

GOALS

- ▶ Understand the growing diversity of the workplace.
- ▶ Learn about diversity trends.
- ▶ Discover the benefits of workplace diversity.



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WORLDS TOGETHER

Communication and Diversity Resources

Video (21:00)

CD-ROM Study Guide

Instructor's Resource CD-ROM

WebTutor

ExamView Pro Testing CD-ROM

One look at the faces in public schools, urban office buildings, grocery stores, or airports is all it takes to see that the U.S. population is becoming more and more diverse. This diversity consists not only of ethnic and racial differences, but also comprises sex, age, and economic variation, and includes people with physical and mental disabilities. The increasing variety of consumers and workers in the marketplace presents challenges—and opportunities—for businesses. This workshop focuses on the benefits and trends of a diverse workforce.

Food for Thought

Occupations that require the use of the other senses would be appropriate for a person who is deaf-blind, such as a sculptor or a wine and food taster.

Food for Thought

Danny Delcambre is an award-winning restaurant owner and cook. His Ragin Cajun Restaurant, located in the famous Pike Place Market in Seattle, Washington, has received numerous honors, including the City of Seattle Small Business of the Year.

Danny is deaf-blind. He was born deaf and gradually began losing his sight due

to retinitis pigmentosa. Though those who taste his delectable meals would never guess that he can neither see nor hear, Danny has been challenged by numerous stereotypes and misperceptions about his abilities.

✓ What other occupations could be performed by a person who is deaf-blind?

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

A More Diverse Workforce

People of all races will be experiencing a workforce of greater diversity over the coming years. Living and working in a diverse society requires an open mind and a willingness to share cultural experiences. The workers or companies who resist diversity will be the losers in the 21st century. The following trends are just a sample of an ever-changing workplace.

➤ **AGING WORKERS**

People are living longer and working well into their senior years. A workplace of both young and old workers combines the experience and wisdom of age with the energy and enthusiasm of youth.

➤ **IMMIGRANTS**

Hispanics are now the fastest growing segment of the labor force; Asian-Americans are second. At the same time, white Americans are declining proportionally.

➤ **RACE**

Racial and ethnic consumers have a large impact on products, marketing, and hiring. Black American purchasing power exceeds \$500 billion a year. Asian-American purchasing power is approaching \$300 billion a year.

➤ **SEX**

More and more women are working outside the home. Women now make up nearly 50 percent of the workforce. Women-owned businesses comprise one of the fastest growing segments of the economy.

➤ **DISABILITIES**

Of nearly 109 million U.S. workers, more than 14 million are known to have a disability. The impact of legislation, accessibility, technology, and community action has increased the representation of workers with physical and mental disabilities.

➤ **CHANGING FAMILIES**

The increase of single-parent households has changed the workforce. Many working women provide more than half of the family income, and parents who are raising their children alone require more flexible work schedules.

“By applying the same standard to everyone, natural talent and hard work are permitted and expected to distinguish individuals on the plane of achievement.”

—Dinesh D’Souza, author

Key Ideas

- ★ **diversity**—differences among people based upon age, race, religion, physical and mental ability, sex, or other characteristics
- ★ **diversity policy**—a company document that requires all employees to respect and value differences, be they age, race, nationality, ethnic group, sex, physical ability, etc.
- ★ **demographics**—statistical characteristics of human populations

Tools of the Trade

This guide, *Communication and Diversity*, deals with sensitive content relating to diverse groups. For this workshop and the workshops that follow, you might wish to practice discretion about having learners share their work with other members of the class. This workshop focuses on the factors that contribute to a diverse workforce and the benefits that diversity can bring to businesses. Review Key Ideas, definitions, and the guidelines presented in Tools of the Trade.

Initiate a discussion about what diversity means to your learners. Have them share their perceptions of how the workplace is changing in their community. You might also want to discuss how courageous people have changed the world's perceptions about minorities, older people, and people with disabilities. Helen Keller, for example, was deaf-blind, and became an author and advocate for persons with disabilities.

The Advantages of Diversity in Business

Though working with people from diverse backgrounds can be an adjustment, embracing and encouraging a diverse workforce can help businesses grow.

- More creativity in solving problems
- Greater innovation
- Higher productivity
- Better relationships with global customers
- Targeted marketing campaigns
- More customers
- Greater profits
- Larger talent pool of workers
- Increased community involvement and support
- Better communication
- More supportive work environment



FDR International Disability Award

The FDR International Disability Award is presented annually to a nation that makes significant progress toward giving citizens with disabilities full and equal participation in the life of its society. Presented by the United Nations, the award is named for Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd President of the United States, who contracted polio in 1921 at the age of 39. Despite his inability to walk or stand without assistance, Roosevelt was elected four times as President, helped found the United Nations, and led the United States through the Great Depression and World War II.



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Today, there are an estimated 600 million people with disabilities throughout the world. The FDR Award, which is sponsored by the World Committee on Disability and the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, recognizes nations that strive to create a society in which persons with disabilities enjoy equal opportunities. Since its establishment in 1995, five countries have received the award, including South Korea, Hungary, Canada, and Ireland.

In 2001, Thailand was honored. The Thai government was recognized for establishing a national plan for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, a fund to support businesses run by persons with disabilities, and increased access to public transportation. Thailand is also home to Ratchasuda College for the Disabled, which offers education to individuals with disabilities and individuals that work with people with disabilities.

The FDR Award consists of a bronze bust of President Roosevelt and a \$50,000 cash prize for a non-governmental disability organization in the honored nation. More importantly, the FDR Award furthers the legacy of President Roosevelt.



INTRODUCTION TO DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Segment 1

Introduction to Diversity in the Workplace

View and discuss Segment 1: *Introduction to Diversity in the Workplace*. Running time: approx. 2:00.

Some people might think that diversity in the workplace brings only misunderstandings, conflicts, and trouble. In this program, you'll see how differences in communication styles, personal taste, opinions, and sense of humor benefit businesses by bringing a variety of talents and ideas to the table. You'll also discover what it takes to get along in a diverse workplace, including communication skills, open-mindedness, and a respect for differences.



Diversity means that we all bring different backgrounds and skills to the workplace.

Post-Viewing Questions

Post-Viewing Questions

1. What is meant by the term "diversity"?

2. Why is an appreciation of diversity important to success on the job?

1. Diversity refers to differences among people based upon age, race, religion, physical and mental ability, sex, and other characteristics.

2. The American workforce becomes more diverse by the day. An appreciation of different peoples and cultures is essential for success. The wide variety of strengths and skills found in a diverse workforce can facilitate effective teamwork.

Currying Favor

Cordell Lockwood had taught for 35 years at an ethnically diverse school before retiring at age 60. He liked receiving a pension, but wasn't ready to stop working entirely. Armed with a college education and a history of successful work experience, he had no trouble getting a job as assistant manager at a supermarket in a neighboring town.

Cordell noticed that the supermarket's shoppers represented many cultural backgrounds. Even among seemingly similar groups, there were differences. For example, the Hispanics were Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican. Middle Easterners were Indian, Pakistani, Saudi, and Egyptian. The Asian-Americans were Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Thai. These shoppers were requesting food products from their cultures, yet the store's general manager seemed to be resisting.

One day, Cordell suggested that they order more varieties of Latino, Asian, Polish, Greek, and Indian foods and more fruit, vegetables, and spices with ethnic appeal.

"Forget it," said his manager. "Let them learn to eat American food. They're in America, aren't they?"

It wasn't long before the store manager was replaced by one who understood the importance of pleasing customers. With Cordell's help, the new manager began recruiting and hiring a more diverse workforce—employees who could talk with non-native English speakers about specials and recipes. He hired employees who could suggest products and services that would have wide-spread appeal.

The new employees also suggested advertisements, displays, and sales promotions that would attract diverse populations. The changes paid off in increased customer satisfaction and increased profits.

On the Job




Currying Favor

A diverse workplace can promote increased productivity in the following ways: Work practices of differing cultures combine to improve production practices; workers learn from each other, and their productivity increases as a result; different perspectives about marketing strategies may appeal to a larger audience; diverse consumers may prefer to shop at stores that have diverse workers; and new groups of consumers can be targeted for sales.



How can a diverse workforce create increased productivity and profits?

PRACTICE

-  1. Use the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Web site (www.bls.gov) to find data about the current U.S. labor force. Create a graph comparing race, sex, and age demographics of today with those of 10 and 20 years ago.
-  2. Find examples on the Internet or in other sources of how diversity in the workplace can result in economic benefits. Write a short essay about your findings.
3. Compile a list of magazines, newspapers, radio stations, TV networks, and/or Web sites that cater to diverse populations. Contact organizations in your community that serve these populations, and send the list to them.
-  4. Explore the Web sites of major U.S. corporations to find out if they have a diversity policy posted. Contact them via their Web site contact information, and find out (1) how they implement the policy, and (2) how they measure its effectiveness.

“ Just because a man lacks the use of his eyes doesn't mean he lacks vision. ”

—Stevie Wonder,
musician

Practice

1. Learners' graphs should clearly illustrate demographic conditions in the current U.S. labor force.
2. Examples might include the following: Increased demand for ethnic foods or clothing; access to varied skills and capabilities among diverse populations (including immigrants); and strong work ethic of diverse groups.
3. Media that targets diverse populations are of interest to organizations that serve those populations. For example, senior citizens' clubs could put promotional announcements on radio stations that have large numbers of senior listeners and restaurants that serve authentic Mexican food might want to advertise in Spanish-language newspapers.
4. You might want to have learners present their findings to the class in a brief oral presentation.

SUMMARY

- Diversity in the workplace provides challenges and opportunities for workers and employers.
- The U.S. workforce is made up of many diverse groups.
- Workers and companies who reach out to diverse populations have a positive influence on productivity.

REVIEW QUESTIONS



Review Questions

1. Diversity refers to differences among people based upon their age, race, religion, physical and mental abilities, sex, or other characteristics.

1. Define diversity.

2. Being able to deal with diversity enables workers to understand differences among cultures. This understanding translates to better customer service and the ability to get along with coworkers and supervisors. Success in the workplace depends upon cooperation and teamwork—these are impossible for those who are not able to work with diverse populations.

2. List ways that the ability to deal with diversity can lead to success in the workplace.

3. The segments of the U.S. workforce that are increasing most rapidly are the Hispanic population and the elderly. Other immigrant groups, notably Asian-Americans, are also increasing at a high rate. Businesses need to be aware of the unique opportunities to serve these new populations through specialized products, accommodations, signage, diversity training for employees, and the hiring of bilingual employees. For workers, this can mean networking opportunities and competition—both of which can promote the motivation to work harder and more productively.

3. Which segments of the U.S. workforce are increasing most rapidly? What does this mean for workers and businesses?



On the Net

Check out these sites for hundreds of links on diversity-related topics, including age, sex, disability, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, and national origin.

<http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Topic/Diversity>

<http://www.careerexposure.com/diversity.html>

<http://www.doi.gov/diversity/> (click on "EO Resources")

PROJECTS

1. During a typical week of TV viewing, record the number of times members of diverse populations are featured in commercials. Create a chart similar to the one below, then analyze your findings and present them in an oral report to the class. (Note: Nontraditional situations are those in which men are doing things commonly associated with women or vice versa.) An example chart follows.

	Monday 4-5 p.m.	Wednesday 8-9 p.m.	Friday 6-7 p.m.	Saturday 9-10 a.m.	Sunday 1-2 p.m.
Black American	3	5	1	2	0
White American	4	4	1	3	1
Asian-American	2	5	0	2	4
Hispanic	3	1	4	2	2
Disabled	0	3	1	1	2
Native-American	4	2	3	2	1
Middle Eastern	0	1	1	2	1
Nontraditional situations	3	1	2	4	2

Projects

Ask learners to complete one or more of the projects as homework or out-of-class assignments. Encourage them to work in pairs or small groups.

2. Read the biography of a successful person who has overcome discrimination. Create a timeline of the person's major accomplishments and write a short narrative describing how his or her differences played a role in his or her successes.
3. With two partners, visit a local shopping mall or other public area and conduct an informal count of the shoppers. Each of you should sit at a different entrance and record demographic information about the people you observe. List the number of men and women; black Americans, white Americans, Asian-Americans, Middle Easterners, and Hispanics; ages 18–30, 31–55, and over 55; and people with disabilities. Combine your data, and create a pie chart that illustrates the diversity of the mall.

1. Make sure learners write a brief description of each scenario.
2. Learners may also use the Internet or magazines to research famous people who overcame discrimination.
3. If time permits, you may also want to take the class to a mall outside of your community, and compare demographics between the two cities or towns.

There never were in the world two opinions alike, no more than two hairs or two grains; the most universal quality is diversity.

—Michel Eyquen de Montaigne,
essayist