

Background: Business Case for Diversity

*“Strength lies in differences,
not in similarities.”*

Stephen Covey

BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY

Chapter Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- explain why managing diversity in the workplace is an important component of business operations
- show how U.S. demographics shifts affect workplace diversity.
- understand the business case for diversity in the workplace.
- defend the business case for valuing diversity.



Diversity is about recognizing, respecting and valuing differences based on primary differences such as ethnicity, sex, gender, color, age, race, religion, disability, national origin and sexual orientation. It also includes an infinite range of individual unique characteristics and experiences, such as communication style, career path, life experience, educational background, geographic location, income level, marital status, military experience, parental status and other variables that influence personal perspectives.

These life experiences and personal perspectives make us react and think differently, approach challenges and solve problems differently, make suggestions and decisions differently, and see different opportunities. An organization can minimize the costs that are associated with a lack of managing diversity comprehension by understanding what diversity is, why it matters, and how to effectively manage a business in terms of diversity.¹ The first approach addressed in the text to effectively manage those primary differences listed above is valuing diversity (accepting, understanding and respecting diversity).

Valuing diversity is necessary because of the demographic shifts that affect the workplace, because it makes good business sense to do so and also because of the laws created to promote equal opportunity despite race, religion, age, sex and physical or mental ability.² As we continue considering why we should value diversity in the workplace, let's look further at the demographic trends and changes affecting the U.S. population and thus the U.S. workplace.

In 2011, Forbes conducted research where they interviewed 321 executives with direct responsibility or oversight for their companies' diversity and inclusion programs. All respondents worked for large global enterprises with annual revenues of more than US\$500 million. More than 40% worked for companies with annual revenues of \$US5 billion or more. The conclusion of this study was that diversity is a key driver of innovation and is a critical component

of being successful on not just a local level but is essential on a global scale.

Senior executives are recognizing that a diverse set of experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds is crucial to innovation and the development of new ideas. When asked about the relationship between diversity and innovation, a majority of respondents agreed that diversity is crucial to encouraging different perspectives and ideas that foster innovation. These 321 executives also indicated from the company experience that a diverse and inclusive workforce is critical for companies that want to attract and retain top talent. Competition for talent is fierce in today's global economy, so companies need to have plans in place to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse workforce.

But is a diverse workforce for U.S. organizations even a realistic expectation? According to demographic statistics it is. Diversity in the U.S. workplace is becoming more a factor as the United States becomes a hodge-podge of individuals with diverse backgrounds.

Changing Demographic Profile in the United States

According to the 2011 *Changing Demographic Profile of the United States* created by Laura B. Shrestha (Domestic Social Policy for Congressional Research) the United States is the third most populous country globally and accounts for about 4.5% of the world's population.³

This report indicates that the U.S. is indeed becoming more diverse as it is not just growing in size but is also getting older and more racially and ethnically diverse. More than just being double in size, the population has become qualitatively different from what it was in 1950. The following statistics taken from the *United States Demographic Profile 2013* support these diverse demographics⁴:

Population 313,847,465 (July 2012 estimate)

Obesity - adult prevalence rate 33.9% (2006)

Sex/Gender Change*

Despite a small decline in the growth of females in the United States, females still

make up 50% of the U.S. population.

Age Structure

0-14 years = 20%	Male 32,050,686 Female 30,719,945
15-24 years = 13.8 %	Male 22,112,02 Female 21,174,050
25-54 years = 40.6%	Male 63,713,761 Female 63,556,345
55-64 years = 12.1%	Male 18,331,065 Female 19,711,907
65 years and over = 13.5%	Male 18,424,785 Female 24,052,919

*Source: adapted from Congressional Research Service ~ The Library of Congress, titled: The Changing Demographic Profile of the United States, 2011

Ethnic Groups ((July 2007 estimate)

White 79.96% Black 12.85% Asian 4.43%
 Amerindian and Alaska native 0.97% Hawaiian/Pacific islander 0.18%
 Hispanic 15.1% Two or more races 1.61%

Religions(2007 est.)

Protestant 51.3% Roman Catholic 23.9% Mormon 1.7%
 Other Christian 1.6% Jewish 1.7% Buddhist 0.7%
 Muslim 0.6% Other or unspecified 2.5% Unaffiliated 12.1%
 None 4%

	1980	1990	2000	2011
Population	224,811,135	248,710,012	281,421,906	306,110,000
Percent Female	51.5%	51.3%	50.9%	50.8%
Percent Male	48.5%	48.7%	49.1%	49.2%

Race/Ethnicity Change*

U.S. POPULATION – 1996	U.S. POPULATION – 2009
73.6% White	74.5% White
12.0% Black or African American	12.4% Black or African American
3.3% Asian	4.4% Asian
.7% American Indian and Alaska Native	.8% American Indian and Alaska Native
Total Population: 262.8 million	Total Population: 301.4 million

The U.S. population of color surpassed the 100-million mark in May 2007. Today, one in every three Americans is a person of color. According to The Changing Demographic Profile of the United States the U.S. population has made the following changes. It is important to understand that as we discuss racial and ethnic categories, “who” is actually represented by each group.

Racial Designations

Source: Census 2011 Special EEO Tabulation Files⁶

“*White*” refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It also includes people who indicated their race as “White” or wrote in entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Middle Easterner, Arab, or Polish.

“*Black or African American*” refers to people having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicated their race or races as “Black, African American, or Negro” or wrote in entries such as Nigerian, or Haitian.

“*Asian*” refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.

“*Native Americans*” category includes Native Americans, Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. This group refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islander groups such as Tahitian, Mariana Islander, or Chuukese.

All of the above groups (Whites, Blacks, Asians, Native-Americans) represent racial categories, where as those who belong to the Hispanic population represent an ethnicity not a race. In the census questioning, you either are of Hispanic descent or not of Hispanic descent. So, you can be White and of Hispanic descent or Black and of Hispanic descent etc. and all of these numbers are represented by the Hispanic/Latino category.

Beginning with the census 2000, respondents were questioned if they were Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino and in 2009 almost 45 million persons, or about 15.1 of the U.S. population, identified themselves as Hispanic. The remaining 256 million people or 84.9% were not Hispanic.⁷

There is considerable variation in the ethnic mix across the country. The states with the highest proportion of Hispanics are mostly in the west and southwest, while those with the highest proportion of African Americans are mostly in the east and southeast. About 56 per cent of the people in Hawaii are Asian or Polynesian.⁸ Rural and suburban areas are more likely to be inhabited by whites, while people of color more often live in large urban areas.

There are 552 federally recognized Native American groups in the US, of which about 285 have reservations (or regional or village corporations in Alaska) that are recognized by the state or federal government.⁹ These lands total more than 20 million hectares (50 million acres).¹⁰ The US government has recognized the political sovereignty of many of these organizations through treaties, statutes, court decisions, and executive orders.

Other Demographic Facts

Language

English is the predominant language of the US and is spoken by most of the population. US English sometimes differs from British English in spelling, pronunciation, punctuation, and even meaning in some cases. For example, in US English, a lift is an "elevator" and the bonnet of a car is the "hood." Spoken English is very flexible, and idioms and accents differ from one part of the US to another, while written English is more standardized. Many first-, second-, or even third-generation immigrants also speak their native language. In fact, one of every seven Americans speaks a language other than English in the home. Spanish is spoken in many Hispanic communities, and Native Americans speak a variety of Amerindian languages. Many secondary and some elementary schools teach one or more foreign languages, such as Spanish, French, and Japanese.

Religion

Although the US has never had an official state church, about 90 per cent of the population has some religious affiliation, mostly with Christian churches. As early European settlers were predominantly Christian, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are based, in part, on Christian values and principles. However, the Constitution dictates that church and state remain separate. There are dozens of different Christian churches throughout the country. About 26 per cent of the population is Roman Catholic. Baptists, Methodists, and Lutherans are the largest Protestant groups.¹¹ Between 40 and 55 per cent of Christians attend services on a weekly basis.¹² There are also substantial numbers of Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in the US. In addition, some Americans practice alternative or non-traditional religions, and many consider themselves to be atheists or are otherwise non-religious.

All of these statistics show that America is becoming more and more diverse not just in the overall society but in the workplace as well. In looking at the job market, about half of the U.S. market will be Latino/Hispanic, African-American and Asian populations.¹³ Another high growth group that is not represented above is people over the age of 55. The number of persons aged 65 and older had been steadily increasing and reached 35.1 million persons, representing 12.4% of the U.S. population.¹⁴ The baby boom generation is getting older and there will be a large number of people in their 50's—according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁵ Many in this group will be seeking employment and participating actively in the workplace. The Census Bureau also forecasted that immigration would be approaching 820,000 people per year, of which 225,000 will be undocumented. This all indicates that the workplace of today will look very different than yester years.

Fifty Years Ago, The Average Worker:

(Source: Workforce 2000-Hudson Institute: Opportunity 2000, U.S.P.O.L. & American Demographics)

- ✓ was white
- ✓ was male and able-bodied
- ✓ was about 29
- ✓ had less than 12 years of education
- ✓ was married to a woman who became a homemaker and had children
- ✓ worked in a region of his birth
- ✓ was conservative politically
- ✓ held beliefs about work, the role of men and women, minorities, authority and family that were similar their coworkers

- ✓ was loyal to his employer and obeyed authority

Today, in the Workplace:

There is an increasing influence of women

- Close to 48% of today's workforce is female. (DOL)¹⁸
- The 48% is made up of 8% African American women, 5% of Hispanic/Latino women, 2% of Asian women and 0.3% of Native American women and the rest are Caucasian women. (EEOC-8/03)¹⁹
- 49.5% of lower level managers and professionals are women, which is up from 29% in 1970. Of the 49.5%, white women comprise 77%. (BLS)²⁰
- 15.7% of corporate officers are female in 2002, which is up from 8.7% in 1995. Of this 15.7%, white women comprise 88%. (Workforce 2020)²¹
- One in three wives now out-earn their husbands, compared to one in five wives in 1980. For MBAs (Masters of Business Administration), six out of ten women out-earn their husbands.²²
- The percentage of employed women who provide half or more of their household's total income is: 48% of all women in a married couple, 55% of all working women, 91% of women who are separated, divorced or widowed, 90% of women in a single-parent household.²³

There are more people of color

- By the year 2050, nonwhites will represent ½ of the U.S. population. (Census Projections 2050)²⁴
- Beginning in the third quarter of 2001, Latinos made up more than 50% of all California births.²⁵
- The Asian American population grew by 63% during the 1990s, making it the fastest growing minority group.²⁶
- There is more religious diversity and people with disabilities in the workforce.

- There are more than 1500 different types of religious bodies in the U.S. making the U.S. the most religiously diverse country in the world. (ACLU)²⁷
- People with disabilities comprise 11.7% of the U.S. workforce.²⁸

Once a largely homogeneous group, the faces of customers, claimants, producers, employees and suppliers have been transformed into a dynamic mix of people comprised of various races, cultures and backgrounds. “Minorities” are now the majority in six out of the eight largest metropolitan areas of the United States.²⁹

Clearly, the U.S. population is changing dramatically. Forward-thinking companies that recognize and understand the implications of these demographic shifts accordingly will want to alter their customer focus, employee base and business practices to better manage the needs of current and future customers and employees.

Business Case Says We Should Value Diversity

Those who perceive diversity as exclusively a moral imperative or societal goal are missing the larger point. Workforce diversity needs to be viewed as a competitive advantage and a business opportunity.³⁰ It is well-proven that diverse, heterogeneous teams and work groups promote creativity, innovation and product development. Only by fully embracing diversity and maximizing the well-being and contributions of all people can an organization fully maximize the strength and competitiveness of their company. Organizations must therefore encourage individuals to reach their full potential, in pursuit of organizational objectives, without anyone being advantaged or disadvantaged by their difference.

Valuing diversity is also important because the inability to manage diversity in the workplace can be extremely harmful and can cost an organization in many ways. It is important to value diversity due to the costs associated with not doing so **BECAUSE:**

- there is a marketplace of diverse customers with significant purchasing power and unmet needs = \$
- as our work environments become increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse, we must maintain a productive, efficient and harmonious workplace. A non-productive workforce is costly = \$

- business owners need to effectively serve, negotiate with, sell to and manage culturally different people. Lack of this ability results in high turnover, loss training costs, etc...= \$
- companies are tapping into international markets where delayed or failed business transactions can result from ignorance of cultural variations = \$
- unnecessary employee terminations and inappropriate behavior toward difference in the workplace can turn into costly discrimination suits. The following are several discrimination suits that resulted in companies paying millions of dollars to settle: Shoney's at \$132.5 million, Texaco at \$176.1 million and Coca-Cola at \$192.5 million = \$

So, valuing diversity is not just the moral thing to do. It is also makes good business sense. Let's just look at a few companies who have lost valuable profits because they were convicted of discriminatory actions (they were not valuing difference). A secret tape catches Texaco executives belittling blacks. In 1996, it was the year's most dramatic case that began with a tape recorder secretly slipped into a Texaco executive's pocket.³¹ The recording caught executives at the country's 14th-largest corporation ridiculing blacks and plotting to destroy papers pertinent to a long-running racial discrimination lawsuit.

Days after the tape's release, Texaco agreed to a \$176 million settlement, the largest ever at that time for a race discrimination case. Civil rights leaders called a boycott and Chairman Peter Bijur publicly apologized.³² This same year a defense contractor paid \$13 million after showing older workers the door and in another case the government sues an automaker, saying men groped and insulted women at an Illinois plant.

In the year 2000, the Coca-Cola Company agreed to pay \$192.5 million to settle a racial discrimination suit brought by black workers.³³ The settlement included \$113 million in cash, \$43.5 million to adjust salaries, and \$36 million for oversight of the company's employment practices.³⁴ Coca-Cola also would pay \$20 million in attorneys' fees and agreed to create an ombudsman post and have its employment practices reviewed by an outside group. Even with the large settlement that Coca-Cola paid out Ben White, of the *Washington Post* in the April 18, 2002 issue says that "despite 2000 Legal Settlement--Protesters Say Little Has Changed - Protesters lined Seventh Avenue outside Madison Square Garden today to press criticisms of Coca-Cola Co."³⁵ But, has the rest of Corporate America learned its lesson from these companies example? No, a Google search today of discrimination lawsuits still finds a litany of gloomy

headlines about discrimination in the workplace.

Injustices occur from the factory floor to the executive suite. On just February 6, 2007, the Ninth Circuit Court affirmed class certification in the Wal-Mart sex discrimination case (representing all female employees of Wal-Mart) making it the largest civil rights class action ever certified *Dukes v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.* (N.D. Cal. No C-01-2252).³⁶ The suit charges that Wal-Mart discriminates against its female retail employees in pay and promotions. Certification of this class shows that no employer, not even the world's largest employer, is above the law. In addition, according to Seyferth Shaw LLP's 2014 Workplace Class Action Litigation Report there were 12,311 discrimination class action lawsuits filed in 2013. Many of which were settled out of court to avoid larger costs and the bad press associated with this type of lawsuit settlement. The cost of the 10 most expensive settlements in 2013 totaled over \$638 million.

Profiting in America's Multicultural/Ethnic Marketplace begins with an awareness that it can be lucrative if done correctly and costly if not. Therefore, market economic forces should not be ignored but taken very seriously. If we disregard the data on changing demographics, we also disregard the substantial growth in buying power of diverse markets. Not only are these diverse minority groups increasing as a percentage of the U.S. population, but so too is the buying power they wield.

According to The Selig Center Report of University of Georgia's Terry College of Business (2012) total annual buying power in the United States, combining all racial categories, will exceed \$12.2 trillion – an increase of 188 percent from 1990-2012. But, where are some of the notable changes? For one, African American buying power has increased 73 percent between 2000 and 2012, which not only overtakes the 60 percent increase in Caucasian buying power, but also the 67 percent rise in total buying power of all races combined. Two factors contributing to the gains of the African American buying power include a 61 percent increase in black-owned businesses in the five-year period between 2002 and 2007 and 84 percent of blacks over 25 years of age completing high school or college – a sharp increase from 66 percent in 1990.

The third largest minority groups, Asian Americans have achieved a 165 percent gain in buying power between 2000 and 2012 and will reach \$1 trillion by 2019. The U.S. Asian market is already larger than the economies of all but 17 countries in the world. The Asian population is growing faster than the total U.S. population and the Selig Center projects the population to reach 17.2 million in 2012—a gain of 55.2 percent from 2000's base population of 11.1 million. Demographic studies reveal 52 percent of Asians over 25 had a bachelor's or

advanced degree compared to 30 percent of Caucasians. Because the Asian consumer market is so diverse in national ancestries, languages and cultures, businesses that target subgroups will find rewarding niche markets. Georgia is now the 5th largest African-American consumer market in the United States (\$73 billion) and owns a 21.8 percent share of total buying power for the state—the fourth largest share of any state. Compared to the Hispanic and Asian markets, which are concentrated in a handful of states, the African- American market is still more widespread.

In addition, at 1.2 trillion U.S. Hispanic/Latino purchasing power is larger than the economies of scales of all but 13 countries. This economic clout is not limited to ethnic groups as in the U.S. an across the globe women are responsible for \$12 trillion of the \$18 trillion of global buying power.³⁸ Furthermore, the gay and lesbian consumers buying power is approaching \$800 billion. The present and future monetary power of diverse markets is more apparent each year.

- If there are populations' growing faster than the national average is it safe to assume that emphasis should be placed on the needs of these populations?
- If ethnic purchasing power is in the billions per year and approaching trillions (not pocket change) isn't this worthy of a company's interest?
- Is it possible that these targeted ethnic consumers may be more inclined to buy from companies where they see people who look like them working at all levels of the organizations?

Researchers have indicated that the evidence that diversity can deliver a business benefit is complex, arguing that many workforces are diverse in a range of both invisible and established categories.³⁹ But despite the complexity, managing workplace diversity effectively should be a common ground that all can agree is necessary.

The authors above recognize the importance of diversity management, commenting that without appropriate management and organizational culture, benefits of diversity may not be realized and dis-benefits may occur.⁴⁰ The 'dis-benefits of diversity' are identified as including increased conflict within the workforce; poorer internal communications; and increased management costs. Diversity can be considered an expression of difference, which, if successfully managed, should reduce the costs associated with the dis-benefits of diversity.⁴¹The current experience of diversity management demonstrates at least

four main ways in which diversity can contribute to business performance according to the research on *The Diversity Scorecard*.⁴²

1. *Diversity in employment promotes cost-effective employment relations.*
2. *Diversity enhances customer relations.*
3. *Diversity enhances creativity, flexibility and innovation in organizations.*
4. *Diversity promotes sustainable development and competitive advantage.*

Concluding Thoughts

After reviewing the demographics, the costs of devaluing diversity and remarks from current studies that indicate that managing diversity makes good business sense, it becomes increasingly apparent that focusing on diversity and looking for more ways to make full use of the contributions of all employees is necessary for today's competitive workplace. Valuing diversity can yield greater productivity, competitive advantage and market share. To manage diversity is to support this collective talent in ways that add a measurable difference to organizational and industrial performance.

Conversely, poorly developed and poorly matched diversity practices can be detrimental to business, creating conflict without gain, raising expectation without delivery, and increasing cost without benefit. The key is the sensible adoption of good practices, tailored to reflect good diversity practice and specific business goals. Even without these good diversity practices there still exist laws that govern discrimination and equal treatment yet, another reason why valuing diversity makes good business sense as it becomes an important workplace issue today.

End of Chapter Questions

1. If making a pitch to business leaders regarding the merits of valuing diversity in the workplace, give four facts from the chapter that you would utilize in your presentation. Please state why you chose these facts.
2. Explain how flesh colored band-aids are a "miss" as it relates to ethnic purchasing power for corporations who sell this type of product. By making a change to offer a more diverse line of flesh colored band-aids what message would this send to consumers?

3. What are four specific demographic shifts as it relates to race/ethnicity and women that indicate the U.S. workplace is becoming more diverse.
4. What are four specific demographic shifts as it relates to age, disability and or religion that indicate the U.S. workplace is becoming more diverse.
5. What is the purchasing power of people of color? How should knowing this information impact the workplace and how it handles diversity with employees and customers?

Internet Exercise

A. Go to:

http://images.forbes.com/forbesinsights/StudyPDFs/Innovation_Through_Diversity.pdf

or go to www.google.com and type: Forbes Insights: Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce

B. Now answer the following six questions:

1. What is the formula for success they describe in the reading?
2. What are Mattel's employee resource groups and how do they drive innovation?
3. What are the top five recruiting sources for attracting talent?
4. L'Oréal USA Harnessing Employee's Diverse Perspectives for Innovation perspective helped this organization do "what" in their product line?
5. In your opinion why was this successful?
6. Review Figure 8 and explain what is the difference in the groups targeted by • Americas • EMEA • Asia Pacific, the report indicates that the respondents say that progress has been made but what are the top areas of improvement and why do you think these areas have not done as well as the improvement designated by gender?

End of Chapter Exercise

Background:

Morgan Stanley says, "Diversity – it's not an obligation – it's an opportunity."

Some of the ways to extract diversity's benefits:

- Identify previously overlooked cultural markets.
- Create new products for existing markets.
- Change corporate culture to attract a different employee mix.
- Form relationships and making inroads with cultures and individuals unlike your own.
- Get things done in better ways.

"Comfy" diversity programs held for compliance reasons are programs that exist solely to comply with the law or to make a company "seem" like they value diversity. But, comfy diversity programs do not show the true benefit of diversity and how best to bring out the greatest talent of a diverse workforce. Comfy programs often do not address or handle the problems that come with managing a diverse group. Ultimately, these comfy programs skirt the real issues and just waste time and money.

Some comfy diversity programs and beliefs say: we should be colorblind. But, this does not help with diversity because it is not showing the value of difference which is a missed opportunity. This is a missed opportunity because rather than ignore difference, the business case for managing diversity says to draw out the differences and help work groups safely explore what those differences suggest about the business. You might find new opportunity, but either way, it's simply the right thing to do in an increasingly diverse workforce. It helps people feel valued and more worthwhile at the end of the day.

Directions: In two paragraphs explain why comfy diversity programs are a missed opportunity.

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