

Definition of workplace diversity

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Workplace diversity affects everything from the market potential to the employee morale of a business or organization. Though challenges are inherent with workplace diversity, cultivating a diverse workforce can help a company to better navigate the global economy of the 21st century.

Scope Workplace diversity can include everything from race, gender and age to socioeconomic and educational background. Diversity in the workplace can also be seen in differing communication styles, physical abilities, lifestyle choices, skill levels and personality traits.

Significance During the 1960s, workplace diversity primarily referred to diversity in race and gender, reflecting the civil liberties and civil rights movements. Since the 1990s, however, workplace diversity has come to encompass a wide variety of cultural differences.

Dimensions Workplace diversity is often understood as the obvious differences between individuals. Underlying cultural values, though, are also aspects of diversity, such as the American value of individual freedom versus the Japanese value of collective effort.

Function When cultivated proactively and wisely, workplace diversity can be an asset to an organization. A diverse workforce can help prepare an organization for a global economy, to provide increased market potential and to prevent legal complications.

Effects Workplace diversity can create challenges and conflicts as individuals learn to communicate with one another and navigate their differences. However, workplace diversity can also result in improved morale, increased innovation and more effective decision-making.

Recommendations Organizations can help to foster workplace diversity in a number of ways, including through informed recruiting and hiring practices. Creating and maintaining a strong organizational culture, as well, can help employees to navigate the inherent challenges of a diverse