

Organizational behavior: ursula burns and xerox case study examples

[Business](#), [Company](#)



INTRODUCTION

In the modern global business world people interact within organizations to achieve a variety of targets. Organizational behavior helps realize how people influence each other in companies. Given this fact, organizations are examining ways to treat employees respectfully and to support them at work creating a stressless workplace, motivating staff and maintaining competitive advantages among their rivals (Schermerhorn et al 26). Additionally, realizing organizational behavior managers receive perfect insights into the problems of individual differences, values and diversity, which have become increasingly popular and important in the recent years. With the increasing value of diversity in the workplace, organizations need to review and improve their current strategies to be successful (Schermerhorn et al 26). This writing demonstrates the importance of individual differences, values and diversity in the workplace relying on Xerox's experience; analyzes company's attitude to workplace diversity that has been modified over the years; reveals reasons why Xerox should stimulate diversification of their workforce; illustrates how Xerox shows it appreciates workforce diversity; examines the reasons why Xerox defies the "leaking pipeline" phenomenon and compares the corporation to other Fortune 500 companies. Additionally, this paper suggests some tools for the improvement of the current corporate attitude toward diverse workplace.

XEROX'S ATTITUDE TOWARD DIVERSITY

In business, diversity considered HR managing as fundamental steps in promoting businesses in the global context. Diversity also helps use

individual differences as an effective business tool. Relying on the Case data, Xerox defines diversity as the most valuable resource to promote the organization towards reaching its business targets (Schermerhorn et al W-101).

Xerox's former CEO, Anne M. Mulcahy, reported that diversity can be seen not just in age, gender, race, disability differences (Schermerhorn et al W-101). She was sure that diversity created a supporting work environment for the staff, in which they could enhance their potential and be promoted to the highest positions (Schermerhorn et al W-101). Given this fact, employees with various ways of acting and thinking can create innovative ideas and perform more effectively. By integrating in the organization like Xerox people with various cultures and values, the corporation creates corporate diversity and provides innovative solutions and enhances competitive advantage. Modern society is characterized by advanced technologies (Internet, Web), which allow to set up global contacts and to communicate without limits. Xerox is presented all over the world and the diversity of its staff is a great advantage for it. Acknowledgement of individual differences and their application for satisfying the consumers' needs contributes greatly to the success of the company.

Global economic crisis and numerous problems have considerably changed the company's attitude towards individual differences and have placed a particular emphasis on the importance of diversity (Schermerhorn et al W-102). No doubt, Xerox's attention to diversity will intensify and become stronger in the nearest future.

REASONS WHY XEROX STIMULATES DIVERSITY

There are seven reasons that stimulate Xerox to diversify their workforce (Schermerhorn et al W-102):

- Attracting talents from over the world. Xerox can attract more talents if people of various race, views and cultures are employed.
- Knowledge and experience sharing. People with various values, knowledge employed by Xerox can share experience and skills, produce more creative solutions and develop effective management systems.
- Increased productivity. By adopting employees' experience, capabilities and skills the company can globally enhance its productivity.
- Diminished discrimination. Xerox focuses on elimination of race and gender discrimination. Consequently, more than 50 percent of Xerox's employees are women and minorities (Vagianos). Actually, more than a half of senior executives are women. This motivates staff to feel comfortable and perform better. The company believes that these measures promote and emphasize diversity enabling employees to demonstrate their capabilities at full regardless race and gender and improving the quality of service provided by Xerox worldwide.
- Strong linkages among company members. Staff effectively and smoothly cooperates like a team owing to equal rights and opportunities for all. It strengthens the corporate spirit and effectiveness of the organization worldwide.
- Improved corporate brand image. The policy of market diversification has considerably improved Xerox's brand image and ranked it as the leader in ensuring diversity in the workplace.

- Global market needs. With the development of business globally, Xerox needs to employ people with various skills and knowledge regardless of their gender and race to ensure its sustainable development. Thus, global market influences the Xerox's diversification strategy and considerably improves it. Xerox believes diverse people to be the source of fresh ideas, owing to which the company can achieve its critical business goals. To ensure diversity in the workplace, Xerox promotes a number of measures, for instance, balanced Workforce Strategy and female/minority vendor Program (Schermerhorn et al W-102), which provide executive cooperation, close and open communication, various training and development programs, strategy development.

XEROX AND THE “ LEAKING PIPELINE” PHENOMENON

Under the conditions of the globalized economy and increased workforce diversity the experienced staff supply has become extremely crucial for organizations and their business results (Vagianos). Moreover, evidence exists that in the recent years women have become even more experienced and goal-oriented than men and more often they occupy the highest positions in various European organizations. Even more organizations believe that women at senior positions can bring more profit and support the company's sustainable economic growth (Vagianos).

However, in the U. S. top managers are mainly men and women are hugely underrepresented in senior positions. According to the latest data, women occupy less than 20 percent positions in Boards of Directors (Vagianos). This tendency is called the “ leaking pipeline” phenomenon (Schermerhorn et al

44).

Xerox amazingly refuses to accept the “leaking pipeline” phenomenon. They promote female workforce and believes that women’s involvement and role need to be increased in their company worldwide. American businesses have a little proportion of women being promoted to the top positions in comparison with men. Actually, women often have fewer chances to go up to the top and are being prevented to succeed at work. However, Xerox defies this tendency and provides men, women and minorities with equal rights and opportunities in the company (Bryant). For instance, in 2007 Ursula Burns became the first African-American female president and in two years was appointed as the CEO following Anne Mulcahy (Vagianos). Such a female handoff experience has happened for the first time in the Xerox’s history and in Fortune 500 companies (Vagianos).

Xerox is an amazingly successful company and it demonstrates the importance of individual differences and the ways it can be effectively managed. Defying the “leaking pipeline” phenomenon, the company can hold talented women, support them by providing various development programs, reduce the staff flow, increase overall corporate devotion and loyalty, and improve its brand image worldwide (Bryant).

Women have more unique abilities and skills compared to men. However, very often in male-dominated business sphere women have narrow prospects of promotion to the higher ranks and executive positions. Their skills and abilities are very often being ignored. Actually, women lack career development opportunities and openness of decision-making on career matters. Women account for less than 5 percent of all Fortune 500 CEOs

(Vagianos). Unfortunately, the trend of underrepresentation of women at executive positions is stable and obviously will continue in the nearest future. Such famous companies as General Motors, PepsiCo, HP, and IBM have female CEOs. Xerox is one of the Fortune 500 firms, which has the African-American female CEO, Ursula Burns. Actually, at Xerox more than 40 % of all higher ranks managers are minorities and women (Vagianos).

While Xerox and other well-known companies have chosen a priority to promote women into executive roles, a great female lack still remains at main top positions. Over the past five years, the number of female board members and CEOs has remained unchanged (Vagianos).

Lots of surveys study female representation within the market leader. The results are the following: in 2008, women accounted approximately 6 percent among other Fortune 500's higher-income earners (Vagianos). By 2013 this figure has reached 8 percent (Vagianos). The survey hold in 2013 reported that just 17% of companies' board seats were occupied by women and that there is no tendency to decreasing that gender gap (Vagianos). The main reason of this problem is not the lack of talented women, but the unwillingness to hire or promote women into the top positions. That is why more than 130 of top Fortune 500 firms have male CEOs (for instance, Google and Apple) and 10 percent of all Fortune 500 firms don't have female employees on their corporate boards at all (Vagianos).

Actually, success of business performance depends on the diversity level and variety of individuals employed by companies. Lack of female executives may result in losses of profitable business opportunities and stagnation of business processes. It is crucial to improve the presented statistics applying

the following steps (Schermerhorn et al 48):

- Strong interest in female promotions to top executive positions.
- Role patterns for minorities, gender and ethnic groups.
- Opportunities for collaborating with potent colleagues.
- Support from the instructors and trainers who can offer career guidance and development programs.
- Comprehensive culture that supports individual differences within an organization.
- Reduced stereotypes among employees and loyalty to new values.

CONCLUSION

Thus, Xerox's major priority and the key to success is socio-cultural diversity of the workplace and equal opportunities for men and women, minorities and ethnical groups. The corporation combines a lot of people with different views and religious beliefs, speaking different languages. The diversity is the core corporate advantage and is the driving force for future innovation.

Diverse people are the main company's asset that unites various employees worldwide. Employees have equal opportunities that are available to everyone in the company. This is the only way to success and sustainable development in future. According to the case study, Xerox has several reasons to stimulate diversity:

- Involvement of diverse qualified professionals, development of their abilities and promotion to the highest positions improves corporate brand image.
- Encouragement of creativity and innovation by creating the conditions

under which employees with different points of view, diverse experience and education to work together efficiently.

- Differentiation from other companies and creation of strong competitive advantages.

- Control of turnover and absenteeism costs.

- Opportunity to better understand employees, motivate and retain them.

Thus, Xerox's diversification strategy is very effective and it deserves to be a good example for other firms appointing CEOs.

Works Cited

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