

Managing a diverse workforce essay examples

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



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Companies operating in Middle Eastern countries or dealing with Arabic organizations often face cultural clashes when serving clients. These countries have cultural values that differ greatly from Western values.

Managing diversity in such a set up can be a particularly challenging task. The ethical dilemma faced by Julie's manager is possibly one of the more common issues that arise when organizations deal with particularly orthodox and culturally different clients. In this case, the client does not want Julie to be a part of the team catering to them because she is a woman. In order to effectively tackle this situation, it is important to understand the 'why' behind the client's preference.

When oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia in 1953, the country changed from a trade based economy to being the largest exporter of oil in the world. This change has opened up several avenues of economic growth with the increasing involvement of global companies. However, it should be noted that, unlike Western countries, where diversity is acknowledged and accepted, Saudi Arabia is a much more conservative country which strictly adheres to its ethnicity and religion. This particularly applies to the role that men and women play in the corporate sphere.

Despite great growth in the economic sphere, it is still difficult for women to gain employment in the corporate sector. Saudi women generally seek employment in places that require minimal interaction with men, such as schools and hospitals. It should be noted that schools in Saudi Arabia are segregated into only girl's schools and only boy's schools. Similarly, there are separate clinics and hospitals for women that have all female staffs.

Where women do find employment in the corporate sphere, it is obligatory for them to dress modestly, with most women donning the ' hijab' or a dress that covers the entire body, often even wearing the ' naqab' or veil to cover the face. While shaking hands is common men, women almost never have any physical contact with male colleagues.

In fact, it is considered rude if a male employee directly looks at a female colleague, as it is not permissible in Islam for a man who does not belong to a woman's direct family to look upon her. As language and religion hold such a dominant place in the Saudi Arabia society, expats generally have to adopt several practices in order to effectively interact with their colleagues. It is necessary for a person to dress modestly while in the country. Expat women who are employed the private sector need to wear clothes that do not reveal their skin. Knee length skirts or sleeveless shirts, that may be considered formal wear in countries like the US and UK, are seen as disrespectful .

If Julie is told that she cannot be part of the team because of the team because she is a woman, it would be considered gender discrimination and would be against the basic concept of fairness when addressing people issues . While such discrimination would be considered a Federal offence under US laws, it is quite common in Saudi Arabia for men not to interact with women, as highlighted through the earlier discussion. Hence, the problem here is not a people issue or gender discrimination.

Thinking from a ' consequentialist' perspective will provide a clearer insight into the right course of action in Julie's case. To begin with, the prime priority of every organization is the client and customer satisfaction. Secure Bank has been pursuing the Big Oil account for two years and hence a lot of time

and resources have already been invested into the deal. The client is a major petroleum company and the monies involved will, likewise, be substantial towards the financial health of the bank. Should the deal not go through as a result of Julie's inclusion of the team, it would be a great loss to the organization as well as other team members who have worked hard to attain this business.

As Julie's manager, I would first explain the situation to her. I would make it a point to sincerely acknowledge her hard work and inputs that have gone into making the deal possible. I would also emphasize that the bank not only appreciates but also needs dedicated employees such as her on its workforce. However, it is the bank's fiduciary responsibility to adhere to the client's request. It would be proposed that while, in order to accommodate the client's request, she may not directly deal with Big Oil or working on their account officially, her expertise in the oil & gas sector will be greatly beneficial in guiding the bank's business growth efforts. I would apologize on behalf of the bank for any possible feelings of disappointment that this may have caused to her as well as assure her that the bank values her as an employee.

Works Cited

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