

# Summary of article diversity does not apply to companies' executives



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Summary of article Diversity does not apply to companies' executives Carol Kleiman, in her article Diversity does not apply to companies' executives, examines how far the concept of diversity has gone into the hiring practices of companies in the United States. In this context, Kleiman defines diversity as 'the equal hiring and promoting of women, minorities, disabled and gay employees in the workplace.'<sup>1</sup> The writer uses the views of Susan Holland, president of Holland Rusk & Associates, a Chicago based executive search firm, to elaborate on the current practices.

Holland, who has been in the recruiting business for the past twenty years, finds the term still evolving. Hiring from diverse backgrounds started as a practice against discrimination. An ideal situation is when diversity helps a company to answer its business needs.

However, very senior positions in most companies are still held by the white male majority. This is in spite of the proven fact that a diverse work force at different levels can help a company to function more effectively. A good number of companies comply with anti-discrimination laws by hiring from diverse backgrounds in the lower rungs of their work force. When it comes to the higher positions, companies usually say that those who are not promoted to higher levels have not stayed with the company long enough. There are also fears about the problems a diverse work force may bring in, such as possible litigation.

Holland suggests that companies can do better in this aspect by developing databases of useful people from diverse backgrounds and initiating real mentoring programs. However, at the end of the day what matters is that the company hires the best people for its business needs. Hence the concept of diversity still has potential to evolve.

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Holland has been in the hiring business for two decades, so the article is able to uncover the real issues at hand. It adopts a pragmatic approach that blends ideals with the practical needs of running a business. Political, social and business leaders will need to work out specific ways to promote diversity of hiring while maintaining the interests of the businesses in question. While the debate is still on, the concept has already taken root in the education scenario. The diversity of students who come from various nationalities, backgrounds and lifestyles to the Berkeley College in NYC is a remarkable example in case. The College nurtures their diverse talents and encourages them to achieve their full potential. Thus the College has been a pioneer in integrating the concept of diversity into work practices.