Diversity Management Time for a new approach in an organization

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Abstract*: There are now more new faces and diversity among the workforce than ever before and this trend is expected to continue into the 21st century. Managers in public and private organizations are searching for and experimenting with various approaches to more effectively deal with increasing workforce diversity.*

HR managers are learning that positive synergy is not automatic. Bringing together different backgrounds, perspectives and functions is an arduous process. Specifically, there will be more women, minority group members, and older workers, suggesting a more heterogeneous workforce, which is a significant departure from the largely homogeneous workforces of the past .Whereas the notion of diversity brings with it opportunities for organizations, it poses serious challenges as well.

Through a careful examination of the diversity concept and human resources systems, certain steps are to be taken to circumvent the problems inherent in contemporary human resources systems, and thereby allow organizations to obtain maximum utilization of their available talent. In the global economy of today, organizations cannot afford to waste resources. Indeed, organizations can achieve competitive advantage through the most effective utilization of their entire workforce's competencies and talents.

For companies to be successful and move ahead of their competition they need to know how to create environments where all people can be accepted, respected and utilized for the differences they bring to the workplace. Knowing how to do that can enhance productivity and increase profit.

Keywords: *HRM, Diversity, Performance, Management, Employees.*

I. Introduction

With ever-increasing complexity of business, it has become important to have employees from different backgrounds and cultures. Some of the studies carried out on Diversity in Fortune 500 companies have clearly shown that Diversity has a positive effect on bottom-line and shareholder value. Enhanced business performance has been seen on various aspects like Higher Profitability, Return on Equity, and Return on Investment etc. Thus, Diversity is linked to enhanced business performance & though various studies (like Catalyst Research report on Diversity, DiversityInc.

While Diversity is perceived differently by different people; having a diverse work force includes employees with different regions (countries, states etc), gender, educational background, varied industry experience, socio-economic status, et al. Diversity at the work place not only means above-mentioned characteristics but also (and most importantly) allowing for diverse opinions as well. After all, no organization wants employees who think alike! Having team members from different economic backgrounds even help in understanding the consumers better. A manager with a 'middle class' background, for example, would be able to better articulate the aspirations and consumer needs of his class.

Organizations which are successful are those who are able to create a culture in the organization where differences of individuals are recognized and accepted. These are the organizations which bank on the different skills and abilities which a diverse workforce brings with it and where their strengths are leveraged upon. Having a large number of women at work helps as they have a sobering effect on the environment and is considered to be emotionally stronger than men. For instance, women are good at multi-tasking. They are empathetic, consensus builders, compassionate and these qualities need to be leveraged upon.

II. What does diversity means?

Diversity initiatives need to begin with an assessment of the organization, no matter how big or small, to identify how employees perceive things. It's more than just race, and gender, but includes differences like

age, ethnic background, work function, education, sexual orientation and religion. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.

2.1. The Importance of Diversity
2.1. Global integration and interconnectedness makes diversity critical.
2.2. It allows insights into the consumer mind and appeals to a diverse market place.
2.3. Diversity supports cross fertilization of ideas and brings in different perspectives.
2.4. Women bring unique insights and impact the work place in a positive manner.
2.5. It enables best practices from different industries to be implemented.
2.6. Makes progress inclusive by carrying employees from different economic strata and religions.
2.7. Regional diversity brings different perspectives to work.
2.8. Functional diversity brings a different approach to finding solutions.

III.   Diversity Management
Diversity management is ensuring that factors are in place to provide for and encourage the continued development of a diverse workforce by melding these actual and perceived differences among workers to achieve maximum productivity. Diversity management involves creating a supportive culture where all employees can be effective. In creating this culture it is important that top management strongly support workplace diversity as a company goal and include diversity initiatives in their companies' business strategies. It has grown out of the need for organization to recognize the changing workforce and other social pressures that often result. Diversity is more than being politically correct; it is about fostering a culture that values individuals and their wide array of needs and contributions.

Diversity Management is related to solve the problems of the employees. Human resource management is linked with employee substances. The core aspires to create this for the employee since they are not compelled to do something which he is not responsible to. This cause is apt to create a particular kind of management which works only for the issues and problem connecting towards the employee and employer. Lot of conflicts takes place in the company between employer and employee, it related to solve the problems according to the rules of the company. The HR department averts mutually and make easy both from the result.Diversity management is one of the managements to solve the employee's problems in a company. Diversity management means to manage the different types of matters and workforces in the organization. There are lot of problems in the company concerning the payment or salary and also the requirements of the company.

3.1. Essence of Diversity Mangement
Employees of organizations are becoming increasingly heterogeneous. With the passing of days, diversity is going to be an important issue for the HR manager for the following reasons:
3.1.1. The term diversity management refers to the systematic and planned commitment by organizations to recruit, retain, reward, and promote a heterogeneous mix of employees. It drives employee engagement across all groups, regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability and religion. Engagement fosters productivity and innovation, which are crucial to sustainability.
3.1.2. Promoting recognition and acceptance of diversity among the employees can convert a hostile workplace environment into a welcoming environment where people freely communicate and support one another with any tasks associated with the job. In doing so, the implementation of a diversity management approach often makes it possible for productivity levels to increase dramatically.
3.1.3. It tends to encourage the development of latent skills and talents among employees. Individuals who may have felt unable to move forward in the company due to factors such as race, gender or sexual orientation find that these attributes are no longer issues. When this happens, employees begin to feel valued and are more willing to step outside their comfort zones and enhance their skill sets for the benefit of the departmental team, the company as a whole and for the individual.
3.1.4. The underlying principle of diversity management has to do with acceptance. While individuals retain their own sense of values and ethics, diversity management encourages people to recognize that not everyone is alike. Rather than being intimidated or prejudiced by those differences, employees are encouraged to accept the fact that there are diverse interests, diverse values, and diverse physical and emotional characteristics present within the office environment.

3.2. Other reasons

3.2.1. A large number of women are joining the work-force.

3.2.2. Work-force mobility is increasing.

3.2.3. Young workers in the work-force are increasing.

3.2.4. Ethnic minorities' proportion constantly in the total work-force is increasing.

3.2.5. International careers and expatriates are becoming common.

3.2.6. Necessity of international experience is felt for career progression to many top-level managerial positions.

3.3. How the organization is getting benefitted from the new approach?

An organization's success and competitiveness depends upon its ability to embrace diversity and realize the benefits. When organizations actively assess their handling of workplace diversity issues, develop and implement diversity plans, multiple benefits are reported such as:

3.3.1. Increased adaptability

Organizations employing a diverse workforce can supply a greater variety of solutions to problems in service, sourcing, and allocation of resources. Employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands.

3.3.2. Broader service range

A diverse collection of skills and experiences (e.g. languages, cultural understanding) allows a company to provide service to customers on a global basis.

3.3.3. Variety of viewpoints

A diverse workforce that feels comfortable communicating varying points of view provides a larger pool of ideas and experiences. The organization can draw from that pool to meet business strategy needs and the needs of customers more effectively.

3.3.4. More effective execution

Companies that encourage diversity in the workplace inspire all of their employees to perform to their highest ability. Company-wide strategies can then be executed; resulting in higher productivity, profit, and return on investment.

3.4. Diversity management-Measures and Initiatives

Organisation perspective	Measures	Initiatives
Workforce Demographics	- Diversity in recruitment - Equal mix of different ethnic groups - Ratio of men and women in the organization - Diversity Mix of the top 10% of the company executives.	*The Value of Mentoring* - Without regard to race, gender, religion, national origin - Inconvenience yourself to show someone else the way - Unleash someone else's potential *Recruitment Alternatives* - Entry level – Upward Mobility Positions - Bridge Positions - Special Appointing Authorities - Schedule A for severe disabilities - Veterans Readjustment Appointment - Outstanding Scholar *Professional Development* - Identify training and development needs for all employees

		• Utilize Individual Development Plans
		• Rotational & Developmental Assignments
		• Rotate "acting" supervisor
Organisation perspective	***Measures***	***Initiatives***
Leadership Development	• Mentoring Program Analysis Reduces Diversity Gap • Leadership skills & experience to handle the diversity scenarios • Nondiscrimination based on Gender	• Mentoring programs • Trainings to make leaders aware of the significance of diversity management and various implementation strategies • Feedbacks and measurements to improve the approach of the leader to handle diversity aspects.
Managing Diverse Workplace Culture/Climate	• Ethnicity aspects in an organization • Equal opportunity employer • Requirement strategy and culture • Gender Mix • Employee recognition programs • Language barrier aspects	• Annual Get together • Offshore programs
Developing Learning and Growth Strategies	• The feasibility of Training Programs • Parameter on which performance evaluation is done.	• Leadership Programs • Managing Trainee Mentor Program • Mentoring for new Hires • Job improvement • Seminars and conferences
Handling Diverse Customer/Community	• Proper company vision and policy to handle customers • Workforce to cater customer of diverse background • Strategies for the proper market analysis • Feedback from the market	• Establish the company policy for customer handling • Train the people to cater customers of diverse background • Analysis of the similar products and companies in the same domain and their growth. • Implementation of a proper methodology to get feedback on the products or services provided.

IV.   Diversity Management-Emerging Challenges

Workplace diversity can either disrupt the workplace or add dramatically to its creativity and productivity. Tension is bound to occur if your company does not have a plan or program in place to manage diversity and the questions or concerns that arise in a diverse workplace Diversity involves more than just race, culture and gender. It encompasses each person's uniqueness, experience and personalities that are different but have to be dealt with in the workplace. Diversity affects performance, so it is important to manage any issues

that may result from personality conflicts. Diversity also determines how an employee interacts with other employees and the type of motivation involved in the job performance.

Some of those challenges are:

4.1. Communication - Perceptual, cultural and language barriers need to be overcome for diversity programs to succeed. Ineffective communication of key objectives results in confusion, lack of teamwork, and low morale.

4.2. Resistance to change - There are always employees who will refuse to accept the fact that the social and cultural makeup of their workplace is changing. The "we've always done it this way" mentality silences new ideas and inhibits progress.

4.3. Implementation of diversity in the workplace policies - This can be the overriding challenge to all diversity advocates. Armed with the results of employee assessments and research data, they must build and implement a customized strategy to maximize the effects of diversity in the workplace for their particular organization.

4.4. Successful Management of Diversity in the Workplace - Diversity training alone is not sufficient for your organization's diversity management plan. A strategy must be created and implemented to create a culture of diversity that permeates every department and function of the organization.

V. Guidelines for Diversity Management

The following are some important guidelines to manage diversity effectively:

5.1. To consider female employee needs, such as child care and job sharing, to prevent their turnover.

5.2. Commitment from top management towards value diversity is a pre-requisite.

5.3. To arrange mentoring programme by senior managers to identify promising women and minority employees and play an important role in nurturing their career progress.

5.4. To arrange diversity training programmes to bring diversity awareness and educate employees on cultural and sex differences and how to respond to these in the workplace.

5.5. There should be an apprenticeship programme to trained promising prospective employees properly before they are actually hired on a permanent basis.

5.6. Employer should set up a support group to provide a nurturing climate for employees who would otherwise feel isolated or alienated.

5.7. To conduct diversity audit to review the effectiveness of an organization's diversity management programmes.

5.8. There should be a proper communication which includes speeches by senior executives, inclusion of diversity in corporate vision statements, the publication of diversity brochure and inclusion of diversity as a topic in new employee orientation.

5.9. Managers need to be sensitive to the needs of working parents

VI. How Well Do You Manage Diversity in Your Unit?

6.1.Do you test your assumptions before acting on them?

6.2.Do you believe there is only one right way of doing things, or that there are a number of valid ways that accomplish the same goal? Do you convey that to staff?

6.3.Do you have honest relationships with each staff member you supervise? Are you comfortable with each of them? Do you know what motivates them, what their goals are, how they like to be recognized?

6.4. Are you able to give negative feedback to someone who is culturally different from you?

6.5. When you have open positions, do you insist on a diverse screening committee and make additional outreach efforts to ensure that a diverse pool of candidates has applied?

6.6. When you hire a new employee, do you not only explain job responsibilities and expectations clearly, but orient the person to the campus and department culture and unwritten rules?

6.7. Do you rigorously examine your unit's existing policies, practices, and procedures to ensure that they do not differentially impact different groups? When they do, do you change them?

6.8. Are you willing to listen to constructive feedback from your staff about ways to improve the work environment? Do you implement staff suggestions and acknowledge their contribution?

6.9.Do you take immediate action with people you supervise when they behave in ways that show disrespect for others in the workplace, such as ethnic jokes and offensive terms?

6.10. Do you make good faith efforts to meet your affirmative action goals?

6.11. Do you have a good understanding of institutional isms such as racism and sexism and how they manifest themselves in the workplace?

6.12. Do you ensure that assignments and opportunities for advancement are accessible to everyone?

If you were able to answer yes to more than half the questions, you are on the right track to managing diversity well.

VII.   Diversity Management and Employees Engagement

The ultimate goal of diversity management initiatives is to create a high-performing organization by ensuring the full use of employee talents and skills. Not only must employees be competent and well-trained, but the work environment should be inclusive and supportive.

Employee engagement, also called worker engagement, is a business management concept. An "engaged employee" is one who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about their work, and thus will act in a way that furthers their organization's interests.

Employee engagement can be critical to a company's success. Engaged employees are more likely to be productive and higher performing. Employers can encourage employee engagement in many ways, including communicating expectations clearly, offering rewards and advancement for excellent work, keeping employees informed about the company's performance, and providing regular feedback.

Diversity Management processes leads to effective employee's engagement in an organization

7.2. Processes

Communicate to employees the issues that relate to the organization or company, such as goals and objectives, policies, corporate culture and common practices. Make any changes that will positively affect the needs of the various diverse groups in the organization. Discuss all issues related to policy, practice and culture and maximize them to extract the full potential of each employee in a consistent way. This can be done through teamwork Create teams of employees to work together. Give each employee her job description and the skills required to complete the project. Mix the teams by involving an employee from each group that fits the necessary job description and skills. This will provide an opportunity for each person to learn from and try to understand one another. Assign a team leader to each group as well as one other person to help the team leader mediate if problems arise.

Create a company employee handbook and give one to each employee to read and sign. Emphasize respect, tolerance and patience and clarify that nothing less should be accepted by any employee. Penalize employees who don't follow the guidelines. Decide beforehand what the penalty will be.

Make each person accountable to the team leader, supervisor and company. Give each person different responsibilities to complete to finish the project. This means that each person will be able to contribute and feel that he is valuable to the company, the team and himself.

VIII.   Diversity Management Practices in High performing Organisation (HPO)

8.1.1. Assessment of diversity in the workplace - Top companies make assessing and evaluating their diversity process an integral part of their management system. A customizable employee satisfaction survey can accomplish this assessment for your company efficiently and conveniently. It can help your management team determine which challenges and obstacles to diversity are present in your workplace and which policies need to be added or eliminated. Reassessment can then determine the success of you diversity in the workplace plan implementation.

8.1.2. Development of diversity in the workplace plan - Choosing a survey provider that provides comprehensive reporting is a key decision. That report will be the beginning structure of your diversity in the workplace plan. The plan must be comprehensive, attainable and measurable. An organization must decide what changes need to be made and a timeline for that change to be attained.

8.1.3. Implementation of diversity in the workplace plan - The personal commitment of executive and managerial teams is a must. Leaders and managers within organizations must incorporate diversity policies into every aspect of the organization's function and purpose. Attitudes toward diversity originate at the top and filter downward. Management cooperation and participation is required to create a culture conducive to the success of your organization's plan.

8.2. Recommended diversity in the workplace solutions include:

8.2.1. Ward off change resistance with inclusion - Involve every employee possible in formulating and executing diversity initiatives in your workplace.

8.2.2. Foster an attitude of openness in your organization - Encourage employees to express their ideas and opinions and attribute a sense of equal value to all.

8.2.3. Promote diversity in leadership positions - This practice provides visibility and realizes the benefits of diversity in the workplace.

8.2.4. Utilize diversity training - Use it as a tool to shape your diversity policy.

8.2.5. Launch a customizable employee satisfaction survey that provides comprehensive reporting - Use the results to build and implement successful diversity in the workplace policies.

IX.   Conclusion

As the economy becomes increasingly global, our workforce becomes increasingly diverse. Organizational success and competitiveness will depend on the ability to manage diversity in the workplace effectively. Evaluate your organization's diversity policies and plan for the future, starting today.

The future belongs to dynamic and vibrant organisation. The organizations will only survive those are in the right direction in managing the Human Resources and believe "People can do and change". There is no other go but to accept competition. So in the competition race, the growth is possible only when the Human Resources in the organisation are developed, so as to win the race

Diversity is not a case of representation of different nationalities or ethnicities. It is a process of creating greater wealth through increased creativity and productivity. Consistent internal communication and employee education is vital to gain support of all the stake holders. Care must be taken to explain the need, benefits and plans to create a diverse workforce. Ensure that the current employees have understood the management's plan to create a diverse workforce and linking to business goals. This involves having training programs, a recruitment strategy, and building a cadre of diversity aware managers.

A diversity strategic plan involves the formal consideration of an organization's current situation and the development of a plan that provides direction for an organization's future. Diversity measures are designed to serve as guidelines for organizations to assess their performance in relation to achieving diversity objectives.

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Human system thrives on variety and Diversity-Esko Kilpi.If you believe people are your greatest asset,and if you believe you need a broad range of perspectives to compete in a global marketplace, you want the best and brightest to face the complex business challenges-Jim Norway