Guess Who Doesn't Fit in at Work?

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Executive Education

Fit: A Pervasive But Nebulous Concept

- Do you hire for cultural fit?

- **82 percent** of managers worldwide say that fit is one of the most important qualities they look for in new hires

- Yet, only about **half** have a clear idea of what their organizational culture is

- Only **one-third** say their company has concrete tools for measuring fit in the hiring process

From Organizational to Personal Fit

- The concept of fit first gained traction in the 1980s
- When done correctly, fit can lead to more productive and profitable organizations
- But in many companies, fit has strayed far from this definition
  - Has become *personal* and social fit with individual employees rather than a fit with job-relevant qualities
- In the process, it has become a potent obstacle to organizational diversity and performance

Why Fit is a Problem

- Inhibits gender, racial, and class diversity in organizations

- Research shows that diverse teams can outperform heterogeneous ones, especially for jobs involving complex decisions or innovation

- People often mistake rapport for skill; gut judgements of fit are poor predictors of future job performance

- Not limited to banks, consulting firms, and law firms; prevalent in a variety of industries ranging from high-fashion to high-tech

What Can Be Done?

- **Know What Your Culture Is.** Communicate a clear and consistent idea of what the organization's culture is (and is not) to potential employees

- **Let Data Drive the Definition.** Culture should be closely aligned with business goals. Cultural fit should be based on data-driven analysis of what values, traits and behaviors predict on-the-job success

- **Be Systematic.** Create formal procedures like checklists and scoring rubrics for measuring fit, so that assessment is not left up to the eyes (and extracurriculars) of the beholder

- **Change the Weighting.** Consider putting concrete limits on how much fit can sway hiring decisions