

Chapter 7

Workforce Diversity: Gaining the Competitive Advantage

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ABSTRACT

The growing acceptance of marrying across racial and ethnic lines (as reflected in US census statistics) together with the growth of demographic changes across workplaces is fueling fears among some who see their culture being threatened and react by engaging in overt discrimination. One concern regards employers having access to databases containing talented individuals who are ready to work. Their choices hinge on the abilities required to further their enterprise. Paradoxically, a business's culture's greatest strength could be its greatest weakness when not consistent with sound business strategies. Moreover, when such a culture prevents a firm from meeting competitive threats, this can lead to the firm's stagnation and ultimate demise. Diversity has never been thought of as a strategy until now. This chapter explores workforce diversity.

INTRODUCTION

Workplace diversity refers to the similarities and differences among people employed within an organization. Aspects of workplace diversity may include age, race, gender, personality, religion, sexual orientation, and education. When the coal mines closed; when the factory jobs disappeared; when Bessemer Road and Petticoat Lane and other high street businesses began taking down signs and logos; when the population started a steady decline; and when the healthcare industry was on the brink of bankruptcy; the residents of Tottenham, London, England or Hazelton, Pennsylvania, USA flocked downtown for

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their annual Funfest regardless of age, race, age, gender, religion, or education (Norris and Laub, 2018). The Tottenham, London festival brings together a diverse population ranging from African, Americans, Asiatic, Caribbean, European, Hispanic, and many other peoples who claim the British Isles as their home. In Hazelton, Pennsylvania, the festival attracts all those who are fascinated with aspects of American culture including beer, wine, music, and fancy attire (Norris and Laub, 2018).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Symbols of the Cities

Each week, in Tottenham City, the Hotspurs Stadium on White Hart Lane hosts live national and European football/soccer matches attended by more than 100,000 fans, with millions more watching the games on television. The crowds include Africans, Asians, Indians, Pakistanis, West Indians, and native Europeans. London demographic data show the presence of minorities in the workplace and in the school system. The demand for healthcare impacts children and adults from all races and ethnic groups.

Today's youth are of a different complexion than the youth of 50 years ago. Norris and Laub (2018) show that in America, the color of non-Hispanic whites is less than 50% of the youth population in 632 of America's 3,142 counties. Most of these are in southern and coastal states. It implies that employers have a wider selection of talent. Norris and Laub suggested that by 2020, 50.2% of American children will be from today's minority groups. By 2044.5, 50.3% of Americans of all ages will be from those same groups.

Organizational Culture

In Schein (1992), organizational culture encompasses values and behaviors that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization. According to Needle (2004) organizational culture represents the collective values, beliefs and principles of organizational members and is a product of factors such as history, product, market, technology, strategy, type of employees, management style, and national culture; culture includes the organization's vision, values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, environment, location, beliefs and habits. In later research, Edgar (2013) asserted that a chronic issue in conceptualizing culture is whether to think of it as a static property of a given organization...its shared customs, beliefs norms and values and tacit assumptions or whether to think of principles as a dynamic human process of constructing shared meaning. Culture creation is one of the unique human characteristics of humans, being based on our capacity to be self-conscious and able to see ourselves and others from each other's points of view. It is this reflexive capacity of humans that makes culture possible. Schein suggested that given these human characteristics, it was then clear that culture was both a process and a state.

In Freiberg and Freiberg (2013), it is suggested that for many years companies have relied on employee surveys and gone are those days. The people doing the job need to be far more than satisfied. They essentially should be enthusiastic about the company. They must to continue to learn and improve their disposition to produce the goods demanded by the customers.

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