employment barriers for culturally diverse people in Australia

the challenges
the pathway
the rewards
Australian study: racism when hiring

By || 15 June

A foreign or indigenous-sounding name gives people less chance of landing a job in Australia, a study has found. Unless your name sounds Italian and you’re in Melbourne, in which case it can be an advantage.

Australian National University researchers Alison Booth, Andrew Leigh and Elena Varganova sent out 4000 fake job applications to employers advertising on the internet for entry-level hospitality, data entry, customer service and sales jobs, changing only the racial origin of the supposed applicants’ names.

Applicants with Chinese names fared the worst, having only a one-in-five chance of getting asked in for interviews, compared to applicants with Anglo-Saxon names whose chances exceeded one-in-three.

Typically a Chinese-named applicant would need to put in 69 per cent more applications than an Anglo-named applicant to get the same number of interviews.

"When you’re looking for a job," Booth said, "you can’t go to a possible employer and say, ‘I’m Chinese and therefore I’m going to be a crap applicant.’"

"It’s not that they discriminate on the individual basis, it’s that they have a classification in their mind of what a Chinese person is, and it extends to any job, not just hospitality."

"It’s easier for an Anglo to get a job than an Aboriginal."
the challenges

• Government agenda
• Australian “culture”
• Employer “ignorance”
• Hierarchical management practices
• Employee ability to negotiate the landscape
• Biases and stereotypes
Leadership within our Workplaces:

- Openly support strategy
- Belief in legacy
- Remove political correctness
- Remove tokenism
- Education: learn about other cultures
- Lead by example through community and cultural engagement - a collaborative approach
- Understand that strategy takes time
Leadership within our Communities:
• Support culturally diverse people to settle
• Ensure they can navigate through the employment landscape
• Support them to network
• Ensure access to Australian work experience opportunities
Phase 1: Research
• Undertake a review
• Include key stakeholders

Phase 2: Planning
• Group approach
• Set realistic goals

Phase 3: Implementation
• Maintain accountability
the rewards

• Innovation through diversity of thinking
• Ability to support a diverse customer base
• Ability for organisational growth through cultural intelligence
• Greater productivity by engaged staff
• Increased skill and qualifications
• Identified as a business that leads their competitors and the community
• Somewhere great to work and live, with unique quality and texture
contact

Justine Murphy
General Manager, Diversity@Work
justine@diversityatwork.com.au

Diversity@Work is Australia's leading innovator in consultancy services, resources and training for organisations engaged in strategic diversity management, workforce planning and cultural transformation.

www.diversityatwork.com.au