

CHAPTER 3
Appreciating Diversity

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CHAPTER 3: APPRECIATING DIVERSITY

Appreciating Diversity

The rich diversity of culture and perspective in the world is our most exceptional system. Global leaders of the future use differences of ideas, methods, and motivations throughout the workforce and to build organizational and individual competency. (Goldsmith et al. 2003 p.27)

As companies expand globally, diversity in the workplace increases. Global companies must identify, recruit, and train a diverse blend of professionals with different cultures, styles, and motivations. Culture is the underlying value that is forthright to how people perform. Cultural diversity in the workplace is an outcome of practices, values, traditions, or beliefs of employees. Cultural diversity is one of the driving dynamism economic globalization. Employers realized that workforce diversity provides both tangible and intangible benefits. Gaining benefits of cultural diversity in the workplace, employers must communicate their commitment to addressing the challenges of a diverse workforce.

The Value of Diversity

Appreciating the value of diversity is understanding the things that form a unique culture. Appreciating diversity in the workforce helps businesses produce and thrive, leading to measurable and lasting results at all levels of activity. Increasing diversity in the workplace will require people to have a higher workforce consciousness and an awareness of individuals' perspectives and rights in all countries. Global leaders must be mindful of cultural differences. Diversity training and multigenerational leadership development are an essential part of the worldwide leader development process. Many companies are finding that conventional structures, traditional corporate cultures, and lack of leveraging diverse talents and perspectives

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prevent their meeting global market demands. Flexible leaders who are capable of managing various groups of people throughout the world are the competitive edge these companies need to succeed. Strengthening diversity is an ongoing business challenge.

Embracing Ideas and Perspectives

Effective leaders embrace ideas and perspectives. Leaders who deal with diverse situations, whether of race, religion, creed, or diversity of style or thought process, need to understand the difference between cooperating and complying with others as opposed to collaborating with others. (Goldsmith, et al. (2003 p. 30). One key to developing reliable and productive teams is the ability to appreciate the benefits of the differences each team member presents. Collaboration is a process by which people differences can be used and made productive, utilized instead of suspected, valued instead of denied. Collaboration is the vehicle where conflict, whether generational or national, is used productively to create a positive outcome. Open-minded leaders are accepting and appreciative of many dimensions of thought, style, and cultural differences in the workplace. They also identify and utilize commonalities across multiple generations, religions, and countries around the world as crucial ingredients for organizational success. Embracing open-mindedness is beneficial to leaders in recruiting, managing and leading a global multigenerational, multicultural workforce. "Effective leaders listen to all points of view. Leaders are curious and intrigued by different perspectives, not threatened by them." (Goldsmith, et al. 2003 p.) It is the responsibility of global leaders to be open to diverse cultures and to recognize opportunities, different perspectives, and motivate members to bring diversity to an organization.

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Motivating People

"Motivating people in the workplace means to help them deliver their best possible performance, be more productive, and to feel satisfied with their positions and growth within the organization." (Goldsmith et al. 2003 p.32) As leaders and followers increase in diverse workplaces with differing perspectives, needs, expectations, and contributions, leaders must acclimate to a different way of leading to inspire and effectively lead. A significant part of the adaptation for leaders will be to define individual and team roles and to delegate authority and responsibilities in the workplace. Effective global leaders will build partnerships with employees to gain an understanding of each person's strengths, needs, and desire career path. A diverse workforce will compel leaders to motivate and guide employees to work in areas of strength and then build strong internal teams of different individuals with complementary motivations and skills. By leaders forging these types of relationships, individuals will be excited about their jobs and motivate them to remain with the organization.

Conclusion

Appreciating diversity enhances learning; we grow our mindset when we listen, process, and understand differences. Differences are limitless. A well rounded, diverse team will produce valuable brainstorming sessions, creative problem solving and decision making, unique perspectives on strategic planning, and inventive product development ideas. Our awareness, regard, and appreciation for how these differences strengthen our team, organization, and the world is the key.

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences". –Audre Lorde

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Reference

Goldsmith, M., Greenberg, C. L. Robertson & Hu-Chan, M. (2003). *Global Leadership: The Next Generation*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc.

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