Diversity in the Workplace: Benefits, Challenges, and Solutions

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Agenda
1. Diversity changes in the workplace
2. How attitudes and behaviors influence the workplace environment
3. Benefits and challenges of workplace diversity
4. Solutions for workplace diversity

DIVERSITY CHANGES IN THE WORKPLACE
Why Do We Have Diversity Training?

• Increase our awareness and educate on how to accept differences
• Break down barriers that separate each other
• Improve communication
• Create a positive work environment

Why Do We Have Diversity Training?

• U.S. population is becoming larger and more diverse

Today’s Workplace

• Compared to 20 years ago, today’s workforce is made up of more
  – Women
  – People of color
  – People born outside of the U.S.
  – Gay and transgender workers
  – People with disabilities
  – Varied religious beliefs
Race Changes in the Workforce

1980

- White: 82%
- Minority: 15%

2012

- White: 64%
- Minority: 36%

Source: The Center for Public Policy and Higher Education

Today’s Workforce

- White: 64%
- Hispanic: 12%
- African American: 16%
- Asian: 5%
- Unidentified: 3%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

How Both Influence the Workplace Environment

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR
Attitude

- Learned tendency to evaluate things a certain way
  - Formed as a result of a personal experience
  - May emerge due to an observation
  - Social roles and norms are influencers

People register an immediate and automatic reaction of “good” or “bad” towards everything they encounter in less than a second, even before they are aware of having formed an attitude.

Behavior

- The way a person responds or action taken because of one’s attitude
  - Response can be either positive or negative
Does Attitude Affect Behavior?

Attitude → Behavior

How Would You Feel If?

You walked into a room filled with hundreds of people and you didn’t know anyone?

You showed up for a party dressed in jeans and everyone was dressed in formal wear?

How Would You Feel If?

Your boss called you in his/her office to tell you about an unexpected raise?

You just completed an annual report for work but you lost it because it didn’t save?
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Tolerance Scale

- Repulsion
- Avoidance
- Tolerance
- Acceptance
- Appreciation
Repulsion
• These people are different in a way that is not normal
• They do not belong in your workplace
• Working with them causes you a lot of discomfort

Avoidance
• These people are different in a way that you do not understand or are not familiar with
• They make you feel uncomfortable
• You try to avoid them and do not want to work with them

Tolerance
• You don’t appreciate people with these differences but you can work with them
• You don’t feel completely comfortable but you believe they have a right to be treated respectfully
• If you had a choice, you would not have them as co-workers
Acceptance

• Your co-worker’s differences really don’t matter to you
• You are comfortable around them
• You listen and interact well with them

Appreciation

• You consider people with a particular difference as smart and talented, or possessing traits, skills and attitudes you admire
• You see their differences as a positive
• You value them as a person
• You enjoy being around them

When We are Made to Feel Tolerated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feel excluded</th>
<th>Feel contradictory feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are silent about who we are</td>
<td>We tend to be more sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We hide our differences so we fit in</td>
<td>We fear feeling separate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When We Feel Appreciated

- We feel included
- Our opinions are solicited
- We feel that others depend on us
- We are included in opportunities
- Others identify with us
- Our differences are valued

STEREOTYPES, PREJUDICE, AND DISCRIMINATION

Stereotypes

- A misconception about an individual or group based on the belief that all people in a given group will act the same way
Prejudice

• An irrational suspicion or hatred of a particular group, race, or religion
• Making up your mind about what a person or group is like before you get to know them

Discrimination

• The act of giving unequal treatment to an individual or group of people because they are members of a certain culture or race, or because of other differences
• People are denied equal opportunities because of their differences

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF WORKPLACE DIVERSITY
Benefits
• Diverse backgrounds at the workplace have talents and experiences that bring
  – Increased adaptability
  – Broader service range
  – Variety of viewpoints
  – More effective execution
  – Better connection with customers
Source: Multiculturaladvantage.com

Challenges
• Diversity can also bring challenges such as
  – Less effective communication
  – Resistance to change
  – Less cohesiveness
  – Greater discomfort
  – Implementation of diversity policies

Consequences of Ignoring Diversity
• Unhealthy tension
• Loss of productivity as a result of increased conflict
• Inability to attract and retain talented people
• Complaints and/or legal action
Consequences of Ignoring Diversity

• Communication breakdown is often a result of a simple misunderstanding of another’s perception or response to a situation

SOLUTIONS FOR WORKPLACE DIVERSITY
Increasing Workplace Diversity

• Does your staff resemble your community and/or student population?

Increasing Workplace Diversity

• Make additional outreach efforts to ensure that a diverse pool of candidates apply
  – Utilize organizations with community connections, including churches, and cultural institutions
• Making the recruiting process more transparent
• Utilize a diverse selection committee
• Be sure managers fully understand the benefits of a diverse workplace

Become a Diversity Change Agent

• Examine your own attitudes toward people who are different from you
• Identify the origin of your negative reaction toward differences
• Be aware of how prejudices and discrimination hurts and whom it hurts
• Disregard physical characteristics when interacting with others
Become a Diversity Change Agent

- Think about the impact of your comments before you speak or act
- Get to know people of different races and groups
- Avoid generalizing the attitudes or behaviors of one individual to an entire group
- Avoid language that reinforces negative stereotypes

Become a Diversity Change Agent

- Be willing to talk, listen, and learn
- Speak out against insensitive remarks or discriminatory behavior
- Take action when appropriate and address discriminatory behavior
- Be forgiving when others make mistakes
- Act as a role model

Diversity Training

Integrate training into organizational practices and goals

Utilize employee satisfaction surveys

Set up office diversity policies
Diversity Training

Establish a resource library for participants to use following the training.

Identify on-going activities that will support lessons learned from the training, which include newsletters, brochures, and videos.

CONCLUSION

Final Thoughts

• A diverse workplace has benefits and challenges yet...those that promote and achieve diversity are most effective.

• Attitudes play a big role in our behavior...what we think about our differences could determine how we act.
Final Thoughts

• By becoming a diversity change agent, you’ll seek to help create a climate where every employee is appreciated for the uniqueness they bring to the workplace.

Strength lies in differences, not similarities

- Stephen R. Covey

SAVE THE DATE!
FASFAA 2016
May 24-27 2016
Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa, Bonita Springs, FL.