

Panel Discussion on Practicing Diversity in the Workplace to Achieve Organisation Goals

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Preamble

Employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands. A diverse workforce can supply a greater variety of solutions to problems in service, sourcing and allocation of resources. Practicing diversity in the organization can make a positive impact on any business or any organization. In order to effectively manage today's workplace and to achieve organizational goals including Safety Health & environmental targets, business leaders must understand and embrace diversity. Organizations shall include diverse employees with equal opportunities considering race, ethnicity, religion, personal beliefs, age, gender, sexual orientation, nationality or physical challenges.

Diversity involves not only how people perceive themselves, but how they perceive others. Those perceptions affect their interactions. For a wide assortment of employees to function effectively as an organization, human resource professionals need to deal effectively with issues such as communication, adaptability and change. Diversity requirements will increase significantly the coming years. Successful organizations recognize the need for immediate actions and are providing resources in managing the diversity in the workplace.

This paper represents the panel presentation on case studies of successful organizations on how they practiced the diversity and achieved the organizational goals including Safety, Health & Environmental (SHE) targets. The panel will be moderated by the ASSE Diversity Committee and consists of following panel presentations:

Panel 1:

By Richard Cooper

Introduction

Working within any sector of industry, there is a jargon or language which is adopted, a common way of speaking which allows for ease of communication.

Mention the word 'diversity' to a telecommunications engineer and he will say it is another way of getting the signal through. It is perhaps a positive thing that 'another way of getting through' is not too far from the generally understood premise of 'Diversity in the Workplace'

The Oxford English dictionary defines 'diversity' – 'being diverse; unlikeness; different kind; variety.' So we therefore have an appreciation of being able to harness those things which are unlike in nature of qualities to be able to achieve the organisational goals.

The Way We Do It – in the United Kingdom

Britain is without doubt a great place. It is just part of our national culture to be diverse. From the Romans, to the Vikings, to the Normans, Britain has accepted, integrated and appreciated the benefits that various cultures or nationalities have brought. Being part of the European Community has brought benefits in respect of varying attitudes of the member nations.

Recently, (February 2010) Lord Davies of Abersoch reported for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, on the diversity element of women's representation in the boardroom.

The main recommendations of the report include:

- All heads of FTSE 350 companies should set out the percentage of women they aim to have on their boards in 2013 and 2015.

- FTSE 100 boards should aim for a minimum of 25% female representation by 2015.
- Each year, quoted companies should be required to disclose the proportion of women on the board, women in senior executive positions, and female employees in the whole organisation.
- Company bosses should disclose meaningful information about their firms' appointment processes and how they address diversity in annual reports.
- Recruitment firms should draw up a voluntary code of conduct addressing gender diversity and best practice covering FTSE 350 board level appointments.
- Other measures put forward include a call for more women to be promoted to executive committees to ensure there is a more diverse talent pool for companies to recruit female non-executive directors from.

Lord Davies called on companies to adopt a "comply or explain" approach, which would encourage companies to publish their own targets, and comply with them or explain to shareholders why they have not done so. Evidence presented in the report revealed the growth of this diversity sector.

Women on FTSE 100 boards:

	1999	2004	2008	2009	2010
Female executive directors	2%	4.1%	4.8%	5.2%	5.5%
Female non-executive directors	10.8%	13.6%	14.9%	15.2%	15.6%

Source: Cranfield School of Management 2010 report.

However it has to be stated that while the recommendations have been accepted by the UK government, the reaction from the business community has been mixed.

- Liz Field, CEO of the Financial Skills Partnership -Employers should look at diversity to improve their businesses and not because they have been told to.
- Carmen Watson, Managing Director of Pertemps Recruitment Partnership - What is needed is cultural change, which fosters the leadership development of women in middle management, not quotas, ratios or tokenism.

It is the view of this author that this statement from Carmen Watson is the key to our panel discussion. To achieve organisational goals in a diverse environment, we must achieve a cultural change whereby race, gender, sexual orientation or religion are not barriers, or worse, reverse discrimination is practiced but whereby development is enabled.

The Way We Do It

One of the challenges in preparing this paper was that of being able to take a step back and discuss the practice of ‘Diversity’ without giving undue publicity to my employment organisation. That being acknowledged, let me give you the ‘practice’ of diversity as established by my employer.

The corporation acknowledges that ‘diversity’ is the acceptance and inclusion of people of different gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, language, nationality, work style and experience, education, culture, organisation function, approach to problem solving, physical appearance, personality type, liberal or conservative thinking and socioeconomic status. This is a factor in not only the recruitment a selection and ongoing employment of individuals but also in those groups and organisations with which we do business.

Diversity is regarded as an integral part of the Corporate Culture. It forms a subset of the goal or directive relating to ‘Ethics.’ The Corporation has established an ‘Ethics Oversight Team’ under the Chairmanship of an Executive Vice President. The role of this committee is to ensure all aspects of ethical behaviour:

Diversity	Physical Harassment	Confidential Information
Visual Harassment	Use of Property	Use of Technology
Romance in the Workplace	Supplier Diversity	

Is part of the Corporate Culture.

This committee meets on average once a year to review progress and receive reports from the Ethical Advisory Committee. Chaired by the Vice President Human Resources, this Advisory Committee manages on a day to day basis the implementation of ethics into the Corporation.

What Does This Mean in Practice?

The advisory committee ensures that all communications as available in the business in at least three languages, (English, Spanish, Portuguese). Because of legal requirements in France, publications are also made available in French.

Perhaps a practical example of this and the translation into the 'Safety Arena' is that in a recent project concerning 'Display Screen Equipment' or Ergonomics, language considerations were taken into consideration in respect not only for the end product but also in the selection of the vendor.

The committee monitors the supply chain to ensure that there is a diversity element. We track supplier diversity (this includes making sure we are using women, minority, small businesses and does not relate to just obtaining multiple bids).

Our Procurement team have a goal or objective, which is published internally:

Supplier Diversity Initiative provides equal opportunity to large and small Minority Business Enterprises ("MBE"), Women-Owned Business Enterprises ("WBE"), Service Veteran Disabled ("SVD") and Hub Zones business enterprises (all collectively recognized as "Diversity Suppliers") to bid on and to participate in the performance of contracts to provide goods and services to Global Crossing. All MBE, WBE, SVD and Hub Zone business enterprises are required to be at least 51% owned, controlled and operated by either minorities, women, service veteran disabled or hub zone individuals. Companies that do business with Global Crossing in the United States are asked to participate in this Supplier Diversity initiative by virtue of their own status as a Diversity Supplier (Tier I) or, through their relationships with prime suppliers (Tier II).

This is reported on monthly and ensures an equality and not 'reverse discrimination.'

The Code of Ethics which is published and distributed to every employee is subject to a retraining programme which is mandatory every two years.

This code ensures that all employees are treated as equally and not subject to either discrimination or reverse discrimination in respect of employment promotion or disciplinary codes.

We increasingly find in bids to customers or for inclusion in 'approved contractor' listings, the subject of Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Diversity are question sets in respect of 'pre-qualification.' Such questioning being either positive:

Do you have written policy statement relating to Equality & Diversity?

To establishment of the negative:

Give brief details of any finding of unlawful racial, sex or disability discrimination by the employment tribunal process or any formal investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the last 3 years.

It would be from an organisational perspective correct to state that a goal or objective is to grow the business and therefore our customers requiring a positive practice in respect of diversity, to achieve the growth goal we must as matter of course include that in our thinking and culture

This is the Present, What Is the Future?

As an organisation, there is a move towards:

Managing Sustainable Development.

While not a standard that can be 'audited' the British Standards Institute in 2006 published BS 8900 – Guidance for managing sustainable development. This has within Europe begun to become the benchmark by which the topic is not only addressed but also the maturity of management systems is seen to be judged.

The standard provides guidance on managing sustainable development and a framework that assists organisations to enhance performance and effectiveness. It offers a coherent approach to managing economic environmental and social aspects of organisations activities.

Hence the subject of 'diversity' is addressed as part of this strategy as part of how the organisation includes within its normal activities the principles of:

- Inclusivity
- Integrity

- Stewardship and
- Transparency

Ethical Business

Publically listed companies and certainly those who operate on an international footing are required to have in place ethical standards which meet as a minimum requirement the legal and social obligations of the countries in which they work. This can involve discrimination legislation, corporate governance standards or legislation designed to enhance public security.

Decision-making and behaviour in these areas is required to be consistent. The principles which inform and set an organisations values must relate to the common ethical norm and increasingly reflect in international agreement on topics such as human and labour rights, environmental legislation and standards and corporate governance.

Conclusion

Diversity in the Workplace to Achieve Organisation Goals is a cultural imperative. In an increasingly 'smaller world' where business is a multinational undertaking, utilising the best that has to be offered allows a corporation to develop and grow. From my employer's perspective, utilising a structured approach such as outlined in the Sustainable Development Guide makes not only moral but economic sense

Bibliography

British Standards Institute BS 8900 – Guidance for managing sustainable development 2006.

ASSE Professional Safety August 2008 (Pages 47-52) - Adding Diversity Awareness
to Your Leadership Skill Set.

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Lord Davies of Abersoch et al., Women on
Boards February 2011.

Intranet web pages: Strategic Sourcing, Ethics

Panel 2

By Jack Fearing

Diversity in the US Military

The United States military is a vast organization with a global presence. One of its central sources of strength is the diversity of its soldiers and sailors, which encompasses over 1.5 million personnel across the active duty and reserve components. The Army was at the forefront of racial integration in the 1940's and 50's, and today it is one of the most diverse organizations in the world. Further challenges must be addressed on the diversity front.

While the term "diversity" can be defined along many dimensions, this portion of the presentation focuses primarily on racial and gender issues due to the unique and historically significant role that they both play in the issues of diversity in the Army. Other pertinent diversity issues such as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" will also be explored and discussed. Specifically, the Department of Defense's *Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"* dated 30 November 2010.

Diversity is critical to the organizational effectiveness of the US military. While the Army has taken many good steps in addressing these issues, additional steps are needed in order to achieve a fully diverse workforce and capitalize on the strength of that diversity. This portion of the presentation will highlight some of the current ongoing issues pertaining to diversity and strategies for addressing these issues that the Army should consider in order to ensure its continuing success as a robust and sustainable global organization. Below is a summary of the topics which will be developed and discussed:

1. Approaches to Managing Diversity in the U.S. Military
 - a. Intercultural Training
 - b. Contemporary Models of Racism
 - c. Religious Accommodations
 - d. Accessing Military Equal Opportunity
2. Diversifying Leadership – Equity in Evaluations and Promotions
 - a. Looking for a Few Good Men – and Women
 - b. Trends in Racial and Gender Retention and Promotions
 - c. Value Differences – "The Content of Our Character"
3. Gender Integration and Sexual Harassment
 - a. Cultural Diversity and Gender Issues
 - b. Perceptions of Woman Assigned to Combat Units

- c. An Integrated Model of Sexual Harassment
- 4. Where Do We Go From Here?
 - a. Women, Minorities and Gays in the Military
 - b. The Future of Intercultural Research

Panel 3

By Hamad Al Kandari and Ashok Garlapati

How Diversity is Managed in the Gulf Region: The Hub of Global Oil and Gas Workers

The oil and gas industry is an essential element of the Gulf Region, and it is of vital importance for the health and welfare of the region. The oil and gas industry operations mainly comprise exploration, development, production of crude oil and its refining, involving various operations including drilling, processing, transport and refining. At each stage of activity, companies in the Gulf region engage huge numbers of contractors for their operations and timely execution of projects. The contractors employ workers from more than 65 countries around the world to meet the demands of skilled workforce. The workforce is highly diverse in nature and comes with different backgrounds, different languages, and different skill sets. Each company in the Gulf Region has established their own HSE Management Systems based on the international regulations to focus on the health, safety of workers and environment protection. It is altogether, a big challenge for every company to achieve HSE (Health Safety & Environment) targets under a diverse workforce. All these companies adopt a variety of methods in implementing the HSE Management by involving the diverse workforce.

The companies in the Gulf Region face many challenges in the process of implementation of Health Safety Environment Management Systems. One of the main challenges is the diverse workforce, and it is altogether a big challenge for the company to achieve HSE (Health Safety & Environment) targets. The companies adopt a variety of methods in implementing the HSE Management by involving this diverse workforce through an effective contractor management. Contract management is one of the key elements for companies' HSE Management systems, which deals with "Contractors Commitments and Involvement". One of the important challenge the Companies are facing is the diverse workforce employed by various contractors. In one end, the diversity of workforce has several advantages in achieving the companies' targets. The companies believe that the workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between people. That sounds simple, but diversity encompasses race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education, background and more.

Diversity not only involves how people perceive themselves, but how they perceive others. Those perceptions affect their interactions. For a wide assortment of employees to function effectively as an organization, human resource professionals need to deal effectively with issues such as communication, adaptability and change. Diversity will increase significantly in the coming years. The companies recognized the need for immediate action and are ready and willing to spend resources on managing diversity in the workplace. The companies take full advantage of the diversity. In this process, Companies faced many challenges particularly related to the communication, perceptual, cultural and language barriers

needed to be overcome for diversity programs to succeed. Absolutely, diversity provides many benefits to any organization. The companies in the Gulf Region realized these following multiple benefits in utilizing the diverse workforce:

- **Increased adaptability:** 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.
- **Broader service range:** A diverse collection of skills and experiences (e.g., languages, cultural understanding) allowed the company to provide service and timely support.
- **Variety of viewpoints:** A diverse workforce that feels comfortable communicating varying points of view provides a larger pool of ideas and experiences. The company could draw from that pool to meet business strategy needs and the needs of customers more effectively.
- **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

In conclusion, many companies in the Gulf Region have achieved organization goals specific to HSE targets under a diverse workforce by adopting several significant applicable initiatives.