

Workforce diversity

[Business](#), [Employment](#)



What challenges and opportunities does workforce diversity present for managers of organisations in Australia? Illustrate your answer with reference to an example(s) where appropriate. This essay explores the challenges and opportunities workforce diversity present for managers of organisations in Australia. Comparing to the 18th century where work diversity was “ Virtually non-existent” (Wagner 2012) only then were white males seen as predominant in the workforce.

But as we are entering the 21st century, businesses are beginning to understand the absolute importance of having a practice or policy that seeks to include people who are considered to be “ Different from those of the prevailing constituency” (McInnes, Diversity World, 1999) Referring to those that may differ and have similarities in terms of ethnicity, race, age, sex, physical abilities and religion.

It is further argued that strong diversity in businesses assist in a better understanding of desires and preferences of the ever growing global consumer market, meaning the companies productivity and strategies may increase due to the range of employee demographics. However the essay also points out that workforce diversity may increase challenges for managers and create more difficulties as an individual workers concept of norm and acceptance of cultural diversity may be hard to embrace and thus create tension and exclusion between the workforces.

Many managers use diversity hiring in the workforce as it creates more opportunities for their employees to work more effectively. This means a company may hire people of vast cultural backgrounds or religious backgrounds to benefit their company a way in which employees are able to

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generate similar ideas and also come up with solutions to a problem but with many perspectives and views that can help the company improve. (Bergen, Soper & Parnell 2005, p. 1) indicated that results have shown economic success if directly related to diversity in an organisation.

The most recognised form of workforce diversity relates to the employee being able to find similarities and relations to their consumers. Employees that are able to speak various languages are very useful when it comes to being able to communicate with customers. This can also apply with age groups and genders as it is easier for them to relate to one another and reflect the community they serve. For example, a women's magazine that is targeted on a range of women would preferably have on staff different aged and ethnical backgrounded women working.

This helps with the productivity of the magazine with each individual employee being able to make an input of their unique idea that may relate specifically to certain subgroups of women. In a similar way, workforce diversity is seen as a profit enhancer for companies. It yields for better team commitment and team problem solving as teams with heterogeneous workers tend to produce broader range of results and serve as mentors of success, giving " organisations a definite competitive advantage" (Tickner 2006, p.)

The production rate of a company is enhanced by diverse workers through mutual learning. Diversity in skills and abilities means workers with different skill levels are able to learn off or from one another, meaning workers are able to execute tasks faster and more efficiently, creating a more sufficient work environment with more skilled workers. Also, collaboration between

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diverse workers means there is a strong communication between the workers.

If demographic workers are able to communicate with one another and are able to coordinate each other's progress of work, then this will be beneficial to the company and the manager in charge as less communication costs are needed to run programs that depict the seriousness of racism and workplace bullying. (Hamilton 2004) claimed "Diversity in ability enhances the team's productivity if there is significant mutual learning and collaboration within the team". However in saying so, complications with diverse workers are still constantly arising for managers.

Having demographically heterogeneous workers can create difficulties in communication and productivity if secondary influences such as religion, education and socioeconomic class differs them from each other, creating exclusion and discomfort between the employees. (Tetteh, 2008) claimed " Even now, in the twenty-first century, there is still much to learn about how to minimize the negative outcomes of diversity. " The productivity rate of a company may down grade if demographical workers are placed outside their social norm.

Such as workers who may be prejudice in a way where groups of similar individuals are formed, creating isolation from the team and thus less productivity is made. Cultural differences among the work place limit their knowledge of one another, making it uncomfortable to make social ties, creating conflict and a decrease of efficiency. According to Barbosa and Cabral-Cardoso (2007, p. 275-276) " Prejudice and discrimination in the

workforce can result from individual thoughts and attitudes. " An example of discrimination in the workplace would be racism.

It may occur as groups exclude certain minority groups by taking sides and stereotyping each other because of their different beliefs and backgrounds. It creates difficulties for the manager as the workplace becomes unsafe and unwelcoming for certain employees, decreasing the work efficiency and also the safety of the workplace. Having demographically heterogeneous workers that are resistant to adapting to diversity can create great negative effects to the company's revenue and productivity. High turnover can be expected for the manager in charge as workers lose interest in their workplace and feel uncomfortable returning to work.

Batt and Colvin (2011) state that data has shown from a survey that quits and dismissals from work organisations are related significantly to the expectations of an organisation as well as the standard of customer service. This accounts for the workplace efficiency and productivity, and whether the employees are performing well and whether or not the company is welcoming. If not this may be harmful to the company as productivity rates may decrease due to the fact of skilled workers leaving, often leaving behind the inexperienced workers with the company.

Loss of workers can place much strain on the company's direct costs and indirect costs. Direct costs refer to the companies having to replace the workers, this takes up money as advertisements and paper work is to be filled out, with an addition to the level of training required for the individual workers. Indirect costs refer to the loss of productivity and the fact that time had to be taken out of the company's production time to recruit workers.

Ultimately, it is apparent that challenges and opportunities are constantly being faced by managers in the 21st century.

When it comes to Workforce diversity, workers can generate both positive and negative effects for the manager. It may affect the productivity and success of a company as well. In saying so, workers that refuse to adjust to demographical workers are found to create complications for a manager as it leads to racism and workplace bullying. However workers that embrace diversity can be seen as adaptive as they use it to their advantage, creating success not only for themselves but for the manager and company.