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## GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE RECRUITING

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) are fundamental pillars that ensure all people are treated with fairness and respect within the workplace. In a corporate context that aims to be increasingly sensitive to these issues and competitive at an international level, we must strive to welcome people from diverse backgrounds, as diversity brings new perspectives, stimulates innovation, and brings new skills, markets, customers, and consumers. Creating such a work environment starts with our ability to identify, attract, and hire talent.

Integrating DE&I principles into the personnel selection process not only promotes diversity and inclusion within the Company but it also improves innovation, productivity, and employee satisfaction, ensuring equal access to selection for all people, regardless of their gender.

These principles must be integrated into every stage of the recruiting process: from defining the job description to conducting the actual interview, to presenting inclusive shortlists. However, it is important to be aware of at least three aspects that can undermine the willingness to improve diversity in the corporate context: the first is our cultural lens, through which we observe the world; the second concerns the degree of comfort we feel towards diversity; the third, finally, concerns our stereotypes and unconscious biases.

- 1- Cultural Identity.** The way we see the world and others is shaped by our identity and cultural filters. Factors such as our age or ethnicity, our gender identity, our religious traditions filter the way we see the world and how we relate to others. In interactions, if applied, these lenses create blind spots towards those who come from a different background than ours: they influence who we see, how we see them, and what we do with the information presented to us. During a selection interview, we must be careful not to form an opinion based on our cultural lens and values.
- 2- Discomfort with Differences.** It can happen that selection interviews do not go as hoped due to the discomfort we feel towards diversity. If our discomfort is evident, we risk making candidates nervous, thus obtaining less information during the interview, which is essential for making informed decisions. When evaluating the interview, it is important to ensure that we are not influenced by our sense of discomfort but rather pay attention to the skills required for the role and those demonstrated by the candidate during the interview.
- 3- Stereotypes and Unconscious Biases.** In addition to the filter of our cultural identity and the discomfort we feel towards diversity, during selection interviews, we must

also pay attention to our stereotypes and unconscious biases. The tone of the conversation, the questions we ask or do not ask can reflect these biases. And often, we do not even realize it. During interviews, our mind is stimulated by many stimuli and information that we try to examine and process on the spot. For this reason, our brain often tends to take shortcuts: it applies known patterns and models, drawing conclusions about things we think we already know. And we act on these conclusions without having all the information. This is, in fact, the concept of unconscious bias. A few examples of generational bias. Not necessarily all millennials are lazy. Not all women want to become mothers. A disability does not prevent a person from being a valuable resource for the company. There are also biases related to people's appearance and so on. These are all subjective stereotypes that can negatively influence the outcome of a selection process.

**What are the main areas where discrimination is prohibited?** In the selection phase, it is essential to avoid personal questions that can lead to discrimination or bias. Some common questions can, in fact, violate DE&I principles and must therefore be avoided during interviews. These include, for example, questions about family situation, ethnicity, religion, marital status, or health. It is important, therefore, to replace these with questions more relevant to the skills and professional qualifications we are looking for.

- **Family Situation.** According to Article 27 of the Equal Opportunities Code: "Any discrimination based on sex regarding access to work, in a subordinate, autonomous, or any other form, regardless of the hiring methods and whatever the sector or branch of activity, at all levels of the professional hierarchy, is prohibited. The discrimination referred to in paragraph 1 is also prohibited if carried out through reference to marital or family status or pregnancy, as well as maternity or paternity, including adoptive." Furthermore, according to the UNI/PdR 125:2022 reference practice, the organization is obliged to prevent requests related to marriage, pregnancy, or caregiving responsibilities during selection interviews.
- **Age and Disability.** Legislative Decree 216/2003 aims to ensure equal treatment in employment and working conditions and expressly prohibits discrimination based on religion, personal beliefs, disability, age, and sexual orientation, while Legislative Decree 276/03 protects against discrimination related to the physical and psychological health of the candidate. It is therefore not allowed to ask candidates their age or if they have a disability.

- **Ethnicity, Origin, Religious and Political Orientation.** Legislative Decree 215/2003 – implementation of Directive 2000/43/EC for equal treatment regardless of race and ethnic origin – prohibits asking during a job interview for information on political ideology, religious faith, and nationality, to prevent evaluation factors related to origin and ethnicity from being included. In this sense, the Workers' Statute also prohibits "the employer, for the purposes of hiring, as in the course of the employment relationship, from conducting investigations, even through third parties, on the political, religious, or trade union opinions of the worker, as well as on facts not relevant to the assessment of the worker's professional aptitude."
- **Physical and Psychological Health and Other Personal Information.** Legislative Decree 276/2003 explains that an employer cannot ask questions during an interview about physical or mental health. A question like: "Do you suffer from anxiety or panic attacks?" is therefore inappropriate. Questions revolving around personal information that is not relevant to the role, such as height, weight, philosophical beliefs, opinions, or political associations, and many others, are also prohibited by law.

**What questions should we avoid and what can we ask during an interview?** Here are some examples of questions to avoid:

- What is your marital status?
- Do you hope to start a family in the future?
- How do you manage family commitments?
- Do you have children? If so, who takes care of them?
- What is your ethnicity?
- Do you have a disability?
- Are you a member of a religious community?
- Are you involved in LGBTQIA+ activities?
- Do you have a same-sex partner?

Below are some examples of questions for inclusive recruiting:

- What company values do you identify with?

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- Which characteristics of this job attract you the most?
  - What do you think is the biggest challenge of this position?
  - How do you think and want to grow professionally in this company?
  - What does teamwork mean to you?
  - Can you describe your needs for flexible working hours?
  - Are there any particular supports or aids you need to perform the job at your best?
  - Are you able to perform all the activities required by the role, or are there any limitations?
  - Are you available to travel for more than three days a week, as indicated in the job description?