

Case for locog workforce diversity?

[Business](#), [Work](#)



Introduction

Diversity within the workforce is one among the significant objectives of LOCOG. This broad objective of acknowledges differences among people in a number of ways with factors which include age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, social status, personality, culture and ethnicity (Foot 2008). Managing of diversity is significant for the successful attainment of LOCOG's objectives and, therefore, management ought to be aware of the importance of workforce diversity and how HR can contribute towards its broader objective of diversity.

This report puts forth a case for workforce diversity in LOCOG and how HR can contribute to this broad objective through its training and development of diversity awareness, its recruitment, selection and overall culture.

Importance of workforce diversity

Management of diversity requires the recognition of value and harnessing workforce differences and individual characteristics such as, religious beliefs, orientations, values, backgrounds, understanding, unique information, and their view of the world, so as to fully utilize individual talents and in turn meet LOCOG's organizational goals (McCuiston 2004).

In LOCOG's endeavor to deliver this most challenging international project to the required standards of the International Olympic Committee and to live up to expectations worldwide, talent and diversity should be leveraged upon. Management focus is essential to ensure that benefits from positive effects

of workforce diversity are accrued and potential negative consequences minimized (Mannix 2005).

Benefits

While diversity management includes commitment to equal employment legislation, this case argues for diversity in the endeavor to gain from its positive effects. Measurable benefits can be derived from policies that serve to promote diversity if properly implemented which include an improved bottom line, enhanced performance in business, satisfaction of employees and therefore loyalty, strong relationships with multicultural communities, attraction of the best and brightest candidates, and overall competitive advantage (McCuiston 2004).

An improved bottom line could benefit the LOCOG through improvement in corporate culture which would consequently improve relationships with employees and clients. Better relationships decrease potential complaints and litigation while improved relations with the workforce would also have positive effects through ease of recruitment and higher retention of staff. Competitive advantage would result from the improved corporate culture and its effects of higher employee morale, higher retention and easier recruitment (Mannix 2005). This improved bottom line and competitive advantage would in turn enhance business performance enabling LOCOG realize its goal.

Diversity increases the variety of perspectives and approaches it brings to opportunities for knowledge sharing and problem-solving, resulting in greater creativity of the team and quality of performance (Syeda 2009).

Research done by the Australian center for International Business (ACIB) shows that diversity improves the quality of decisions of management, through provision of innovative ideas and solutions to problems in the organization that are superior than would be if not embraced (Shen 2009).

A diverse workforce has more effective brainstorming processes resulting in better quality solutions relative to groups that are homogenous. For better effect, this should be premised on a constructive conflict management based primarily on tasks and information sharing (Foot 2008). Variations in education and functional area increases constructive task conflict through differences in opinions and perspectives could positively influence group performance if gainfully harnessed, and especially if cooperative behavior is espoused. While evidence points to progress being affected by conflict and challenges in communication in the short-term, diverse teams foster innovation producing high quality solutions with speed (Syeda 2009).

Implications

With employment relations founded on equality, LOCOG will likely attract and retain a qualified workforce adequate for its quest to deliver on its mandate, and it could also be beneficial in reducing staff turnover and absenteeism. The improvement of quality of decisions by management through diversification and constructive task conflicts, aided by improved relations in its system, higher employee morale, retention, easier recruitment and cooperation, would give LOCOG better capacity to deliver, giving it the required competitive advantage as it seeks to achieve on its objectives.

Management of workforce diversity effectively enables access to the changing marketplace in the increasingly diverse global market, which also helps in the improvement of corporate image (Shen 2009). With attachment of value to diversity, this can become a source of competitive advantage for LOCOG as it hosts this international event.

Role of HR in LOCOG's diversity management

Proper management of diversity in LOCOG can result in the enhancement of overall efficiency and greater effectiveness towards a successful delivery of its mandate. This should be premised on recognition of differences as positive attributes rather than problems that require solutions (Shen 2009). The potential benefits will not come into being simply as a result of diversity but corporate competence and increased tolerance for individuality would also be required to create an atmosphere that favors inclusion and values diversity (Syeda 2009).

The HR function as the custodian of processes of people management, is mainly concerned with its contribution to business strategy. Previous studies have concluded that use of a variety of HR toolkits in addressing inequalities in recruitment, appraisal, advancement and rewarding can have the consequent effects of enhancing equal opportunity employment, improving inclusiveness and enhancement of creativity in the diverse workforce (Syeda 2009). Effective HR strategies require a focus on enhancing organizational learning and knowledge creation, overall flexibility and the development of work environments which are conducive to diversity management and which include the nurturing of teamwork, participation and cohesiveness. There is

need to measure demographics or identity profile of work groups, the dominant culture in the organization, and employee perceptions in order to identify cultural barriers that could hinder participation of employees (McCuiston 2004).

Training and development of diversity awareness

High quality diversity awareness enhances effective integration of diverse team or group members. It builds a common understanding of values espoused in diversity and therefore social cohesion (Mannix 2005). HR needs to assess training needs and clarify training objectives so as to tailor it to the specific needs of LOCOG's diversity objective. The aim of diversity awareness is to reduce stereotyping and prejudice and should be incorporated into the design of the training (McCuiston 2004).

A top-down training strategy providing awareness to managers at senior level initially then down to the team level would be valuable, linking training to the strategic diversity objective. The use of facilitators external to LOCOG in the awareness training would also help HR achieve higher productivity levels in shorter time enhancing constructive conflict in the short-term (Mannix 2005). LOCOG management should ensure the provision of equal opportunity to all employees for promotion and personal development through well designed professional development programs and career planning. This would entail direct interventions by top executives in the promotion process to ensure that diversity goals are met.

Recruitment and selection

Managing workforce diversity and increasing representation is a critical HR strategy and there is need to develop multiple cultures in LOCOG so as to avoid the tendency towards homogeneity which might negatively impact effectiveness in the long term. There is need for HR and line managers engaged in recruitment to be aware of ways in which beliefs, attitudes and stereotypes influence interview behavior, so that deliberate measures to foster diversity can be instituted (Shen 2009). Additionally, employees must be adequately prepared to take on demanding assignments through mentoring strategies to enhance productivity and performance.

Culture

A strategic management philosophy is required which recognizes diversity as reflected in LOCOG's vision and business strategy, as well as, HR formulated diversity policies to support to this philosophy. This is aimed at developing an institutional culture creating an atmosphere of mutual respect of all employees, and entails appropriate shifts whenever there is recognition of unfavorable norms and values in the dominant organizational culture that do not take individual differences into consideration. Such a culture should cover the formulation and implementation of training, appraisal and pay policies enforcing the notion of equality and fairness (Syeda 2009).

Conclusion

This report presents a case for workforce diversity in LOCOG as it seeks to deliver the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic games. Benefits that could accrue from this diversity and implications have been outlined and include

improvement in bottom line and workforce relations, resulting in enhanced efficiency, gains in competitive advantage and thus enhanced business performance which would enable LOCOG achieve its objectives and mandate. HR seeks to contribute to the realization of these benefits through deliberate training and development of diversity awareness and culture evaluation, as well as, focusing on workforce diversity in the recruitment and selection of staff.

References

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