

# How to manage multicultural workforce

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## How to Manage Multicultural Workforce COMM/215 September 04, 2012

Introduction The world is becoming more diverse and most large companies are multicultural. Diversity definitely has brought new importance to the workplace. “ More organizational leaders are trying to overcome the challenges of managing a multicultural workforce so that they can reap the benefits. A multicultural workforce consists of employees with a wide range of backgrounds. Age, race, national origin, gender, and marital status are just some of the traits that distinguish employees culturally. ” (Kokemuller, 2012). When people of various cultures work together the results are usually great. Not only does it help to build strong relationships and gain more knowledge, but it also gives the company competitive advantage. With this complex structure of human interaction comes the greatest challenge, how to communicate among and between these groups. In addition, the working environment and culture at Worldwide Telecommunications, Inc. may change. The change can be either positive or negative. However, increased cultural differences within a workforce also create potential costs in higher interpersonal conflict, turnover, and communication breakdowns. To capitalize on the benefits and minimize the potential costs of worker diversity, leaders are advised to oversee the change processes toward creating multicultural organizations. Advantages and disadvantages of this issue must be brought to attention. Advantages Neil Kokemuller, points out some of advantages of multicultural workforce. Neil, points out, “ A common advantage of a multicultural workforce is a broader range of perspectives on issues or challenges. A 1999 " Fortune" study supported the notion that more diverse companies were performing better. People from

different backgrounds bring their own unique cultural experiences to the situations they face in their companies and this broader perspective of viewpoints tends to allow for a better ultimate resolution. " (Kokemuller, 2012). With companies such as, Worldwide Telecommunications, Inc. opens wide range of benefits. With some costumers, viewing and considering the advantage of a multicultural team as a problem. However, Marquardt and Havarth, bring out point ware multicultural team have over none multicultural team. " Once they are established, multicultural teams are perceived to outperform mono-cultural teams, in areas such as problem identification and resolution, by the sheer strength of its diversity (Marquardt, 2001). In order for companies, fully and aggressively to compete in the marketplace, they will need to consider these statistics and work towards attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse workforce. Becoming a diverse organization makes good business sense for profit as well as for not-for-profit companies. Taking this advantage to great consideration, Worldwide Telecommunications, Inc. can benefit by increasing their work production globally and not limit their company project to local or domestic workforce. Several associations make available foreign language classes to its employees. This help with dealing with the non-English speaking nations. When teams are together it helps the team building activities. To have success you must recognize the need and the role of other team members in one's success. When companies understand Failure they must make clear understanding of different cultures results can put a stop to unclear communication, lack of passion in the work place. The strain in the relationship has a direct impact on the employee productivity.

Continue to exist and prosper in the highly volatile market scenario the proper management of a multi cultural environment is expected. It helps in the creation of a highly productive work force that drives the company to success. Input of ideas from a highly motivated and diverse work force results in quality output, leading to customer satisfaction. <http://www.chrmglobal.com/Articles/400/1/Managing-a-Multi-Cultural-Team.html>

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Disadvantages With a diverse workforce companies look at pros and cons where company may or may not go wrong. Looking at all sides of where a company can go wrong Neil Kokemuller, points out: “ A diverse workforce presents increased potential for discrimination. It is natural that if you put people together with obvious distinguishing traits, employees with prejudices could use them against others. This increased risk is why diversity management is so critical with multicultural workforces. Companies need to provide cultural awareness and sensitivity training to help create a company culture of tolerance and acceptance of differences” (Kokemuller, 2012).

McDonald seconds this when she states, “ A company that recruits and employs a diverse workforce must create a culture that promotes dignity and respect to avoid tension between employees” (McDonald, 2012). Another disadvantage to a multicultural workforce is the possible language barrier. If not all employees can speak the same language or have a first language of the primary language of the country communication then becomes very difficult (McDonald, 2012). This disadvantage can be overcome with proper management (Kokemuller, 2012), and training. Schrieber suggests three ways a company can overcome the language barrier. The first of which is by demonstrating techniques on how to overcome it. The other two depend on

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the company's willingness to spend money. The first of the two is hiring translators to ease in the communication and improve performance (Schrieber, 1996). Hiring extra personnel may be a short term solution but combined with Schrieber's third suggestion can be a very good long term solution. The third suggestion is " scheduling work hours around English classes" (Schrieber, 1996). By allowing the employees who don't speak English to take advantage of a way they can learn English, the company will then no longer require the translators and efficiency should improve.

Combine the language barrier with the fact that a multicultural workforce will also bring in differences in the way people think and act. While this may be an advantage at first, it can be a disadvantage. For example, in one culture making eye contact while talking to someone might be considered proper, while in another culture eye contact may be seen as an act of aggression. Miss communication such as this may lead to an increased number of complaints " regarding negative attitudes and harassment can take up a considerable amount of management time, whether or not they are upheld" (McDonald, 2012). Maintaining the employees' individuality while is a hurdle that the company and the leadership of the company must overcome. " The desire to maintain individual identity operates in all employees - those within current corporate structures and those who attempt to enter them - and can create tensions between cultures" (Schreiber, 1996). To overcome the fear of losing one's individuality, Schrieber suggests that the company allow individuals to work in small groups. By allowing employees to work in small groups, the employees can keep their individual identities and encourage teamwork. " Problems in the workplace arise from exclusion, distrust, and

fear. Teams counter these difficulties by creating bonds through working together towards mutually beneficial ends. Therefore, teams play an important part in restructuring the role of the individual and others in the workplace" (Schrieber, 1996). Once, a company becomes team oriented they can experience " increased customer satisfaction and retention, reduced operating costs, increased productivity, improved revenues, increased margins and yields, increased enjoyment of the work place, increased quality of life, increased trust of staff, more empowered staff, and better aligned staff/workloads" (Schrieber, 1996). Schrieber, also states that these groups must be trained in-group dynamics to get the full effect of the team atmosphere, this may be a cost the company does not want to make. A multicultural workforce also put added stress on the managers of the workforce. While managers " need to set the tone for a supportive, open, and receptive environment" (Schrieber, 1996), they also have their own preferences. Schrieber, states that only by moving on past their own preference can managers truly have an effective work force. Schrieber also states, " By modeling biasfree language, both written and spoken, and by illustrating a genuine acceptance of different methods and manners, managers can create a work environment that will nurture and profit from diversity" (Schrieber, 1996). Conclusion To become a great company Worldwide Telecommunications, Inc. must be able to analyze all aspect of becoming a multicultural company. They must weigh all decisions against what they see as the right thing to do for the company. Worldwide Telecommunications, Inc. will need to react in response to cultural changes within the company. In addition, managers will need to identify and value

different work styles, ways of learning and gaining knowledge, and opinions about problems and solutions. Managers need to recognize and value diversity of different cultures. Worldwide Telecommunication maintains its growth strategy. The future challenge is to understand how to assort, sustain and build support. Developing a culture where everyone accepts the challenge, a leaders and working to make a strong organization. Worldwide Telecommunication Inc. is finding new ways in an environment where people are to do more with less. “ Customers and diversity is a way of promoting innovation of thought within the organization" (Bristol myers-Squibb, 2002). Globalization is proving the challenges for organization to connect culture difference, and carry on competitive improvement. Cross-culture alertness is a chance for firms and stockholders to become accustomed to life in the twenty-first century global village; this will allow communication successfully with other cultures. The most important thing is to accept different cultures, values, and beliefs into the workforce. Not to mention, that people will not always view the same point of views, and it is ok to be diverse. Times are different and the great things of living in a country like the United States are the different ethnicities. The freedom to express, practice, and believe in what one chooses, without prosecution. Therefore, it allows people to work, go to school, and live in diversity. Communication and acceptance is a necessity in a working environment because different ideas and thoughts are what make a company and business successful. Perhaps if all individuals thought the same America would not have the laws, and constitutions it has now. With laws, view individuals differently, but allows each individual person to express one another with respect of their individual believes.

Throughout American history, each individual in one way or another has experience diverse multicultural gathering of different ethnic backgrounds. In American society today, we experience diversity like never before. With this changes large corporation such as Worldwide Telecommunication Inc. been force to make implementation where never seen hundred years ago. “ Implementing change is always a challenge. People generally find change disconcerting and work to avoid it. In addition, not everyone within an organization values diversity and some may even find it threatening. Given such realities, companies need to go beyond simple recognition of cultural diversity to active diversity management. Managing diversity is a comprehensive process for developing an environment that works for all employees. Diversity management is an inclusive process and should not be viewed as an us/them kind of problem to be solved. Rather, it should be viewed and presented as a valuable resource to be fostered and used. Incorporating a positive and welcoming attitude towards diverse opinions and outlooks usually means making changes to existing practices and habits. But these changes can be explained in such a way as to highlight their value to the organization as a whole and to the ability of staff members to expand their roles" ([http://www. inc. com/encyclopedia/multicultural-work-force. html](http://www.inc.com/encyclopedia/multicultural-work-force.html)). To conclude businesses and companies need different backgrounds and cultures to help the growth of ideas and challenges. References Kokemuller, N. (2012). Advantages and disadvantages of a multicultural workforce. Demand media. [http://smallbusiness. chron. com/advantages-disadvantages-multicultural-workforce-18903. html](http://smallbusiness.chron.com/advantages-disadvantages-multicultural-workforce-18903.html) Marquardt, M. J. and Hovarth, L. (2001), Global Teams: How Top Multinationals Span Boundaries <https://assignbuster.com/how-to-manage-multicultural-workforce/>



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