

## Here is Why You Should Have a Diverse Workforce

Author: Thandeka Madziwanyika . July 2020

### Introduction

The world has become a global village as most people know. In a global village, it means many people are now working in many places. The call for inclusion and diversity has strengthened as a result. With education on discrimination against various groups of people intensifying, the focus on this topic has intensified as well.

When one thinks of diversity, different images should appear. Gone are the days where if you imagined a board room, a room full of men would instantly pop up in mind. The way we imagine some of these concepts, helps in changing or mindset over time. Instead of a room full of elderly men (predominantly), a change in the picture of some sort is a step in the right direction. Perhaps, having a room half-filled with women and half with men. Skin colour cannot be uniform and cultures must be different. For diversity to be successful, there needs to be a representation of various backgrounds.

In this article, we will explore what diversity is and why it is important for your business' success and employee wellbeing.

### What is workforce diversity

In research conducted by Saxena (2014), she provides us with a detailed explanation of what workforce diversity is. Workforce diversity means similarities and differences among employees in terms of age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. No two humans are alike. People are different in not only gender, culture, race, social and psychological characteristics but also in their perspectives and backgrounds. Society had discriminated on these aspects for centuries.

In order to have a more visual explanation of what workforce diversity is, the diagram below by Saxena (2014) will help:

### What is the importance of workforce diversity?

There are no two people who are the same. Having a diverse workforce allows for diverse thoughts and ideas. We are living in a world where it is crucial to have a creative team in your organisation. By focusing on one a certain kind of person for your organisation, you could be robbing yourself of great results.

Grant Cooper (2020), offers some benefits that diversity offers organisations.

- Diverse organisations experience greater financial benefits – According to McKinsey & Company (2017), research shows that there is a case for improved financial performance when tapping into gender, cultural and ethnic diversity. McKinsey & Company found a positive correlation between gender diversity on executive teams and financial performance. According to the 2017 report, companies in the top-quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 21% more likely to outperform on profitability and 27% more likely to have a higher value creation. Companies in the top-quartile for ethnic/cultural diversity on executive teams were 33% more likely to have industry-leading profitability.
- Diversified job applicants are readily available - In today's business world, business is not limited to a single location or type of employees. The rise of integrated, multidisciplinary networks has always and will continue changing the face of the various industries. A strongly diversified group of employees allows the organisation to bring the most talented and suited candidates for the job.
- A strong support system – A diversified workforce encourages the notion of a support system in the organisation. By having different people from various backgrounds, everyone may have similar experiences of being in a new environment. These shared experiences have the potential to bring people together, not because of colour and gender but because of individualism and experience. It is difficult being an “outsider” in a new place, as many people may not understand what one is going through. With a supportive network, employees may have more of a sense of togetherness. According to Grant Cooper (2020), a diverse workforce “reduces conflict between groups, improving collaboration and loyalty.”
- Service providing organisations may improve – Having a diverse group of employees may improve service delivery to clients. The reasoning behind this is that a diverse group of clients come into contact. By having a single type of people in the organisation, some clients may feel out of place by not being able to relate to the organisation. Imagine going to a restaurant for example and you notice that everyone, from the cashier to the waitress are the same. You may start to feel out of place. One thing must be remembered, an organisation's staff force resembles the leadership of that organisation. People will go back to places where they feel welcome.
- Increased problem solving and creativity - People from varying demographic backgrounds bring with them a unique set of life experiences that improve workplace environments and encourage team growth. A report published by McKinsey & Company noted that “diverse and inclusive groups make better quality decisions, often faster, and in a more fact-based manner, with less cognitive bias or groupthink”. Information technology and market research are just two of the many areas that benefit from diverse hiring. This is a result of creative thinking needed in these fields. The far-reaching result of inclusivity comes down to innovative solutions, which is a win for everyone involved.

In conclusion, diversity is an important aspect of an organisation. The times have changed and continue to change every day. The way ideas were brought about previously, is not the same now. People's interests have changed and so has how business is conducted. Remember to reimagine how you imagine the boardroom now.

***Thandeka Madziwanyika is a Consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, a management and human resources consulting firm.***

***Phone +263 (242) 481946-48/481950***

***Cell number +263 78 318 0936***

***Email: [thandeka@ipcconsultants.com](mailto:thandeka@ipcconsultants.com)***

***Visit our website at [www.ipcconsultants.com](http://www.ipcconsultants.com)***

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