Chapter 9

A History of How U.S. Academics, Laws, and Business Have Created the Current Approach to Organizational Diversity with Some Ideas for Moving Forward

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to clearly define and address the original intended usage of terms among academicians, the law, and businesses regarding diversity: workforce diversity (cultural diversity and gender diversity) and global diversity (cultural diversity and multicultural diversity). The proposed comprehensive Guidelines for Diversity Training Program as common ground to shared gain takes into consideration different paradigms of various parties (academicians, politicians, and practitioners) in two ways. First, the Diversity Training Program utilizes the academicians' rhetorical definitions of diversity, incorporates the legality component of diversity, and transforms it into a functional strategy to assist firms with hiring diverse competent staffs who possess the appropriate KSAOs qualifications as common ground to shared gain. Second, the Diversity Training Program starts with diversity from the beginning (with the recruiting and selecting), supports diversity through its process (with diversity appreciation), and continues to promote diversity thereafter (with mentorship).

INTRODUCTION

Among the many environmental trends affecting organizations in recent years is the rapidly changing composition of the workforce, a phenomenon known as workforce diversity (Bhadury, Mighty, & Damar, 2000), which is a dynamic phenomenon because of the rapidly changing composition. Increasing globalization requires more interaction, quantitative and qualitative, among people

from diverse cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds than ever before. People no longer live and work in an insular marketplace for they are now part of a worldwide economy with competition coming from nearly every continent. For this reason, organizations need diversity to become more creative and open to change. Therefore maximizing and capitalizing on workplace diversity has become an important issue for management today.

Diversity issues are now considered important and are projected to become even more important in the future due to increasing differences in the population of many countries. Companies need to focus on diversity and look for ways to become more inclusive organizations because diversity has the potential of yielding greater productivity and competitive advantages. Competitive advantage as derived from the creation, acquisition, transfer, use, and protection of knowledge provides opportunities for organizations to create and sustain competitive advantage. To do so, organizations must be able to build and sustain knowledge within their core businesses, yet protect much of that knowledge from discovery by competitors. According to Mazur and Bialostocka (2010), managing and valuing diversity is a key component of effective people management, which can improve workplace productivity. Unmanaged diversity in the workplace might become an obstacle for achieving organizational goals. These organizational goals include, but are not limited to, innovations, return on investment (ROI), and organizational longevity. Therefore diversity can be perceived as a "double-edged sword" (Mazur & Bialostocka, 2010, p. 5).

The purpose of this chapter is to explore and clarify usage of terms among academicians, the law, and businesses regarding diversity: workforce diversity (cultural diversity and gender diversity) and global diversity (cultural diversity and multicultural diversity). Upon having a more clearly defined understanding of terms and their intended usage, strategy in identifying knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) within

diversity (Tran, 2008) will be addressed. This chapter will conclude with recommendations on effective and appropriate program(s) on managing diversity in organizations based on KSAOs.

RHETORIC OF DIVERSITY

The twenty-first-century organization is characterized by ever-increasing global competition, ever-changing customer expectations, and ever-increasing change (Cao, Clarke, & Lehaney, 2003). The world's increasing globalization requires more interaction among people from diverse cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds than ever before. To respond to these pressures, many organizations face a situation where they "either change or die" (Beer & Nohria, 2000, p. 133), with "approximately 84 per cent of American companies… undergoing at least one major business transformation" (Romano, 1995, p. 6). However, while the management of change (MOC) has become an increasingly important area for management attention, the downside is that it seems to suffer adversely high failure rates, at times above 70% (Siegal, Church, Javitch, Waclawski, Burd, Bazigos, Yang, Anderson-Rudolp, & Burke, 1996; Spector & Beer, 1994; Stanton, Hammer, & Power, 1993).

Quite often, the high failure rate is a result caused by the fact that managing diversity is a concept that sounds good in theory, but has provided mixed results in practice. Top managers are becoming increasingly frustrated and disenchanted with managing diversity programs that have cost organizations billions of dollars over the years, but have yielded little in the way of identifiable positive impact on the bottom line (Hansen, 2003; Kochan, Bezrukova, Ely, Jackson, Aparna, Jehn, Leonard, Levin, & Thomas, 2002; Naff & Kellough, 2003).

Part of the reason for this lack of efficacy may be traced to the dual assumptions that diversity is both inevitable and inherently good (Knouse &

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