Guess Who Doesn’t Fit in at Work?

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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.