

MANAGING DIVERSITY: Meeting the Needs of Workforce 2020

Organizations are responding to the diverse needs of their employees in a number of different ways. Outlined here are some ideas that might be adopted as a means to introduce diversity.

ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL DIVERSITY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A VISION.

For some organizations, assessing where they are and determining where they want to be may be the preliminary phase of diversity management. Organizations that have not been involved in formal or informal affirmative action analysis may first want to conduct an analysis to gain an understanding of the current makeup of their workforce, and then establish a vision for where they want to be.

TARGETED RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS.

For organizations that have not met their goals of diversity, a targeted recruitment program may be the initial step. Many businesses are looking at focused, targeted recruitment programs that directly speak to blacks, women, older workers, and other labor market segments.

SENSITIVITY TRAINING/INFORMATION SEMINARS.

Many organizations, especially those that have not had diversity represented in their workplaces, are finding that they must educate and inform their managers and employees on diversity issues. These organizations are offering educational seminars and sensitivity training to ensure that their management teams are comfortable and supportive of all employees.

One large multi-unit employer, for example, has developed a series of training programs focused on different labor market segments, including older workers, younger workers, and people with disabilities, to ensure that their management team could effectively recruit and retain members of these important labor market segments.

Other organizations have also modified their on-going training efforts so that all new and existing managers and supervisors are exposed to diversity training as part of the supervisory training process.

ANALYSIS AND CHANGE OF CORPORATE CULTURE.

Some organizations are finding that their corporate cultures are not open to diversity. Companies such as Dow Corning have had to make major modifications to their corporate culture to ensure that all employees have

equal opportunities for growth and advancement.

TASK FORCES.

Some companies, like Honeywell, have formed special employee task forces, employee networks, or offices of diversity to discuss and report to top management on various employment issues. For example, Honeywell has formed an Older Worker League (OWL) to review benefits, employment issues, and other topics that impact their workers as a group. They report on these issues to top management and keep the organization tuned in to how various programs benefit or exclude this labor market segment.

US West boasts “resource groups” for American Indian, Asian, black, differently abled, gay and lesbian, Hispanic, Vietnam Veteran, and women employees. These are typical of groups being formed across the country to better enable employers to meet the needs of their employees.

HOLDING MANAGERS ACCOUNTABLE.

Some organizations have found that if diversity is to succeed, then all managers must be held accountable for that success. Performance criteria and bonuses must be based upon the effective management of diversity, including recruitment and retention. Once managers understand that their personal success in the organization is linked to a shared commitment to that goal, organizations can begin to see change take place.

Diversity in the workplace will be with corporate America for many years to come. It is the organization that wishes to remain competitive that will embrace the opportunities of diversity and meet the needs of the Workforce 2020.

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