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Abstract Today, human resource management is being renewed in organizations and is gradually affirming its strategic role. The need for highly qualified managers will increase as more organizations globalize their operations. The research presented in this paper highlights the need for management who are sensitive to the concerns of multicultural employees. The effects of cultural diversity on organizational behavior are complex and powerful. Within this perspective, the definition of diversity in the USA and the goals in achieving a more diverse workplace will be discussed. This paper will also examine the different facets involved in managing and developing a diverse human resource base. Organizations take into account their human resource base before hiring employees. One factor they look at is the possible advantages and disadvantages of a multicultural and diverse organization. This paper will examine ways by which managers and employees can learn about diversity, understand it, and respect it on a day-to-day basis when dealing with people from other diverse backgrounds.

The composition of the USA's workforce is changing. According to the Census Bureau, nonwhites will represent more than one-third of the US population by the year 2010 and close to half the US population by the year 2050 (Allison, 2001). By the year 2005, the ethnic minority share of the workforce will reach 28 percent. It is also projected that the Hispanic-American population will be the largest minority group in the USA by the year 2010 (Allison, 2001). The decreasing presence of native white males is a wake-up call to US businesses that changes in workforce demographics will soon mandate changes in organizational culture.

In order for companies fully and aggressively to compete in the marketplace, they will need to consider these statistics and work towards attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse workforce. Becoming a diverse organization makes good business sense for profit as well as for not-for-profit companies. Creating a diverse workforce provides tremendous opportunities for companies and individuals to tap the ideas, creativity, and potential contributions inherent in a diverse workforce.

The research conducted in this paper is significant because it is beneficial in showing organizational management how to recruit, train and hire a diverse workforce through the use of their human resource department.

Diversity in relation to organizational culture

In order to create a diverse workforce, we must first define what diversity is. Next, we must identify the goals needed to achieve it. Finally, we must examine an organization's culture in order to measure the effects of diversity within that particular organization.

Diversity is the "representation, in one social system, of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance" (Cox, 1993). Organizational culture entails the shared values, beliefs, behavior, and background of the organization's members. Cultural factors not only include ethnicity and nationality, but also race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability.

People of different ethnic backgrounds possess different attitudes, values, and norms. Cultural differences rather than a numerical minority status determine the observed differences in work attitudes relative to the "white" employees. One area of cultural differences is the contrast between individualism and collectivism. Collectivists emphasize the needs of the group, social norms, shared beliefs, and cooperation with group members. In general, Asians, Hispanics, and blacks have roots in nations with collectivist traditions, while Anglos have roots in the European tradition of individualism (Hsu, 1981; Hofstede, 1980). The extent of people's cultural beliefs of individualism or collectivism has been used to predict the effectiveness of many management practices.

People from cultures that view relationships in terms of hierarchy have a preference for highly structured teams. People from cultures that see relationships in terms of groups want teamwork to be the norm and people from cultures that emphasize the individual feel most comfortable with voluntary and informal teams. Mixing these culture types can have a significant impact on an organization (Perkins, 1993).

Within today's cultures, various groups possess distinct identities. These include physical observable features known as phenotypes. People with phenotypes that are different from those of the majority tend to have less favorable work experiences and career outcomes such as satisfaction, compensation, and promotion. Research in past years has revealed that strong identification with the majority culture enhances one's career outcomes (Carnevale and Stone, 1994).

An organization's culture determines the ability of members from other groups to perform within the organization. Individuals from minority groups face challenges everyday dealing with prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping.

Prejudice is defined as "an adverse opinion or judgment formed beforehand or without full knowledge or complete examination of the facts; a preconceived idea or bias" (Webber, 1984). Prejudice can be both positive and negative. To discriminate is "to make a clear differentiation and act on the basis of prejudice" (Webber, 1984). Discrimination can include bias towards a person based on their group identity. Minority group size may determine the level of discrimination.

Stereotyping also presents an obstacle for minority groups. Stereotyping is saying that "one, as a person, group, event, or issue is thought to typify or conform to an unvarying pattern or manner, lacking any individuality" (Webber, 1984). So, it is to say that by doing so, we view individuals as members of groups and associate information that we store in our minds about that particular group to the individual. Stereotyping is a factor in lower acceptance of minority group members as leaders, job segregation

based on identity, and differences in hiring and performance ratings between majority and minority group members (Cox, 1993).

In order for minority group members to overcome these challenges, organizations must set realistic goals for its leaders as well as its employees to work towards. Three types of organizational goals contribute to the growth of the diversity movement.

First, organizations must center round a goal of social justice. This has to do with the moral, ethical, and social responsibilities that guide efforts to improve the conditions of racio-ethnic and gender minorities.

Second, legal obligations require organizations to improve racio-ethnic and gender equality. Affirmative action is a key mechanism in meeting legal obligations and refers to positive efforts necessary to eliminate racial and gender discrimination in education and employment.

Third, there is an increased focus, especially by US businesses, to maintain and increase competitiveness in the global marketplace. Corporations acknowledge cultural diversity as a necessary factor in competing in the multinational business environment. For the first time, corporate America sees diversity as having a significant influence on performance and profitability (Ramakrishnan and Balgopal, 1995).

Implementing and achieving these goals is very important especially since cultural clashes can be a significant drain on the energy of the people involved, thus bringing down the productivity of the company (White, 1999). Changing demographics challenges policy makers to improve productivity as well as to improve workers' education and skills to perform new jobs in service and high-tech industries.

In order to achieve a more diverse workplace, there must be involvement of management in all aspects of the process. Top management plays a crucial role in making diversity a success. Leaders must be the first to receive training to address myths, stereotypes, and real cultural differences as well as organizational barriers that interfere with the full contribution of all employees. Organizations have to make continuous learning a must for trainers.

Diversity must be part of an organization's strategic business objective. Diversity goals must be linked to business goals, not just meeting affirmative action legal requirements. Diversity must be stressed internally as well as externally through outreach programs within the community.

Managers must be held accountable for meeting diversity goals. Performance evaluations and rewards should be tied to a manager's ability to develop and manage a diverse workforce. Top management must ensure fairness when it comes to compensation. A company must improve its supply of diverse workers through recruiting. It must break the "glass ceiling" and increase the number of women and minorities in the higher salary groups through career development, mentoring, and executive appointment. It must encourage all of its employees to use their full capacity within the organization. Efficient lines of communication must be established in order for employees to communicate new ideas, problems, grievances, input, and feedback.

A company must value diversity. The main objectives of valuing diversity include awareness, education, and positive recognition of the differences among people in the workforce. A cultural environment must allow differences to be celebrated instead of merely tolerated. All employees must understand the competitive and moral advantages of diversity. They must respect and support cultural diversity through the

recognition of cultural and religious holidays, observances, practices, and diet restrictions.

Often, an organization must undergo a "cultural transformation" before it can successfully achieve the full benefits of diversity (Carnevale and Stone, 1994). To be successful, managers need to "unlearn" practices rooted in an old mind set, change the ways organizations operate, shift company culture, revise policies, create new structures, and redesign human resource systems. Diversity initiatives can improve the quality if an organization's workforce. Organizations spend a large sum of their budgets on human resources in the form of salaries, benefits, training development, and recruitment. In order to get a good return on their investment in human capital and maximize their competitive advantage, it is important to recognize that the workforce will grow in the number of women (see Table I), people of color (see Figure 1 and Table I), and immigrants each year.

Strategies to a multicultural work environment

Workforce diversity is a present day necessity for future clarity and efficiency of all organizations (CSREES, 1997). In order to make this work we need strategies and multiple ways to make each organization become a multicultural workplace. This process begins with the top leaders of the organization, as well as a put forth effort from all employees. "Diversity is a commitment from senior managers; the budget and

Category	Total 2001	Total 2002	White 2001	White 2002	Black 2001	Black 2002	Hispanic 2001	Hispanic 2002
Sex								
Total (all civilian workers)	136,933	136,485	114,430	114,013	15,006	14,872	16,190	16,590
Men	73,196	72,903	62,212	61,849	6,938	6,959	9,668	9,845
Women	63,737	63,582	52,218	52,164	8,068	7,914	6,522	6,744
Occupation								
Managerial and professional specialty	42,271	42,482	36,242	36,405	3,393	3,378	2,329	2,461
Technical, sales, and admin. support	39,469	38,947	32,969	32,665	4,385	4,193	3,877	3,828
Service occupations	18,656	19,219	14,279	14,643	3,241	3,379	3,278	3,475
Precision production, craft, and repair	15,138	14,660	13,372	12,970	1,133	1,083	2,462	2,503
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	18,065	17,697	14,489	14,137	2,695	2,667	3,466	3,472
Farming, forestry, and fishing	3,335	3,480	3,079	3,079	159	171	777	850
Class of worker								
Agriculture	3,231	3,340	3,047	3,103	111	131	716	779
Nonagricultural industries	258,623	257,706	214,999	214,205	29,253	28,936	30,237	30,866
Full- or part-time								
Full-time workers	113,573	112,700	94,275	93,521	12,938	12,782	13,983	14,163
Part-time workers	23,361	23,785	20,154	20,491	2,067	2,091	2,206	2,427

Table I.
Employed white, black, and Hispanic-origin workers by sex, occupation, class of worker, and full- or part-time

Note: Data for "other race" are not presented and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups
Source: US Census Bureau (2002)
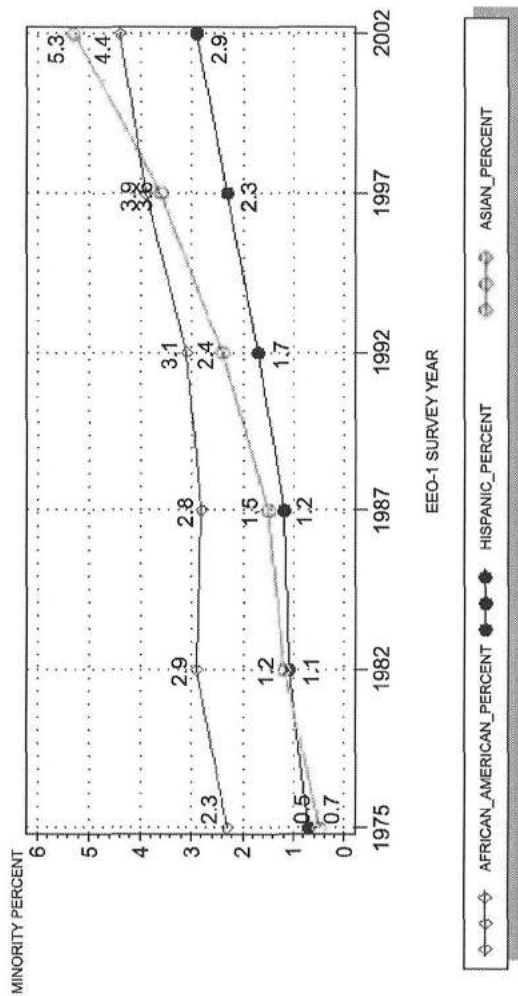
YEAR	1975	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002
ASIAN PERCENT	0.5	1.2	1.5	2.4	3.6	5.3
AFRICAN AMERICAN PERCENT	2.3	2.9	2.8	3.1	3.9	4.4
HISPANIC PERCENT	0.7	1.1	1.2	1.7	2.3	2.9
NATIVE AMERICAN PERCENT	0	0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2

Source: US Census Bureau (2002)

Figure 1.
Employment by
race/ethnicity 1975-2002

staff downsizing; the difficulty of attracting minorities; the scarcity of minorities with the skills required; and finally, resistance of some groups to working with staff from diverse backgrounds" (CSREES, 1997). All of these constraints are real problems that we have in our society. Therefore, we need to find ways around this negative attitude. Some strategies involve equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.

Advantages to diversity in the workplace

There are many advantages to having a diverse workplace. In their book *Workforce 2020*, Judy and D'Amico (1997) discuss some important statistics. They stated that the number of white non-Hispanics would decrease from 80 percent of the nation's population in 1980 to only 64.3 percent in 2020. Latinos will comprise 37 percent of the population increase with African Americans and Asians following. Most of the shifts will occur in the Southeast as its economy expands (Byrd-Giles, 2003). This is important for a company to know and understand. A company that is prepared for such a change in demographics will be prepared for the future as the market changes as well as the pool of applicants. The company will also be able to experience many of the advantages that a diverse workplace can bring.

Having a diverse workplace creates an increase in attracting and retaining the most qualified candidates. The SHRM study, released last year, found that 91 percent of respondents think diversity initiatives helped their organizations maintain a competitive advantage. According to the study, 79 percent of the companies believe their diversity programs improved corporate culture, 77 percent think they helped in recruitment and 52 percent said they fostered better client relations. Companies will gain a competitive advantage of being able to market and deliver their products within different cultures. Having inside information on how to communicate and what a community wants in a product is a great asset. A multicultural company can penetrate and widen their markets with the knowledge of political, social, legal, economic and cultural environments (White, 1999, p. 477). Further, having someone within the organization who can negotiate and speak the language of the country is a very valuable asset. Take for example Chevrolet's experience in Latin America. They produced a car, which they called the Nova. They marketed the car and at first could not understand why they were not having success with it in the Latin communities. As they soon learned, Nova, or *no va* as the Spanish speaking communities heard and read it, means does not go in their language. This all could have been prevented. There have been many of these kinds of examples of cultural blindness, which could have been prevented by having a culturally diverse company (Dibble, 2001).

"Creativity thrives on diversity" (White, 1999, p. 477). This quote implies that a company with a diverse workforce can experience higher creativity and innovation. When people of different cultures come together to solve a problem or come up with an idea, they are more able to reach a common solution. Different cultures can bring insightful alternatives to the table (Lee, 2000). Every company is in search of an idea, which will bring them added value. Ideas, which will increase profit for the business, create a competitive advantage and cannot be copied by their competitors are in great demand. Since only people can create these ideas, the more diverse the company is the greater the chances are for creating these new ideas. One group of people is no better than another at generating these ideas; and no one can say who will come up with the next big idea. Along with new ideas comes an increase in productivity. When people

arc brought together to achieve a common goal there is an increase in support for it. People who believe in its success will in turn work harder (Naik, 1999).

Finally, a multicultural firm is better able to adapt to change and is more flexible. For example, a woman is more likely to have a higher tolerance for uncertainty than men. Also, bilinguals are more capable to have a higher level of contrasting thinking and cognitive flexibility than those who only speak the common language (White, 1999, p. 477).

Disadvantages to diversity in the workplace
With all of the positive aspects that multiculturalism brings a company, there are a few disadvantages. Many people feel threatened by working with people of a different age, sex, or culture.

First, there is an increase in the cost of training. This increase comes from costs associated with seminars, programs and lectures given to promote diversity in the corporation. These types of training are given to all levels of staff within the organization. They teach employees how to accept the personalities and ideas or thoughts of others. These programs also teach one how to deal with conflicts and prejudice in a professional and civil manner (White, 1999, p. 478).

A second disadvantage a company may encounter is reverse discrimination. This is a feeling that is associated with affirmative action policies. It is a major argument against such policies. Reverse discrimination is a claim by white males that they have been unfairly discriminated against. They claim they are equally or more qualified for the position, yet were passed over for a minority to receive the job (Brunner, 2003). This can cause lawsuits in some cases, but mostly a sense of rejection by other workers in the company toward the minority who received the position. Reverse discrimination became an issue by the famous Bakke case in 1978. Allan Bakke, a white male, had been rejected two years in a row by a medical school that had accepted less qualified minority applicants. The school had a separate admissions policy for minorities and reserved 16 out of 100 places for minority students. The Supreme Court outlawed inflexible quota systems in affirmative action programs, which in this case had unfairly discriminated against a white applicant. In the same ruling, however, the Court upheld the legality of affirmative action (Brunner, 2003).

Another disadvantage of diversity in the workplace is an increase in conflicts. Conflicts arise when two or more individuals or groups do not see eye to eye on a particular situation. In regard to diversity, conflicts arise largely due to ignorance. Prejudice feelings or derogatory comments cause a lack of acceptance. "This can produce negative dynamics such as ethnocentrism, stereotyping and culture clashes" (White, 1999, p. 478). The most common conflict comes from one feeling superior. If management ignores such conflicts, the company's performance may suffer (White, 1999, p. 478). If conflicts can be managed and controlled creativity and performance can be increased. Employers will work harder to gain acceptance by creating a solution or invention first. This can be the case when managers reconcile competing goals, promote in a representative manner, stand behind the minority group member, and act when resources are plentiful and cultural differences are low or well understood (White, 1999, p. 480)

Increases in turnover and absenteeism are another disadvantage in having a diverse workplace. Research has shown that the turnover rate for African Americans in the US

workforce is 40 percent greater than whites. Another study by Corning Glass stated that between the years 1980-1987, the turnover rate for women in a professional job was two times higher than males. Women also have a 58 percent higher absentee rate than men. Yet, another study shows that a person, who is not a member of the "inner group" will be one of the first to leave a company (White, 1999, p. 479, flextime scheduling). Some research contradicts the idea that flextime reduces these rates, however absenteeism and turnover can cost a company up to and over $3 million annually (White, 1999, p. 479).

Mismanaged diversity can have long-reaching effects on employee satisfaction and productivity. Employees who perceive themselves as valued members of their organization are harder working, involved, and innovative. Unfortunately, minority-group members often feel less valued than do majority-group members due to stereotyping, ethnocentrism, and prejudice. Mismanagement of diversity in the form of denied access or unfavorable treatment can have negative consequences, such as inhibiting workers' abilities and motivation. This leads to lower job performance. Therefore, when an organization ignores the existence and importance of workforce diversity, conflict can emerge and neither the corporation nor its employees will realize their potential (Goetz, 2001).

In today's fast-paced work environment a successful organization is one where diversity is the norm and not the exception (Lawrence, 2001). Albertson's, BJ's Wholesale, CompUSA, Costco, Office Depot, Sears, Staples, Target, and Toys R Us are examples of retailers that explicitly bar discrimination in the workplace, as do more than half of the *Fortune* 500 companies (The Home Depot, 2003). Home Depot is another prime example of an organization that bars discrimination in the workplace and makes diversifying an organization a priority.

Home Depot
In recent years Home Depot has successfully built a reputation as an organization that provides value to its customers due to its highly diverse workplace (Lawrence, 2001). At Home Depot, staff members are committed to creating a diverse work environment where all associates are included, respected and supported to do their best work to serve all customers better. They recognize the benefits of all growing associates to reach their full potential and they strive to promote a workplace where all associates have the opportunity to learn, grow and contribute (LatPro.com, 2003).

In September 1996, 25,000 Home Depot employees won a class-action suit alleging discrimination against women and minorities in terms of promotions and pay equity. Home Depot settled for $104 million (iVillage.com, 1995-2003). This company now has an interest in preventing discrimination and resolving complaints internally to avoid further costly lawsuits and damage to its reputation as an equal opportunity employer (The Home Depot, 2003). After the lawsuit, a large group of investing firms got together and organized a new policy for Home Depot. The group filed a ruling with Home Depot, demanding that the retailer make a report, which the company had already filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission revealing the race, sex, job and salary of all Home Depot employees public (iVillage.com, 1995-2003). Slowly Home Depot began to come around and acknowledged it had a problem. The company instituted a nationwide diversity-training program and job-awareness campaign. In each Home Depot store today is an information booth where applicants

can see the kinds of jobs that are available. Employees can also test for these jobs right at the store without having to wait for a signal from upper management (iVillage.com, 1995-2003).

The shareholders of Home Depot have also been working to make the retailer a better workplace for women and minorities (iVillage.com, 1995-2003). They have requested that the board of directors amend Home Depot's written equal employment opportunity policy to prohibit explicitly discrimination based on race, religion, gender and national origin and to considerably apply this policy:

> By implementing a written policy prohibiting discrimination based on these attributes, Home Depot will ensure a respectful and supportive atmosphere for all employees and enhance its competitive edge by joining the growing ranks of companies guaranteeing equal opportunity for all employees (The Home Depot, 2003).

Home Depot's written policy of nondiscrimination

> The stated policy is that they do not discriminate on the basis of color, race, age, sex, natural origin, religion or disability. This policy mirrors the categories required by the federal laws. If we go beyond legal requirements, it would be impossible to enumerate additional categories that fully express our inclusiveness (The Home Depot, 2003).

What Home Depot does to promote diversity

> They are continually developing and implementing programs that promote diversity. For example, they have implemented programs in their stores that incorporate state of the art hiring and promotion practices that are fair and equitable to everyone. They firmly believe that hiring, retaining and promoting associates from a wide variety of backgrounds are essential to ensuring that we have the strongest workforce possible. Additionally, they believe that having associates who reflect the differences in the communities they serve is good business and provides them with a competitive advantage (The Home Depot, 2003).

Home Depot has learned a great deal from their experience with this lawsuit. Now they are establishing a diverse work environment not only because they are obligated to, but also because they have now realized that it is the best approach for the employees as well as the company as a whole. A large part of Home Depot's future success will depend on encouraging and utilizing the talents and capabilities of every associate.

Conclusion

The topic addressed in this paper is important because in today's business environment, diversity affects all aspects of life especially in the business world. It is difficult to find a business in this day and age that does not serve customers/clients of diverse backgrounds in one way or another. By creating a diverse workplace, managers are more capable of dealing with diversity within their organization as well as externally in the community.

When considering the goals, strategies, advantages, and disadvantages of creating and managing a diverse workplace an organization should ask themselves if they could accomplish these factors and become a successful diverse organization. In today's society every organization needs to be actively part of diversification. They should accomplish this not only because it mandatory by law, but also for the reason

that in the long run it will help organizations become successful domestically and internationally. Diversifying the work place will allow for organizations to gain a competitive advantage within their particular industry or market. Frequently diversity within organizations is merely tolerated. However, this paper examined ways by which managers and employees can learn about diversity, understand it, and respect it on a day-to-day basis when dealing with people from other diverse backgrounds.

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