

# Strategies for addressing the challenges and opportunities of workplace diversity...

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The diversity of people in the workplace is one of the greatest strengths of organizations as it encourages different perspectives in decision-making, widening the market reach of a company and allows equal chance for all employees to advance. However, effective implementation of diversity in the work place requires zealous approach and corporation from management the opportunities and challenges that arise from workplace diversity. Effective implementation of diversity and inclusion requires several effective strategies. According to Gröschl, (2011), managing diversity is a comprehensive process aimed at ensuring a work environment that includes everyone. The management should focus on personal awareness when creating a successful diverse workforce. This requires awareness of personal biases by both managers and associates. Consequently, organizations should develop, implement, and maintain ongoing training aimed at changing behavior of people at the workplace (Gröschl, 2011).

The initial stage to implementing a diversity program involves recruiting people from diverse backgrounds and ensuring that they welcome diversity in the workplace. This does not mean sidelining applicants who qualify but fail to meet the criteria, but modifying the recruitment procedure to include additional issues related to diversity. Organizations can include requirements such as requirement for applicants to have the ability to work in a diverse work environment in their job descriptions. This will help eliminate people with open views against diversity. The interview panel should establish the willingness of the applicant to be included in the detailed diversity program. This can help an organization access a large pool of highly qualified personnel from which to choose. For example, IBM has a diversity

recruitment program that offers Hispanics, African-Americans, Asian, Native American, women and people with disability the chance to apply for career opportunities at IBM (IBM, 2013). This strategy has enabled IBM access a wide pool of diverse personnel.

It is relatively easier for younger employees to embrace diversity in the workplace while it may prove difficult for some. While some of the employees may show their willingness to embrace diversity, they might not know how they can achieve this. There are a number of options that organizations can explore train employees on diversity based on budget limitation. Some organizations pay for employees to undergo a diversity-training program. Companies that do not have adequate training budget for organized program for training diversity could organize retreat for their employees. Such retreats can take place in nearby resorts or hotels or more relaxing environments. Such retreat helps employees to interact in a social setting, allowing diverse employees to handle important concerns.

Organizations should keep an open-door policy to enable to allow for open communication between managers and employees. Supervisors should provide suitable atmosphere where employees can reach them to express their concerns and comment on issues that relate to diversity. This can help an organization avoid some of the anxiety experienced in a diverse workplace setting. Keeping an open-door policy helps companies reduce conflicts among employees and enhance the confidence of employees who are already experiencing problems in their work. HP has an open door policy, which outlines the commitment of the company to creating an attractive working environment. The policy allows for open communication in an

environment of mutual respect and trust that creates a solid foundation for growth, collaboration, success, and high performance across HP (HP, 2013). The open door-policy has enabled HP to ensure a diverse workplace for its employees and nature innovation.

Another strategy that companies should implement in addressing the challenges and opportunities of workplace diversity is improving conflict resolution. Companies that do not have a plan for resolving conflicts should establish one that promotes diversity in the workplace. Conflicts must arise in a diverse workplace and companies should prepare in advance. The process of developing a plan for conflict resolution should start with developing ways of resolving existing diversity issues. Such processes may include encouraging employee openness, ensuring that both sides present their grievances, advancing a solution that both parties can accept, arranging a common gathering with both parties and outlining an agreement document that presents the divergence and how the solution came.

Diversity in the workplace is a reflection of changing world and marketplace. Organizations highly benefit from diverse teams as they bring value.

Encouraging employees to respect individual difference will benefit the workplace by creating an edge and enhancing productivity of employees.

Management of diversity benefits both companies and employees by creating a safe environment with equal access to opportunities and challenges. Organizations must put into place strategies to help in addressing the opportunities and challenges of diversity. Educating workers on diversity in the workplace is the best strategy that companies can use to address the challenges and opportunities presented by diversity. In

conclusion, most organization comprise of diverse culture, so organizations must make it a priority to learn how to be successful.

## **References:**

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