WHAT MAKES AN ORGANIZATION MORE DIVERSE AND WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COMMON ISSUES

# Introduction

## Organization

An organized group of people with a particular purpose such as a union, associations, corporation, and charity that work together towards achieving the same goal.

Organizations are categorized into two major categories:

**Formal organization**

Organization structure where the authority and responsibilities are clearly defined. In a formal organization setting there are predefined policies, rule, schedules, procedures and programs.

Formal organization can be divided into four major forms depending on their flow of authority;

* Sole proprietorship
* Partnership
* Corporation
* Limited liability Company

**Informal organization**

Organization structure that has no defined hierarchy of authority and responsibility. In such an organization the relationship between employees is formed based on the common interest, preferences and prejudices.

**Diversity** within an organization encompasses race, gender, ethnic groups, age, religion, sexual orientation, citizenship status, mental and physical condition as well as other distinct difference between people. For an organization to be more diverse it must incorporate the three C, s of diversity among their employees that is curiosity, courage and commitment.

# What makes an organization more diverse

## Securing top management leadership and commitment

For an organization to be more diverse in its dealings, the responsibility does not fall entirely on the shoulders of the top management or the diversity directors alone. Obtaining top management leadership and commitment is critical for diversity program to succeed. Effective communication in the workplace is crucial to unite and strengthen the organization on the same core values, policies and goals. Thus, the top managers should clearly communicate expectations to employees as well as to incorporate the organizations attitude towards diversity into the corporate mission statement and into strategic plans and objectives. Adequate funding should be allocated to diversity effort to ensure its success as the managerial compensation can be linked directly to accomplishing diversity objectives.

## Organizational assessment

Establishing an ongoing assessment of the organizations workforce, culture, policies and practices in areas such as recruitments, promotion, benefits, compensation, demographic of labor pool and customer base should be evaluated. The objective being to identify problem areas and make recommendations where change is needed. This will help prevent indirect discrimination that may even begin before hiring a new workforce.

## Diversity training

Diversity training program attempts to identify and reduce biases and develop the skills needed to manage a diversified workforce effectively. Diversity training has two components: Awareness building and Skill building.

**Awareness building:** Awareness building is designed to increase awareness of the meaning and importance of valuing diversity. Its aim being to sensitize employees to the assumption they make about others and how those assumptions affects their behavior, decision, and judgement. To build awareness, people are taught to become familiar with myths, stereotypes and culture difference as well as organizational barriers that inhibits the full contribution of all employees. They develop a better understanding of corporate culture, requirement for success and career choice that affect opportunities for advancement.

**Skill building:** Skill building is designed to allow all employees and managers to develop the skills they need to deal effectively with one another and with customers in a diverse environment.

Training is a key component of diversity management as it creates awareness and nature’s better understanding in the workplace.

## Attracting and retaining employees

### Attracting employees

Companies can attract a diverse, qualified workforce by using effective recruitment practices, accommodating employees work and family needs and offering alternative work arrangements.

**Recruitment:** A company’s image can be a strong recruitment tool. Companies with reputation for hiring and promoting all types of people without discrimination or bias judgement have a relatively high competitive advantage.

**Accommodating work and family needs:** Majority of the job seekers are more concerned about their family needs first. Corporate work and family policies are now one of the most important recruiting tools. Employers that have become involved in child care report decreased turnover and absenteeism enhancing improved morale.

**Alternative work arrangement:** Companies may accommodate diversity by offering flexible work schedule and arrangements.

### Retaining employees

As replacing qualified and experienced workers becomes more difficult and costly, retaining good workers will be of much more importance.

**Mentoring:** Mentors are high level managers who help ensure that high potential people are introduced to top management and socialized into the norms and values of the organization.

**System accommodation:** Organization can support diversity by recognizing cultural and religious holidays, differing mode of dress as well as accommodating individuals with disability. Encouraging them to continue working as long as they are able and if warranted allow flexible scheduling.

**Accountability:** For diversity effort to be a success, managers must be held accountable for workforce development. Organization must ensure that their performance appraisal and reward system reinforce the importance effective diversity management.

# Common issues

## Communication issues

Embracing diversity can be more difficult when there are differences in language and communication. This may pose as an issue since it would hinder distribution of roles and assigning of responsibilities as well as sharing new innovative ideas.

## Ethnic and cultural difference

The racial spectrum is changing in the western countries each year as more people immigrate to those countries from around the world. Unfortunately, there are some individuals who harbor unfair prejudice against people who are different from them in some ways whether it’s racial, faith, age, sexual orientation and many more aspects. These intolerances cannot, and should not be tolerated in professional work environment.

## Gender equality

Priority of one gender of another in duties and role allocation has been a major issues as the male gender is more recommended for the managerial position as compared to female gender. Organization should rather distribute role and responsibilities according to the person’s capabilities rather than from their gender to fully exploit the workforce capabilities to achieve the organizations goal.

## Mental and physical disabilities

Often, disabled employees have a difficult time navigating through their workplace because proper accommodation as simple as wheelchair ramps are not available. Ensuring a fair and comfortable work environment for employees with physical and mental disabilities helps successfully create a more diverse workforce.

## Discriminating organizational structure

As the work force becomes more diverse some employees may experience more bias, discrimination and harassment. This may restrict employees from bringing their true selves to the work place, limiting collaboration, creativity and innovation.