

Handling Diversity in the Workplace

Based on the book **Handling Diversity in the Workplace Communication is the Key**
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Course Introduction

As the U.S. population has become increasingly diverse, so has the U.S. workplace. The federal government's Workforce 2000 study and the Census Bureau assure us that these population changes will continue for many years. To succeed in our multicultural society, your organization must value the differences of our diverse population, respect the individuality of all employees and customers, and maintain a climate in which everyone is treated with dignity. To do this, you need to understand the current demographics of America and its businesses and anticipate tomorrow's population. You also need to understand how your words and actions in today's diverse workplace and marketplace affect your bottom line, and you need to maintain and exhibit a positive outlook on diversity. There are many issues that can create misunderstandings, including racial, cultural, sexual, physical, mental, and verbal issues. To be totally effective and avoid unintentional offense, you need to understand the effects of perception, cultural background, discrimination, and prejudice.

What You Will Gain From This Course

Handling Diversity in the Workplace will:

- Make you more aware of the ways we can offend others.
- Help you recognize your blind spots.
- Provide you with ways to avoid verbal, social, and written mistakes.
- Help you learn how to talk about your differences and your similarities.
- Give you new ways to deal with and relate to people.

It deals with human issues and relationships -- perception, stepping on toes, personal biases, confronting prejudice against you and others, and recognizing when to laugh instead of fight. And, while this course is primarily about diversity in the workplace, the information applies to all areas of corporate and community life.

Section One

What Diversity Really Means

Objectives

- Define diversity.
- Realize the importance of learning to accept and work with different types of people.

Diversity . . . Everyone seems to be talking about it. Businesses offer training on it, politicians support it, the media salutes it. But what exactly is diversity? Is it race? Cultural background? Personality type? The answer is yes -- and much more. Some people let diversity get in the way of their relationships with other people. But successful organizations realize that people's differences can be their strength -- if they combine their skills, experiences, and ideas while still valuing each other as individuals. As Abraham Lincoln said, "United we stand, divided we fall."

Diversity Means Differences

Differences are what diversity is all about. Although many organizations are now offering diversity training for their employees, diversity is not really a skill or something for which you can be trained. Diversity simply means "differences," and in this course it means "differences in people." Whether diversity becomes an asset or a liability to you and your organization depends on how you use it.

Four Steps to Dealing with Diversity

As the world grows smaller, functioning in a diverse work environment will be as much a part of our jobs as filing or computing. The key to dealing successfully with diversity is open, honest communication. In a diverse workplace, we should all feel free to be ourselves -- while treating others with respect. We should be able to tell each other when something bothers us -- without overreacting. Relationships, especially in business, grow stronger with discussion and compromise. We can all work together more effectively by following these four easy steps:

1. Understand and respect individual differences. Keep an open mind toward others who are different from you. Remember that not everyone sees things the same way you do.
2. Be assertive. Let other people know how you want to be treated, and don't be afraid to speak up if another's actions make you uncomfortable. How will people know that you find a particular expression or behavior offensive unless you tell them? And, if someone has the courage and sensitivity to tell you how you've offended them, don't get defensive -- be thankful. The only way you can correct the situation is through honest communication. Don't say, "That's not what I meant! What's the matter with you?" Say, "I'm sorry you heard it that way. That's really not what I meant. Can I clarify and tell you what I did mean?"
3. Learn how others want you to treat them. Use the New Golden Rule (sometimes called the Platinum Rule): Treat others the way they would like to be treated. If you're confused about how to pronounce an unfamiliar name, or whether a person would rather be called black or African American, ASK. Your question will not only help you learn how to avoid misunderstandings and

conflict but also will communicate a respect that will strengthen your relationships.

4. Act as a force for change. Everyone is responsible for workplace behavior. If you encounter an example of discrimination or prejudice, speak up. Tell the people involved why you think the behavior was inappropriate. You may not be able to change attitudes overnight, but you can change behavior, and that's the first step.

Section One Self-Check

Choose only one answer for each of the following questions.

1. Diversity is defined as which of the following:

- A. Different races
- B. Differences in people
- C. Different cultures
- D. Different personality types

2. Keep an open mind toward others who are different from you. Remember that not everyone sees things the same way you do. This is the definition of which step in dealing with diversity?

- A. Act as a force for change.
- B. Learn how others want you to treat them.
- C. Be assertive.
- D. Understand and respect individual differences.

Handling Diversity in the Workplace

Self-Check Answers

1. B 2. D

Section Two

Factors That Create Diversity

Objectives

- Identify the factors of diversity.
- Recognize different personality styles and adjust to them.
- Adjust your assertiveness level to match someone else's.
- Deal more effectively with the opposite gender.

Diversity is much more than skin color, gender, or background. It's internal and external. Skin color is the result of the level of pigment in our skin; it's a biological event. It doesn't determine how we think, feel, or believe. Gender is random gene selection; we had no choice. It doesn't decide our goals, ambitions, or careers. As children, we learn about morals, values, and religious beliefs. But these may be relearned, changed, and adjusted over the course of our lives. Each of us is diverse in many ways -- chosen and random -- and each of us brings many qualities to the workforce and the world in general.

What Makes Us Diverse?

When we put all people of one color, gender, or ethnic group into one category, we disregard the many other ways in which people are diverse. Many of the factors that create diversity may not be immediately visible: personality style, thinking style, processing style, assertiveness level, religion, values, energy level, habits, likes and dislikes, education and knowledge, goals and ambitions, political views, lifestyle, sexual orientation, social status, job titles, and many others. We can find diversity even in a group of 25-year-old, native-born, white males of the same religion, size, and coloring. Diversity simply means "differences," and no two people are identical.

Processing Style as a Factor in Diversity

Processing style is the way people listen, receive, think about, and accept information. It is subconscious and automatic, although it might change because of age or disability. We can identify three major categories of processing styles:

- Seers (visual)

"Seers" prefer to receive information visually. They like to read, and they want information given to them in written form. If you call a highly visual person on the phone and say, "Here is what I need you to do," he or she might say, "Would you send me a fax on that?" No matter how many times you tell them, they need to see it. Seers use visual words. "I can't visualize how that would work." "I need the big picture here." They can be listening to a radio and say, "Did you see what he said?" They may also be reading or writing when you see them. They have notes in their pockets and purses. They enjoy reading, watching TV, and playing intellectual games.

- Hearers (auditory)

"Hearers" will ask for information in an auditory form, usually the phone. If you send them a note, they will say, "Yes, I saw it, but I didn't have time to work on it. Can we talk about it now?" No matter how many e-mails you send them, they'll still want to hear it. Hearers use auditory words: "I like the way that sounds." "Are we in tune on this issue?" If they're not listening to music or tapes, they may be whistling or humming. Sometimes they might not even realize they are doing it. They enjoy word games, conversation, and movies.

- Feelers (kinesthetic)

How do you figure out if you are dealing with the "feeler" style? "Feelers" want to meet about the matter. They like to see your face, be able to feel your presence. If you write or call, they'll still want to get together. Feelers use feeling words: "This is a touchy issue." "This doesn't feel right." They also like the sensory perception of touching things and people. They like to hold items while they talk. And, if they compliment your clothing, they may reach out and touch it at the same time. They will also wear soft, sometimes fuzzy, materials. They enjoy sports, concerts and plays, and dancing.

Of course, people cross over from one style to another, but researchers say that we stay in our own comfort style 70 percent of the time. So identifying and adapting to someone's primary style can be an effective way of communicating with them. Remember: The more you are like others, the more they will like you.

Assertiveness Level as a Factor in Diversity

Assertiveness is another factor that can influence diversity. Assertiveness can be defined as the power we use to make our needs, wants, and desires known to others.

People express assertiveness in many different ways: through tone and volume of voice, gestures, physical size and posture, and by what they say. As you might guess, different people express different levels of assertiveness. A person who speaks in a high, soft voice while looking at the ground would be perceived as less assertive than a person who stands straight, looks a person in the eye, and speaks loudly.

You can't change another person's level of assertiveness, but you can deal effectively with people of different assertiveness levels by adjusting your level to meet theirs. Try to determine how assertive the other person is and adjust your behavior accordingly. When speaking with less assertive people, try lowering the volume of your voice and pausing occasionally to give them a chance to talk. When speaking with highly assertive people, increase the volume of your voice, and don't be afraid to express your opinion. Just remember, you can't change them; you have to change yourself.

Personality Type as a Factor in Diversity

Some people love to work in teams; some are loners. Some people want facts and figures before they make a decision; some go with a gut feeling. Some people are cheerful all the time; others seem to have the weight of the world on their shoulders. Throughout history, people have tried to explain differences in personality. Astrology was one early attempt that identified 12 different personality types, or signs; there have been many others.

In 1923, Dr. Carl Jung created a model based on four categories of personality types: Intuitor, Thinker, Feeler, and Sensor. Since then, many researchers have expanded on Jung's model. Today, dozens of models of personality types exist, all based on grouping behavior into four categories. Though the names used to describe the different personality types differ in each model, the personality types themselves remain the same.

I like to use dogs to represent different behavioral styles. Read through the following descriptions, and see if you can identify yourself and your coworkers:



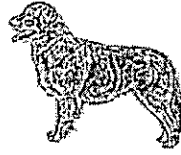
Bulldog

- Task-oriented
- Motivated by achievement
- Fears being taken advantage of
- Favorite words: time, more, money, deal, power
- Annoyed by people who waste his/her time

- Takes risks, accepts challenges
- Focuses on the bottom line
- Speaks first, thinks later
- Gets the job done -- quickly
- Sees the big picture easily
- Expresses opinions freely
- Appears rushed, insensitive
- Not concerned with details
- Challenges others frequently
- Doesn't listen completely or with empathy

- Impatient, confronting, controlling
- Sometimes perceived as rude, overbearing

- Extrovert
- Aggressive



Retriever

- Task-oriented
- Highly analytical
- Motivated by order
- Fears losing control of own situation
- Favorite words: logic, sense, proof
- Annoyed by emotion, rambling
- Believes his/her way is the only way
- Controlled, critical, cautious
- Concentrates on details
- Works best under known conditions
- Focuses on one thing at a time
- Checks for accuracy
- Thinks logically
- Talks very little
- Critiques performance (own and others')

- Makes slow but excellent decisions
- Sometimes perceived as unemotional
- Introvert
- Passive until challenged



Spaniel

- People-oriented
- Motivated by recognition
- Fears not being liked
- Favorite words: I, me
- Annoyed by people who interrupt and those who don't recognize his/her talents

- Makes decisions emotionally
- Likes to be in contact with people
- Makes favorable impression
- Verbalizes, articulates well
- Talks a lot
- Influencing, interacting, interesting
- Generates enthusiasm
- Likes to be fashionable
- Entertaining
- Wants to help
- Participates in groups
- Sometimes perceived as flighty
- Extrovert
- Assertive



Collie

- People-oriented
- Fears change
- Patient, steady
- Favorite words: we, us, others, team
- Annoyed by people who disturb his/her belongings and those who don't keep their promises

- Motivated by stability and teamwork
- Makes decisions slowly
- Performs accepted work pattern
- Can remain in one place for long periods

- Loyal and supportive
- Specializes in one or two areas
- Team builder
- Concentrates on one thing at a time
- Shows loyalty and support
- Listens well
- Calms excited people
- Sometimes perceived as stubborn and slow
- Introvert
- Passive

We all have parts of each personality type, of course, but tend to stay in one or two styles most of the time. The ideal team would consist of equal numbers of each personality: Bulldogs to generate ideas and insist on results, Spaniels to go out and promote those ideas, Collies to make sure the ideas are carried out and bring stability to the group, and Retrievers to make certain that key details are covered and the project is done well. The key to dealing with the different personality types is to develop all four sides of our own personalities so we can adjust ourselves to the people we meet.

Here are some specific guidelines for getting along with the four personality types:

Bulldog

- Get to the point and stick to the facts. Complement their ideas and goals, not them personally.
- Motivate them with clear objectives.
- Give them several options, and let them choose.
- Assure them that their time will not be wasted.
- Give them more than what they expected, and make sure they know you did it.
- Don't expect recognition; they don't have enough time to give praise.
- Respect their authority.
- Never be late.
- Give them 110%.

Retriever

- Be organized and armed with facts and statistics.
- Compliment their efficiency.
- Communicate systematically.
- Motivate logically.
- Don't rush their decision-making process.

- Avoid emotion.
- Check your timing -- they can only do one thing at a time.
- Don't take their attitude personally.
- Avoid small talk and personal questions.

- Don't expect compliments or gifts.
- Remind them of events and things to be done outside their field of concentration.

- Let them think the plan was their idea.

Spaniel

- Be entertaining.
- Pay them direct compliments.
- Allow them plenty of time to state their case.
- Support their dreams and opinions.
- Summarize in writing what you both agreed to; they get so caught up being the center of attention that they sometimes forget.
- Offer incentives and testimonials as motivation.
- Listen for facts and feelings.
- Probe them with direct questions.
- Establish checkpoints or follow-up procedures.
- Let them be the center of attention.

Collie

- Show them personal interest before getting to the subject.
- Discuss their feelings along with the facts. Compliment their efforts, credibility, and loyalty.
- Motivate them by helping them strengthen their relationships.
- Give them a mentor.
- Actively listen and discuss alternatives slowly. (They are not dense, but it takes them time to think things through.)
- Offer personal assurances that you will stand by their decisions.
- Don't push them or make them feel like they are getting the third degree.

Take A Moment

Can you identify your dominant and secondary personality styles? How would developing the other styles in your personality help you in your work?

Age as a Factor in Diversity

America is getting older. A Census Bureau study predicts that the 65-and-older population will grow from 1 in 8 today to 1 in 6 by 2020. At that time, America's elderly population will total 53.3 million -- a 63 percent increase over the current total.

Age creates a diversity issue because younger workers want different rewards than older ones. Older people are more likely to be motivated by appeals to intuition, feelings, and the complex nature of reality rather than appeals to intellect, reason, and power. They are used to working in hierarchical organizations

and are willing to work hard to make good money.

Younger people don't work for *money*; they work for *rewards*. They have a different idea of what's important and a different work ethic. Today's young people want to be part of a business *team*, not a hierarchical bureaucracy. They don't want to be told what to do; they want to be empowered.

Gender as a Factor in Diversity

In today's business world, men and women work side by side in careers of all kinds. For the most part, there are no more "female" jobs or "male" roles in business. Consequently, men and women are asked every day to relate to each other in new (and equal) ways, and that makes some people uncomfortable.

In our culture, females are traditionally taught to be nonaggressive, noncompetitive, submissive, and dependent; they learn to put relationships ahead of winning. Males, on the other hand, learn how to compete early in life; they are expected to be aggressive, dominant, independent, and competitive.

Because we tend to expect others to respond as we do and often consider differences to be "wrong," communication between the sexes holds many opportunities for wrong assumptions, frustration, and hurt feelings. But to interact effectively in our diverse workplace, we need to accept each individual as a person, not a male or a female.

Race as a Factor in Diversity

People of color (African Americans, others who are considered black, Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders) currently make up a little more than one quarter of the U.S. population. Due to higher immigration and birth rates, these minority groups are growing at a faster rate than the U.S. Caucasian population. By the year 2030, people of color will make up approximately 43 percent of the nation's population and will claim 50 percent by the middle of the next century.

People of color often have early memories of name-calling or other negative interactions with other children, and sometimes with adults. We must learn to treat people equally and objectively. We must recognize people's differences but not allow ourselves -- or others -- to condemn, belittle, or discriminate because of them. We are all minorities -- everyone in America, including Native Americans, came from somewhere else. The sooner we can learn to live together, the better our business and social relationships will be.

Quote

Race is an arbitrary and meaningless concept. Races among humans don't exist. If there ever was any such thing as race, there has been so much constant crisscrossing of genes for the last 500,000 years that it would have lost all meaning anyway. There are not real divisions between us, only a continuum of variations that constantly change, as we come together and separate according to the movement of human populations.

Amoja Three Rivers
Cultural Etiquette: A Guide for the Well-Intentioned

Disability as a Factor in Diversity

There are 43 million people with disabilities in the United States, and they're not hiding anymore. As physically challenged people are mainstreamed into society, they become handicapped -- not by their different abilities but by the attitudes toward them. Although the disabled have as many valid ideas and leadership abilities as the nondisabled, many able-bodied people are unable to look beyond the disability. To change existing attitudes toward those with disabilities, we need to improve communication between all involved. It takes more than a warm heart to break down barriers.

Disabilities are often physical and visible, but there are many hidden disabilities, like arthritis, hearing or visual impairment, cancer, or loss of a breast or some other unseen body part. There are also personal disabilities like height, weight, and thinning hair. Oddly, people often react negatively to visible disabilities, such as loss of limbs, blindness, obesity, or severe height differences, but they react sympathetically when they learn of invisible impairments.

People with disabilities are only restricted in a specific area, and in the long run, may not be handicapped at all. Take the time to discover the true depth of a person's independence and avoid making assumptions.

If you work with someone who is differently abled, learn to talk about it. You don't have to avoid the subject; a person in a wheelchair knows that he or she is in the chair! But do be aware and sensitive.

Putting the Factors Together

There is more to diversity than meets the eye. People are made up of personality style, processing style, assertiveness level, religion, values, energy level, habits, likes and dislikes, education and knowledge, goals and ambitions, political views, lifestyle, sexual orientation, social status, job titles, and many other things. No two people are identical, and even if one of us is right, the other does not have to be wrong. We must learn to accept people for who they are, not who we want them to be.

Quote

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home. So close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual persons; the neighborhood they live in; the school or college they attend; the factory, farm, or office where they work. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.

Eleanor Roosevelt
Former First Lady and
U.S. Delegate to the United Nations

Section Two Self-Check

Choose only one answer for each of the following questions.

1. The major categories of processing styles including all of the following except:

- A. Seers
- B. Hearers
- C. Feelers
- D. Doers

2. Young people don't work for _____; they work for _____. Which of the following words fit?

- A. Money / rewards
- B. Rewards / money
- C. Recognition / money
- D. Money / promotions

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Self-Check Answers

1. D 2. A

Section Three

Barriers to Diversity

Objectives

- Define *prejudice* and understand where it comes from.
 - Define *stereotyping* and *discrimination*.
 - Understand how prejudices affect our work and life.
 - Define and understand *friendly fire*.
 - Understand how nonverbal behavior can hurt relationships.
- As we've seen, people are diverse in many ways. When we accept our differences and learn to work with them, we enrich our lives and improve the creativity and productivity of our organizations. But too often, we work against our differences and allow them to hinder instead of help us.

What are the Barriers?

Why do we have so many problems dealing with diversity? Diversity itself isn't a problem -- our differences have always been there; they're what make us unique. The problems lie in our attitudes toward diversity. People who have negative attitudes toward other people's differences often engage in negative behaviors, including:

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Prejudice - a preconceived feeling or bias and it's a normal human reaction. Each of us has biases of one kind or another. For example, some people absolutely hate cats even though they've never owned one; some people own dozens. We all have different likes and dislikes, and that's okay.

Our prejudices come from our family, our friends, our environment, the media, and other external influences -- wherever we first learn our beliefs. As long as our biases are about unimportant things, like our brand of toothpaste, they're relatively harmless. But when we hold prejudices against other people, we create all kinds of problems.

Prejudice against people comes from a belief in the superiority of one's own race, culture, class, or other group. It comes from believing that our own group is best or "right" and that others are not just different, but "wrong." These prejudices often lead people to create stereotypes.

- Stereotyping occurs when we apply our biases to all members of a group. If you were raised to think that all members of a particular ethnic group are lazy, you may still hold this stereotype, no matter what your day-to-day experience tells you. If you believe strongly in this stereotype, you may also spread it to others.

We also stereotype when we apply our experiences with one member of a group to the entire group. But just because one member of a race, gender, age group, or culture acts a certain way doesn't mean every other person of that group will act the same way. Your perceptions could be based on a lack of knowledge because you haven't taken the time to understand the other person or culture.

The stereotypes we attach to people hurt us as much as they hurt everybody else, because we can't get to know the other people for who they really are. Worse still, stereotypes lead to discrimination.

- Discrimination does not mean failing to hire enough women, minorities, or gays; it doesn't even mean refusing to associate with people from other cultures. Discrimination is treating people differently, unequally, and usually negatively because they are members of a particular group.

We develop prejudices, turn them into stereotypes, and allow them to grow into discrimination. Prejudice can take many forms—ethnic, cultural, sexual, physical, mental, verbal -- and so can discrimination -- racism, sexism, heightism, weightism, ageism, anti-Semitism, religious bigotry -- the list goes on and on.

To keep these negative behaviors from becoming barriers to organizational diversity, we must learn to recognize and avoid them -- in our business relationships, our treatment of employees, our hiring and firing practices, and our marketing. Prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination hurt people -- and hurt a business's bottom line.

Consequences for Your Organization

Handling Diversity in the Workplace

Unfortunately, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination are still facts of life in our society and our workplaces. We see these barriers to diversity every day in the form of racist or sexist jokes, rude remarks, or the refusal to hire or promote. If you encountered a person being discriminated against today, how would you handle it? Keep in mind that doing nothing is also taking a position.

American business pays a price for its inability to deal successfully with diversity:

- Racial bias claims alone cost the American economy about \$215 billion a year. That's almost 4 percent of the gross domestic product!
- Age discrimination cases are up since the Age Discrimination Act went into effect in 1987, with a median of \$219,000 awarded in successful suits.
- Disability claims have also been rising since the Americans with Disabilities Act went into effect in 1992. It's still a new law, but it's already having a major effect on the way we do business by giving the physically challenged a way to be heard.

Besides the expense of a settlement, a discrimination claim can cost your company a tremendous amount of money in court costs and attorney fees. If a discrimination case goes to court, it can take more than three years to be heard, which adds to the expense.

Significantly, about half of all discrimination lawsuits don't make it to court. Some are settled out of court but can still be expensive for a company. Even lawsuits that are dismissed, however, can cost your company -- in money, time, energy, and reputation -- simply because of something somebody said or did unintentionally. This type of lawsuit is perhaps the most wasteful, because so many unintentional offenses can be easily prevented.

Friendly Fire

The military uses the phrase "friendly fire" to describe situations in which troops inadvertently come under fire from their comrades. It's an excellent way to describe those situations in which we say or do something without thinking and end up hurting someone else in an attempt to be our own friendly selves.

Friendly fire is unintentional discrimination that occurs because of habit, unconscious behavior, or just plain insensitivity. We can avoid friendly fire if we take the time to think about how our words and behavior might affect others, and if we communicate with sensitivity.

Biased Language

Though we may not intend it, we sometimes say things that can be interpreted as racist, sexist, or offensive in some way. Some of this biased language includes:

- Referring to different groups of people in an unequal manner.

If we are referring to several different groups of people, we need to use language that treats each group equally. When we list ethnic backgrounds on an application, for instance, they should match in format. Can you find what's wrong with this list?

• White	• African American
• American Indian	• Mexican
• Asian	• Hispanic

You might have noticed three problems with this list. The first is the category "American Indian";

many people in this category prefer to be called Native Americans. The second problem is the division of "Hispanic" and "Mexican" -- Mexicans are Hispanic.

The third problem is the term "White." All the other words are ethnic terms; white is a color. The ethnic terms for white are Anglo-Saxon, Caucasian, Anglo-American, or European American. If we use white, we should also use black. And remember, the white or Caucasian category doesn't always have to be listed first.

Another example of language inequality can be found on many public rest room doors. If one door says "Men" and the other door says "Ladies," they are not equivalents. The equivalent of "Men" is "Women," and the equivalent of "Ladies" is "Gentlemen."

- **Using the wrong name to refer to a culture or group.**

We risk alienating members of other cultures or groups when we refer to them by a name they would prefer not be used. Some common examples of this are *Indian* instead of *Native American*, *Oriental* instead of *Asian*, *Eskimo* instead of *Inuit*. Unfortunately, even people in the same culture or group sometimes disagree on what they would like to be called. When you're in doubt, the one sure way to learn what people prefer is to ask.

- **Misusing the name of someone from a different culture.**

Few things are more frustrating than hearing your name mispronounced, no matter how well-intentioned the speaker. As our workplace becomes more culturally diverse, native English speakers must learn how to deal with names from a variety of cultures. Some of these names may be difficult to spell or say. To avoid offense, always ask whether you are pronouncing and spelling the name correctly. The order of names can also be confusing. Some cultures place the surname last, some place it first, and some use no surname at all.

Age also plays a part in what to call people, even in America. Many of the "older" generation still prefer the terms "Mr." and "Mrs." In some other cultures, younger people must show respect by using the terms "Aunt" and "Uncle" for older people, even if the "younger" person is 90! This tradition has been practiced in Africa for many generations, and many African Americans continue it in their homes.

In business, Asian and Middle Eastern employees may be more comfortable using a courtesy title with their manager's first name (Mrs. Kay, Mr. Jeff) than using just the first name. So it may be hard for members of some cultures to jump right in to the first-name-at-work routine.

- **Using inappropriate labels or terms.**

The way we refer to other people within our companies and organizations can also be offensive to people, especially if we use terms like boss, professional, superior, and subordinate. Employees are not subordinate to anybody -- nor are those who supervise them superior. Departments may have a manager, but in today's world, the concept of a boss is becoming outdated. Safer choices for describing your organizational structure include manager, supervisor, team leader, team member, assistant, or associate.

Nonverbal Communication

Our nonverbal communication, or body language, can also be a source of friendly fire. It's true that our actions often speak louder than our words. Our unspoken messages are usually understood by our peers but may easily be misinterpreted by people from other races, genders, cultures, age groups, or economic

backgrounds. Although our world is becoming smaller, we will never all share the same language, culture, or mannerisms. No gestures are universal. Worse yet, sometimes our tongues say one thing, our gestures say another thing, and our symbols (clothing, jewelry, hairstyles, facial hair, body markings) say yet another thing. Mixed signals can be very misleading to other people, especially people who come from an area where the words, gestures, or symbols mean something entirely different. Some actions that can be misleading include:

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Gestures - Many use inappropriate gestures without ever thinking about how they might affect people. We fold our arms, stand in a certain position, move our body in a way that might be considered provocative or rude, or make eye contact when we shouldn't. It's so easy to offend people without really knowing it.

- Movement - Something as simple as how we sit may send an unintended message. For instance, people with a European heritage are sometimes offended by the open way American men cross their legs while sitting. For your European associates, it expresses crudeness. Americans in turn suspect that European men are effeminate because of the tight way they cross their legs and the limpness of their handshakes.

Misunderstandings occur too often simply because another person does not stand, sit, or speak the way others do.

- Personal Space - We also differ in our "comfort zones" -- and getting too close to someone can become friendly fire. Have you ever walked up to someone and had him back away from you? Perhaps members of his culture don't enjoy having people that close to them, while you were raised to get up close and personal. (Americans have a comfort zone of 8 inches to 3 feet, Mexican Americans will accept closeness up to 18 inches, Japanese Americans want a distance of 3 to 6 feet.) The person you stood too close to may not even be consciously aware that conversational distance or personal space was an issue -- he simply knows that he feels uncomfortable.
- Eye Contact - This follows the same principle as personal space. Typically, Americans are taught that the more eye contact they give, the more power they are perceived to have. In many cultures, however (especially Asian, Mexican, Latin American, Native American, and Caribbean), less eye contact is more respectful. Many African Americans were also raised this way. Americans are sometimes confused by this when their employees, coworkers, or customers don't give them the eye contact they expect. They begin to think that something is wrong or that the other person is doing something they're ashamed of. Jumping to these conclusions can harm your relationships.
- Opening Doors - If you open a door for a woman or offer to take her coat when she arrives, and she takes offense, apologize and explain your position: "Sorry, that's just my heritage showing." But do remember not to open the door for her the next time or attempt to help her off with her wrap. Today's guideline for opening doors is not based on gender, age, or hierarchy. The rule is that whoever is in the lead opens the door and holds it for the other. As for coats, most people prefer to handle their own.
- Touching - Touch is another area that causes friendly fire. People in positions of authority sometimes think they can touch employees without causing offense, yet they get upset if someone from their support team reaches out to touch them. The rule of equality says that we should not use a behavior without being willing to receive it as well. Still, any touch other than a handshake is not wise behavior in the business setting; it is too easy to misunderstand. Shaking hands is always a polite way to greet people in America, and an occasional pat on the back is acceptable. Anything else in business is risky.

Accepting Our Differences

We need to recognize and accept that people are different and have different areas of sensitivity. I may be terribly hurt by a word or action that you think is foolish. But see it from my point of view. If you make a

joke at my expense, you're just being friendly. If I make a joke at your expense, it will burn like fire.

But if it *is* just a joke and no harm was intended, forgive and forget. Going to court or losing a job or a friend over a misunderstanding is not a good use of your rights.

Section Three Self-Check

Choose only one answer for each of the following questions.

1. Treating people differently because they are members of a particular group is called ____.
 - A. Prejudice
 - B. Stereotyping
 - C. Discrimination
 - D. Diversity

2. Situations in which we say or do something without thinking and end up hurting someone else is known as:
 - A. Biased language
 - B. Friendly fire
 - C. Assertive diversity
 - D. Processing style

Handling Diversity in the Workplace

Self-Check Answers

1. D 2. B

Section Four

Our Changing Etiquette

Objectives

- Appreciate the beliefs, values, and standards of behavior of other cultures.
- Use proper etiquette when relating to members of these cultures.
- Work more effectively with the three cultures most prevalent in the U.S. workforce.

To work effectively with people from other cultures or upbringings, you need to understand them and where their ideas of right and wrong come from. That's what culture is: the way we were raised and the values, beliefs, and standards for behavior we internalized. These factors profoundly affect our relationships, the way we do business, and our reactions to events, circumstances, and other people.

Adapting to Cultural Differences

Because cultures are so diverse, values, beliefs, and standards for behavior are not universal. What is right for you may not be right for me, and what is important to a member of one culture may not be important to a member of another culture.

Independence, for example, is emphasized in American culture, so people who were raised in the U.S. are ready to leave home at an early age and may continue to move throughout their lives. Because American society is so mobile, Americans tend to jump into jobs and friendships quickly. They need to make friends quickly because they may not be in the same city a year from now.

More traditional cultures emphasize family and long-term relationships. People who grew up in "older" cultures (European, Asian, and others) or who were raised within those older value systems don't move around as quickly or easily. They often are born and die in the same place and take time to get to know people before accepting them as friends.

You can see how these two different approaches toward friendship could cause confusion in the workplace.

Americans also tend to have different sets of friends -- work friends, social friends, and neighborhood friends. Members of other cultures more often include friends in all aspects of their lives. So if you are friendly at work, they may not understand why you don't invite them to socialize. These differences could lead to misunderstandings and friendly fire, creating an unpleasant working relationship.

Here are some additional examples of ways in which typical American values and behaviors differ from those of other cultures.

- **Giving and Receiving Compliments**

Mary likes it when someone compliments her on her clothing, so she assumes that other people also appreciate compliments. But when she complimented Yoshi on her new dress, Yoshi looked down at the floor, murmured softly, and hurried away. How should Mary interpret Yoshi's behavior?

If Mary were following the Old Golden Rule, she might think Yoshi was being rude or unappreciative. But if she followed the New Golden Rule, she would, instead of assuming the worst, try to understand why Yoshi reacted as she did. Mary might be more understanding if she knew that many Asians believe that accepting praise in front of others is vain. Instead of praising Yoshi out loud, she could praise her in writing or quietly at her desk and not expect her to beam visibly. (She may still beam inside, however.)

- **Recognizing Personal Achievement**

José had just won an important new client for his firm, yet he'd hardly mentioned his achievement. When José's manager mentioned his success during the weekly staff meeting, José seemed embarrassed and emphasized the contributions of his team members. How can José's manager recognize his accomplishment?

What would a "typical" American do if he made a major contribution to his company? He would probably talk about his accomplishment and take credit for it. Hispanic coworkers or employees might find this type of behavior rude. Traditional Hispanics believe in placing the group before the individual. Loyalty to the team and family is outranked only by loyalty to God. So a person who was raised with Hispanic values will probably defer all individual praise to the department or the team. Instead of forcing José to accept individual praise when he is clearly uncomfortable with it, José's manager could follow José's example and praise the entire team.

People raised with American values tend to be motivated by incentives, personal compliments, recognition of achievement, and increased responsibility. Mexican Americans tend to be motivated instead by managers who show personal concern for them, job security, and reduced risk. Japanese Americans tend to be motivated by security, achievement, a sense of belonging, and being part of a team.

- **Manager / Employee Relations**

The fulfillment department was shorthanded, and Yoko was working extra hard to take up the slack. She knew they were a little behind schedule, but she couldn't believe it when her manager stood next to her and started pressing mailing labels onto boxes. "Oh, no," thought Yoko, "I must have really done something wrong."

In mainstream American culture, managers rolling up their sleeves and working beside employees is a sign of teamwork. And those managers would be astounded if this behavior were taken as a sign of anything else. Many Asians, however, were raised to interpret this behavior as an accusation that their work is not up to par. In extreme cases, an Asian employee may consider it an insult, causing loss of face. At the very least, this misunderstanding could create an instance of friendly fire. Worse, the employee might lose respect for the manager because the manager did not remain aloof. Asian employees, as well as Native Americans, would probably never discuss these feelings with their managers, because they have been taught to respect seniority in public. Managers working with different cultures should explain their motives before diving into an employee's tasks.

Communicating with Non-Native English Speakers

Almost 9 percent of all U.S. citizens were not born in the U.S., so many workers speak English as a second or third language, and 21 percent speak no (or very poor) English. This language gap can contribute to a variety of misunderstandings.

If you are a native speaker of English, don't assume that someone understands you just because they speak to you in English or nod in agreement. Members of many cultures will not question you about unfamiliar words or expressions, because they believe that to do so is disrespectful, suggesting you didn't make yourself clear. They may also be afraid of appearing as though they have trouble understanding instructions. To communicate effectively with non-native English speakers, try the following techniques:

- Avoid jargon, slang, and idioms.
- Slow down your speech (but don't talk louder -- hearing is not the problem).

- Use simple words.
- Pronounce and enunciate clearly.
- Repeat your ideas in different words.
- Check for understanding.

If you are a non-native English speaker, don't be afraid to ask coworkers to slow down or repeat themselves -- your request will not be considered rude. If someone uses an expression that you don't understand, ask about it--your coworker will probably enjoy explaining it to you.

American Culture Comparison

The chart below is a guide for the three most prevalent cultures you will be working with in America. (Of course, the chart will be especially helpful if you are traveling to Mexico or Japan.) Please remember that it is only a guide. Every individual in every family in every city in every country is an individual. Remember, too, that our individual differences, such as age, style, gender, and so on, come into play in addition to our cultural and ethnic backgrounds; an older female in the U.S., Mexico, Asia, or any other area may act very differently from a younger male in the same area. If, however, you want to understand a person's cultural tendencies, or better yet, practice them when dealing with that coworker or business associate, here is a guide you can use.

	Native-Born Americans	Mexican Americans	Japanese Americans
Greeting	Usually outgoing, shake hands firmly. Socially, men may hug or kiss cheeks with women, and women may do the same with men.	Medium formality. Always shake hands (moderate grip) or give a slight bow (especially with women) in business. Tend to hold handshakes for a while and repeat frequently. Socially, friends may hug; women may kiss cheeks.	Comfortable shaking hands but will do so gently. The native way is a long, low bow instead.

<p>Business Cards</p>	<p>Not automatically exchanged on meeting but always handed out if there is some reason to get in touch later. No one will refuse your card, but don't be offended if you don't get one in return.</p>	<p>Prefer to give cards at start of business meeting. No particular protocol.</p>	<p>Prefer to exchange cards before shaking hands (or bowing). To present your card in Japanese style, use both hands, with type facing the recipient, right side up. Examine theirs, turn it over, admire it; never fold it or write on it. It is considered impolite to receive a card and not give one back.</p>
<p>Eye Contact</p>	<p>Moderate to strong.</p>	<p>Strong, but usually drop eyes as sign of respect.</p>	<p>The more respected a person, the less direct eye contact is used.</p>
<p>Decision-Making Style</p>	<p>Quickly, usually independently.</p>	<p>Those in authority are not expected to solicit input from colleagues, so decisions may take longer than many people are comfortable with.</p>	<p>By consensus, and sometimes a very time-consuming process. High-level people are seldom seen making decisions. When negotiating, will want you to come down from initial offering. Don't like to say no, but that doesn't mean yes.</p>

<p>Negotiating Style</p>	<p>Most don't worry about building relationships. Ready to get down to business, so there's little time spent on small talk before business. One-on-one, usually between high-level individuals. Informal. Ask for more than they expect. Timing is important.</p>	<p>Slow, indirect. Will appeal to personal relationship. Love to bargain and play with offers.</p>	<p>Slow, formal. Building a personal relationship comes before building a professional relationship. Usually done in a collective group. High-level people seldom speak. Will be well-informed about topic.</p>
<p>Problem-Solving Style</p>	<p>Systematically and through trial and error.</p>	<p>By taking the leader's vision. Careful consideration of everything. Use intuition.</p>	<p>With group input. Thorough.</p>

Cooperation in the Diverse Workplace

No matter what your level of intelligence, talent, or business acumen, your success in the workplace depends to a large extent on your ability to work with other people. And now those people are multifaceted, multiracial, and multicultural.

When you adapt your behaviors to the cultural practices of others, you're more likely to earn cooperation and support, get commitments, gain friends and clients, and keep peace. The people you depend on to keep your business running -- clients, coworkers, and customers -- will usually come through for you.

As John Naisbitt observes in *Megatrends*, "Whenever new technology is introduced into society, there must be a counterbalancing human response." As our society becomes increasingly high-tech as well as multicultural, the need for a nonoffensive, sensitive, and personal touch in our interactions increases.

Section Four Self-Check

Choose only one answer for each of the following questions.

1. No matter what the culture, everyone enjoys being complimented in front of his or her coworkers.

True

False

2. Which of the following is not a good way to adapt to a non-native English speaker?

A. Avoid jargon.

B. Slow down your speech

C. Talk louder

E. Enunciate clearly

Handling Diversity in the Workplace

Self-Check Answers

1. False 2. C

Section Five

Confronting Prejudice and Discrimination

Objectives

- Communicate more effectively.
- Give feedback more clearly.
- Confront prejudice and discrimination.

Few people enjoy confrontation. In fact, many of us will go out of our way to avoid it! For this reason, we may be tempted to overlook instances of prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. But when it comes to these behaviors, turning our backs can only make an unfortunate situation worse.

We may have an easier time responding to prejudice and discrimination if we think of ourselves as giving feedback rather than starting a confrontation. *Feedback* is a form of communication that helps other people see their behavior as *we* see it. Feedback should not be used to criticize a *person*, only to describe what the person is *doing* and your reaction to it. If your reaction is positive, feedback can reinforce the behavior. If your reaction is negative, feedback conveys the message "I like you, but I don't like what you've done."

Is It Really Prejudice?

Before you provide feedback on behavior that you perceive to be prejudice or discrimination, analyze the situation carefully to be sure it isn't just a simple misunderstanding or friendly fire. By reviewing the situation before you speak, you have a better chance of finding the truth and not making the situation worse. Remember that people often respond differently to situations because they don't have the same:

- Information (knowledge each person has)
- Goals (what each wants to accomplish)
- Values (what is important to each)
- Methods (how something is done)
- Perceptions (how each sees the situation)
- Cultural background (maybe it's not offensive behavior where the other person comes from)

To further diagnose the situation, ask yourself these important questions:

- How important is this issue? Am I overreacting? Why am I really bringing it up?
- What will I gain/lose by bringing it up? What will I gain/lose by not bringing it up?
- Is it really prejudice or just friendly fire?
- How frequently do these types of situations occur with this person? Can I overlook a one-time mistake?
Are others having the same problems?
- Am I bringing any biases or misinformation to the situation? Am I being objective?
- How does this person view me? Would they consider me insensitive or biased?
- What actions can I take to help change the situation?
- Am I ready and willing to make the effort to resolve it?• What changes am I actually looking for?

Take A Moment

Recall a situation in which someone's words or actions made you uncomfortable. How would you deal with the same situation today?

Guidelines for Feedback

If you still feel that you have encountered prejudice or discrimination after considering these questions, approach the other person with your feedback. Use the following guidelines to increase the likelihood that your feedback is well-received and that the intent of the feedback -- change in the other person's behavior -- is realized:

- **Check your timing.**

Feedback is most helpful when given soon after the behavior occurs; however, it should always be appropriately timed. Present your feedback in a private place, away from other people, and be sure emotions have cooled. Check the other person's readiness by asking, "I have an issue to discuss with you. It should take about 20 minutes. Is now a good time?" or "I'd like to discuss what happened this morning. Is now a good time?" If the other person says yes, present your feedback. If the person says no, ask, "When is a good time?"

- **State the problem as your problem or as a common problem.**

An effective way of dealing with a negative behavior is to describe the situation from your perspective:

"I'm having a problem with the joke you told this afternoon." This gives the other person an opportunity to respond without being put on the defensive.

You can also state the problem as a common problem:

"Kay, there seems to be a problem with your perception of Nancy's work habits." This technique is known as triangulation. Often, when two people have a conflict, the situation turns into me against you. If, instead of working against each other, those involved can work against the problem, they can solve it.

- **Be empathetic.**

Put yourself in the other person's shoes; acknowledge that person's needs and point of view. The major barrier to communication is our natural tendency to judge, evaluate, and approve or disapprove of others especially in situations where feelings and emotions are involved. Empathy can help us listen, be more sensitive, and not judge so quickly. A sincere attempt to understand someone else's view usually makes that person more receptive to our ideas.

Empathetic statements reflect the person's feelings, not just their words. In a heated situation, you might say, "I can see that you're angry about this" or "I can hear that you feel like you're being discriminated against" or "I can tell that my statement bothered you. Will you tell me why?"

•Acknowledge the other person as a unique individual.

Feedback should address what a person did, not who that person is. You're not evaluating the person, you're addressing behavior or performance. When the person expresses feelings -- positive or negative -- in reaction to your comments, respond with statements that indicate you understand their feelings: "I understand that you're angry about this; I might be too. But it has to be resolved."

•Paraphrase, clarify, and ask thoughtful questions.

When you don't really understand, or if you just want to make sure you understand clearly, the best thing to do is paraphrase or clarify: "You smiled when they made that crack about Jews, but I thought I sensed anger too. Did it bother you?" or "So because you're Catholic, you feel that you shouldn't be required to work on Sundays, is that correct?"

•Mirror and align with the other person.

Remember, the more you are like them, the more they will like you. You certainly don't need to try to turn into the other person, but for that particular moment, try to mirror that person's body language and align with their processing style (seeing, hearing, touching) so you are on the same wavelength.

•Bring in a third party if necessary.

If you reach a point where nothing is being solved, you may want to ask an outsider for their opinion. Make sure that this other person is not biased for or against either party or the situation.

•Thank the other person for their cooperation and willingness to consider changes in behavior.

Say "I appreciate your efforts to address this issue. It's been bothering me, and now I feel like we have a handle on it. I appreciate your willingness to talk about this. We still don't agree, but I'm glad we were able to discuss it."

Follow a Feedback Formula

Following specific steps when you give feedback can help you stay on track and avoid becoming unnecessarily emotional. The following formula incorporates the guidelines discussed above. The first letters of each step spell out D.E.A.R. -- Describe, Express, Ask, and Review. This formula works best if it's used in exactly this order. Remember that the timing of feedback can also be critical, so choose an appropriate, private time and place.

Describe the other person's behavior objectively and give specific examples (not assumptions or hearsay).

Telling someone, "Your comments were inappropriate" does not explain what was unacceptable to you.

What were the comments? What about them was inappropriate? Why?

Here are some clear descriptions of behavior that could be used to begin a feedback session:

1. "When I'm referred to as a 'girl,' as I was at today's meeting . . . "
2. "Your use of the word (derogatory term) . . . "

Express how you feel and explain the effect the behavior or situation had on you, the rest of the group, or another person. Explain more if you wish, then pause so the other person has a chance to respond. Remember that the feedback you're providing is a description of your perception and is not absolute, even if it is important. Use "I" language (I think, I feel, I get) to describe your feeling -- statements that begin with "you" tend to imply absolutes and may seem judgmental. Instead of saying, "You insensitive, sexist idiot!" try "When I see lewd pictures in your office, I feel ashamed and embarrassed."

Here are some expressions of feelings that could be used to complete the earlier examples:

1. "When I'm referred to as a 'girl,' as I was at today's meeting I get really frustrated. It makes me feel like you just don't care about me as a person."
2. "Your use of the word (derogatory term) is offensive and embarrassing to me and the entire department."

Ask for the other person's help and talk about the situation. Negotiate and compromise if possible. If the other person does not want to change, ask for what you want, and be sure to describe the benefit to them.

1. "I'd really like to prevent this from happening again. What will it take?" (Negotiate, compromise.) "I'll tell you what. If you'll agree to call me an 'assistant' instead of a 'girl,' I'll try not to become so defensive when you forget. That should make both of our lives easier. OK?"
2. "If you'll agree not to let this happen again, I'll withdraw the complaint I made to management so your name will be cleared."

Review the new agreement, then stop, as in these conclusions to our earlier examples.

1. "So we've agreed that . . ."
2. "You've promised not to use terms like that at work (or around me)."

What If The D.E.A.R. Formula Doesn't Work?

What if someone makes a promise to change a behavior and doesn't? Here's another formula you can use to point out a discrepancy between somebody's words and deeds -- to remind them that they agreed to act differently toward you or another person. As with the previous formula, you can use this to help keep your emotions in check and objectively describe what the other person said they would do, what they actually did, and what you want or how you feel. The steps are similar to those in the D.E.A.R. formula:

1. Agreement -- Describe what they said they would do.

Example - "Last week, you agreed to stop interrupting me and discrediting my input at company meetings."

2. How broken -- Describe what they really did.

Example - "Then today you made fun of my ideas about the new project. I'll admit that you didn't interrupt, but when you roll your eyes as though nothing I say is valuable, it has the same effect."

3. Advice -- Determine what you can do about the situation. (Optional)

Example - "What else can I do to get your respect?" Talk, negotiate, compromise.

4. Desire or incentive -- State what you want or what you'll offer.

Example - "How about this? If you'll just hold your tongue and not make faces while I'm speaking, I'll ask your opinion in the group when I'm finished, and you can say out loud whatever it is you're thinking. I can handle the spoken criticism, just not the nonverbal antics in the middle of my thoughts. Is that a deal?"

5. New agreement -- Restate the desired outcome.

Example - "So we've agreed that you'll listen calmly to my ideas until I've finished. Is that correct?"

Quote

Americans do not care much about differences in culture or even in color (despite much rancid history under that heading) as they care about character as it is expressed in behavior. The American challenge now is not to pay homage to every cultural variation and appease every ethnic sensitivity, but rather to encourage universally accepted ideals of behavior; self-discipline, compassion, responsibility, friendship, work, courage, perseverance, honesty, loyalty, and faith.

William J. Bennett
Former Director of the
Federal Office of Drug control Policy

Handling Touchy Situations

Providing feedback about prejudice or discrimination to a difficult or sensitive person can be a special challenge. Here are some approaches for handling those touchy situations. These phrases are called "escape routes." They are a way for either side to get out of the conversation and still save face. They include phrases such as:

- "I'm sure you're not aware of this, Gary, but . . ."
- "I know you don't mean to be offensive, but . . ."
- "Betty, I have a problem, and I need your help."
- "I hope you don't mind my asking . . ."

As your interaction progresses, you can paraphrase and clarify the other person's intent and meaning with these "power phrases." They include phrases such as:

- "So from your point of view . . ."
- "So from where you stand . . ."
- "It looks like you see it as . . ."
- "What I hear you saying is . . ."
- "It sounds like you're (angry/sad/overjoyed)."

Some Additional Guidelines

1. Check your timing before asking to talk.
2. Listen, listen, listen.
3. Listen for the unspoken too.
4. Never assume anything.
5. Remember that the more you give people what they need, the more they will give you what you need.
6. Never expect the same reaction to a statement or situation that you would have.
7. Don't be surprised at anything that comes up.
8. Don't look for praise for yourself or others.
9. Don't shame or blame anyone.
10. Allow plenty of time for the conversation.
11. Be assertive but not aggressive.
12. Remember that others may take more time to adjust than you expect.
13. Make appropriate eye contact.
14. Don't belittle or put down people's ideas or comments.
15. Never interrupt or "yes, but" people.

16. Don't tell others how they feel or what they think (now or in the future).

17. Don't compare people to other people, even yourself.

18. Be empathetic and positive.

19. Discuss points from logic, not from emotion.

20. Don't make promises you can't keep.

Stand Up for Your Rights

The thought of confronting instances of prejudice and discrimination can be intimidating. But if you think before you speak and follow a formula for providing feedback, you can improve your chances of being effective.

Everyone has a responsibility to combat prejudice and discrimination in the workplace and the community.

Section Five Self-Check

Choose only one answer for each of the following questions.

1. Before we confront behavior that we perceive as prejudice or discrimination, we should always...
 - A. Wait at least a week to let everyone cool off.
 - B. Carefully analyze the situation to be sure it isn't just a misunderstanding.
 - C. Be sure to get your facts straight so the person will understand what is the "right" behavior.
 - D. Model the correct behavior for all to see.

2. The D.E.A.R. formula stands for:
 - A. Describe, Express, Ask, Review
 - B. Discuss, Enter, Answer, Read
 - C. Do, End, Answer, Request
 - D. Done, End, Ask, Review

Handling Diversity in the Workplace

Self-Check Answers

1. B 2. A

Section Six

What Else Can You Do?

Objectives

- Recognize and change possibly offensive behavior.
- Project an attitude of caring for others.
- Create a plan for continued improvement.

Working effectively with diversity means recognizing the many types of differences in yourself and others. It means capitalizing on each other's strengths and compensating for each other's weaknesses. It means being appropriately assertive, saying what you mean, and asking for what you want. It means developing patience and tolerance, and handling conflict and feedback appropriately. Here are some other specific guidelines to help you manage your diverse relationships.

Guidelines for Managing Your Diverse Relationships

Guidelines for Individuals

1. Be aware of the change that's taking place around you, and welcome that change.
2. Recognize and respect others and their individuality.
3. Think before you speak, and be sensitive to others.
4. Talk about your differences and ask tactful questions about how people want to be treated.
5. Listen more.
6. Recognize your own biases and prejudices.
7. Eliminate stereotypes and generalizations.
8. Expose yourself to other cultures.
9. Remember that your race/gender/personality style is not the center of the universe.
10. Be careful with humor.
11. Lighten up!

Guidelines for Organizations

Your organization has met EEOC requirements. You regularly hire and promote female and minority employees. You've remodeled your office to accommodate the physically challenged, installed Braille guides in your elevators, and placed amplifiers on your phones. You've cautioned everyone to avoid biased language. Are you "diversity perfect?" No, you're just beginning.

Discrimination in our country will end only with awareness of how others perceive our actions. Managing diversity well means addressing the needs of every segment of our population. It means enabling every worker to perform at his or her highest potential. It means raising awareness, teaching employees about differences and similarities, and giving them the skills to act and think differently. When we do it right, people will not be advantaged or disadvantaged because of their differences.

What organizations fear, of course, is a lowering of standards, a "quota" system in which the best person doesn't necessarily win. We can't allow that to happen. Because of increased competition, quality and competence count now more than ever. The goal is to manage diversity in a way that will allow us to maintain the same productivity and quality we once achieved from a less diverse workforce. But we must learn to do so without discrimination.

Here are some things you can do to help your organization meet its diversity goals:

1. Be a role model, regardless of your job title or level in the organization.
 2. Celebrate all holidays or no holidays.
 3. Use nonprejudicial words in your marketing and service efforts.
 4. Hire people who are bilingual, and advertise that you speak other languages.
 5. Offer ongoing diversity training for your employees -- at all levels.
 6. Adhere to all ADA and EEOC regulations.
 7. Check your pulse.
- Even after all the women in your company are called "Ms.," and "he" has been deleted from your vocabulary, are the women still making 65 cents for every dollar earned by the men?
 - Are blacks and Hispanics still working at administrative and service jobs, or is your management staff also diverse?
 - Do your programs, policies, principles, and wages give special consideration to any one group?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you're not managing diversity yet. The goal is not to bring minorities and women into a dominant white male culture and teach them how to get along; the goal is to create a dominant heterogeneous culture.

Conclusion

We will be stronger, as companies, and as a nation when we can work together, maximizing the abilities of all of our workers and putting aside racism, sexism, and all those other "isms" that separate us. In short, we will have succeeded in managing diversity when we can live up to the values set out in our Constitution.

Quote

The greatest challenge America faces in the era beyond peace is to learn the art of national unity in the absence of war or some other explicit external threat. If we fail to meet that challenge, our diversity -- long a source of strength -- will become a destructive force. Our individuality -- long our most distinctive characteristics -- will be the seed of our collapse. Our freedom -- long our most cherished possession -- will exist only in history books.

Richard Nixon
37th President of the United States

Section Six Self-Check

Choose only one answer for each of the following questions.

1. Which of the following is not a guideline for managing diverse relationships?

- A. Think before you speak.
- B. Recognize and respect others and their individually.
- C. Recognize your own biases and prejudices.
- D. Keep your activities within your own culture.

2. If your organization has met EEOC requirements you are "diversity safe."

True

False

Self-Check Answers

1. D 2. False

Affirmation of Course Completion

By checking the box below marked "YES" I affirm that I have completed the self-study course,

Cultural Diversity and that I understand USDA's commitment to Special Emphasis. I also understand that I am personally expected to follow the USDA policy concerning Cultural Diversity while carrying out USDA missions and programs.

Credit will not be recorded if you do not affirm that you have completed this course.

YES, I affirm my completion and understanding of the course

COURSE EVALUATION FORM

Directions: Please take moment to complete this brief evaluation form. Evaluations are extremely important to us because they help us to adjust the training and make improvements. We appreciate your opinions and input.

Please rate the course on how well it covered each of the following learning objectives:

What is your overall evaluation of this training ?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Ineffective	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent
<i>Please rate the course on how well it covered each of the following learning objectives.</i>				
Recognizing that cultural diversity is more than race or gender ?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Ineffective	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent
Identifying elements of culture and how culture varies between groups of people ?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Ineffective	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent
Identifying and defining communication and its purposes, and how positive interpersonal communication skills and techniques enhance working relationships ?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Ineffective	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent
Defining cross-cultural communication strategies for effective communication ?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Ineffective	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent
Identifying key elements of an organization that effectively values differences?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Ineffective	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent

Comments: