

**Project Management
and Leadership
Challenges, Volume III**

Project Management and Leadership Challenges, Volume III

*Respecting Diversity, Building
Team Meaningfulness, and
Growing Into Leadership Roles*

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Project Management and Leadership Challenges, Volume III: Respecting Diversity, Building Team Meaningfulness, and Growing Into Leadership Roles
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Abstract

Project management is an approach that emphasizes taking the right decision at the right time in the right manner to move in the right strategic direction. The diversity approach is helpful for creating an environment for creativity and innovation and provokes thought with the power of anticipation.

Project implementation depends on a strong project team, discussed in Chapter Two, to manage the processes necessary for a strong team for self-propelling through challenges.

High-performing team members connecting with organizational culture are unique and find a satisfactory level of meaningfulness out of the task assigned to them. Chapter Three dealt with the challenges of connecting and meaningfulness.

Leadership role in project management is inevitable for successful advancements and creation of an environment to work together, compensating individual shortcomings, supporting each other, and reaching a desired end result effectively and efficiently.

You learned the basic differences between the focus of a manager and that of a leader where a project manager needs to learn the leadership skills to move to the leadership role and manage the human side of challenges in a project. You also learned how to develop trust in the workplace in Chapter Four.

A model proposed for managers to grow to the leadership role was discussed in Chapter Five. Leadership skills are mandatory for each team member along with the project manager to become a high performer in a team.

Chapter Six dealt with leadership enablers at the personal level. What you need to focus on for the development of personality and capability to withstand the challenges?

The chapter also focused on leadership enablers that provide the breeding grounds for development of leadership.

Chapter Seven brought in view the ultimate growth to Blue Ocean Leadership and how to reach there?

Keywords

building team, connecting with culture, diversity, growing leadership, leadership enabler, meaningfulness, strategic leadership

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>ix</i>
Chapter 1 Why Diversity?	1
Chapter 2 Building a Team	31
Chapter 3 Meaningfulness and High Performance.....	81
Chapter 4 Leadership in Project Management	121
Chapter 5 Growing to Leadership.....	143
Chapter 6 Leadership Enablers	171
Chapter 7 Strategic Leadership	205
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>215</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>217</i>

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CHAPTER 1

Why Diversity?

Introduction

The competence and collective wisdom of a project team is enhanced through diversity to achieve high performance, high productivity, and increased creativity in order to always succeed. This chapter provides an overview of diversity and how to achieve its benefits in the workplace.

Team members with different backgrounds and experiences bring together a variety of perspectives, evoking alternative solutions and approaches when discussing a problem or an issue. When managed well, the strengths and best insights of every individual may be harnessed to heighten productivity and deliver better results.

The traditional notion of workplace diversity refers to representations of various races, genders, and religious backgrounds; today's concept of workplace diversity is all-encompassing. Besides these variables, there are considerations made on the basis of personality, age, cognitive style, skill set, education, background, and more.

The focus of workplace diversity is on the promotion of individuality within an organization, acknowledging that every person may bring something different and valuable to the task.

Further, the chapter also discusses how the endeavor for diversity in the workplace is managed through change resistance, culture for diversity, and the strengths for continued success.

Objectives

Recognize the importance and power of diversity in business.

Members who think alike or are trained in similar disciplines with similar knowledge bases run the risk of becoming insular in their ideas. A fast-changing business demands extensive creativity and innovation.

Diversity in the organization is based on four pillars: create management support, engage team members as partners, integrate diversity in management policies, and link diversity goal with business goal. Capture the value of project management by strengthening the project teams with members having different perspectives and different cultural backgrounds. Like-minded thinking is restricted to socializing and pleasure gatherings.

How does project management under the pressure of increasing complexity for business advancement, fast-changing customer requirements, and increasing expectations act as an approach that is useful for growth and competitiveness?

How is diversity maintained to break the monotony in the thinking process of professionals and enhance collective wisdom?

The concept of creating and maintaining diversity in a project is discussed under the following headings:

- Added Advantages of Diversity in the Workplace
 - Diversity in Project Management
 - Cultural Diversity in the Workplace
 - Developing a Diverse Workforce
 - Creating a Culture of Training in Diversity
 - Leveraging Diversity for High Performance
 - Maintaining the Strengths of Diversity
-

Project management takes fast-paced actions to implement projects and programs with high-performing teams that draw strengths from competence, creative innovation, interdependence, and respect. The continued success of the project management approach with constant improvement requires the teams to have all possible strengths. Diversity has proved critically important to organizations and their teams for a number of reasons and needs to be adapted on projects for added value.

Being around people who are different from us makes us more creative, more diligent, and more hard working.

Further, the economic interdependence in the global market has created a workforce demographic shift, and mitigating the risk of becoming insular in ideas has become the need of the day. Workplace

diversity has become a business strategy. When teams show a commitment to embracing differences and changes, they reap benefits, both tangible and intangible.

Project management approach for “success first time and every time” encourages diversity to add to team strengths from a variety of opinions, varied perceptions, social backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, work exposure, and experience, for creating an environment of innovation for continuous improvement.

Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between team members in an organization. The concept is primarily to accept and respect the individuality of others who come from different backgrounds. It means an understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing the values of each individual accepting all the differences.

The major viewpoints and benefits of embracing diversity are as follows:

- Decades of research-based viewpoint
Researchers, organizational scientists, psychologists, sociologists, economists, and demographers show that socially diverse groups (that is, those with a diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation) are more innovative than homogeneous groups.
- Obvious advantage
It is very obvious that a group of people with diverse individual expertise would be better than a homogeneous group at solving complex, non-routine problems. It is less obvious that social diversity should work in the same way—yet science shows that it does. Team members with different backgrounds and experiences bring together a variety of perspectives, thereby evoking alternative solutions and approaches when discussing a topic or an issue. When managed well, the strengths and best insights of every individual is harnessed to heighten productivity and deliver better outcomes. There needs to be a mix of capabilities to ensure that essential components and skills from strategic planning, execution, and follow-up to communication abilities and conflict resolution are present.

- Informational diversity
People with different backgrounds bring new information, thus resulting in informational diversity. Interacting with individuals who are different forces group members to prepare better, to anticipate alternative viewpoints, and to expect that reaching consensus will take effort.

Multiple Perspectives

Team members from various cultural and social backgrounds bring multiple perspectives on various issues. A broader array of perspectives also breaks up group thinking. According to psychologists Katherine W. Phillips, Katie A. Liljenquist, and Margaret A. Neale, more diverse groups are more likely to bring new ideas to the table.

- Organizational performance and economic growth
An access to a larger pool of talent helps development of high-caliber diverse teams and harnesses the various skills, varied perspectives based on cultural exposure, specialized competencies, and distinctive capabilities of their members. It results in creative solutions for problems and better organizational performance. This amalgamation of diverse individuals also sets the stage for creativity as different ideas can be tested against one another and new ones may be birthed. Team members stand to experience more personal growth in an environment where they are exposed to differences in culture, opinions, and ideas that lead to high performance and growth.
Diversity supports economic growth by fostering high performance, having a focus on the right skills for the right job, acquiring the right skills from a global pool, and encouraging competence from women, minorities, and gay and transgender workers entering the workforce.
- Enhanced reputation
Organizations demonstrate a commitment to diversity through aggressive outreach. Maintaining it for ethics, fair practices, and appreciation for diverse talent are the factors that create a reputation and attract a wider pool of professionals. Loyalty from customers who prefer to do business with companies that are socially responsible is an additional advantage. Diversity in the workplace shows

to team members that the organization focuses on building a great reputation and opportunities.

- Reduced discrimination
Regular interaction with team members who come from different countries or backgrounds helps reduce discrimination, prejudice, and misunderstandings. Taking time to celebrate fellow workers' cultures and holidays boosts morale and creates a better team bond among team members.
- Negative politics and reduced group thinking
- Diversity creates a hurdle in a group formation and independent thinking negate politics of preferring particular virtues or view point in decision-making.

Manage Pillars of Diversity

Diversity is increasing significantly in the business arena. Successful organizations recognize the need for immediate actions and are ready and willing to spend resources on managing diversity in their workplace. Diversity is needed to manage the pillars for building the rest of the structure effectively.

Accepting diversity to reap the benefits is impossible without managing the pillars, as noted in Figure 1.1.

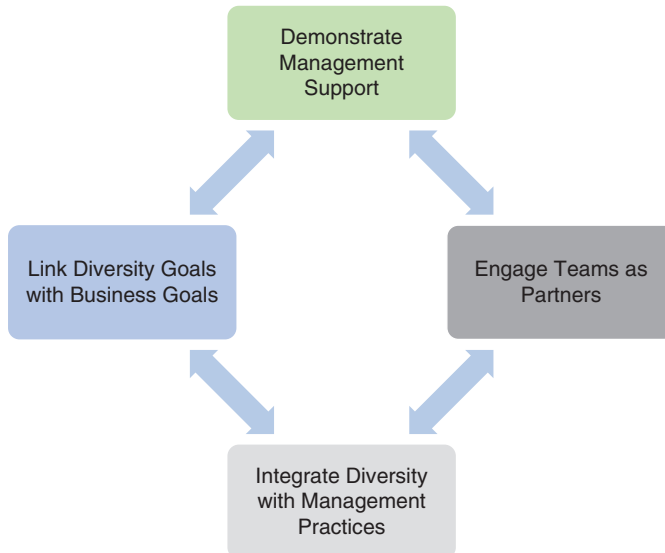


Figure 1.1 Pillars of diversity in an organization

- **Demonstrate Management Support**

A change in the existing approach is inevitable without effective support from the top management and leadership at all levels.

- **Engage Teams as Partners**

Preferably, the changed approach must be implemented at the top and cascade down for the entire organization to appreciate and learn the importance. However, at every level the team members are required to be treated like a partner and are engaged in bringing the required change.

- **Integrate Diversity with Management Practices**

The diversity must be reflected in management policies and practices and all irritants should be dealt with on priority.

- **Link Diversity Goal with Business Goal**

Clarity must be established and shared with all team members as to how diversity will help achieve the business goal.

Move Forward

Implementing diversity in an organization is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The requirement may vary from organization to organization and project to project depending on needs and dynamics.

The starting point, however, is to define the type of diversity that your organization needs to succeed. Identify what is important for your organization and project and then set the appropriate goals and measures such that team members understand what is needed to succeed in an endeavor.

An organization should echo its commitment to diversity. Foster an appreciation for diverse individuals, and encourage teamwork and collaboration.

Successful diversified organizations like AIG, IBM, RB Pharma, and Malakoff have adopted a target-setting approach in relation to gender and ethnic representations at senior leadership levels. They review diversity mix on an annual basis at their workforce-planning meeting, discussing talent needs with heads of divisions and departments. Quota systems are an option as well; however, a danger here is that the hiring managers may sometimes feel pressured to recruit for the sake of diversity more than for talent.

Requirements of every organization's diversity are different, but communication is crucial across the board. Leaders need to be made

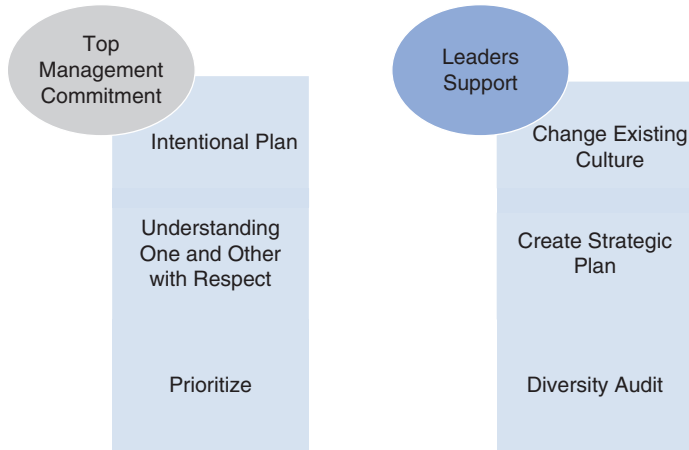


Figure 1.2 Plan for going forward

aware of the reasons behind the importance of achieving a diversity mix that ensures understanding of the goal and should also lend the essential perspective and context to their everyday decision-making. The going forward may be pursued with top management commitment and support from leaders (see Figure 1.2).

Top Management Commitment

For making a change successful, it is mandatory to start from the top with a mindset to advance further.

Intentional plan: develop a plan for going forward keeping in view the business goals, organizational diversity needs, and project-team creativity and innovation challenges.

Understanding and respect: the building block of diversity is respect for individuality and an understanding that intelligence and wisdom are common for all.

Prioritizing: be committed to a diverse workforce to harness a pool of individuals with unique qualities, seeing the combination of differences as a potential for growth rather than as a source for conflict. Be committed to nurture and develop the potential of each individual.

Leaders' Support

Without the guidance and support of leaders at all levels, no change can be effective.

Change the existing culture: immense support from leaders helps to move from an existing culture to a diversity culture.

Create a strategic plan: having a strategy helps to keep all stakeholders on one page in endeavors for advancement.

Conduct a diversity audit: a periodic audit is helpful to ascertain that you are heading in the right direction.

1.1 Added Advantages of Diversity in the Workplace

High performance of a team on a project depends on the ability of an organization to develop team diversity to realize the benefits at the workplace. Actively assessing workplace diversity issues and developing and implementing diversity plans have multiple benefits (see Figure 1.3).

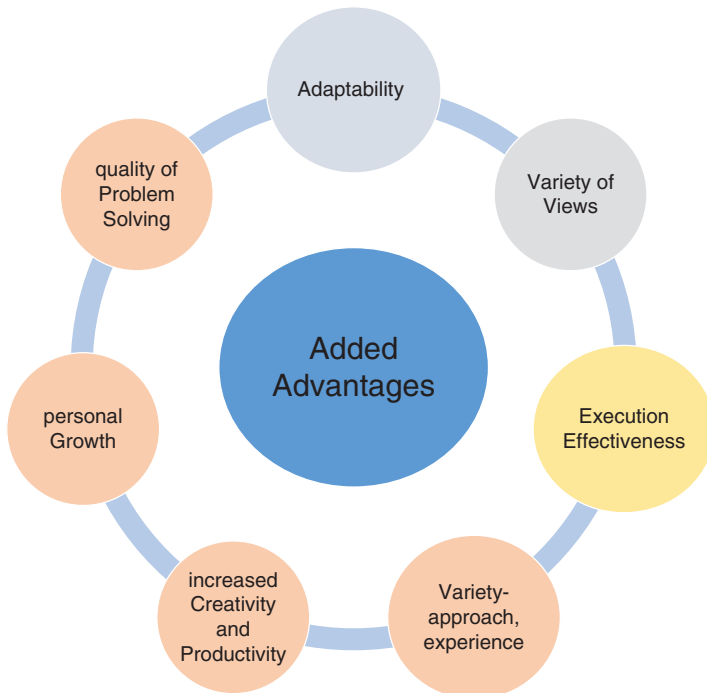


Figure 1.3 Added advantages at the workplace

- **Increased adaptability**

Organizations employing diverse teams supply a greater variety of solutions to problems in service, sourcing, and allocation of resources. Team members from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands.
- **Variety of viewpoints**

A diverse workforce that feels comfortable communicating varying points of view provides a larger pool of ideas and experiences. The organization draws from that pool to meet business strategy needs and the needs of customers more effectively.
- **More effective execution**

Organizations encouraging diversity inspire all of their members to perform to their highest ability. Company-wide strategies are then executed, resulting in higher productivity, profit, and return on investment.
- **Variety of thought, approach, and experiences**

The varieties of experience help in developing an approach for an issue or a process. The varied thought process creates innovation for finding the best solution.
- **Increased creativity and productivity**

“Diversity in the Workplace: Benefits, Challenges, and the Required Managerial Tools,” a report published in 2008 by the University of Florida, reveals that while teams tend to act as a unit for the company, simply respecting individual differences increases productivity. Similarly, the study by Phillips and colleagues, mentioned earlier, finds that diverse groups tend to devise better solutions, even when individuals believe they do not work well together. They suggest that a degree of discomfort can improve results compared to ideas devised by a more familiar, comfortable, and homogeneous group. When team members feel valued, they perform at their fullest potential and highest productivity.
- **Personal growth**

Team members stand to experience more personal growth in an environment where they are exposed to differences in culture, opinions, and ideas.

The more you know, the more you know what you don't know.

—Aristotle

In a diversified team the more you know, the better your capacity to test and refine your own perspectives and opinions.

Team members will have to improve their ability to adapt to different circumstances in a diverse environment. They have to work through differences in personality, culture, and background. Underlying ethno-centric notions may finally be brought to the fore and confronted as they learn to work with different styles and cultures.

- **Quality of problem solving and innovation**

Many studies now show that diverse teams view situations from a broad range of perspectives, producing more creative solutions to problems and greater product innovation.

Challenges of Diversity in the Workplace

Team development starts immediately after the approval of charter for a project and the implementation of a program. To take full advantage of the benefits of diversity, all challenges need to be addressed effectively. Some of the challenges are as follows:

- **Resistance to change**—For team members who refuse to accept the fact that the social and cultural makeup of the workplace is changing, their “always done it this way” mentality mostly gets in the way of new ideas and inhibits progress. Encourage team members to express their ideas and opinions with a sense of equal value to all, to eliminate their apprehensions.
- **Implementation of diversity policies**—This may be the overriding challenge to all diversity advocates. Armed with the results of assessments of team members and research data, a customized strategy to maximize the effects of diversity in the workplace must be built and implemented for every organization.
- **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.

- **Successful management of diversity**—Diversity training alone is not sufficient for your organization's diversity management plan. A strategy must be created and implemented to inculcate a culture of diversity that permeates every department and function of the organization.
- **Assessment of diversity**—Desired advancement makes assessing and evaluating diversity an integral process in any management system. A customizable member-satisfaction survey to accomplish this assessment is important for your company. It helps your management team to determine which challenges and obstacles to diversity are present in the workplace and which policies need to be added or eliminated. Reassessment then determines the success of diversity in the workplace plan for implementation.
- **Development of a diversity plan**—Choosing a survey that provides comprehensive reporting is a key decision. That report will be the beginning structure of diversity in the workplace plan. The plan must be comprehensive, attainable, and measurable. An organization must decide what changes need to be made and must develop a time line for that change to be attained.
- **Implementation of diversity 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 an organization's plan.

1.2 Diversity in Project Management

Project management in the early 21st century is a truly global affair. Companies do business across countries and in every time zone and hundreds of languages. This makes having a diverse workforce an advantage for project implementation in the global market. Diversity

improves organizational systems from the inside, fostering better team interactions and tapping into a larger pool of talent.

Each Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) may have a diversified team depending on challenges and requirements for creativity and innovation.

Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between team members in an organization. The concept encompasses primarily acceptance and respect. It means an understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizes the values of each individual with all differences.

- That sounds simple, but diversity encompasses race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education, background, exposure, and more.
- Diversity involves not only how team members perceive themselves but also how they perceive others. Those perceptions affect their interactions. For a wide assortment of team members to function effectively in an organization, human resource professionals need to deal effectively with issues, such as communication, adaptability, and change.

A diversified project team is able to continuously improve processes when empowered to creativity and innovation and find better solutions to issues in progression.

With the economy becoming increasingly global, teams become increasingly diverse. Organizational success and competitiveness depends on the ability to manage diversity in the workplace effectively. Evaluate your organization's diversity policies and plan for the future—start today.

Transformational Change

Transformational change covers and develops an equal-opportunity agenda for both the immediate need and long-term solutions for project implementation. For the short term, it implements new measures to minimize bias in procedures such as recruitment or promotion. The long term, however, is seen as a project of transformation for organizations. This approach acknowledges the existence of power systems and seeks to challenge the existing hegemony through implementation of equality values. Figure 1.4 shows transformational change.

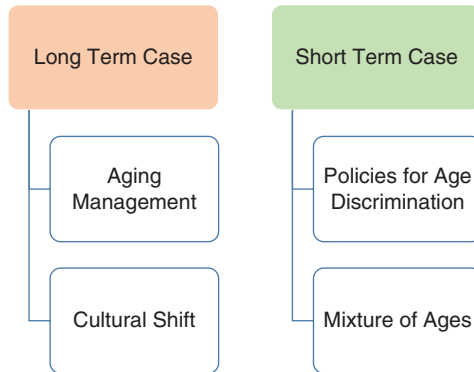


Figure 1.4 Transformational change

- The long-term case for transformational change is aging management; younger team members are considered more innovative and flexible, while older ones are associated with higher costs of salary, benefits, and health care needs. Thus, organizations prefer young ones to older members. The application of transformational concept for immediate intervention may provide the needed relief for a longer term cultural shift that occurs with the benefits of older members' experience.
- The short-term action of an organization may be to set up policies preventing age discrimination. However, on a case-by-case basis, older team members with negative stereotypes may be provided training for added skills for a task. This will result in a positive realization that older members add value to the workplace through their experience and knowledge base. The balanced idea is to capture the benefits of innovation and flexibility that comes with youth, with a mixture of ages.

Implementation

When the need for diversity has been realized and accepted for change, the implementation must go with all intentional “diversity programs” to assist organizations in facing rapid demographic changes taking place in the market and workers' pool. Help team members to work and understand one another better with acceptance and respect. Resources exist through

best-practice cases of organizations that have successfully created inclusive environments for supporting and championing diversity.

- Commitment from top management is the foremost factor for an urgent implementation of diversity.
- When top leaders support their organization to change from the existing culture to one of diversity inclusion, this increases the success of the change management process. This process includes analyzing where the organization currently stands through a diversity audit, creating a strategic action plan, gaining support by seeking stakeholder input, and holding individuals accountable through measurable results.

1.3 Cultural Diversity in the Workplace

The following text has been adapted from Dr. Kizzy M. Dominguez, “Benefits of Managing Cultural Diversity at Workplace,”

source: <http://www.kparksconsulting.com/benefits-of-managing-cultural-diversity-in-the-workplace/>

It encompasses the variety of experiences and perspectives that arise from employee’s differences in an organization. These differences are based on race, gender, ethnic group, age, sexual orientation, personality, cognitive style, religion, tenure, organizational function, education, heritage, and more. Also known as multiculturalism, cultural diversity is born from the values, norms, and traditions of an employee that affect the way she typically perceives, thinks, interacts, behaves, and makes judgment. So it’s not just about an individual’s characteristics, but also about the way others perceive those characteristics.

How Does It Manifest in the Workplace?

When starting the process of managing cultural diversity in the workplace, you’ll want to assess the cultural competence of your employees. Cultural competence is the ability to be agile to

collaborate effectively with people from various cultures. There are multiple factors that affect each employees' cultural competence, including awareness of one's own cultural worldview, knowledge of other cultural practices and worldviews, and attitudes towards cultural differences. Creating an environment where cultural competence is welcomed and rewarded is the overarching goal of managing cultural diversity at work.

What Ways Support Cultural Diversity?

Supporting cultural diversity within your workplace means going beyond legal and policy requirements and promoting community and comfort with difference—it means following the Platinum Rule: “**treat others as *they* want to be treated.**” The biggest hurdle is simply warding off changing resistance. Do this through including as many employees as possible and executing the below guidelines:

- **Assess cultural competence and diversity**

Start doing a quick audit of your company's culture. Ask yourself: What prompted me to search about cultural diversity in the workplace? What are my goals for creating a culturally diverse environment? Does my company (and upper management) value and practice cultural diversity? What is hindering cultural diversity in my place of work? Also, look inward to understand your own culture, identity, biases, prejudices, and stereotypes. Then make a plan to address your concerns, based on the suggestions below.

- **Offer an Employee Resource Group (ERG)**

ERG also known as affinity groups or business resource groups are voluntary, employee-led initiatives that serve as a resource for members and organizations by fostering a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives. They bring employees together based on common interests, characteristics, or shared backgrounds. These company sponsored groups have moved away from simply being a place for

social gatherings to serving as think-tanks for companies to gain insight into products, services, or the marketplace. Try offering an ERG or add a multicultural, or culture specific, ERG to your current list of affinity groups.

- **Consider adding diversity training**

Diversity and inclusion training is a great addition to the steps above, especially if you assess low levels of cultural competence among your team players in step one. Most training starts with an understanding of your own cultural diversity and then moves to expanding your knowledge and tools for working with others to drive team success and impact the bottom line. The learning course allows your team players to discover new approaches to doing things and helps you develop a plan to create an inclusive workplace. Another tip: always follow your efforts at managing cultural diversity in the workplace with analysis. Send team player short surveys to reassess and make adjustments where necessary.

How Does It Benefit the Workplace?

Managing cultural diversity in the workplace is necessary. Your team really gets benefits from diversity and inclusion. Two biggest benefits occur when you lead the way for high levels of cultural competence at your workplace:

- **Better People: Higher variety of viewpoints and teamwork**

The more different people's experiences and backgrounds are, the more diverse their viewpoints and voices will be. Including all voices in your brainstorming sessions creates spaces where outside-the-box thinking can thrive. This means your team is better able to develop fresh ideas that will meet the needs of the diverse marketplace that we work in. You can also broaden your service range as cultural diversity includes inviting a variety of on-the-job skills that drive innovation in your organization and reflect the world around you. When members of your team look like and

understand the people in diverse target markets, they are perhaps better able to design and deliver products and services that meet the needs of the potential customers. This creates an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect that further creates a firm foundation for building effective teamwork.

- **Better organization/project: Improve implementations, reputation, and marketing**

When your team members feel valued and happy on the job, you are more likely to have low turnover and absenteeism. These two factors contribute to unnecessary expenditures in your organization because you have to take time to find new employees and train them. Plus the engaged team members means higher productivity and better attitudes toward coworkers, managers, and customers. Once your internal operations are optimized, your reputation as an organization of choice will allow you to attract the best talent from an ever-shrinking labor pool. People want to work for employers who care about and value their unique characteristics. Thus, by managing cultural diversity in the workplace, you make recruitment easier and more effective. When you have a diverse workforce, diverse customers in your target market are more likely to trust your brand and feel comfortable doing business with your organization. All of these factors contribute to your current marketing efforts, allowing you to capture more of the market share.

Negative Impacts of Mismanagement of Cultural Diversity

Ignoring the mounting costs of mismanaging cultural diversity in the workplace will have long-term effects on your company's future. Mismanaging cultural diversity at work causes unhealthy tensions between team members and managers and a loss of team productivity. Your organization's reputation as an employer of choice is dependent on its atmosphere of acceptance. When you can't recruit or retain talented people of all kinds, your organization has lost its most valuable asset: professionals. Remember, when our economy becomes increasingly global, our workforce will also become increasingly

diverse. Your competitiveness and success will depend on your ability to manage the cultural diversity in your workplace.

1.4 Developing a Diverse Workforce

To promote a diverse work environment is to actively attract and hire people of different cultures. There are many benefits of a diverse staff, such as gaining a variety of assorted talents and skills. If you're looking for steps on how to develop a diverse workforce, consider the following suggestions in Steps 1–7 (adapted from <http://www.wikihow.com/Develop-a-Diverse-Workforce>) shown in Figure 1.5.

Step 1

Make it a policy and core value that discrimination is not tolerated in organization. Design a procedure for complaints regarding discrimination in the workplace, in addition to disciplinary action. Make sure your consistency in responding to complaints and executing discipline.

Discrimination may occur in relation to age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability or illness.

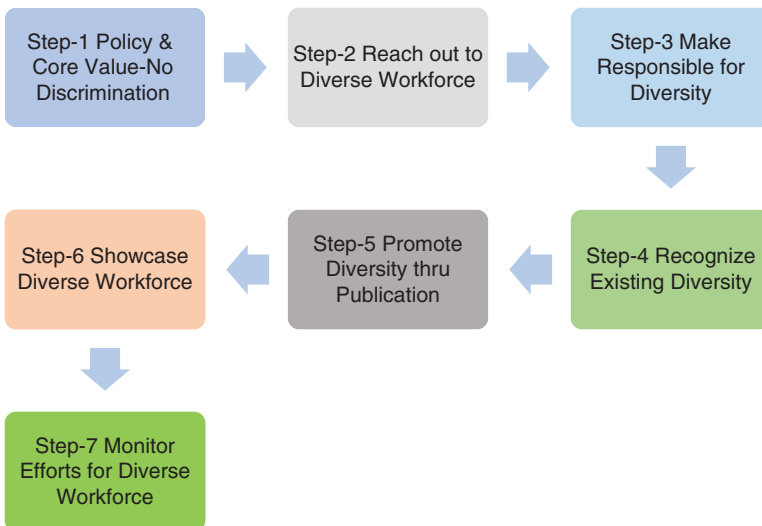


Figure 1.5 *The 7-step approach for implementation of diversity in the workplace*

Step 2

Advertise job positions in locations and forum with a widely diverse audience and readerships. Opt for local and regional papers, magazines, trade publications and television.

Step 3

Assign a person in charge for finding ways to incorporate or celebrate the cultural differences in organization. Other team members may offer their suggestions and even be involved in the actual planning of these events and activities.

It is strong idea to make managers to repost regularly on initiatives to ensure and sustain diversity.

Step 4

Commemorate the existing diversity recognizing the culture that may already be present in your workforce and do not confuse diversity with minority. Make sure you include everyone in your attempt to celebrate diversity.

Step 5

Encourage the existing diversity of staff within your company through corporate publications. It may be through company magazine, website, reports highlighting company diversity whenever possible. When your diverse readers and web traffic recognize the diversity within your company, they will be more inclined to be part of it.

Step 6

Networking with various diverse organizations will provide you an opportunity to showcase your company and the diverse workforce. Using such forums to emphasize the company's dedication to diversity will likely increase interest of diverse individuals within your company.

Step 7

Monitor your efforts for developing diverse team members at work. Make notes of various methods used in attempts to increase your

diverse workforce. Determine which methods have worked best and to what extent. Work to build upon the best method gave the results.

Additional Tips

1. Offer internship to diverse schools. It will help promotion of diverse workforce and the feel of working in such environment.
2. Make use of experiences in other organizations with diverse workforce.
3. Include the desire to build and maintain diversity as part of your mission statement. It will demonstrate the seriousness and significance of diversity to your organization.
4. Be sure to use succession planning to keep diversity to core value within your organization and business.

1.5 Creating a Culture of Training in Diversity

Simply having an intention for diversity never works; training is mandatory to help team members celebrate differences and create a peaceful environment of acceptance and respect.

Workplace diversity refers to not only the differences between team members but also to the acceptance and celebration of these differences at work. Diversity training, according to an article by the Greater Rochester Diversity Council, is an essential part of building awareness and a cohesive work environment.

Workplace diversity training is an investment on your teams, thus an investment on your organization. Cultural awareness serves as a bridge between team members whose paths might not otherwise cross.

A training program serves to inspire cultural sensitivity in religion, ethnicity, sex, background, sexual orientation, disabilities, and age, according to business consultant David G. Lewis(2004). Lewis noted the following (Figure 1.6).

Training Benefits

- Diversity training benefits the workplace by allowing team members to let their guards down and build healthy business relationships, as well as decreasing bullying and discrimination at work.

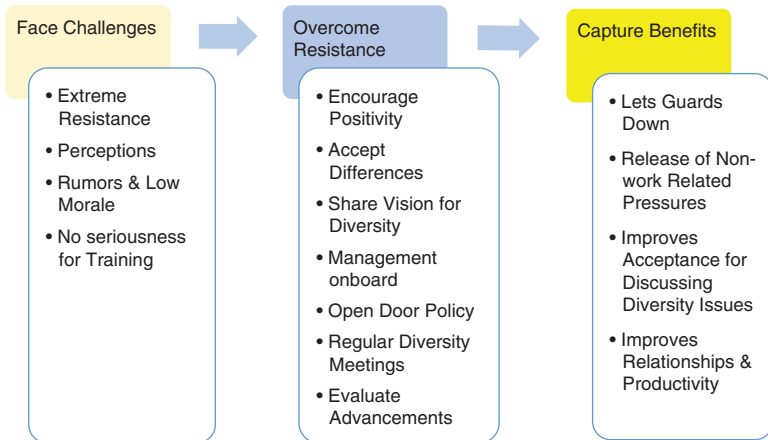


Figure 1.6 The processes for managing training

- The plans turn complacent team members into passionate, well-adjusted, and comfortable members by decreasing non-work-related pressures, according to the Greater Rochester Diversity Council.
- It improves understanding, acceptance, and respect to discuss diversity issues together in a learning mode.
- It improves the quality of work by team members. It produces a happier member and, in turn, increases productivity.

Workplace diversity training is implemented in an effective way.

Face Challenges

- Diversity in the workplace often faces extreme resistance from team members. For diversity to thrive, managers must be able to spot this resistance and put an end to it. Resistance comes in many forms and behaviors.
- A resistant member is quick to think that unearned benefits are being showered upon certain members and that promotions are being given to meet a quota.
- A resistant member starts rumors about things that are unfair and causes unrest in an office. This is damaging to office morale.

- Such members do not take diversity training seriously, going through the motions but making jokes and distracting others along the way.

Overcome Resistant Members

- Encourage positivity to overcome powerful resistance. Several ways exist to address diversity resistance in an arising situation that may make all the difference.
- Emphasize all member differences—not just race and sex—as issues of diversity. Putting everyone and their differences on the same level, whether age, religion, or background, will help people see that everyone is different in their own ways.
- Share the company vision for diversity with team members. Often, plans are implemented without communicating them to the team members. Keeping everyone in the loop prevents a lot of resistance.
- Make sure all management personnel are on board. When top management do not show interest in diversity, team members will also likely not take it seriously.
- Keep an open-door policy. Tell team members that when they have a concern, they may talk to management anytime they want. This will keep issues on the table and not in the break room.
- Facilitate regular diversity meetings and keep it fresh on everyone's minds. Be consistent with diversity training.
- Evaluate advancements in training and highlight the benefits achieved with all team members.

Additional Training When Needed

A Harvard study has found that training scenarios have become the fodder for office jokes.

In 2012, Peter Bregman, CEO of the global consulting firm Bregman Partners Inc., said that business diversity training is ineffective. A 2007 study from Harvard University confirmed that of 830 companies surveyed over 31 years, the companies found that attitudes toward diversity did not change. Despite the moot effects of diversity training, there are a number



Figure 1.7 Additional training for diversity

of recommended tactics that can help organically foster positive diversity acceptance and growth in the workplace. Additional training may be carried out as noted in Figure 1.7.

- **Mentor Program**

Caroline Turner, author of *Difference Works: Improving Retention, Productivity and Profitability through Inclusion*, said that mentor programs are an effective way to have team members work together on a business and personal level and break down diversity barriers. Pairing experienced members with recent hires of different ethnic, cultural, or gender backgrounds helped newer members feel accepted in the workplace. The Harvard study found that companies that implemented the mentorship program saw an average 40 percent increase in business diversity acceptance and awareness.

- **Diversity Task Force**

Implementing a diversity task force was another effective tactic and alternative to business diversity training. Offices that implemented the task forces in the 2007 study saw a 30 percent increase in diversity awareness. The task force, which comprised various department managers or representatives, focused on ways to highlight diversity in the workplace, for example, committees

that plan cultural social events after work, committees to oversee diverse hiring practices, and committees to coordinate events that build interoffice relationships. “The best way to bring about change, theorists argue, is to make new programs the responsibility of a person or a committee,” the study found.

- **Personal Accountability and Responsibility**

In addition to action committees and mentoring that begin at the managerial level, each team member should work on their personal growth in the workplace and learn to accept their coworkers for who they are instead of what they are. Encouraging members to have open dialogs with one another and their superiors will help a member feel that they can speak up if they need to and where appropriate. On the flip side, human resources expert Suzanne Lucas said that members should remember that the likelihood is that their fellow members do not mean to offend with an off-color joke or remark. For example, she says, “When your coworker says, ‘Merry Christmas,’ don’t scowl about how not everyone celebrates Christmas. Say, ‘Thanks!’ Or if you want to make it clear that you don’t celebrate, say, ‘I don’t celebrate, but I hope you have a lovely time.’”

- **Emphasize the Severity**

Experts encourage managers and the human resources department to emphasize the seriousness of filing a discrimination lawsuit claim. Each member should be familiar with the formal process, which typically involves a written and signed claim, a meeting between the individuals at hand, and potential action following the meeting. If members understand that filing a lawsuit should be considered only if the discrimination is directed, intentional, and continuous, they are likely to not read more into every aside or joke. “This is generally a last resort,” Suzanne Lucas says. “Unless the behavior was egregious to begin with, which it isn’t in most cases.”

1.6 Leveraging Diversity for High Performance

Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success.

Team building is a process of evolving a group into a cohesive unit.

—Henry Ford

Winning is not always meaning being first, it means doing better than done before.

—Bonnie Blair

Project management is results-driven management that demands building high-performing teams to make strategic advancement. Diversity helps to build teams from a larger pool of professionals available to connect the right person with the right skills for the right task at the right time.

High performance is an outcome of clarity of achievement known to each team member and their level of engagement in the task or purpose.

High-performing teams have two key drivers: achievement and engagement.

In relation to achievement, these teams are clear on their strategy, meet and/or exceed their KPIs and goals, and have higher levels of innovation. In relation to engagement, these teams have a high level of morale and teamwork and know how to support, encourage, and motivate one another in order to achieve their goals.

High-performing teams not only understand how to reach a high level of achievement and engagement but also understand and strive for a balance of focus across both factors. When a team is too focused on achievement, team members report lower job satisfaction and morale due to the absence of interpersonal relationships and support from their team members. In these circumstances, team members report a feeling of isolation despite being part of the team, as each team member is so focused on outcomes that they lose the ability to relate and bond with other team members.

Conversely, when a team is too focused on engagement, team members may report high morale and an elevated level of social networking and activities. But outcomes and results may be lower, which in turn increases management focus on the team performance and the party eventually comes to an end. In these circumstances, morale quickly nosedives and team conflict and dysfunction emerge as pressure to deliver results is increased.

1.7 Maintaining the Strengths of Diversity

The following text has been adapted from <https://hr.gwu.edu/maintaining-diversity-workplace>

Consistent with commitment to equal opportunity, there remain strives to maintain a positive climate for work in which relevant factors such as ability and performance are the bases for decisions relating to placement of an individual team player. Managers are responsible for maintaining an environment that supports equal opportunity. The managers need to understand and incorporate policy and guidance on equal opportunity and affirmative action programs, and to create and manage diversity in the workplace.

How to Create and Sustain a More Diverse Workforce?

The following text has been adapted from CAI (2016):

In 2013, Harvard Business Review conducted a survey of 1800 professionals that found a striking correlation between diversity and innovation in the workplace. The study examined what it terms “two-dimensional diversity”—which encompasses both inherent diversity, or traits you are born with such as gender and ethnicity, as well as acquired diversity, involving traits you gain from experience. The study referred to companies whose leaders exhibit at least three inherent and three acquired diversity traits as having two-dimensional diversity, and found that those companies with 2-D diversity out-innovate and out-perform others.

In fact, employees at these companies are 45% likelier to report that their firm’s market share grew over the previous year and 70% likelier to report that the firm captured a new market.

Though it may sound intuitive, the evidence for the business case for workplace diversity is significant. Along with carrying the obvious social value of creating a more inclusive, tolerant

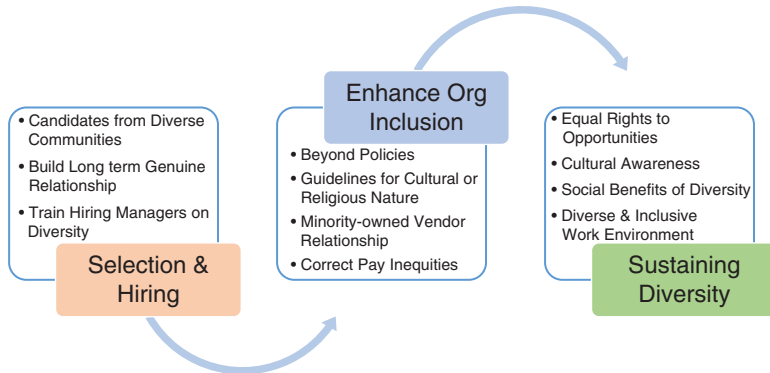


Figure 1.8 *Phases of processes of groundwork for a diverse workplace*

workplace, diversity in the office really can improve profits and your bottom line, as evidenced above.

Of course, most HR professionals don't need to be told that diversity is important to the workplace, as they are most likely aware of its many benefits. Where many in HR may struggle with the process, however, is how to get started on tackling diversity initiatives with limited time and money. That's where we're here to help. By dividing the process into these easily digestible phases, you'll not only be able to quickly lay the groundwork for a more diverse workplace, but also put your office on a path to sustaining this diversity going forward as shown in Figure 1.8.

Selection and Hiring

To create a truly diverse workplace, you have to start at the beginning. Hiring people with different backgrounds may be an obvious way to improve diversity, but it takes a conscious effort to broaden recruiting efforts to reach those candidates. Here are a few ideas as to where to start this process:

- Think about where you look for candidates. Are you looking in markets or roles that seek out membership associations, clubs, and publications with minority or underrepresented community audiences? Right here in the Triangle, you could be

looking at reaching out to minority publications such as Que Pasa and The Triangle Tribune in order to place job postings.

- But go beyond just posting a job to engaging and networking with the owners and employees in order to build longer term-genuine relationships.
- Train and educate hiring managers on the importance of organizational diversity, particularly the business benefits. By ensuring the hiring team is aware of both the social and financial need for diversity in the office, HR can lead the charge to finding more qualified and diverse minority candidates.

Enhancing Organizational Inclusion

Once you've moved past the selection and hiring of a diverse pool of candidates, how will you ensure they want to stay at your organization? It takes a company-wide commitment to cultivate a culture of organizational inclusion. Employees want to work in an environment where they feel supported and valued for their differences and human resources plays a large role in driving this culture. Here's how HR can permeate inclusion throughout their organization's culture:

- Go beyond handbook policies that cover anti-discrimination laws and consider including an organizational statement that addresses the company's commitment to an environment of support and inclusion.
- Revisit your dress guidelines to ensure that you aren't inadvertently excluding items that are cultural or religious in nature.
- Demonstrate a company commitment to utilizing minority-owned or managed businesses for key vendor relationships.
- Regularly review your pay system to identify and correct any pay inequities.

Sustaining Diversity Going Forward

Now that you've planted the seeds of diversity within your organization, HR must do its part to ensure it continues to grow

and prosper moving forward. Creating a diverse workplace is one thing, but what about keeping it that way? Here are a few tips to ensure your diverse workplace is here to stay:

- Ensure your minority employees have equal access to opportunities through the use of a minority mentorship program. This will not only give minority employees a space for engagement and advancement but also breaks down barriers between generations and other boundaries at work.
- Train managers and all employees on cultural awareness and inclusion—this can be as simple as an online training course or even sharing an article or case study around this subject.
- Educate your front line managers around the business and social benefits of diversity and teach them to recognize any signs that point otherwise.
- Be transparent around your intent to create and sustain a diverse and inclusive work environment and the company practices that support it. By openly showcasing your organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion, you will continue to create a culture that fosters these ideals and attract employees who are dedicated to fulfilling them.

Though the process may seem overwhelming, it is imperative that HR leads the charge for a more diverse and inclusive workplace. By following these phases, you can foster a sense of inclusion that will transform your business for the better, both culturally and financially.

Summary

This chapter provided an understanding of the importance of diversity for enhanced performance in project management and how it helps results-driven management on project.

Diversity at the workplace is developed and maintained to sustain efficacy. It needs developing a mindset that is achieved through training. The practical aspects of the training have been discussed in the chapter.

The chapter also discussed the development of diversity at the workplace with a practical approach, helping practitioners to achieve a “diversity culture” and move to the next level in performance.

The endeavor needs maintaining efficacy and sustaining the benefits.

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Index

- ABCD trust model, 130
- Ability, readiness dimension, 36–37, 98
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), 108
- Achievers. *See* Drivers
- Active listening, 83
 - communication skills rely on, 57
 - importance of, 71
 - in interpersonal skills, 76
 - parameters, 45
- Adaptability, advantages of diversity, 9
- Adversities, plan to overcome, 117–118
- Advertisement, for job positions, 19
- Aerobic exercises, 182
- Affinity groups. *See* Employee Resource Group (ERG)
- Agility, emotional, 107–108
- Anger management, 155–156
- Aon Consulting People Risk Index™ (PRI), 85
- Assertiveness, 150
 - for efficient leadership, 126–127
- Attention, conscious, 146
- Attitude, 200–203
- Australian Psychological Society (APS), 177
- Bad decision, 103
- Behavioral, competency category, 165
- “Big-Five” traits, 197
- Blue Ocean Leadership, 209–213
 - versus conventional leadership, 211–213
 - grid, 212, 213
 - steps for execution, 213
- Body language, 169
- Bradberry, Travis, 184, 186
- Brain training
 - designed to address real-life needs, 175
 - investment and, 175–176
 - promising studies on effects of, 175
 - science behind, 174–175
- Budgeting, 138
- Burnout, 63
 - management of, 64
 - signs of, 64–65
- Business resource groups. *See* Employee Resource Group (ERG)
- Caffeine intake, 185, 190
- Character, 196
 - defining, 196
 - personality, 196–197
 - traits, 197
 - trust dimension, 134
 - values, 197–198
 - virtues, 198–199
- Chartered Institute of Personal Development (CIPD), 173
- Coaching, 135
 - leadership style, 59
- Commemorate, existing diversity, 19
- Commitment, 37
- Communication, 10–11, 127, 138
 - skills, and conflict management, 66
- Communicators. *See* Connectors
- Company value, aligning personal value with, 99
- Competence, 126
 - categories of, 164–165
 - conscious, 164
 - emotional, 107
 - growth, 161–163
 - stages of, 163–164
 - trust dimension, 134
 - unconscious, 164
- Competition
 - advantages of, 89–90
 - defined, 89

- Competition (*Continued*)
 disadvantages of, 90
 internal, 88–95. *See* Internal competition
 negative. *See* Negative competition
 positive. *See* Positive competition
 types of, 88–89
- Confidence building, 150
 steps for, 150–151
- Conflict management, 65–77
 communication skills, 66
 critical thinking, 66
 decision-making, 65–66
 importance of your team, 74–75
 interpersonal skills for, 65, 75–76
 problem solving, 66
 project team, 76–77
 and relationship enhancement,
 rules for
 choosing your battles proactively,
 67–69
 conflict as an opportunity, 66–67
 do your homework, 69–70
 empower third side, 72–73
 focus “out” before focusing “in”,
 70–71
 seeking mutually beneficial
 solutions, 71–72
 take initiative steps, 70
 relationships matter, 73–74
- Conflict resolution, 83
- Connectors, 40
- Conscious competence, 164
- Conscious incompetence, 164
- Consciousness, 145–146
- Consistency, 126
- Constructive criticism, 75
- Contentment, power of, 147
- Controlling, 138–139
- Conventional leadership versus Blue
 Ocean Leadership, 211–213
- Conventional wisdom, 207
- Cooperative competition. *See* Positive
 competition
- Coordinating, 138
- Core competencies, 165
- Corporate publications, 19
- Creativity
 advantages of diversity, 9
 developing, 158–159
 thinking, 157–158
- Credibility, 192
 building, 193–194
 characteristics of, 192
 negative with low, 193
 positive with high, 193
- Critical thinking, and conflict
 management, 66
- Cultural diversity, in workplace
 benefits of, 16–17
 diversity training, 16
 employee resource group, 15–16
 inclusion training, 16
 manifesting, 14–15
 mismanagement of, 17–18
 ways for supporting, 15–16
- Cultural life cycle problems, 101
- Cultural waste, 97
- Culture, 96
 deviation with, 99–100
- Decision-making, and conflict
 management, 65–66
- Delegating leadership style, 59
- Destructive competition. *See* Negative
 competition
- Diet, and exercise, 181
- Diplomacy skills, 83
- Directing leadership style, 59
- Disbanding, of team, 33
- Discrimination, 18
 and diversity, 5
 lawsuit, filing, 24
- Disengagement, causes of, 41
- Diverse staff, benefits of, 18
- Diverse workplace
 creating and sustaining, 26–27,
 28–29
 steps for developing, 18–20
- Diversity
 benefits of, 3–4
 developing a diverse workforce,
 18–20
 implementation of, 6–7
 introduction, 1
 leveraging, for high performance,
 24–25
 maintaining strengths of, 26–29

- multiple perspectives, 4–5
- objectives of, 1–2
- pillars of, 5–6
- in project management, 11–14
- task force, 23–24
- top management commitment and, 7–8
- training, 16, 20–24
- in workplace
 - added advantages of, 8–11
 - cultural diversity. *See* Cultural diversity, in workplace
- Doing *versus* managing, 82–83
- Double-edged sword, 110
- Double lives, 41
- Drivers, 39
- Eating habits, and physical upkeep, 168
- Economic growth, and diversity, 4
- Effective execution, advantages of diversity, 9
- Effectiveness, measurement of, 84
- Emotional agility, 107–108
- Emotional competence, 107
- Emotional fitness, 186–190
- Emotional growth, 165–167
- Emotional intelligence (EQ), 184, 187, 188, 190
- Emotional strength, of each member, 43
- Employee Resource Group (ERG), 15–16
- Enablers, leadership
 - enemy of, 173
 - fitness. *See* Fitness
 - introduction to, 171
 - managing core values, 191–203
 - objectives of, 171–172
- Encouragers, 40
- Enemy, of enabling, 173
- Enforcers. *See* Regulators
- Engagement process, requirement for, 99–100
- Enhanced reputation, and diversity, 4–5
- Enthusiasm, 43
- Etiquettes, and behavioral aspects, 169
- Exercise
 - internal benefits of, 181
 - tips for professionals, 180–182
- Experience, 37
 - advantages of diversity, 9
- Failure, 109
 - empowering to
 - developing power mindset, 118
 - double-edged sword, 110
 - keeping away failure-prone individuals, 109–110
 - overcome adversities, 117–118
 - personality building, 110–111
 - quotable quotes, 112
 - leading to success, 111
 - power of wisdom, 113–114
 - provides opportunities for learning, 112–113
 - webinar on, 114–117
- Fearless innovator, 144–145
- Feedback, 53, 62–63, 208
- Fight-or-flight mechanism, 190
- Fit, development for, 100
- Fitness
 - dimensions of, 173–174
 - emotional, 186–190
 - mental, 174–180
 - physical, 180–186
 - spiritual, 191
- Five-factor model (FFM), 197
- Flexibility, 83
 - exercises, 182
- Gaps, harness intentions, 146–147
- Greater Rochester Diversity Council, 20, 21
- Hard skills, 37, 65
- Harness intention, steps to, 146–148
- Health, and wellness, 168
- Human resources
 - competency model, 55–56
 - in organizational inclusion, 28
- Hygiene, and physical upkeep, 168
- Inclusion training, 16
- Information sharing, reward for, 93
- Informational diversity, 4

- Initiative, keys for, 70
- Innovation
 - advantages of diversity, 10
 - stifling, 83
- Insensitive leadership, 97, 100–101
- Integrity, 195–196
 - leadership, 195
- Intention
 - conscious, 146
 - power of, 146
 - steps to harness, 146–148
- Internal competition, 89
 - avoiding, 91–93
 - imperatives for reducing, 92–93
 - mismanagement impacts, 93–94
 - teamwork impacts, 94–95
- Interpersonal communication, 45–46
- Interpersonal skills
 - for conflict management, 65
 - for team maintenance, 75–76
- Investment, and brain training, 175–176
- Job positions, advertisement for, 19
- Knowledge, 37
- KPIs, of Success, 47
 - appreciating diversity, 49
 - balancing team focus, 49–53
 - better teamwork, three strategies for, 50–51
 - clarifying roles on team, 48
 - common purpose and goal, 47–48
 - communication, 48–49
 - trust each other, 48
- Leader-driven team building, 51
- Leader versus manager, 124–125
- Leadership, 40, 77, 97, 122
 - approach versus managerial approach, 135–136
 - assertiveness, for effective and efficient, 126–127
 - elements for, 126
 - growing to
 - introduction, 143
 - objectives of, 143
 - self-awareness. *See* Self-awareness
 - self-development, 144–145
 - self-grooming. *See* Self-grooming
 - self-growth. *See* Self-growth
 - self-management. *See* Self-management
 - in project management, 123–124
 - central role of, 125
 - responsibility, 136–137
 - role in teamwork, 78
 - skills, 144
 - importance of research-based, 141
 - strategic. *See* Strategic leadership
 - style, 57–58
 - team motivation, 79
- Lifestyle, and exercise, 181
- LinkedIn, 56
- Listening skills, 83
- Long-term case, for transformational change, 13
- Low performance, cost of, 46
- Loyalty, 126
- Lumosity, 174–175
- Management, competency
 - category, 165
- Manager versus leader, 124–125
- Managerial approach, 137–139
 - versus leadership approach, 135–136
- Managing *versus* doing, 82–83
- Manner, and behavioral aspects, 169
- Meaning quotient (MQ), 127
- Meaningfulness, 96
 - deadly sins of, 105–107
 - ecosystem of, 105–106
 - helping professional, in works, 104–105
- Meaninglessness, 105
- Mental fitness, 174, 176, 178
 - brain training, 174–176
 - defined, 176
 - improving mental well-being, 178–179
 - mental health promotion and protection, 179–180
 - positive aging, 177
- Mentor program, 23
- Mind-body connection, and exercise, 182

- Misfortune, 103
- Mishap, 103
- Mistakes, learning from, 83
- Monitor efforts, for diverse workforce, 19–20
- Motivation, 37, 43, 57, 99, 127, 135
- Motivators. *See* Encouragers
- Multiple perspectives, of diversity, 4–5
- Mutual beneficial solutions, keys for, 71–72

- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 65
- National Sleep Foundation, 184
- Natural personality, 61
- Negative competition, 89
 - disadvantages of, 90
- Negative emotions, 103–104
- Networking, and diverse workforce, 19

- One-size-fits-all approach, 6
- Open-door policy, 22
- Openness, 126
- Organization
 - diversity in, 2
 - implementing diversity in, 6–7, 17
 - marketing, 17
 - pillars of diversity in, 5–6
 - reputation, 17
 - wide capability audit, 55
- Organizational culture, 96–97
 - connecting with, 98–101
 - aligning with personal values and passion, 98–99
 - facilitating engagement requirements, 99–100
 - impediments to, 100–101
 - maintaining, 102–108
 - personal strength, 98
 - readiness, 98
 - similarities for, 101–102
- Organizational inclusion, 28
- Organizational life cycle, 101
- Organizational meaningfulness, 105
- Organizational performance, and diversity, 4
- Ozone, and competition, 91

- Peer leadership, 60–61
 - encourage relentlessly, 61–62
 - engage intentionally, 62
 - natural personality, 61
 - seeking feedback, 62–63
- Performance, high, 82
 - benefits of, 46
 - empowering to fail. *See* Failure
 - internal competition in team, 88–95
 - introduction to, 81
 - leveraging diversity for, 24–25
 - managing people risk, 84–87
 - meaningfulness. *See* Meaningfulness
 - objectives of, 81–82
 - organizational culture. *See* Organizational culture
 - supporting elements for, 82–83
 - winning mindset, 84
 - work–life balance, 87–88
- Performing team, 34, 42
 - endeavor to bring all together to create, 40–42
 - formation of, 34
- Person in charge, for diversity, 19
- Person, valuing, 53
- Personal accountability, 24
- Personal development, 173
- Personal growth, advantages of diversity, 9–10
- Personal values
 - aligning company value with, 99
 - and passion, aligning with, 98–99
- Personality
 - building, 110–111, 160–162
 - and character, 196–197
- Persuasion, 135
- Physical fitness, 180–186
 - exercise tips for professionals, 180–182
- Political skills, 83
- Positive aging, 177
- Positive attitude, 202–203
- Positive competition, 89
 - advantages of, 89–90
 - ways to encourage, 90
- Potential leaders, 78
- Power mindset, 118

- Problem solving
 - advantages of diversity, 10
 - and conflict management, 66
- Productivity, 32
 - advantages of diversity, 9
- Professional growth, 160–161
- Professional life, 41
- Professional meaningfulness, 104–105
- Project management, 2, 25, 84–85, 123–124, 173
 - achieving desired outcomes, skills required for, 140–141
 - approach, 3, 95–96
 - building trust for, 125–139. *See also* Trust
 - diversity in, 11–12
 - implementation, 13–14
 - transformational change, 12–13
 - framework, 172
 - introduction to, 121
 - leadership in, 123–124
 - central role of, 125
 - manager versus leader, 124–125, 135–136
 - responsibility, 136–137
 - managerial approach, 137–139
 - objectives of, 121–122
 - strengths of team member for, 56–57
 - systems, 172
- Project manager
 - important tasks for, 38
 - responsibilities of, 139
- Project team, 76–77

- Que Pasa, 28
- Quick fix, 63–65
- Quotable quotes, 112

- Rank and yank team members, 92
- Readiness, dimensions of, 98
- Real team, definition of, 34
- Regulators, 39
- Relationship Awareness Theory, 148
- Relationship building skills, 74, 83, 135
- Relationship enhancement, 65–77
- Relationship, for trust building, 134
- Relationships matter, 73–74
- Relentless, 61–62
- Resistance, advantages of diversity, 10
- RESOLUTION, mnemonic for, 65
- Responsibility, 24
- Results-driven management, 42–56
- Right job, 96
- Right skills, 96
- Right team, 52, 53–55
- Risks
 - employing people, associated with, 86
 - hiring decisions, associated with, 85
 - macro-level, 86
 - managing people side of, 84–87
 - micro-level, 86
 - redeploying, associated with, 86
- Schedule days off, for work–life balance, 88
- Schedule hours off, for work–life balance, 87–88
- Self-assessment, 149
- Self-awareness
 - attention, conscious, 146
 - consciousness, 145–146
 - intention. *See* Intention
 - self-assessment, 149
 - self-consciousness, 146
 - self-discovery for, 148–149
- Self-consciousness, 146
- Self-development, for leadership, 144–145
- Self-directed team building, 51
- Self-discovery, for self-awareness, 148–149
- Self-esteem, 153
 - range of, 154
 - steps for building, 153–154
- Self-grooming, 167–168
 - behavioral aspects of, 169
 - physical upkeep, 167–168
- Self-growth, 159–160
 - career path, understanding of, 164–165
 - competence growth, 161–163
 - emotional growth, 165–167
 - performance management and, 163–164
 - personality growth, 160–162
 - professional growth, 160–161

- Self-leadership, 144–145
- Self-management, 149–150
 - anger management, 155–156
 - assertiveness, 150
 - building confidence, 150–151
 - creative thinking, 157–158
 - developing creativity, 158–159
 - self-esteem, 153
 - range of, 154
 - steps for building, 153–154
 - stress management, 156–157
 - time management, 151–152
- Service life cycle, of team member's, 102–103
- Shared success, for trust building, 134
- Short-term action, for
 - transformational change, 13
- Sleep
 - amount of, 185–186
 - benefits of, 183
 - blue light at night, 185
 - caffeine and, 185
 - deprivation, 183
 - impacts of, 184
 - emotional intelligence, 190
 - meditation and, 186
 - pills for, 185
 - recommended amount of, 184
 - wake up and, 185
 - work and, 186
- Society of Human Resource Management, 55
- Soft skills, 37, 65
- Spiritual fitness, 191
- Staffing, 138
- Stifling innovation, 83
- Strategic leadership
 - Blue Ocean Leadership, 209–213
 - introduction to, 205
 - objectives of, 205
 - strategic thinking leaders, 205–206
 - habits of true, 206–208
 - skill sets of, 208–209
- Strategic thinking, 82
- Strategy, defined, 205
- Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI), 148–149
- Strength training, 182
- Strengths of diversity. *See* Diversity
- Stress, and exercise, 181
- Stress management, 156–157
- Stretching exercises, 182
- Sudoku, 174
- Supporting leadership style, 59
- Talent management, 37
- Target-setting approach, 6
- Task meaningfulness, 105
- Team
 - achievement, 39
 - burnout, 63–65
 - clarifying roles on, 48
 - defined, 47
 - engagement, 39–40
 - goals, 52
 - high-performing, norms for, 95
 - importance of your, 74–75
 - internal competition in, 81, 88–95
 - members, developing, 83
 - motivation, 79
 - project, 76–77
 - spirit, 52–53
 - targets, 52
 - working, 53, 172
- Team building, 33
 - conflict management, 65–77
 - introduction to, 31
 - leadership style, 57–60
 - objectives of, 31–32
 - peer leadership, 60–63
 - phases of, 32
 - project management, strengths of
 - team member for, 56–57
 - quick fix, 63–65
 - relationship enhancement, 65–77
 - results-driven management, 42–56
 - team member readiness, 35–42
 - team performance, 42–56
 - teamwork, leadership and, 77–79
- Team performance, 32–33, 42–56
 - each member, knowing emotional strength of, 43
 - interpersonal communication, 45–46
 - KPIs of success. *See* KPIs, of success
 - motivate, 43
 - and results-driven management, 44
 - team productivity. *See* Team productivity

- Team productivity
 - external factors and, 43–44
 - internal factors and, 44
- Team readiness, 35
 - assessment of, 36–42
 - endeavor to bring all together, 40–42
 - personal strength, 38–40
 - readiness, 36–38
 - willingness, 37–38
 - determining, 36
- Teamwork, 16–17, 40, 77, 135
 - better, three strategies for, 50–51
 - competency category, 165
 - impacts, 94–95
 - leadership role in, 78
 - team motivation and, 79
- Technical, competency category, 165
- Technological tools, integrating
 - latest, 56
- THINK, mnemonic for, 66
- Time management, 83, 138, 151–152
- Top management commitment, and diversity, 7–8
- Training process, for diversity, 20
 - additional, 22–23
 - mentor program, 23
 - personal accountability, 24
 - responsibility, 24
 - task force, 23–24
 - benefits, 20–21
 - challenges faced in, 21–22
 - overcome resistant members, 22
- Traits, defined, 197
- Transformational change, 12–13
- Transparency, for trust building, 134
- The Triangle Tribune, 28
- Trust, 127
 - ABCD trust model, 130
 - building, 55, 129–133
 - for project management approach, 125–139
 - definition of, 129
 - ingredients of, 128
 - managing, 128–129
 - path to, 133
 - steps to building, 134
- Trustworthiness, 127–128
- Truth, for trust building, 134
- Twitter, 56
- Two-dimensional diversity, 26
- Uncertainty, wisdom of, 147–148
- Unconscious competence, 164
- Unconscious incompetence, 163–164
- Values, and character, 197–198
- Viewpoints
 - advantages of diversity, 9
 - variety of, 16–17
- Virtues, of cross-enterprise leader, 198–199
- Vision, 127, 135
- Visionary strategists, 39
- Volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), 125
- Waist size, and exercise, 181
- Weak readiness, 100
- Webinar, on failure, 114–117
- Well-being programs, 52
- Wellness, and health, 168
- Willingness, readiness dimension, 37–38, 98
- Winning mindset, 84
- Win-win mentality, 83
- Wisdom, power of, 113–114
- Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), 12
- Work engagement process, 99
- Work environment, 41–42
 - unsupportive, 100
- Work group
 - defined, 33
 - for relationship enhancement, 68–69
- Work meaningfulness, scenarios of, 105
- Work-life balance, 87
 - key to, 88
 - schedule days off, 88
 - schedule hours off, 87–88
- Workplace diversity, 1–3
 - added advantages of, 8–10
 - challenges of, 10–11
 - defined, 3

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