplaces for ourselves, our clients and our industry at large.

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An authentic and meaningful DEI approach is about so much more than ticking boxes to build a diverse slate of candidates. It’s a virtuous circle of learning, sharing, implementing and growing.

Our DEI council crafted our overall diversity approach and positioning, expressed as “learn more, share more, do more.” The goals are both internal for our employees and external for our clients, as stated on our [website](#).

While sizeable for a search firm, we are relatively small in the number of our employees and in the early stages of our DEI journey. We have a passion and commitment for continued progress and feel we are proceeding with authenticity, meeting our employees where they are in their personal journeys. Our CEO has taken the CEO Action pledge, and Caldwell is a member of CEO Action. We are also members and supporters of the BlackNorth Initiative, Out Leadership and TFX Capital’s veteran entrepreneur accelerator.

Within our executive search process, we follow The Caldwell Inclusive Leadership Approach, which acknowledges the importance of inherent diversity such as gender, race and ethnicity, but goes further to avoid placing our candidates into buckets – we want to treat our employees and candidates as people and not categories. By viewing diversity more holistically we embed inclusion into our competency-based assessment framework to evaluate DEI leadership aspects when assessing our candidates’ competencies.



DEI in our searches

We endeavour to present a diverse candidate slate, beginning with name generation and long-list of candidates. Diversity is defined differently by each client, based on their existing employee group and aligned to their goals.

Gender and race/ethnicity equity are understandably front of mind internally and with our clients, yet merely symbolic efforts to be inclusive of underrepresented groups to give the appearance of equality within a workforce is not a justifiable goal and can be tokenizing. When discussing diversity with our clients and conducting our search process we strive to keep in mind both inherent and acquired diversity. This approach comes from work performed by Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Melinda Marshall and Laura Sherbin (part of the Seramount team with whom we consult on DEI matters). [Read more here.](#)

Defining diversity with two dimensions

Inherent diversity: traits we are born with and/or are innate within our experience of the world.

Acquired/cognitive diversity: Acquired diversity is derived from experience. For example, working in another country can help you appreciate cultural differences, while selling to female consumers can give you gender insights.

INHERENT DIVERSITY	ACQUIRED DIVERSITY
Nationality	Cultural fluency
Religious background	Generational savvy
Gender	Appreciation of benefits of all diversity
Age	Technological literacy
Sexual orientation	Cross-functional knowledge
Race/Ethnicity	Global experience
Socio-economic background	Military experience
Disability	Language skills

Ultimately, for diversity to make its most positive impact, it is important to seek a broad and inclusive slate of leaders for our clients with both acquired and inherent diversity.

Inclusion as a business competency

A candidate's ethnocultural background should be viewed separately from their leadership skills. A candidate who is not from an underrepresented group may have experiences that demonstrate their skills for developing diverse talent, creating inclusive workplace environments, and/or expanding business with diverse business partners and communities. By including DEI competency questions in the interview process, your search consultant can assess these skills.

This assessment can organically lead to a candidate slate including, but not exclusively limited to, candidates of the client's diversity focus areas.

Included below are some areas for consideration and sample questions:

Cultural agility - project-based example(s):

- *Share an example where you were able to leverage diversity (that may differ from your own) to meet a customer/client need.*
- *In what ways have you had to build your own self-awareness to meet a customer's need?*
- *How did you leverage diverse relationships (employee resource groups, colleagues, external relationships) to solve a customer's business problem?*

Inspiring an inclusive workplace environment:

- *How have you demonstrated an openness to diverse points of view at work?*
- *Share examples of how your actions reinforced a commitment to fostering an inclusive environment for all employees.*

Developing a diverse team:

- *Describe any actions you have taken to develop a diverse leadership team (e.g., mentor/sponsor).*
- *Describe examples where you have championed an employee for a workplace advancement opportunity (e.g., stretch assignments, placement on a key business account, leading a critical meeting or event).*
- *Share examples of activities you have engaged in to attract diverse talent to your workplace.*

Serving traditionally underrepresented consumers to generate increased revenue:

- *Describe new initiatives you've led to build business or develop growth opportunities with underrepresented consumers/clients.*
- *Share lessons learned from those new initiatives and related efforts.*

Navigating client diversity goals relative to employment laws

Our clients are usually well intentioned in their diversity goals, but we work to ensure we are providing our services lawfully and authentically. ***Caldwell strongly supports the value of broadly represented candidate slates.*** The most natural way to develop this is at the name generation and long-list stages. The definition of well-represented is different for each search based on industry, role and client.

When considering our approach to identifying candidates based on diversity goals we:

- **Assess** candidates as to **acquired diversity** (including consideration of strengths through navigating socio-economic backgrounds) and include discussion in our write-ups and client conversations.
- **Do not assess** a candidate as to **inherent diversity** traits. These traits are protected from discrimination (and reverse discrimination) by employment law and should not be assessment criteria. ***We will not present/advance or not present/advance a candidate based on a protected group as set forth in our firm equality statement.*** A legally approved affirmative action plan a client has implemented may allow us to consider inherent diversity for the client on behalf of their approved plan, but these are very rare. The client may, of course, advance/hire the candidates they choose.
- ***Will not accept assignments that exclude candidates based on a protected status as set forth in our equality statement.*** These are legally protected categories from discrimination (and reverse discrimination) in most geographies we operate in, and even if we perform a search in a geography where such classes are not legally protected, our firm equality statement policy is not to discriminate based on those characteristics.
- Are broad in our sourcing and outreach, so as to respond to a client's focus on specific diversity by ensuring we include candidates from underrepresented groups, while also not excluding anyone of any background who meets the knowledge, skills and other qualifications of the role. We also review our name generation and long-lists to determine if additional inclusive name generation should be done to make the long-list as broad as possible prior to interviewing down to the short-list.
- May perform diversity talent mapping projects (not a full search) where the goal is for the client to add those results into their internally conducted search process.

Equal pay laws

We comply with applicable equal pay laws. These laws level pay gaps across employees, which have been shown to exist in groups based on gender and underrepresented minority status. These laws prohibit us from asking candidates about and collecting their current or past compensation information. States currently prohibiting salary history inquiry include:

STATES WITH EQUAL PAY LAWS PROHIBITING INQUIRY OF SALARY HISTORY:

California	Colorado	Connecticut
Delaware	Hawaii	Illinois
Maine	Maryland	Massachusetts
New Jersey	New York	Ohio (Cincinnati and Toledo)
Oregon	Pennsylvania	Puerto Rico
Vermont	Washington	

An excellent resource to determine if asking for current or historical compensation is permitted can be found [here](#).

The laws apply to the state our client is based in, the state the job will be in and the state the candidate resides in – those could be in three different states, any one of which could trigger a prohibition.

We can ask candidates for their compensation *expectations*, even in the above states.

Fair chance/ban-the-box laws

We comply with applicable fair chance/ban-the-box laws, which level the playing field for applicants who may be highly qualified but have had a criminal conviction. These laws prohibit employers and recruiters from asking candidates about their criminal record before making an employment offer.

After a conditional job offer is issued, employers are allowed to conduct a criminal conviction history check, but the laws generally require the employer to complete an individualized assessment of the candidate's conviction history before deciding whether to hire the candidate or formally rescind the job offer.

Given the number of states with fair chance laws and that, similar to equal pay laws, the laws apply in the state our client is based in, the state the role is based in and the state the candidate currently resides in, our practice is to not inquire about or perform a background check on criminal history prior to a formal offer being extended unless specifically requested of the client—and then only after checking the list of prohibited states.

An excellent resource discussing fair chance laws can be found [here](#).



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Caldwell Partners is a technology-powered talent acquisition firm specializing in recruitment at all levels. Through two distinct brands – Caldwell and IQTalent Partners – the firm leverages the latest innovations in AI to offer an integrated spectrum of services delivered by teams with deep knowledge in their respective areas. Services include candidate research and sourcing through to full recruitment at the professional, executive and board levels, as well as a suite of talent strategy and assessment tools that can help clients hire the right people, then manage and inspire them to achieve maximum business results.

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