seekout>

How AI Can Support DEI Hiring

Examples, tips, and how to get started

Contents

Introduction

Recruiting today is more challenging than ever before. Not only are you being asked to do more with less, but you also have the responsibility of ensuring that effective DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) practices are embedded throughout your entire hiring process. DEI talent strategies are tough to implement because they're often disjointed from a company's hiring practices. And without the right tools, it's nearly impossible to uphold DEI efforts responsibly.

While the environment for recruiting is tough, it's also filled with unprecedented opportunities for innovation. Human resources (HR) is in the midst of a technological boom, and there is an artificial intelligence (AI) solution to almost every challenge you're experiencing when it comes to meeting your DEI hiring goals. AI can automate your most tedious tasks, help you build diverse pipelines, generate content with inclusive language, ensure that more underrepresented candidates are considered for opportunities, and so much more.
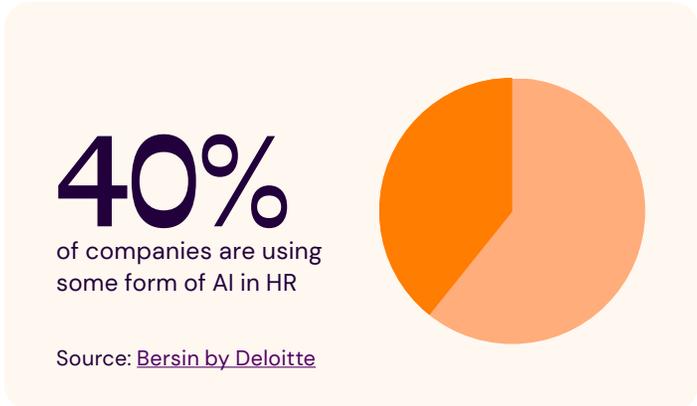
It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the number of new AI advancements in HR technology. And for various reasons, there can be hesitancy to adopt these tools.

This guide will help you understand how to use AI responsibly for your DEI hiring efforts, share examples of AI technologies you can use throughout your recruiting process, and show how you might get started in adopting AI technology across various use cases and company initiatives.

The state of AI hiring today and the growing market for DEI tools

AI has likely been a part of your hiring tech stack in various forms over the last few years. In HR, AI is helping organizations accelerate day-to-day efficiency and enable decision making that is human-driven and AI-assisted.

Nearly
1 in 4
organizations use automation or AI to support hiring

Source: Paycor

45%
of organizations are using AI to improve recruiting and human resources in order to address labor

Source: IBM

40%
of companies are using some form of AI in HR

Source: Bersin by Deloitte
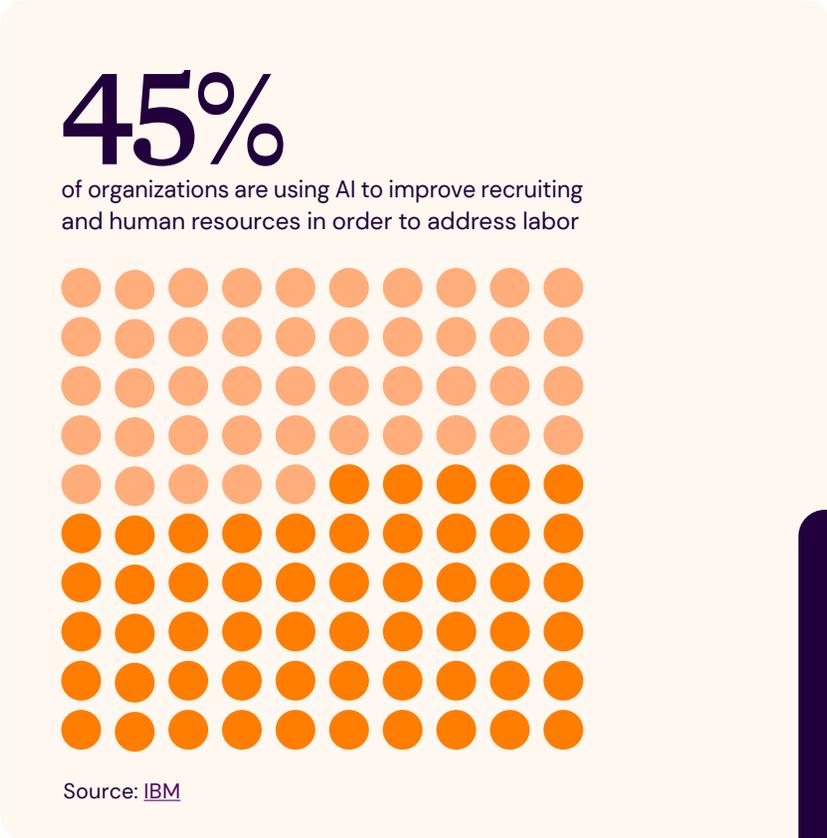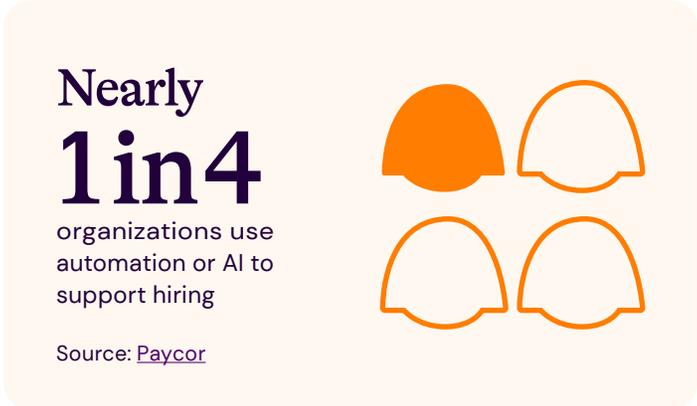
📣Want to learn more about how to incorporate ChatGPT into your overall recruiting strategy? Check out A Guide to ChatGPT for Recruiters.

And the industry is using AI technology more than ever before with the launch of generative AI tools.

Generative AI refers to algorithms that are used to create content like audio, code, and text. ChatGPT is one of the more popular generative AI tools available today, and it's transforming how recruiters get work done—from writing job descriptions to lengthy Boolean search strings. Think of ChatGPT as an AI chatbot that generates human-like responses to user prompts (i.e., the questions and commands you enter). ChatGPT allows you to go from a blank page to well-formed, relevant content almost instantly, giving you the freedom to revise your prompt until you get the exact responses you need. (We'll show you a few examples of how ChatGPT can be used for DEI hiring efforts later in this guide.)

ChatGPT has been a catalyst in driving education, awareness, and adoption of AI in the HR industry, and the DEI space is no exception. In addition to generative AI, DEI now has AI tools for nearly every stage of the candidate pipeline to help automate manual tasks, reduce unconscious bias, and help teams achieve their DEI goals.

According to RedThread research, the market size for DEI technology nearly increased tenfold from 2016 to 2020. Technological advancements in DEI are here to stay, and it's crucial that talent acquisition (TA) teams understand how to use emerging tools to secure a competitive advantage in the talent landscape and continue working toward an equitable hiring experience for all.

10x

The market size for DEI technology increased nearly tenfold from 2016 to 2020

— RedThread Research
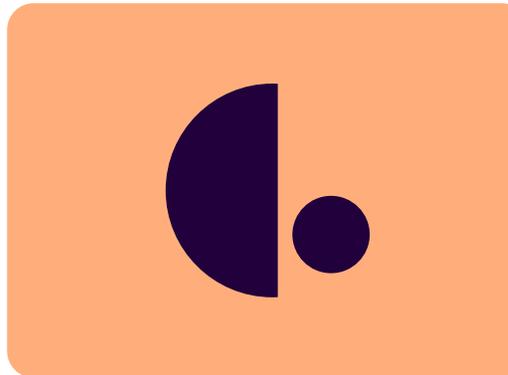
Why DEI hiring needs AI now

Recruiters and talent acquisition (TA) teams today are overwhelmed with additional work (and less help to get it done), and the strain is pushing DEI hiring practices aside. However, the need to address gaps in representation and inequitable treatment in the workplace today continues to grow.

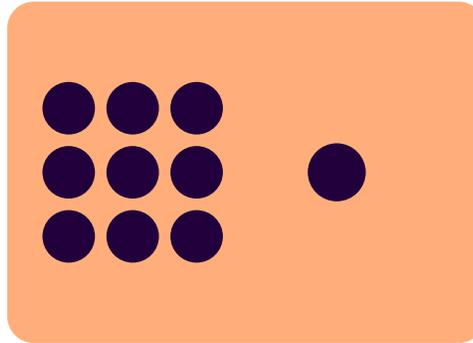The following pages highlight the urgent need to solve heightening DEI hiring issues.

Underrepresented communities have been the first to be laid off during tech layoffs

Marginalized groups

Women, people of color, disabled workers, and other marginalized groups have been disproportionately affected by mass layoffs in tech despite being underrepresented in the industry.

Source: Prism Reports

DEI roles

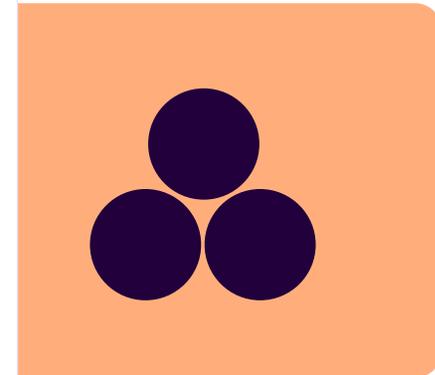The attrition rate for DEI roles reached 33% at the end of 2022, compared to 21% for non-DEI roles.
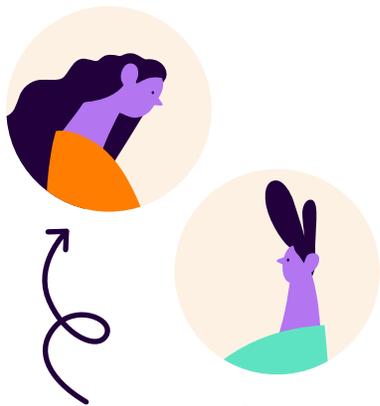
Source: NBC

Tenure

Companies rely heavily on position and tenure when making layoff decisions, which translates to wiping out "most or all of the gains made in diversity."

Source: HBR

Large numbers of women have left the workforce after the pandemic.

4.1%

Higher unemployment rates for women than men

In April 2020, women's unemployment outpaced men's by 4.1% and has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Nearly one million women left the workforce to prioritize caring for their family.

Source: U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Job seekers of color still experience pay gaps when compared to White peers.

$1.00
White workers

$0.76
Black workers

$0.68
Latino workers

Black workers earn 76 cents to the dollar of White workers

Source: U.S. Department of Labor

Latino workers earn 54 cents for every dollar paid to White workers

Source: National Equity Atlas

Job seekers of color are "ghosted" more than other groups.

78%

62%
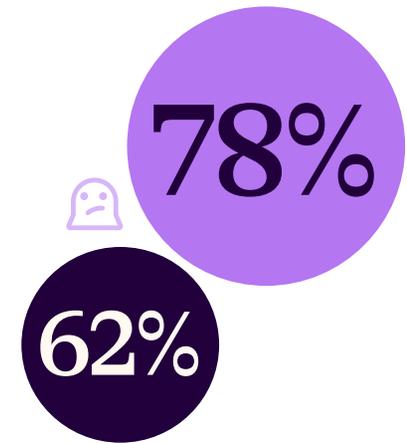
● Underrepresented groups
● White

A significantly higher percentage of candidates from historically underrepresented groups (78%) than white candidates (62%) reported being ghosted from recruiting processes (i.e., never hearing from the employer again)

Source: SHRM

When diversity efforts are ignored, the entire workforce suffers. DEI hiring needs can be complex and nuanced, but with the help of AI, recruiters can help their organizations build more equitable and diverse teams.

Demystifying AI: You're more in control than you think

Despite the need and urgency, AI adoption for DEI hiring initiatives is slow. Reasons for this can vary, but some hesitation may come from not understanding how these tools can truly benefit the role of a recruiter.

Common concerns about adopting AI in recruiting are:

Is AI going to replace my job?	Is AI ethical?
Won't AI introduce more bias?	Is AI going to replace human interactions?

These are all valid questions and natural reactions to new and mainstream technologies. But keep this in mind: AI was created by humans to benefit humans. You can shape the future of AI, and it starts with taking ownership of your organization's AI hiring strategy, ensuring you're part of every step in the process. You have the autonomy to decide what works for you and what doesn't, which technology to use and which technology not to use. When you're involved throughout the AI adoption process, you'll see firsthand how AI can be used to elevate–not replace–your role.

"We have the ability to look at the inputs and outputs and fine-tune the AI models. I take comfort in knowing that AI can't really get to the level of impact we want without humans being part of the process."

—**Jeff Diana**, Chief People Officer at Calendly

📣 Webinar: Watch "Predictions on AI and Recruiting" with Jeff Diana for more tips on adopting AI

And AI tools can indeed introduce bias into recruiting processes, but this greatly depends on a few factors: how the recruiter uses the technology (e.g., not leaving the final decision making to the tool) and the data practices of the AI vendors themselves (e.g., how the company collects their data, whether the data is reliable). It's up to you to properly assess any vendor you work with to ensure they vet and monitor their own data to prevent bias. The next section will give you an idea of how to start this process.

Checklist: Getting started with responsible AI

Before you incorporate human-assisted AI tools into your diversity hiring workflow, you'll want to research to ensure the technology they're developing and deploying is both ethical and legal. It's also just as important to check in with your team about how you'll be responsibily incorporating these tools as well.

Here are some suggested questions you can pose to both your AI vendor and your teams when exploring new tools.

Questions for the AI vendor

☑ Do you have guidelines on how you use AI responsibly? (See SeekOut's Responsible AI principles for an example)

☑ Is your technology innovation team diverse?

☑ Do you disclose how you're staying accountable for responsible future innovation?

Questions for your team

☑ How are we going to ensure compliance with emerging AI hiring laws for each tool?

☑ How are we going to regularly assess each tool to prevent bias?

☑ What are we going to do internally to ensure that the parameters we set in our AI tools are inclusive?

This checklist is a starting point for discussion, and we recommend seeking legal counsel for complete guidance. For additional questions you may have, check out The Ultimate Guide to AI and Recruiting.

How to incorporate AI tools into your DEI hiring process

We dissected the hiring process into five use cases with unique ways AI can effectively contribute to your DEI efforts, including examples of tools to explore.

1. Job posting

Unsurprisingly, [nearly 80%](#) of workers want to work for a company that values DEI and encourages employees to be their full, authentic selves. How do you communicate to candidates that you genuinely value who they are? A candidate's first touch point to your commitment to DEI is often the job posting. Unfortunately, job postings often take the back seat of recruitment priorities due to a lack of resources.

To help you with some of the heavy lifting that comes with writing content like job postings, you can turn to a combination of AI writing tools that help with general writing and can incorporate inclusive language. These AI tools will help you write inclusive content for career pages, job description templates, and company culture propositions, just to name a few examples.

> **Tip:** *Content writing tools can also help you create other recruiting content, such as blog posts, social media posts, emails, and more.*

A specialized tool for writing inclusive job postings is [Textio](#). The team has developed advanced workplace language guidance technology backed by AI, so you can see where social bias is hiding by simply inputting your job description—and it will know exactly where you can make edits to eradicate unconscious bias, foster inclusive communication, and improve workplace culture.

If you'd prefer a free option, you can choose content writing tools like [ChatGPT](#) or [Copy.ai](#). Here's a sample ChatGPT prompt illustrating how you could make a job description more inclusive.

🪄 Prompt

You are an inclusive recruiter with extensive experience in diversity recruiting. Please give me examples of how this job description could be more gender neutral.

[paste job description here]

And here are a few suggestions that ChatGPT came up with:

- Replace "he or she" with "they" or use the plural form ("candidates," "professionals," etc.) to refer to individuals without specifying a gender.

- Avoid using gendered terms such as "salesman" or "saleswoman." Instead, use "sales professional" or "sales representative."

- Foster inclusivity in qualifications and requirements: Instead of specifying "Bachelor's degree" only, you can state "Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience" to accommodate various educational backgrounds.

Creating an inclusive job description is a process that takes refining and multiple iterations. ChatGPT can be an effective brainstorming partner given that you provide the right parameters, context, and information, but it's crucial that you always review the responses to ensure accuracy and remove any unintended biases.

AI tool options for writing

Note: SeekOut does not endorse any non-SeekOut tools listed in this guide. We recommend researching each tool for your specific needs.

○ [Textio](#)
Augmented inclusive writing platform

○ [DEI.ai](#)
Inclusive language detector

○ [Microsoft Copilot](#)
Job description generator

ON [Ongig](#)
Job description analyzing software

○ [ChatGPT](#)
AI chatbot

📣 Need help writing a DEI statement? See this guide by [included.ai](#)

2. Reviewing applicants

Recruiters are set to high standards and asked to juggle many projects at once. Sorting through resumes is time consuming, and when humans evaluate many resumes at once, biases can unintentionally sneak in. AI can save time by giving you a holistic picture of every candidate, using human-assisted algorithms to sort through and quickly identify key skills and qualifications to select qualified candidates for your final review.

For example, here's how SeekOut's Applicant Review can help you parse through applicants and review them more inclusively:
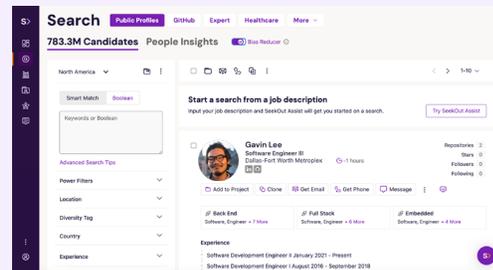
1

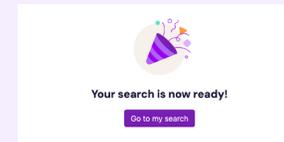Integrate your ATS system with SeekOut

2

Go to the main dashboard to find, review, and disposition diverse applicants all in one view.
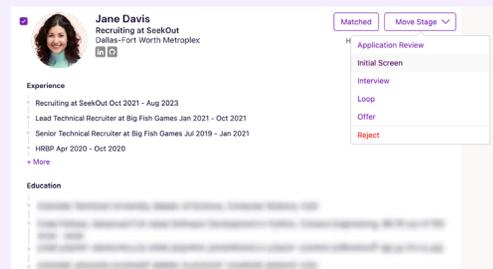

3

SeekOut's Applicant Review will then match the applicant's skills and background with requirements for open roles.

4

Applicants are sorted based on how strongly their qualifications match the job description.

5

Turn on **Bias Reducer** to evaluate applicants fairly with filters that hide identifying information.

6

Hover over **Match** or **Partial Match** on the applicant's profile to see how they match up to your required and preferred skills. Use the **Move to Stage** button to change the applicant's stage. This change will be reflected in your ATS within 15 minutes.

7

SeekOut integrates with your entire HR stack to show you the most complete up-to-date data.

AI tool options for reviewing applicants

SeekOut
ATS Applicant Review

Pomato
Resume parsing

AI technology assists humans by swiftly evaluating candidates. It identifies essential skills and qualifications for the role to surface diverse and qualified people to the top of your pile, thus reducing biases and providing you with a comprehensive view of the candidate.

3. Sourcing

AI-powered sourcing tools can quickly tap into vast databases and online platforms to identify potential candidates who may not have been reached through traditional, manual methods. These tools expand your talent pool and increase the chances of finding the best-fit candidates and are especially helpful in discovering talent from underrepresented groups.

For example, by copying and pasting a job description into SeekOut Assist, you can automatically generate a targeted search that surfaces the most qualified candidates for your role. On top of this, you can use SeekOut's diversity filters and other advanced search capabilities to source qualified and diverse talent.

Here's how you can use SeekOut Assist to source candidates using AI:

1

Enter your job description into the text box and click **Create Search.**

Create search

2

SeekOut will analyze your text and custom build a search with relevant job titles and skills.

3

Once you find a candidate that meets your criteria, add them to a project within SeekOut to save their profile for future access.

Add to Project

4

To create a customized outreach message to the candidates, use SeekOut Assist to select the type of tone, length, and focus of the message.

AI tool options for sourcing

SeekOut Assist
Human-driven AI assisted recruiting platform

Pymetrics
Holistic soft skills platform
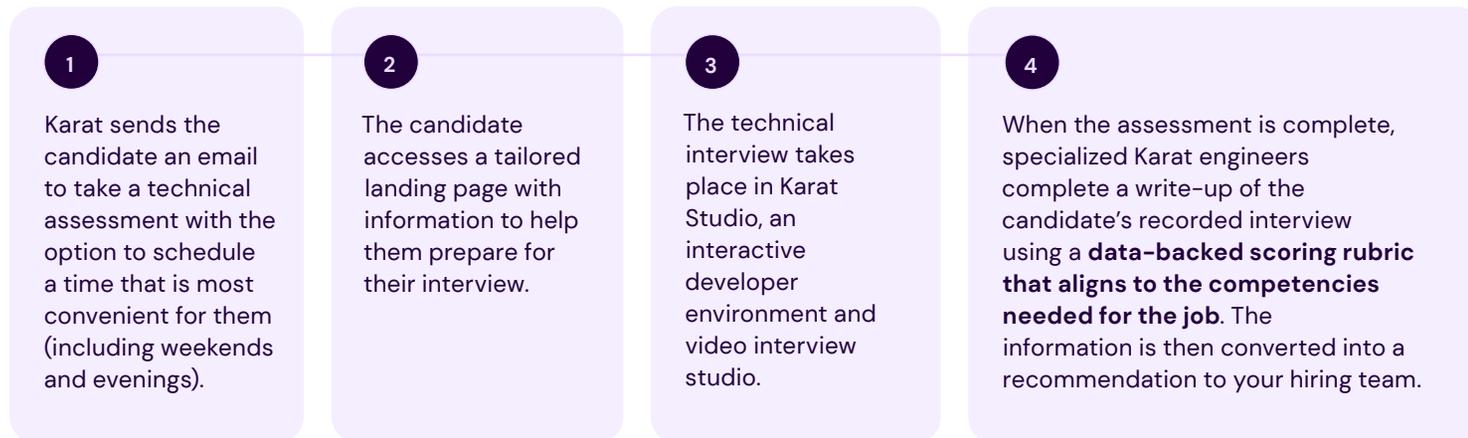
Greenhouse sourcing nudges
ATS DEI sourcing nudges

🤖 SeekOut Assist can also generate the first messages to your candidate and complete the sourcing cycle front-to-end.

4. Interviewing

There has long been debate over the use of AI in the interview process because users may sometimes rely on these tools to make a final decision about candidate hiring. But thankfully, there are a growing number of laws in place to prevent companies from doing just that.

Using AI responsibly means TA teams make the final decision on a candidate and only use AI to help streamline or automate tedious hiring tasks, such as conducting skills assessments or writing questions for an interview.

Here's an example of how an AI tool called Karat can be used in a technical interviewing workflow to automate assessment tasks and support inclusive interviewing best practices for candidates:

1
Karat sends the candidate an email to take a technical assessment with the option to schedule a time that is most convenient for them (including weekends and evenings).

2
The candidate accesses a tailored landing page with information to help them prepare for their interview.

3
The technical interview takes place in Karat Studio, an interactive developer environment and video interview studio.

4
When the assessment is complete, specialized Karat engineers complete a write-up of the candidate's recorded interview using a **data-backed scoring rubric that aligns to the competencies needed for the job**. The information is then converted into a recommendation to your hiring team.

Tip: *When conducting technical interviews, share as much information as possible to help candidates prepare and offer flexible times throughout the week to interview.. This not only creates a more equitable talent pipeline but also a more efficient and effective way to hire the best talent.*

Look for AI tools like Karat that involve human input from the very beginning: both your team and the Karat engineers develop the interview assessments and workflows. The AI assists by maintaining a consistent assessment strategy and measures success throughout the hiring process.

AI tool options for interviewing

Vervo
Job assessment and simulation

Karat
Technical interview automation

Textio
Inclusive language in interview questions

5. Onboarding

The employee onboarding process is the first impression of your company to new hires, and it can make or break their sentiment of your organization.

One way to create an inclusive onboarding experience is by providing new hires equitable access to tools, resources, and knowledge. AI can support this experience by way of responsive chatbots, like Leena.ai and Slack. These tools offer instant, personalized assistance that can be accessed at any time. And the benefit to your team is time saved from answering repetitive questions about the company's resources and programs–instead, you can focus on high-level onboarding initiatives. AI chatbots also give you the flexibility to iterate on the onboarding experience so that it reflects your brand voice and values

For example, here's how Leena.ai's virtual assistant chatbot helps automate an onboarding workflow:

1
The chatbot sends your new hire interactive nuggets and messages to help them connect with HR and their onboarding partner.

2
The chatbot answers any questions and automates all pre-boarding activities like sending the offer letter, sending the introductory email, sharing links to resources, and completing salary account details.The technical interview takes place in Karat Studio, an interactive developer environment and video interview studio.

3
Leena.ai collects data on key engagement analytics to help you understand the effectiveness of your onboarding process.

Tip: *The first 90 days are crucial to make sure your new hires are set up for success. One way to drive an equitable onboarding experience that ensures every new hire receives the information needed to be successful in their role is to create a structured onboarding process. Examples on how to do this:*

- *Have intentional introductions and team integrations*
- *Provide clear expectations for the role and performance metrics*
- *Create standardized training materials*

Don't leave their onboarding experience up to chance.

AI tools you can use for onboarding

Leena.ai
Onboarding automation

Slackbot
Slack integration and automation

Do's and don'ts of implementing AI tools

As organizations seek to harness the power of AI to gain a competitive edge in DEI efforts, it becomes increasingly important to navigate the implementation process with care and foresight. While AI holds immense promise, its successful integration requires a thoughtful approach to ethics, data quality, and stakeholder engagement.

This section covers the crucial dos and don'ts of AI implementation, providing insights and best practices to help you embark on this transformative journey and maximize the benefits while minimizing potential pitfalls.

Do

✅ **Identify repetitive tasks that can be delegated to AI:** Handing over repetitive tasks to AI will streamline operations, save time, and enable employees to focus on more strategic and intellectually engaging activities, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction.

✅ **Be deliberate as you integrate AI into your recruitment process:** To evaluate the direct benefits of an AI tool, adopt only one at a time versus several. It will be easier to identify which tools are improving your processes and which ones are failing. Jeff Diana, Chief People Officer at Calendly, recommends holding a pilot period: One recruiter uses AI while another recruiter continues their work without the AI tool. You can identify any biases or concerns and gauge whether the AI tool is affecting productivity.

✅ **Assess and iterate AI on an ongoing basis:** Evaluating and improving your AI tools ensures an effective tech stack. You'll optimize performance, comply with ethical standards and regulations, and keep up with changing market conditions. Ongoing assessment also ensures that you consistently provide equitable access to opportunities, mitigate data bias, and evaluate the tool's business impact.

Don't

🚫 **Add proprietary information into ChatGPT:** ChatGPT is an open-source tool, and you cannot predict where it will store your sensitive information. Don't write offer letters, legal documents, or any other confidential documents in ChatGPT or any open-source generative platform.

🚫 **Let AI work on autopilot:** AI tools can only be successful with consistent human input. AI was created to assist us and make our lives easier, not to replace human cognitive ability. You have the autonomy to make the technology work for your needs, and you are responsible for monitoring these tools to ensure results aren't straying from your values and DEI goals.
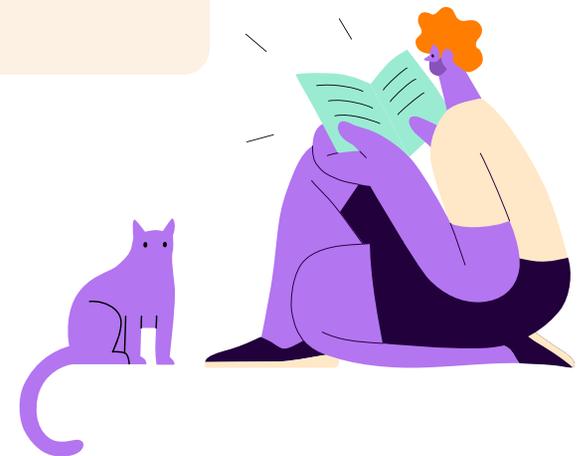
Final takeaway

Integrating AI technology into your hiring workflow holds immense potential in supporting and advancing DEI hiring initiatives. By humans taking control of the power of AI, organizations can overcome biases, promote inclusivity, and work more efficiently so you can spend more time building relationships with candidates. It's crucial to approach AI implementation with care, ensuring transparency, accountability, and ongoing evaluation to address potential biases and unintended consequences. By leveraging AI as a tool to assist you with DEI hiring, you can foster a more inclusive workforce and unlock the full potential of diverse perspectives, ultimately creating a better future for all of us.

How SeekOut supports DEI hiring

SeekOut is a trusted leader in diversity sourcing, rated the #1 Enterprise Diversity and Talent Intelligence Software by G2 and one of the "Most Loved" products by TrustRadius in 2023. The SeekOut platform uses advanced algorithms to search for inferred diversity backgrounds with incredible accuracy—without relying on scarce, self-reported data like other tools.

Find success in your DEI hiring initiatives with the following:

DEIB goal setting: Many organizations only focus on a few data points like race, gender, or location to drive their diversity hiring strategy. With SeekOut, you can track representation across all your talent pools and the wider market with data around employment history, job titles, skills, education, and more.

Sourcing: Instead of manually searching for hard-to-find talent, recruiters need to take a targeted approach. SeekOut's dedicated talent pools give you access to millions of candidate profiles—so you can search by specific experience, unique skills, licenses, and more.

⚡ Go from JD to qualified candidates in seconds with SeekOut Assist

⚡ Automatically create personalized outreach to candidates with SeekOut Assist

⚡ Curb unconscious bias with SeekOut's Bias Reducer

⚡ Understand diversity for specific roles, functions, and locations with built-in talent insights

How SeekOut is helping customers prioritize diversity in recruiting

43%
Users have utilized SeekOut's diversity filters

48%
Of candidates added to projects are from underrepresented groups

28%
Of all diversity searches were run in combination with a power filter

180K+
Total diversity searches have been run from January through the end of May 2023

40%
Of all searches include a diversity filter

Ready to learn more about SeekOut?
Request a demo to see how SeekOut can provide you with a competitive advantage in understanding your talent needs and recruiting hard-to-find and diverse candidates.

"We're able to use the customizable tools and features within SeekOut to narrow down our talent pool to exactly the people that we're looking for. It is lightyears ahead of any other tool that we use whenever we're executing a diversified search."

—Devin Walls, Senior Manager of Recruiting Operations at IQ Talent

SeekOut helps organizations hire, grow, and keep great people with its proven expertise in sourcing diverse and hard-to-find talent. SeekOut's people-first, AI-powered platform combines internal and external data to provide actionable analytics, empowering companies with a clear picture of their current and future talent.