



Embracing Opportunity Talent

**Three Strategies to Drive
Diversity in Your Workplace**



Who Are Opportunity Talent?

We are facing a one-two punch: a global talent shortage and a socioeconomic revolution.

These two issues are coming together to necessitate change in the way organizations recruit, hire, and work. The result is that we are waking up to an untapped sector of the workforce, one that is:

- Trained and ready to meet increasing market demand for entry-level and middle-skill talent
- Proven to deliver higher retention rates than the traditional talent pipeline resources
- Eager to launch their careers with employers seeking to invest in long-term talent solutions that bring diverse perspectives and drive better business outcomes

This is Opportunity Talent.

This broad term is used to describe individuals who have been traditionally underemployed and economically marginalized. They have lacked access to economic opportunity, stability, and mobility and are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), though also include:

Opportunity Youth:
young adults ages 18 to 26
who are disconnected
from school and work

**Members of the
LGBTQ+ community**

Veterans

**Individuals with
disabilities**

**Individuals who seek
economic stability but
lack four-year degrees**





Hire Opportunity Talent.

It will transform your workplace and build your workforce for tomorrow.

In the following pages, you will discover the top three strategies your organization can implement to recruit and hire Opportunity Talent and advance your workforce Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) goals. At YUPRO, we've learned through years of listening, and we share these strategies with you in service to our social mission: to place Opportunity Talent in jobs with economic mobility. This way, we may build a more equitable and inclusive workforce where both individuals and businesses thrive.

Top 3 Strategies to Recruit and Hire Opportunity Talent

- 1** **Reconsider job descriptions:** focus on skills, not degrees
- 2** **Create and enhance work-based learning (WBL) opportunities**
- 3** **Join the YUPRO Opportunity Employer Network** and gain exclusive access to over 30,000 Opportunity Talent ready to work and contribute to your organization

Strategy 1



Reconsider how you write job descriptions. Focus on skills and competencies over degree and pedigree.

Building a Skills-First Hiring and Retention Strategy

Employers committed to building inclusive workplaces are rethinking how talent is found and re-evaluating what they seek from early-career talent. In what cases, for example, will employers require a four-year degree for entry-level roles, as opposed to looking primarily for proven skill sets?

Strategies are being developed to achieve DEI goals, express corporate values of equity and inclusion, and build pathways to employment for those who face barriers to economic opportunity. Achieving diversity can only be accomplished with a commitment to reconsidering how we hire...especially when **nearly 75% of the workforce lack bachelor's degrees.**

Forward-thinking organizations are building intentional employment practices that meet their recruitment needs and help them attain highly desired, inclusive hiring goals. Those who hold an enviable lead in the 'best place to work' categories gain access to overlooked and untapped talent by prioritizing skills over degrees.

"We believe that by taking a skills-based approach to opportunity we can remove barriers for candidates that might not have the degree or network, while also increasing the size of employer talent pools, often letting them pinpoint quality applicants for hard-to-fill roles."

Hari Srinivasan • LinkedIn VP of Product

Consider the roles for which you have the most need. For those that are highly skill dependent, you may be interested to learn that **skill-focused jobs are performed equally well by those trained specifically for that skill compared to those trained in a college setting.**

Strategy 1



Screening Out Your Targets?

Adding a four-year degree requirement to job descriptions often screens out people who bring diversity to your team.

For instance, compared to [35% of white Americans](#):

Slightly more than
22%
of Latino adults have
earned some form of
college degree

29%
of Black adults
hold a bachelor's
degree

Three out of every five employers filter out applicants, dismissing those without four-year degrees.

When a degree is required for entry-level and middle-skill jobs, it excludes people from a talent pool that could solve your hiring challenges. The talent marketplace is already fragmented, and hiring managers are struggling to find ready-to-work talent. So why make it harder? Start by redesigning hiring criteria.

Retention and Skills

More and more, companies are embracing the concept that retention starts at recruiting. The aspects of culture and strategy emphasized at the very beginning of the relationship will impact employee commitment. Indeed, with the talent gap as wide as it is, organizations must focus as much on retaining their own employees as they are on hiring new ones. When companies embrace a skills-first approach from the beginning, employees maintain the confidence that they will remain a good fit for this company.

TIPS: Recruiting and Retaining Opportunity Talent

Write inclusive job descriptions, removing gender-specific action verbs or language.

Include **trainable job skills** that are accessible with some experience in either a relevant job or training program — instead of a formal college.

Benchmark duties specifically aligned with the role itself versus generalized statements such as 'strong verbal skills.'

Assess requirements in the job description to determine if skills can replace credentials.

Stay clear of time-based experience where it is not required; if you can train this on the job, steer clear of necessitating a length of time in a role and replace time with skill.

Open doors to "equivalent experience," allowing applicants to 'fill in the blank' with this information on the application.

Adopt a skills-first hiring culture, and you'll improve both hiring and retention. It is a sustainable and scalable talent strategy that engages Opportunity Talent.

Strategy 2



Create and enhance work-based learning opportunities.

Pathways to Employment: Work-Based Learning Supports Opportunity Talent Success

With [fewer than one third of Americans](#) holding a door-opening college degree, finding the right talent may actually mean growing the right talent.

An ideal avenue to grow your cadre of talent is through work-based learning (WBL) programs. These come in many forms but generally are a combination of apprenticeships and on-the-job training. These programs can be an effective way for companies to meet hiring needs, create career pathways, and advance their DEI initiatives while offering a socially responsible approach to building the workforce.

In collaboration with our partner [Grads of Life](#), Bain consultants found that WBL programs benefit both employees and businesses:

Benefits for Employers

- Build a new talent pipeline while meeting entry-level hiring demands
- Evaluate apprentice workers before making a full-time employment offer
- Reduce employee turnover with improved engagement and retention
- Expand opportunities for organizational diversity

Benefits for Career Seekers

- Build in-demand skills while earning a wage
- Create opportunities to upskill and re-skill for career progression
- Build their resumes with a socially responsible employer committed to Opportunity Talent

The best work-based experience programs are 'earn and learn' opportunities such as wage-based apprenticeship programs and internships.

91%

of apprentices find full-time employment upon completing their apprenticeship.

Bain

Strategy 2



Building WBL to Serve Opportunity Talent

Building a WBL program that will attract Opportunity Talent requires several proven fundamental components of success. However, the benefits of these programs far outweigh the costs, with engagement, productivity, and retention paying for themselves as you commit to Opportunity Talent success. **Proven WBL components:**

Coaching



Dedicate an employee to help Opportunity Talent become more integrated into the culture and expectations of the business.

Mentorship and Peer Support Groups



Role models and/or employee resource groups offer support, guidance, motivation, and assistance, building relationships along the way.

Benefits and Wages



Offering family-sustaining wages and inclusive benefits help develop trust and a strong relationship with Opportunity Talent.

Social Care Support/Resources



Opportunity Talent may have barriers to success beyond access to education. Providing easy access to free and reduced-fee social services resources, such as [FindHelp](#), can make the difference between success and failure.

Ongoing Upskilling Opportunities



Developing new skills needed to advance is difficult for everyone, but even more so for those who only have job experience versus post-secondary education. Partnering with a non-profit training provider and offering employer-sponsored upskilling can mean you're better prepared to advance Opportunity Talent.

YUPRO's WBL Apprenticeship Program

YUPRO offers the OnRamps@Work Apprenticeship Program. Our program serves as a bridge between skill development and full-time employment for Opportunity Talent.

The 26-week paid apprenticeship launched in January 2021 with 122 Opportunity Talent, of whom 88% had lost jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second cohort in July 2021 serves more than 250 apprentices in Fortune 500 companies nationwide.

OnRamps@Work is a turnkey program built upon our expertise in serving Opportunity Talent. It offers professional development workshops and coaching, community-building, and access to free and reduced-cost social assistance programs.

Apprentices earn fair market wages and learn employer-driven, in-demand skills while building experience in companies seeking to build diverse workforces across all career levels.

YUPRO was honored with a 2021 American Staffing Association [Elevate Award](#) for our OnRamps@Work Apprenticeship Program and is now accepting employer partner requests for the next cohort.

Strategy 2



Skilled trades have long-used apprenticeships to grow their talent. Finance and technology organizations are relatively new to the idea, and have an opportunity to create an apprenticeship model that works best for their organization. YUPRO recently partnered with [Aon and Accenture](#) because they, too, believe in the unifying theme of removing barriers to early-career corporate jobs. Both organizations lead their industries in apprenticeship programs so that barriers such as four-year degree requirements can be eliminated, thus expanding access to qualified talent while building their workforce with a grassroots mentality.

“What YUPRO provides is unique. They take a genuine interest in candidates with mentoring, apprenticeships, and on-the-job-training, as well as coaching those who come from underserved and underprivileged parts of the country. It helps us level-set.”

Jennifer Sewart • PHR, Manager, Human Resources

Upskilling Opportunity Talent at YUPRO: It’s all about your partner

Changing the workforce isn’t something you can do on your own. Partnering is at the core of success.

At YUPRO, we have identified two of the greatest partners we could find in the technology world: **IBM and Google**.

Because certification proves capability, YUPRO’s Opportunity Talent is offered by Google IT and Professional Certifications plus training from IBM SkillsBuild — all at no cost to the learner.



TIPS: Developing a WBL Strategy

Determine skills gaps between entry-level and middle-skill roles.

Discuss how you can train in-house for those skills or partner with a training provider to build workforce skills.

Identify internal champions and mentors who can support your apprenticeship program and serve as ongoing resources for your talent.

Develop workshops that are free to all employees, focusing on professional development and other soft skills.

Check your state’s offerings, as subsidies are often available for apprenticeships, internships, and even upskilling courses.

Partner up and lean on the expertise, networks, and resources of industry-proven, turnkey WBL programs.

Reap the benefits of an ambitious workforce.

Take this opportunity to invest in your talent, and they will invest in your success.

Strategy 3



Become an Opportunity Employer.

Leverage Opportunity Talent Resources and Expertise

Let's solve some of our biggest workforce challenges together with historically underrepresented talent. Seize this opportunity to be at the forefront of change — a change that will impact generations to come.

When you create a hiring strategy that supports Opportunity Talent, and you show your commitment to building and enhancing a diverse talent pipeline, you'll see three things happen:

- **Because of higher retention rates, ROI increases**
- **Employees become more engaged**
- **Brand reputation is enhanced**

Organizations that become a part of the YUPRO Opportunity Employer Network have access to a diverse pipeline of career-ready adults. This skilled and vetted talent community will strengthen teams, increase competitiveness, and fuel innovation.

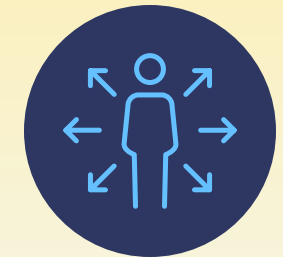
Benefits of Our Opportunity Employer Network



Lower both hiring and rehiring costs



Gain fresh perspectives from new talent



Impact the future of work, enhancing economic power for social change

When you partner with YUPRO, we work alongside you. We guide, challenge, and empower companies to become successful Opportunity Employers. Organizations that invest in this approach establish their leadership, and influence how other companies recruit, hire, and grow diverse talent.

Strategy 3



There is shared value in partnering with YUPRO.

We are uniquely designed to align with your inclusive talent acquisition strategy. When you access YUPRO's diverse talent community, you access the skills and experience your company needs. Each of the individuals in our Opportunity Talent pool has completed certification through upskilling programs, such as those provided by:



...and others.

YUPRO talent is only placed in organizations committed to providing Opportunity Talent with the means to build on their career while earning fair market wages.

"I wouldn't have (my current) position without their help. Even through transition trouble and beyond, YUPRO was in constant contact with me and helped reinforce the value of open communication and encouragement."

Dom • YUPRO Talent

We believe placement with social impact is better business.

Learn more about becoming an Opportunity Employer partner. Send us a note at getintouch@yupro.com or visit our [website](#) to learn more.

TIPS: Becoming an Opportunity Employer

Enhance your recruiting strategy by creating pathways to employment through work-based learning opportunities.

Access a new pipeline of skilled and trained Opportunity Talent candidates.

Retain and upskill your workforce by offering employees career advancement tools.

Commit to fair market wages and comprehensive benefits, and you'll gain a competitive advantage in attracting top talent and brand reputation loyalty.

Leverage your YUPRO partnership. The resources and expertise that comes with Opportunity Talent at your doorstep will change your business for the better.

About YUPRO

As the nation's leading Opportunity Talent Placement Firm, we connect forward-thinking companies with our trained talent community to improve long-term business performance, accelerate career growth, and close the Opportunity Divide. We partner with our parent company, [Year Up, Inc.](#) and other mission-aligned workforce development programs to build our community of trained talent so visionary companies can tap into our pipeline, hire smarter, and optimize performance. Everybody wins.

At YUPRO, we not only match talent to employer needs, but we continue to work closely with both talent and employer. Our high-touch career coaching gives talent meaningful experiences that result in a career pathway and broader access to economic opportunity.

How Our Opportunity Talent Ranks

90%

of YUPRO talent completes contract assignments vs. the national average of 68%

YUPRO talent's hourly wages exceed the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics average wage by

7% (April 2021)

Contract assignments for YUPRO's Opportunity Talent average 13 months, compared to the industry average of

10 weeks

*Source: YUPRO. Unless otherwise noted, these are year-to-date metrics for 2020.



YUPRO ™

Contact Us

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