

Cabinet News and Views

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Cadwalader Corner Q&A: Rare Recruitment's Raphael Mokades



Raphael Mokades

Founder and Managing Director,
Rare Recruitment

Raphael Mokades is the Founder and Managing Director of Rare, an award-winning leader in diversity graduate recruitment. Rare works with over 80 of the world's most prestigious employers, with a particular emphasis on the financial services industry in the UK, has some 10,000 candidates on its books, and builds cutting-edge software that is making a real difference for companies and the people they hire.

What should companies/organizations know today about recruiting and retention?

Data compilation and analysis are critical to effective recruitment and retention and can provide an important early warning system about issues that could potentially bubble up to the surface.

For instance: our applicant-tracking system, Candid, provides real-time grade-adjusted adverse impact reporting. In plain English, this tells companies how effectively they are reaching a pool of qualified diverse candidates.

All industries today, including financial services, are emphasizing active diversity hiring programs. What advice are you giving your clients?

We regularly advise our clients to do targeted outreach to under-represented groups. As mentioned previously, we stress how important it is to use data when recruiting but also to continue using data-driven analysis even when not actively hiring in order to find trends on what high-potential candidates look like. To accomplish this, companies need to invest in applicant-tracking and HR information systems that are fit for this purpose.

In our view, an organization that says it can't afford the software it needs to do proper data analysis should halt its hiring and put its money in a piggy bank until it can. This process is really that critical. We also help our clients develop an understanding that hires from under-represented groups will experience their work cultures differently, and that, in turn, creates important opportunities to have conversations about work culture, fairness and other workplace imperatives.

What advice would you give to companies and organizations that have not fully embraced this organizational imperative?

Align yourself with the industry leaders, who have concluded that investment here produces important results and avoids a number of potential negative outcomes. These leaders are using targeted outreach and data-driven assessment to make real progress in this area.

As a company, we've thought long and hard about these critical issues and share our philosophy at www.racefairnesscommitment.com.

What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?

When I started my business in 2005, I met a man called Martin who advised me on the initial stages of getting the thing off the ground. "If you haven't put on ten pounds in weight by Christmas," he told me, "you'll have been doing it wrong." He told me to take everyone I could for lunch – potential clients, suppliers, employees, etc. Relationships are different and stronger when you break bread together and people tend to be more open and more inclined to collaborate. He was right, and "food" has actually become one of Rare's six values (the others are fun, flexibility, friendliness, fairness, and focus).

What are you most proud of?

The honest answer is the family I've created. When I think about how my wife and my parents grew up, and the leap between their childhoods and the one we've created for our kids, I feel deeply proud. Professionally, for sure, it feels good to have created a business that has done meaningful good for the clients we serve the best part of two decades. The facts that we have a smart, diverse, happy team, and that the business is commercially successful are definite bonuses!
