Levering diversity and inclusion in the workplace

Business, Work

This article sheds light on how some companies approach diversity and inclusion training from a standpoint that may be doing more harm than good. The article speaks to what not to do or say as it relates to diverse groups of employees. Mainly to ensure no lawsuits occur or any laws are broken. However, a recent study by researchers fromHarvardUniversity, University of California at Berkeley and the University of Minnesota showed that diversity training that emphasizes the threat of lawsuits actually had a negative effect on diversity.

In addition, attitudes about diversity showed no measurable changes after such training. The research showed that the problem with negatively directed diversity training was that it emphasized differences rather than similarities. The training tended to group people according to characteristics, such as color and religion, rather than individual preferences. Noting that race and religion, being such a " touchy" subject, put managers in a position where they felt they were being intrusive or encroaching on employees freedoms.

Getting one step closer to breaking laws or having impending lawsuits. This article was written to suggest an alternate way of presenting diversity and inclusion as it relates to the work place. They suggest that training should focus more on similarities of diverse group members and non-diverse group members. This creates an open line ofcommunicationand appreciation that although a difference exists among them they still share common ground. They suggest that the key to successful training and in breaking down stereotypes is to focus on exercises that allow people to relate as individuals.

Instead of using words like " diversity" or even " similarity," turn the employee's thoughts to " individuality. " At even the basic level all people can relate to being an individual. This individuality is generally more widely accepted than thinking of someone being a part of a " diverse" group. The major goal in addressing diversity from this stand point also shifts management's mindset from what not to do to what they can do as it relates to positive diversity and inclusion training.