



DIVERSITY FRIDAY

PROMOTION & AWARENESS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Cultural diversity can provide distinct competitive advantages in the world of service delivery, and all governmental departments can benefit from employing proactive human resources strategies to build a culturally diverse workforce. Hiring culturally diverse employees is only the first step, however. To fully leverage the benefits of cultural awareness in the workplace, organizations must actively promote diversity awareness among all employees.

Benefits



Cultural awareness is achieved when all employees in an organization can appreciate the benefits of cultural diversity. The numerous benefits of cultural diversity stem from the fact that people from different cultures bring different perspectives to the table, introducing new ideas, perspectives and personalities into strategic planning processes and workplace activities in general. A culturally diverse and aware workforce can create an organizational culture of mutual respect and dignity, garnering a reputation as a fair employer in the job market.

Policies



A good example for promoting cultural awareness among your employees is to recognize the diversity of your workforce in your human resources policies, specifically policies for holiday celebrations. Celebrate more than the basic public holidays in your office. For instance, celebrate the Chinese new year, or set up a fun event to celebrate Human Rights Day of Holi, the Indian day of colours. Allow staff members to take be original and have team building sessions for for the Jewish Passover in lieu of Thanksgiving if they choose, as another example, and celebrate Hanukkah in addition to Christmas. You do not have to go overboard when celebrating holidays from other cultures. Your celebration could be as simple as a short explanation of the holiday and dressing accordingly.

Leadership



Seek out minority employees for leadership positions, but be careful not to overlook more qualified or better performing candidates based solely on their majority status.

Hiring culturally diverse employees can serve to spread cultural awareness among employees, but culturally diverse leaders can go even further to leverage their cultural uniqueness for the benefit of their work teams and employers. Placing minorities in leadership positions can promote understanding between different cultures in the workplace and can encourage lower level minority employees that there are career advancement opportunities for them within the organization.

Training



Include diversity training as part of new hire training programs or advanced training programs for managers. Diversity education programs can help employees to recognize prejudices and cultural assumptions in their own minds, while teaching them skills to respectfully seek to understand other cultures they come in contact with. Diversity training can also teach employees effective intercultural communication skills, as well, helping them to speak clearly with and fully understand co-workers who speak English as a second or third language.

Oom Andries, himself, very strongly agrees with including cultural diversity in any business or organization, especially on the farm where he works. This is why he once tried to make traditional Zulu Pineapple Beer, and it was such a 'hit' that he was instructed by the 'Big Boss' to permanently make it on a monthly basis. The 'Big Boss' even buys all the ingredients, which Oom Andries shared with me:

1 whole pineapple or 5 pineapple peels
800g white sugar
6 litres lukewarm water
100g raisins
10ml yeast

Method:

Cut pineapple/peels into small pieces
Dissolve sugar in lukewarm water
Add pineapple and raisins
Sprinkle yeast on top
Wait 30 minutes & stir
Strain after 24 hours
Pour into sterilised bottles
Only cap after 12 hours
Serve ice cold



Have a GREAT weekend

~EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AND DIVERSITY UNIT~

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