



Intercultural school
Talents pour le monde

ÉPREUVES D'ADMISSION
MANAGEMENT INTERCULTUREL

LANGUE DE TRAVAIL: ANGLAIS

Read the following article then complete the exercise below.

Quotas alone can't fix diversity – it's time to go further

Having minority staff and having minority staff who are empowered to speak up are two very different things



Many of the International Women's Month panel discussions I have sat on turn to the topic of quotas. I always defend them. I reject the criticism that quotas somehow usurp "meritocracy" because meritocracy does not exist (it is no coincidence that the Oxbridge-educated children of other journalists, for example, just happen to "deserve" so many journalism jobs).

That said, I do have my reservations. Quotas are often offered as a panacea to all diversity-workplace woes. In my experience, institutions that establish quotas are usually far too busy congratulating themselves for their surface-level changes to worry about the finer details, such as retention rates or the roles into which they are recruiting minority staff. The kinds of problems that are caused by homogeneity in the workplace are not immediately fixed simply by having more women and minorities "in the room".

Last year, when Gucci was forced after a backlash to withdraw from sale a jumper resembling blackface, it was argued that these kind of racist faux pas would be avoided by quotas. No Gucci employees seemed to twig the bright red and black issue with it – despite this exact thing happening a few months previously when Prada pulled figurines and keychains with similar blackface imagery.

Quotas would also have perhaps spared us the cringingly sexist Peleton Christmas advert – in which a man buys his female partner an exercise bike with the implication that she needs to get fit and lose weight. Surely the advert, which caused the company to lose \$1.5bn in value, would not have been made if a woman had been present?

This isn't always the case. I've worked in newsrooms that have published articles that are tone-deaf to racism and sexism, while simultaneously boasting about their commitment to ensuring all voices are heard. Having minority staff and having minority staff that are empowered to speak up are very different things.

Diversity itself is only one part of the puzzle – inclusion is the bigger, most integral piece. If the culture of a workplace doesn't genuinely embrace diversity of thought, the backgrounds of its staff mean nothing. Many company higher-ups commit only to diversifying their staff at the very lowest levels, and are not interested in new perspectives but in having views they already hold parroted back to them. Of the very few female executive directors in FTSE 100 companies (they make up just over 30%), 97% of them are white.

New recruits aren't always emboldened to put their head above the parapet because their presence has no value beyond appearing "woke" to the outside world.

Quotas cannot simply be a quick-fix, or an exercise in PR. We must go beyond an annual cohort of brown perma-interns that can do little to challenge the status quo. We cannot simply just be in the room to make change; we require a seat at the table, too.

Exercise

What is your opinion on diversity quotas in companies? Do you think they can really make a difference? If so, what is the best way to go about implementing them? Or do you think they essentially undermine the principle of meritocracy? Are there better, alternative ways of achieving diversity?

Use information from the text as well as your own knowledge and examples to answer the aforementioned questions and justify your answers.

You should write around 500 words.