



SUCCESSFULLY RECRUITING DIVERSE TALENT

The Nest Summer Internship Program 2021

The Context

Christina Finlay, Director of Data & Analytics at Nest, has always been acutely aware of the lack of diversity in her sector. She joined Nest last year and decided it was time to tackle the diversity challenge head on. As Christina describes it, "the irony is that for a profession that prides itself on being objective, the clear gender bias in data science models is a real problem that needs addressing". Christina has always been a firm believer that a career in data and analytics is not just about statistics. Promoting the three-dimensional, commercial nature of a career in analytics is something that she is passionate about. She realised that the more she could promote this, the more she could help the data and analytics sector to attract more diverse talent. The place to start was Nest and its inaugural 2021 Summer Internship program. Christina drove the launch of Nest's first Internship program with the clear aim to capture as diverse a pool of talent as possible.

What Did Nest Do Differently?

Christina started by running the first draft of the Summer Intern position profile through an on-line gender bias tool. This tool helped Christina to change the language in the profile to make it much more gender-neutral and attractive to a wider range of diverse candidates. She used "study" instead of "analyse"; "passionate" instead of "driven"; and "mentored and supported" instead of "supervised".

The profile made clear that a good statistical understanding was required. Beyond that, she knew that it was going to be critical to get the language in the position profile right in order to attract diverse candidates. Christina also used the word "nurture". Nest's nurturing, supportive environment has not traditionally been promoted in position profiles. Christina knew this would also help attract more diverse candidates.

In addition, Christina made sure that the profile emphasised the positive impact that the interns could have on Nest. It focused on the outcome of the work, not just the work itself, as it is widely known that focusing on outcomes appeals to

women and this helps to encourage them to apply for positions such as this one.

What Was The Outcome?

This approach to recruiting summer interns was extremely successful. Nest hired five Summer Interns into the Data and Analytics team. All of the applicants were women, and amongst the five interns there was also some additional diversity e.g. race and LGBT+.

Christina notes that she asked herself the question,

"Why didn't any men apply? Did we swing the pendulum too far in the other direction? Should the position profile have also attracted male applicants?"

However, against Nest's wider goal of having 40% of its leadership positions filled by women, this living-wage Summer Internship Program appears to be a huge step forward in terms of filling the pipeline.

Beyond this, a broader ripple effect is already taking place across Nest. Many of Christina's peers across the business have asked her, "How did you do it? How did you attract such a gender diverse internship program?" Work is in progress to adopt similar recruiting tactics across a range of open positions internally. In addition, Nest is looking at adopting a blind recruitment policy. There is more to do, but Christina's success in developing this strategy for the Summer Internship program is clearly a step in the right direction. Seemingly small but significant changes in the recruitment process have already made a big difference in diverse outcomes.

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