

The draw of diversity essay sample



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Introduction

“Managing diversity” is rapidly becoming the corporate slogan of the twenty first century – not because companies are becoming kinder and gentler toward culturally diverse minorities but because they want to survive in today’s complex environment (De Meuse, Claire, and O’Neill 38). And so that it is possible to survive a growing number of companies will have to employ, train, and promote culturally diverse groups. Basically, this is nothing more than developing additional human resources (Sudhoff and Griffin 36). This human resource approach concentrates on the personal relations between people and the company, and accepts a fact that diversity in the workplace includes every employee. This approach starts with the claim that all employees are the most important resource in a company. A company is only effective when diversity is effectively utilized and managed. Today, many companies look healthy to untrained eyes, but in reality they experience difficulties and are decaying inside. “Healthy” atmosphere frequently hides a series of disruptive diversity problems.

Main Body

According to Mor Barak (2000), a major stimulus for diversity in the workplace lies in the moral code upon which the United States was founded: the belief that all people have equal rights. One of the hidden rules in American society is that a person does not comment on differences because it is considered that differences mean deficiency (Edwards, 1991, p. 51). The refusal to accept difference in the workplace is illustrated in the following case: An unknown American of African descent walked into a room full of

white managers and they disregarded him. Yet each of them persistently tried to find out “ Why is this Afro-American here?” At the same time, two unknown white males also walked into the room. They were met with expressions of welcome and quickly accepted into the group.

The difficulty of getting women and minorities into senior-level management positions is another diversity-related issue. While the proportion of women and minorities in the workforce has increased considerably during the last decades, few of them became executives (Mor Barak 41). According to the author, women and minorities constitute more than 50 percent of the American workforce but they have less than 5 percent of executive positions. There is indeed a considerable barrier that prevents an unequal number of women and minorities from occupying executive positions. Therefore, diversity must be valued, trained, and efficaciously managed.

Along with diversity in the workplace came additional competition. Edwards (1997) notes that some white male employees must now engage in a contest with people they did not consider rivals before – for the most part women, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians (66). Even though white male employees still control most of the top corporative positions, many of them sense an impending loss of job opportunities. The transition from a workplace dominated chiefly by white males to one in which managerial and supervisory jobs are shared with people representing other diverse minorities caused emotional strain and conflict between employees. The diversity issue is further complicated by company downsizing and reorganizing -processes that add to the feeling of lost positions.

Conclusion

This essay addressed various issues related to the diversity in American companies introducing a number of implications for managers. While the essay focused on race-gender diversity, there are a number of additional topics, including ethnicity, culture, nationality, sexual orientation, physical abilities, social position, age, religion and others. While the focus of the essay is limited, it emphasizes an important area of diversity in the workplace- the relationship between workforce diversity and the need for effective approaches that will advance fairness in the workplace. This area applies to all points of diversity in the workplace.

References

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