Fostering Diversity Through Skills-Based Hiring: A TekSystems Case Study

In partnership with CareerCircle, TEKsystems is helping companies think beyond degrees by tapping into a diverse pool of upskilled talent with in-demand certificates and skills.

Fostering Diversity Through Skills-Based Hiring

In recent years, an increasing number of companies have adopted skills-based hiring initiatives, removing college degree requirements from their job listings to expand their talent pool and enhance workforce diversity. Instead of traditional academic credentials, employers are increasingly evaluating candidates based on their skills and competencies, utilizing assessments, recommendations, and detailed interviews to gauge potential.

TEKsystems has partnered with CareerCircle to bolster these efforts, accessing a diverse talent pool equipped with in-demand certifications. This partnership reflects their commitment to a modern hiring approach that prioritizes practical skills.

Despite the clear benefits, implementing these changes has proved challenging for many. According to a joint report by The Burning Glass Institute and Harvard Business School, 45% of organizations claim to adopt this approach, but show no meaningful difference in their actual hiring behavior.

Lauren Kolodrubetz, Executive Director of Marketplace Diversity Solutions at TEKsystems, highlights the complexity of implementing real change.

> *"Driving transformation in skills-based hiring can be challenging when the market is resistant to changing its established hiring practices. We're guiding our clients through this transition by advising on crafting effective job descriptions, posing the right questions to uncover diverse perspectives, and demonstrating the value of skills over degrees."*
>
> - Lauren Kolodrubetz, Executive Director of Marketplace Diversity Solutions

Amid these challenges, new policies are encouraging employers to empower job seekers to reach their full potential by adopting skills-based hiring practices. This approach not only broadens opportunities for individuals but also equips businesses with a workforce that is versatile, innovative, and prepared to meet tomorrow's demands.

Adopting a New Mindset

Adopting a skills-based hiring approach represents a significant paradigm shift for many organizations traditionally anchored to academic credentials as indicators of professional capability.

TEKsystems is spearheading this shift within their client organizations, advocating for a focus on applicable skills and competencies rather than just degrees.

This shift involves educating clients on the advantages of diverse skill sets and how non-traditional hiring practices can lead to greater innovation and productivity. However, moving from theory to practice is often met with resistance.

As Kolodrubetz explains, "Some companies are not only risk averse but process-driven in that this is the way we do it. We see a lot of challenges just in the implementation because people say, 'I need resources today. I get what you're saying, but I feel like there's a risk to change the way we hire.'"

This hesitancy is evident even when companies show initial support for the new approach. TEKsystems experienced this during the recruitment process for a workforce development program focusing on Android development. Despite emphasizing practical skills, interviewers often reverted to assessing theoretical knowledge, highlighting the deep-rooted challenges and reluctance to move away from traditional educational benchmarks. This underscores the ongoing struggle to fully integrate skills-based hiring practices in environments steeped in conventional methods.

Certificate Programs & Bootcamps

Qualified Candidates

Higher Education
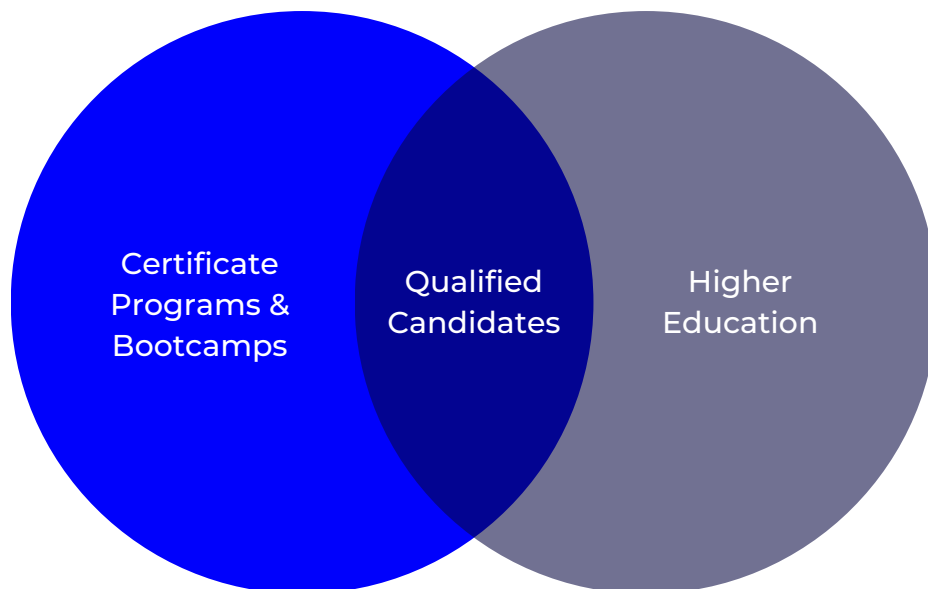
Making the Case for Skills-Based Hiring

In the tech industry, employers are evolving their recruitment strategies by incorporating live assessments, upskilling programs, and certifications to assess candidates beyond their academic credentials. They are increasingly interested in individuals who have enhanced their skills through non-traditional paths.

"Our clients are actively seeking diverse, skilled individuals from varied backgrounds, which drives us to create customized solutions with partners dedicated to talent development," explained Lauren Kolodrubetz.

TEKsystems' collaboration with CareerCircle enables them to strategically fill roles requiring specific expertise. "CareerCircle is instrumental in helping us execute strategic hiring plans, especially in sectors like data center operations where diversity and specific skill sets are crucial," Kolodrubetz said. The collaboration enables TEKsystems to efficiently match qualified candidates to roles that require precise expertise.

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A prime example of applying skills-based hiring effectively comes during tax season—a critical time when IT support needs skyrocket. TEKsystems was able to rapidly scale up their teams thanks to the partnership.

Many of the candidates were armed with relevant certifications, such as the Google IT Support certificate, perfectly aligning with the client's needs for quick deployment and potential long-term roles.

Realizing the Benefits of Hiring for Skills

Skills-based hiring not only improves retention rates but also expands access to a broader, more diverse talent pool—essential as the demand for emerging tech skills continues to grow. Non-degree holders tend to remain longer in their roles compared to their degreed counterparts during the first two years, according to the Burning Glass report. Additionally, a LinkedIn study found that diverse and inclusive teams are over 35% more productive, highlighting the strategic benefits of this approach.

CareerCircle's emphasis on upskilling has greatly enhanced the recruitment process. By leveraging the CareerCircle TalentConnect platform to access updated candidate profiles and resumes, TEKsystems recruiters can swiftly identify the best candidates for open roles, freeing up time for more meaningful work. This approach helps streamline the hiring process by ensuring that recruiters have access to the latest information.

Quickly Find the Right Talent

Moreover, the partnership with CareerCircle allows TEKsystems to access a continually refreshed pool of skilled candidates, ensuring that recruiters can quickly find the right talent for their clients.

> *"CareerCircle's ability to collect candidate data directly from the members and keep that information current helps our recruiters effectively find the right matches."*
>
> - Lauren Kolodrubetz, Executive Director of Marketplace Diversity Solutions

This not only decreases the time to fill a position but also ensures candidates are matched to roles where they can thrive, benefiting both candidates and employers.

Harnessing Potential for a More Dynamic Workforce

By prioritizing skills and potential over traditional metrics, TEKsystems is not only filling positions more effectively but is also paving the way for a more diverse and dynamic workforce. "I've witnessed remarkable changes," said Kolodrubetz.

> *"For example, there was a role that remained vacant for a long time. Once we filled it by focusing on the individual's potential, that person was not only retained longer but also became more invested in the company due to the opportunities provided."*
>
> - Lauren Kolodrubetz, Executive Director of Marketplace Diversity Solutions

Their partnership with CareerCircle demonstrates that valuing candidates' skills over their degrees and past work can enhance hiring outcomes. This method not only fills positions efficiently but also cultivates a workforce that is both diverse and dynamic. "The feedback from clients has been overwhelmingly positive," notes Kolodrubetz. "Candidates are not only willing but eager to learn, embrace challenges, and introduce new ways of thinking, which is a huge benefit to any organization."

Skills-Based Hiring Outcomes

Faster Time-to-Hire

Diverse Talent Pools

Cost Savings

Quality Hires