

# Chapter 1

## Integrating Diversity into Organization and Career Development: A Changing Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter's goal is to describe the confusion that occurs within organizations where there is no clear definition of diversity from which all employees operate. Integrating diversity into organization and career development is vital but cannot occur without an operational definition of the term diversity. There is also misunderstanding between the terms career management and career development. The terms are not interchangeable, although they are treated as though they are within organizations. Eliminating the confusion and misunderstandings will assist organization leaders' efforts to integrate diversity into organization and career development.*

### INTRODUCTION

Unimaginable is the term often first expressed by individuals after they have witnessed or experienced a significant change. One example was the election of the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America, the Honorable Barack Hussein Obama, an American Black man. It was unimaginable, world-wide, that this level of change was possible in America in 2008. Yet, it occurred because of an impact of diversity. Not only because of diversity in appearance of the citizens in the United States,

but also because of a diversity of thought within the citizenry of the American voting population. There is not enough of any one group of citizens in American society to be a super majority, and there may never be again.

The term unimaginable may become obsolete with respect to diversity because of the above described change. For some individuals the obsolescence was almost immediate as they began to speak of a post-racial America. This may be a bit premature, but it is imaginable as citizens continue to accept and embrace change that occurs through

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the impact of diversity on organization and career development within organizations. The American government has provided the world with a view of the impact of diversity on an organization and ultimately its impact on individual careers. The world is witnessing resistance, acceptance, and infinite ways in which diversity is experienced by non-diverse and diverse individuals.

There is no definitive definition of diversity within society; however, the federal government has provided a definitive definition for organizations. The federal government's definition originated from the 1964 Civil Rights Act legislation, but has evolved through Presidential, Executive Orders to provide protection for individuals who are discriminated against within the workplace. The following list contains the classification by which groups of employees are currently protected within organizations that have federal contracts and are enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC):

1. **Age:** Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967;
2. **Disability:** Vocational Rehabilitation and Other Rehabilitation Services of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
3. **National Origin:** Civil Rights Act of 1964;
4. **Race/Color:** Civil Rights Act of 1964;
5. **Religion:** Civil Rights Act of 1964;
6. **Sex:** Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Civil Rights Act of 1964; and
7. **Sexual Orientation:** Executive Order 11478. (2014, ¶ 1)

Having federal contracts requires organizations to adhere to federal laws and allows employees to be protected by the EEOC. They are protected from discrimination based on equal pay/compensation (Equal Pay Act of 1963); harassment (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967,

(ADEA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (ADA)); pregnancy (Pregnancy Discrimination Act); retaliation; sexual harassment; genetic information (Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008); and veteran status (Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 and Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act).

This text reveals that across a spectrum of situations and issues, there is a need to clearly delineate the difference between legal, mandated diversity and diversity of thought. Organization leaders have permitted and perpetuated the mudding of the waters by allowing the word to, in essence, simply represent difference. This choice has benefitted neither the organization nor the individual. It has resulted in over \$8-10 billion spent on ineffective diversity training without evidential, positive change as reflected in the continuous claims, lawsuits, and settlements made through the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) and the United States Department of Labor as a result of discriminatory workplace practices. U.S. EEOC Chair Berrien noted that the EEOC had filed 21 systemic lawsuits in Fiscal Year 2013 securing "a record \$372.1 million in monetary relief for victims of employment discrimination in private sector and state and local government workplaces" (Performance and Accountability Report, 2013, vi).

This chapter suggests that some of these problems can be addressed if organizations pursue a change towards career development evaluations as opposed to the traditional performance evaluation systems that are currently used. The majority of Human Resource (HR) professionals do not like their performance evaluation systems because they are too subjective and subsequently inaccurate and ineffective. Most employees enter organizations with the expectation of career advancement and/or career change, yet organizations typically do not have career development and/or career

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