

## **Recruiting a Diverse Workforce: Don't Make Two Common Mistakes**

*By Simma Lieberman*

To be a successful business in today's culture you need to create an environment of inclusion where people feel valued and integrated into a company's mission, vision and business strategy at all levels. When employees' skills and knowledge are recognized, appreciated and utilized they are more engaged in contributing to an organizations' success. They are more willing to go the 'extra mile' and share ideas and innovation. The visible and invisible dimensions of diversity that they bring are used as resources for success and growth. In order to create an inclusive work environment you need a diverse workforce.

Organizations make two common mistakes in recruiting a diverse workforce that cause them to fall behind their competition and even lose market share.

### **1. "Company photo diversity"**

The organization only considers the visible dimensions of diversity primarily race, and gender. The company photo looks good but everyone thinks the same. Differences that include sexual orientation, geographic background, thinking and communication style, work function, ability and disability, religion, and work style are not valued and are even discouraged. This is a very narrow definition of diversity and offers little or no value to the organization in terms of new ideas, creativity and innovation.

### **2. " Diversity by Numbers"**

Again diversity is defined by what you can see. Demographics reflect the outside community but it is only at the lower levels. (Production, and unskilled labor) There is little or no diversity as you move up into management. When questioned about diversity in their organization, they point to all the numbers. Every year they have good "numbers", but the people are constantly changing. Employees leave and get jobs where there is a value of diversity at all levels and they are encouraged to move up in the ranks.

### **Addressing the Issues**

To be a successful business in today's culture you need to create an environment of inclusion where people feel valued and integrated into a company's mission, vision and

business strategy at all levels. When employees' skills and knowledge are recognized, appreciated and utilized they are more engaged in contributing to an organizations' success. They are more willing to go the 'extra mile' and share ideas and innovation. They spread the word that your organization is a great place to work. They are enthusiastic about recruiting their talented colleagues to fill open positions who bring new ideas and diverse ways of thinking, solving problems and expanding market share.

**Simma Lieberman** is a consultant, speaker and author. She is known as "The Cross-cultural Conversationalist" because of her ability to get people from different backgrounds to engage in diversity dialogue that enables them to be more productive.

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