

Title:

Are You Wasting Your Money on Diversity Training?

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Summary:

You may be wasting your money if you haven't done any foundation building. If diversity and inclusion are not first integrated into your business strategy, very little will change just by holding one or two day training classes. Organizations in all sectors make this mistake and don't realize it until it is too late.

Keywords:

Diversity, human resources, diverse manpower, workplace, cross-cultural communication

Article Body:

If you are planning to spend money on diversity training, WAIT!

You may be wasting your money if you haven't done any foundation building. If diversity and inclusion are not first integrated into your business strategy, very little will change just by holding one or two day training classes. Organizations in all sectors make this mistake and don't realize it until it is too late.

If you want to leverage the diversity you already have, increase the diversity of your organization, or prevent cultural misunderstandings you need to create a corporate culture that is inclusive at all levels, and in every system and process.

You can get everyone trained by a great trainer, with a great program, but when people leave your organization they take what they learned with them (if they still remember it) and your organization remains the same. Further, reaching resisters and naysayers of diversity efforts is unlikely only with training—a more multi-faceted approach is needed to help these individuals see the value of diversity in their organizations and to bring a greater number of people on board to the initiative.

Simma's Strategies for Creating an Inclusive Organization

Here are some of the steps that need to be taken in order to create an inclusive

organization.

Start at the top. It must be championed and led by the CEO and other people in the executive team. Leadership of a diversity and inclusion initiative or culture change cannot be delegated. Other people can help drive it, but it must be viewed as coming from the top. That also means you need to start including it in conversations, discussions, newsletters and e-mail.

Assess your organization with surveys, focus groups and interviews in order to identify strengths, challenges and areas for improvement as it relates to diversity, inclusion and employee satisfaction in specific areas.

Create a cohesive vision and strategy that is agreed upon by members of the executive leadership team. Know where you are going.

Engage all levels of senior management. They need to be part of the vision and have a clear understanding of concepts, roles, business case and benefits, in order to help lead the change.

Develop a communication and information sharing strategy and process in order to share that vision throughout the organization. Send the message in such a way that you create middle manager and employee buy-in. Help them understand how the diversity and inclusion/culture change process will benefit them personally, professionally and as an organization, That will involve internal marketing at all levels.

Use the results of the survey to address specific areas for improvement, most commonly; recruitment, interviewing, hiring, retention, promotion and performance evaluation. Examine your present organizational culture, and identify ways in which your organization can create a more inclusive environment.

Define skills and behaviors that managers need in order to make the initiative/culture change a success and successfully lead a diverse workforce.

Conduct training for all levels of your organization in areas related to diversity and inclusion.

Set up a process for accountability at all levels, relating progress to compensation and evaluations.

Measure results, create the buzz and make it exciting (if its not fun, it won't be done)

The amount of time, order and the steps themselves depend on your organization and goals, but if you want to go beyond compliance, hear new ideas and best practices, reduce cultural misunderstanding and miscommunication, hire and retain the best of the best from everywhere, training alone won't do it. Before you spend your next dollar on diversity training, ask yourselves if you just want people to have a good day, learn and forget a few things or do you want ongoing change that will make you a benchmark organization and the employer of choice.