

Chapter 14

Training and Development: Leveraging Diversity to Gain Strategic Advantage in Corporate Settings

Denise R. Philpot
University of North Texas, USA

Laura A. Pasquini
University of North Texas, USA

ABSTRACT

Organizations, in their strategic plans to gain competitive advantage, must utilize training and development initiatives that recognize and exploit the current diversity of the entity as well as developing trends that will impact future operations (Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1997). Unfortunately, in many organizations, these initiatives are frequently the victim of cost cutting measures in a tough economy. It is critical that organizations design and implement programs that recognize the diversity of the organization and the customers they serve. It is important to consider how training and development models can support any desired organizational outcomes and diversity objectives. As our definition of diversity changes, this evolution and its impact on training and development curriculum will challenge organizations to review learning curriculum trends, program goals, expenditures, organizational commitment, and achievement. Because of these changes, training professionals should continuously assess learning outcomes, analyze the results, and implement improvements as indicated.

As the world becomes smaller through globalization and the definition of diversity expands to accommodate new dimensions, it becomes increasingly important to identify and measure these changes and interpret how they influence strategic decision-making within organizations. To achieve an organization's stated goals, it is not only important to recognize this diversity, but also build programs to incorporate the benefits of diversity while minimizing any negative aspects associated with this construct. Sharing case studies of best practices will highlight successes that can be used as models for those organizations

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-1812-1.ch014

that are addressing their training needs in the area of organizational diversity. This chapter will share tools designed to help organizations evaluate their needs in terms of diversity training and development. These resources can help training and development professionals identify needs, design curriculum, create evaluation tools for assessment, and evaluate costs to deploy strategic training and development programs.

INTRODUCTION

In today's corporate world, organizations need to create value and develop innovative practices that will lead to a competitive advantage in the marketplace. To manage effectively, organizations must value diversity and make it an integral part of the organization (Gilbert, Stead, & Ivancevich, 1999). By using diversity management strategies in training and development programs, corporations have the ability to enhance their organizational effectiveness and maximize profits. Cox and Blake (1991) indicated that diversity management can lead to the following competitive advantages for organizations: cost savings, resource acquisition, marketing success, enhanced creativity, and problem-solving and system flexibility.

As a result of this paradigm shift, many corporate settings are creating a culture which values and appreciates diversity in the workplace. Organizational benefits for managing cultural diversity to achieve competitive advantage include cost reduction, effective use of recruitment resources, and cultural insight among all employee groups, increased problem-solving capability, and promotion of system flexibility (Gilbert, Stead, & Ivancevich, 1999). The presence of a diverse organization allows a corporation to reach a broader consumer base and market share. When implemented appropriately, training and development initiatives that support diversity management strategies have the potential to dramatically enhance an organizational structure and achieve the objectives of all stakeholders.

Another way to interpret how an organization uses human resources to support the organizational objectives is to determine if an HR system is utilized. According to Lepak, Liao, Yunhyang, and Harden (2006), an HR system is comprised of the organization's HR practices and policies. An example of an HR practice that supports diversity training is making diversity training part of the onboarding process for all new employees as well as refresher courses during the course of employment. The corresponding HR policy that supports that practice would be a policy that requires all new hires to attend training sessions designed to introduce the new employee to the organizational culture, code of conduct, business practices, and commitment to diversity in the workplace. The HR system, comprised of the HR policies and practices that support the strategic goals of the organization, should influence an employee's knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation and effort, and create opportunities for employees to contribute in a meaningful way to the overall success of the organization (Lepak, et al., 2006).

This chapter will address the subject of diversity management strategies as it directly relates to training and development initiatives within the corporate setting. Further, the authors seek to widen the definition of diversity to support the growth of an effective training and development program that utilizes theory, systems, processes, and tools to advance organizational learning and support effective human resource practices.

16 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/training-development-leveraging-diversity-gain/67061

Related Content

Managing the New Psychological Contract

Benjamin Oyegoke Akinyemi (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM* (pp. 640-648).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/managing-new-psychological-contract/13293

An Adoption and Diffusion Perspective on HRIS Usage

Tobias Keimand Tim Weitzel (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM* (pp. 18-23).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/adoption-diffusion-perspective-hris-usage/13204

Communities of Practice

Gonçalo Costa (2009). *Encyclopedia of Human Resources Information Systems: Challenges in e-HRM* (pp. 142-148).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/communities-practice/13221

Emerging Technology Trends and Implications for Diversity Management

Mike A. Guest, Elizabeth Culhaneand Daniel P. McDonald (2013). *Technology as a Tool for Diversity Leadership: Implementation and Future Implications* (pp. 133-146).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/emerging-technology-trends-implications-diversity/74766

Performance Analysis: Crafting the Flair to Make the Difference

Mambo Mupepi (2017). *Effective Talent Management Strategies for Organizational Success* (pp. 47-56).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/performance-analysis/176319