

Diversity in the workplace



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In today's multicultural workplace, it pays to be familiar with the culture of fellow employees, supervisors, clients or customers who may come from a different ethnic background from you. Understanding their cultural traditions and customs will allow you to work with these individuals more effectively. Being able to understand ethnically diversified individuals will help to unlock their potential. How can you teach these individuals to work together? What can you do to motivate them to want to win or be successful?

Employees become more productive when there is harmony in the workplace among co-workers. This harmony comes from showing respect for individual differences. An employer who values cultural smarts will often hire trainers to give their employees in house workshops on cultural diversity. These workshops could cover nonverbal communication such as eye contact, which in some countries it is rude to make eye contact. They might even discuss the use of hand gestures when speaking. There are cultures where a handshake is offensive and the good ole American thumbs up can mean something completely different. In Iraq, it means up yours.

Cultural and language barriers are a challenge that needs to be beat in order for diversity programs to succeed. Ineffective communication results in confusion, lack of teamwork and low morale. There will always be that one employee who refuses to accept the fact that the social and cultural makeup of their workplace is changing. Attitude plays an important role in the positive progression is this type of attitude that can hinder progress. Make language learning and support for language learning part of the team ethic and encourage people from different language backgrounds to communicate with each other. For example, encourage co-workers and managers to reach

out and learn each other's names and to learn set, " ritualized" phrases in each other's languages, such as " Hello," " goodbye," and " how are you?" Such small gestures go a long way towards improving workplace relationships because they demonstrate respect and acceptance for all employees. Eliminate prejudices and become sensitive to the needs of individuals who have different customs or traditions. Pick an ethnic group and write down as many adjectives as you can that you feel describes the group. See if there are similarities that apply to both your group and another ethnic group. Become proactive at work and identify immigrants, talk to them, ask where they came from, what their goals are. The best way to develop rapport is to find a common ground that can discussed and built upon, such as favorite food, holidays etc.

Workplaces can benefit from the mix of cultures, traditions, and experiences. People of a different ethnic background bring new energy and vibrancy to the workplace. This allows people who do not naturally see the world in the same way to learn to work with each other, solve problems together, and collaborate for success. We also need to understand gender differences in the workplace because gender may determine certain attitudes, behavior, and thinking. Both men and women are equally competent in the work force. We must show respect for each gender's different approaches and views because doing so will be beneficial to everyone success.