National Defence | Défense nationale

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Increasing the representation of visible minorities within the executive cadre

EX-01 REPORT

Visible Minorities Recruitment Campaign

Canada

Background

The events that took place in the United States including the horrific murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd ignited international civil unrest, sparking international attention on racial injustice and inequalities. This cultural reckoning precipitated the call to action for governments around the world

“It is not that individuals in the designated groups are inherently unable to achieve equality on their own, it is that the obstacles in their way are so formidable and self-perpetuating that they cannot be overcome without intervention.”

- Royal Commission Report

“The time has come for us to make major advances, not minor improvements. We have had several discussions and I know that you all share in this commitment which the Government and Canadians expect us to accomplish.”

-I. Shugart Clerk of the Privy Council

Recruitment Campaign Objectives

The Department of National Defence (DND) launched an external EX-01 pilot recruitment campaign aimed at increasing the representation of visible minorities within the executive cadre. In addition, the campaign sought the following:

- identify a talent pool for future opportunities;
- introduce novel tools and technology to support barrier and bias-free assessments;
- incorporate character and behaviour-based assessments;
- provide a hyper-personalized experience for candidates and ensure all candidates, including those not deemed as successful, benefit from the experience with feedback and understanding of gaps in order to progress in their careers; and
- assess the pilot process against traditional approaches to identify systemic barriers and biases and identify recommendations for improvement of future recruitment processes.

Assessment Board
Fairness & Transparency Panel

Kin Choi - Assistant Deputy Minister (HR- Civ)
And Chief Human Resources Officer
Department of National Defence

Gaveen Cadotte - Vice-President, Policy
and Communications, Public Service
Commission

Jacqueline Rigg - Chief Executive Officer
Association of Professional
Executives of the Public Service of Canada

Mauricette Howlett - Director
Canada Revenue Agency

Okenge Yuma Morisho – Deputy Minister,
Municipal Affairs,
Government of British Columbia

Paule-Anny Pierre - Executive Director,
Centre for Diversity & Inclusion

Maria McKay – Guest to the panel

Human Decision Making

Enabled by AI / Machine Learning Technology

Assessment Methodology and Platforms

Instrumental to this initiative was the piloting of two different yet complimentary innovative assessment platforms which were administered to assess and qualify top tier of candidates who can then be matched to opportunities.

Recruitment Strategy & Approach

Knockri

Knockri is an A.I. skills-based assessment tool designed to reduce bias and scientifically shortlist top performing candidates to the interview stage.

Knockri was awarded as Innovator of the Year by Ascend, one of North America's largest diversity groups and has been given a seat at the World Economic Forum's Global Council on Equality and Inclusion.

Knockri's approach has been built specifically to reduce bias and promote equity in the recruitment process, through which the use of the video recordings – is used for two specific reasons:

- Reduce and minimize cognitive load within the assessment thereby contributing to flattening the playing field for minority candidates and minimizes the potential for adverse impact in assessments
- Simply designed to replicate an interview's experience and make it straightforward to respond to questions.

Key Knockri Findings

Key Leadership Competency Assessment:

Among the candidates that succeeded at the Knockri assessment, the average score for all KLCs was 81.3%. The highest to lowest scoring KLCs were Upholding Integrity & Respect at 83.3%, followed by Collaborate with Partners and Stakeholders at 83.1%, Mobilize People at 81.4%, Create Vision and Strategy along with Achieve Results tying at 81.1% and finally Promote Innovation and Guide Change as the lowest scoring KLC at 77.7%. These results generally align to the executive competencies – specifically areas of strength and areas to be developed (gaps).

Talent Assessment

82%

Based on self-identification, of the 36 top tier qualified candidates, 25 (69%) are public servants, however, non-public servants performed better than their public servant counterparts on the assessment.

In addition, in terms of EE sub-group breakdown, of the 36 top-tier candidates, 33% self-identify as Black, with the next largest candidate representation of South Asian/East Indian at 25%, followed by West Asian / North African / Arab at 17% and Mixed origin at 11%. The remaining candidates represent the following EE sub-groups: Chinese, Japanese, Southeast Asian and Non-White as well as those that did not self-identify. In terms of gender representation, 53% self-identify as women, 36% as male with the remaining 11% not self-identifying.

Key Knockri Findings

232

Hours of interviews collected and analyzed **in 2 business days**

20%

Compared to previous hiring method, **20% more Women and Persons with Disabilities were among the candidates with the highest success rates.**

93%

Of candidates completed assessment, which scaled candidate responses against Government of Canada Key Leadership Competencies

4.4/5

Average candidate feedback score

Key Knockri Findings

Knockri assessment finding:

- The women's higher success rates can be seen across most of the visible minority subgroups.
  - Indeed, women in the Black, South Asian/East Indian, Non-White West Asian, North African or Arab as well as Non-White Latin American subgroups performed better than their male counterparts.

Key Learnings

Human Decision Making: While the assessment tools assisted in providing data to inform decisions, critical decision points needed to be continually revisited.

Technology Requirements for Candidates: Knowledge of the technology and platforms early on in the process would have provided additional time for HR to communicate technology requirements.

Assessment Selection and Capability Alignment: Familiarity with the platforms at the onset of the process would have been beneficial to ensure effective utilization and measure of merit criteria.

Customization and Timeliness: Advanced project conceptualization and planning would have mitigated pressures and tight timelines.

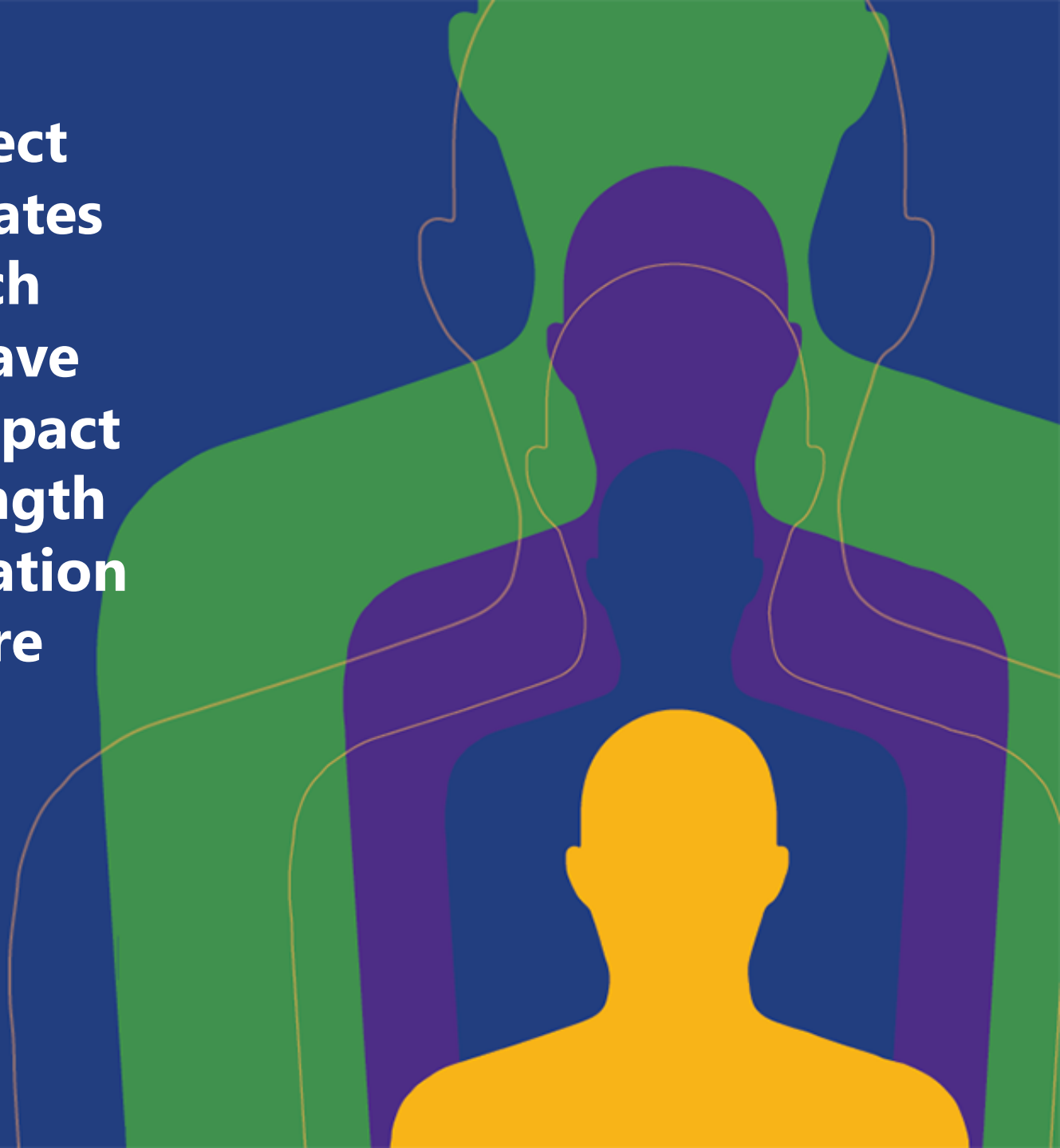
Process Clarity: Clarity of how any A.I. is being implemented, and precision of dates, time of day, and next steps.

Communications Support: Assessing several hundred candidates inherently implies that even a small percentage of customized inquiries could imply several dozen customized responses.

Directives, Policies & Use of Innovation: Directives and Policies are not consistently aligned to support the piloting of new methods and technologies

Recommendations & Next Steps

In areas where gaps have been identified, the department must commit to explore the gaps that exist, and put in place approaches and frameworks to ensure hiring practices are inclusive, fundamentally barrier and bias free. This will also be addressed by the ADM(HR-Civ) Anti-Racism Taskforce and Staffing Systems Review which is currently addressing the following five themes: Hiring & Outreach, Selection Process & Assessment, Tools & Templates, Guides & Directives and Data Tools & Systems.

- It is recommended that hiring managers be required to undergo unconscious bias training prior to candidate assessment and as a prerequisite to exercising their staffing authorities.
- ADM(HR-Civ) to work with internal and external stakeholders to develop and promote systems, tools and innovation that supports inclusive recruitment and hiring processes with a focus on barrier and bias-free assessment approaches.
- Working with internal and external stakeholders, and partnering to ensure that onboarding practices provide executives with the environment, networks and tools to succeed and grow.
- Ensuring sound reporting and data analytics of underrepresented groups to include appointments, departures as well as promotion rates among other key metrics and tracking the executives along their leadership journeys will support broader EE/D&I initiatives.

The ripple effect each of us creates will be so much greater and have more of an impact if we use strength and determination instead of mere intention.