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**Best Practices for  
Managing Organizational Diversity**

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Abstract

Organizations with increasingly diverse workforces and customer populations face challenges in reaping diversity's benefits while managing its potentially disruptive effects. This article defines workplace diversity and identifies best practices supporting planned and positive diversity management. It explores how academic libraries can apply diversity management best practices and provides a reading list for leaders and human resource managers wishing to optimize their organization's approach to diversity.

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## **Best Practices for Managing Organizational Diversity**

In the twentieth century, ecologists and agriculturalists developed an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the value of biological diversity, specifically the resilience and adaptability it brings to ecosystems. In the twenty-first century, the ecosystem model has been applied to human systems, particularly to understanding how organizations are structured and how they operate. Twenty-first century organizations face diversity challenges in many arenas. Demographic changes in the workforce and customer populations, combined with globalized markets and international competition, are increasing the amount of diversity organizations must manage, both internally and externally. Many diversity specialists and business leaders argue that organizations interested in surviving and thriving in the twenty-first century need to take competitive advantage of a diverse workplace.<sup>1</sup> But to do so successfully, leaders and human resources (HR) managers must redefine their management and leadership.<sup>2</sup>

Just as mono-cropping destroys biological diversity, and, in extreme cases, human as well as natural ecosystems,<sup>3</sup> mono-managing similarly destroys diversity within organizations. Leaders who want to build strong, diverse organizations will not be successful if they rely on one approach or solution. Single-threaded diversity solutions, such as focusing only on recruitment, or single-approach management techniques, such as requiring every employee to take diversity training, do not create lasting change.<sup>4</sup> Implementing the changes needed to build and sustain diversity requires commitment, strategy, communication, and concrete changes in organizational structure and processes.

How can managers and leaders develop diverse organizations and ensure that they are managed to take optimum advantage of diversity? What role should human resource specialists play in creating and managing diverse organizations? What are the best practices they should apply? This paper reviews best practices and the broader diversity literature. Sections define workplace diversity, identify and assess best practices, and examine how these practices can be applied in academic libraries. This review also includes an annotated bibliography of resources selected from diversity management writings in business, social sciences, and library and information sciences. The bibliography's topic areas broadly parallel key best practices in diversity management. Taken together, they form a practical primer on diversity management for library leaders and human resources managers who want to optimize their organizations' approach to diversity.

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Definitions**

Diversity has been an evolving concept. The term is both specific (focused on an individual) and contextual (defined through societal constructs).<sup>5</sup> Many current writers define diversity as any significant difference that distinguishes one individual from another—a description that covers a broad range of obvious and hidden qualities. Generally, researchers organize diversity characteristics into four areas: personality (e.g., traits, skills, and abilities), internal characteristics (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, intelligence, sexual orientation), external characteristics (e.g., culture, nationality,

religion, marital or parental status), and organizational characteristics (e.g., position, department, union/non-union).<sup>6</sup>

The trend in defining diversity “seems to favor a broad definition, one that goes beyond the visible differences” that, for many people, are too closely linked to affirmative action.<sup>7</sup> One of the first researchers to use an inclusive definition, R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., was pivotal in moving diversity thinking beyond narrow EEO/Affirmative Action categories. In his landmark work, *Beyond Race and Gender*, he argued that to manage diversity successfully, organizations must recognize that race and gender are only two of many of the ways in which human beings can be different from each other. Managers and leaders must expand their understanding of diversity to include a variety of other dimensions such as those described above: personality traits, internal and external qualities, and formal and informal organizational roles.<sup>8</sup> Workplace diversity management, in Thomas’ model, is also inclusive, defined as a “comprehensive managerial process for developing an environment that works for all employees.”<sup>9</sup> There is political value in this inclusiveness since it does not overtly threaten existing management structures, which are still predominantly populated by white males. This general definition also enables all staff to feel included rather than excluded, permitting them “to connect and fortify relationships that enable employees to deal with more potentially volatile issues that may later arise.”<sup>10</sup>

However, critics of this inclusive diversity definition charge that it can too easily devolve into a general “feel good” approach that substitutes for real change.<sup>11</sup> In addition, critics argue that this definition fails to acknowledge the unequal treatment and limited opportunities experienced by those who differ from the dominant culture. Mor Barak expresses this criticism succinctly, stating, “It is important to note that there is a fundamental difference between attributes that make a person a unique human being and those that—based on group membership rather than individual characteristics—yield *negative or positive consequences*.”<sup>12</sup> Change cannot happen in the workplace, she argues, unless management understands that diversity “is about being susceptible to employment consequences as a result of one’s association within or outside certain groups.”<sup>13</sup>

## **Organizational Frames**

Despite legitimate criticisms of a broad definition of diversity, inclusiveness remains politically useful. To make it organizationally useful, senior managers and HR directors must define the motive(s) behind their interest in diversity and identify the specific ways diversity will benefit their organizations. Digh observes that management must first “articulate, clearly and simply, what is meant by diversity and then decide what approach to take. Does the organization want to tolerate, value, celebrate, manage, harness or leverage diversity?”<sup>14</sup> The selection of one or more of these defining verbs is influenced by how an organization understands the context of diversity.<sup>15</sup>

Framing workplace diversity initiatives affects the outcomes an organization achieves. For example, an organization may define diversity as regulatory compliance; as social justice; as the responsibility of only part of the organization, such as HR; as a strategic planning outcome; or as a community-focused activity.<sup>16</sup> Diversity outcomes derived from these definitions vary, but they generally can be classified into five broad categories:

- Complying with federal and state requirements
- Expecting and rewarding homogeneity
- Identifying diversity as a broad goal without accompanying changes
- Identifying discrete diversity goals and implementing selective organizational changes to achieve them
- Pursuing systemic and planned organizational change to take optimum strategic advantage of diversity.

This variety of approaches shows that organizations vary both in the degree to which they define diversity as valuable and in the amount of change they engage in to support workplace diversity.<sup>17</sup> To be successful, organizations must set implementation parameters by asking themselves three questions: “[Why] do we want diversity? If so, what kind? If so, how much?”<sup>18</sup>

### **Role of Human Resources**

R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., a seminal diversity proponent, once described how he would like organizations and the people in them to think about diversity:

As a rule, I tell people to practice “foxhole diversity.” Let’s pretend the enemy is active all around and I’ve got to find people to be in the foxhole with me. I don’t have to ask too many questions. Does the candidate have all of his or her faculties? Does the person have a gun? Can they shoot? That’s about it. I don’t care where they went to school, their religion or their sexual preferences. Can they do the job?<sup>19</sup>

If organizations and the people who comprise them worked in foxholes, this approach to surviving—dropping homogeneity as a criterion for full participation—would be compelling. In life-or-death situations, many people will suspend beliefs, change behaviors, and embrace new solutions. However, the current business and organizational climate is not sufficiently dire that most employees would quickly and completely commit to the broad and deep changes required to embrace a genuinely diverse workforce.

Human resources (HR) directors face a serious challenge in developing organizational diversity. The changes needed are particularly difficult.<sup>20</sup> Meeting this challenge takes top management commitment, skilled training and breadth of organizational knowledge HR possesses, and a shared understanding that managing diversity is not an isolated problem to be solved but an ongoing and lengthy process. All three of these elements are needed to sustain people’s willingness to work together when they do not share values, experiences, culture, and ways of interpreting meaning and solving problems.<sup>21</sup>

Researchers have documented two reasons why implementing diversity in the workplace is difficult.<sup>22</sup> First, human beings prefer working in homogeneous groups. Second, human beings and the organizations to which they belong generally avoid and resist change. Successful diversity management requires HR managers to possess skills in leadership, organizational development, change management, psychology, communication, measurement, and assessment. Such cross-cutting skills might seem broadly useful to the success of any business initiative. However, there is a key difference with diversity management. For organizations to profit from diversity, the

people in those organizations must change how they interact. Diversity's focus on changing human thought and behavior requires and defines HR's role in diversity management.

Successful diversity is built from the often small, everyday actions taken by people at all levels of an organization. Organizations may start diversity initiatives because they are motivated by laws and regulations, but, as Paul Freeman argues, "in the end it is not habits of compliance we seek to change, it's habits of the heart."<sup>23</sup> Changing how people act must be reinforced by changing the organizational policies and procedures that define how people operate. "No firm can rely simply on changing the hearts and minds of its employees. . . . It must develop a broad range of policies and practices to help ensure that today's workplace works for everyone."<sup>24</sup> The HR manager is uniquely qualified and strategically positioned to partner with management at all levels within the organization to meet these challenges.<sup>25</sup>

## BEST PRACTICES

### Organizational Best Practices

Best practices are defined as "practices which are most appropriate under the circumstances, esp. as considered acceptable or regulated in business; techniques or methodologies that, through experience and research, have reliably led to desired or optimum results."<sup>26</sup> Best practices in a field are often derived through systematic and careful reflection on hard-won practical experience. Unfortunately, many writings on diversity best practices rely on brief case studies or anecdotal stories to support the authors' assertions. Only a small body of empirical research assesses particular diversity practices to determine whether they will produce desired or optimum results.<sup>27</sup> Organizations wishing to implement the best diversity management practices for their circumstances and goals need guidance. This section will examine two comprehensive, practice-based descriptions of best practices for organizational diversity. It will then describe a recent research paper with substantial, data-based conclusions on what corporate best practices positively influence affected groups' status within organizations.

Two core resources for workplace diversity best practices are Aronson's article on "Managing the Diversity Revolution: Best Practices for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Business"<sup>28</sup> and the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (US GAO) report on "Diversity Management: Expert-identified Leading Practices and Agency Examples."<sup>29</sup> Aronson's article gives an excellent overview of workplace diversity. It outlines how to institute a diversity initiative, summarizes the principles on which it should be based, and provides many best practices examples implemented by various companies. The GAO's review includes a comprehensive literature review, a detailed analysis of the writings of five diversity experts, and interviews with an additional 14 experts. From this process, the GAO identified nine best practices. The two works compliment each other: Aronson's business perspective and wealth of best practices detail is balanced by the GAO's non-profit agency examples and its high-level focus on diversity principles.

The GAO's nine leading best practices are:

1. **Top leadership commitment**—a vision of diversity demonstrated and communicated throughout an organization by top-level management
2. **Diversity as part of an organization's strategic plan**—a diversity strategy and plan that are developed and aligned with the organization's strategic plan

3. **Diversity linked to performance**—the understanding that a more diverse and inclusive work environment can yield greater productivity and help improve individual and organizational performance
4. **Measurement**—a set of quantitative and qualitative measures of the impact of various aspects of an overall diversity program
5. **Accountability**—the means to ensure that leaders are responsible for diversity by linking their performance assessment and compensation to the progress of diversity initiatives
6. **Succession planning**—an ongoing, strategic process for identifying a diverse talent pool and developing them into an organization’s potential future leaders
7. **Recruitment**—the process of attracting a supply of qualified, diverse applicants for employment
8. **Employee involvement**—employee’s contributions in driving diversity throughout an organization
9. **Diversity training**—organizational efforts to inform and educate management and staff about diversity’s benefits to the organization.<sup>30</sup>

Aronson’s analysis presents top-level best practices but also drills down into more detailed, specific advice and examples of tactics, practices, and policies. He begins with the same requirement as the GAO’s analysis—commitment from the top—with a similar focus on communication and demonstration, which he calls “concrete actions.” Defining diversity as inclusiveness, he asserts that the second best practice is bringing people on board. While this practice did not make the GAO’s list, many diversity experts’ writings note that employee involvement is critical to building workplace diversity success.<sup>31</sup> Aronson’s third practice, which is implied by several of the practices the GAO identified, is assessing where an organization currently stands—that is, a diversity audit. His suggestions for how to conduct this audit match the advice given in a number of other textbooks and articles on diversity.<sup>32</sup> The fourth and most detailed best practice mirrors the GAO’s second practice: An organization must develop a strategic plan to promote diversity. Aronson’s includes six critical elements:

- A compelling analysis of the business case identifying diversity’s advantage(s) for the organization
- Recommendations for involving all employees in the diversity effort
- Institutionalization of the diversity initiative through an office or individual responsible for the strategic plan at the executive level
- Clearly defined goals tied to the gaps found through the diversity audit and the business goals
- Diversity metrics to track progress toward those goals
- Accountability metrics that hold managers responsible for meeting diversity goals.<sup>33</sup>

After discussing these four best practices, Aronson describes in detail many policies, processes, and tactics used to incorporate diversity into an organization. He categorizes these more specific best practices into five areas: recruitment and hiring, promotion and career advancement, alternative dispute resolution, management accountability, and human factors. In each section, he provides numerous examples of successful implementation tactics to support that best practice. At the end of his article, Aronson

includes a best practices cheat sheet, containing 46 one- to two-line suggestions for successfully implementing a diversity initiative.

Both Aronson's and the GAO's best practices recommend mixing broad diversity implementation actions (such as appointing diversity managers or task forces that focus on systemic organizational changes) with narrower actions (such as employee training or mentoring programs that aim to provoke individual changes). In their article titled "Best Practices or Best Guesses?," Kalev, Dobbin and Kelly identified which best practices have the most effect on diversity. They found three popular mechanisms for correcting workplace inequality based on organizational change theory:

- Creating specialized positions to achieve new goals
- Using training and feedback to eliminate managerial bias and its offspring, inequality
- Developing programs that target the isolation of women and minorities as a way to improve their career prospects.<sup>34</sup>

They then studied how these specific approaches to diversity management increase the representation of white women, black women, and black men in corporate management. They identified changes in representation by analyzing federally collected workforce data from 708 private employers between 1971 and 2002 and linked those changes with data gathered on those companies' diversity and affirmative action employment practices.

Their research specifically examines whether assigning organizational responsibility through actions such as creating affirmative action plans, appointing diversity committees, or hiring full-time diversity staff is more effective than targeting the behavior of individuals through activities such as diversity training, diversity evaluation, networking, or mentoring. The findings show that

the most effective practices are those that establish organizational responsibility... Attempts to reduce social isolation among women and African Americans through networking and mentoring programs are less promising. Least effective are programs for taming managerial bias through education and feedback.<sup>35</sup>

Analyzing their findings more closely, the authors discovered that assigning responsibility at an institutional level and using either structural roles expertise or affirmative action plans had a positive effect on more individually focused diversity practices such as training, evaluating, mentoring, and networking. While some of these correlations are weaker or non-existent, overall Kalev et al.'s findings confirm both Aronson's and the GAO's studies. Best practices begin with top-level management commitment to sustained organizational changes, which create the potential for more effective individual changes.

### **Academic Library Best Practices**

Diversity best practices in library literature parallel general diversity best practices. Both leadership commitment and strategic planning are required to sustain lasting diversity changes.<sup>36</sup> Assessment and accountability are necessary to identify process changes and to reinforce behavioral changes.<sup>37</sup> And, finally, to build a truly diverse staff, academic libraries must engage in diverse, creative recruitment and retention strategies.<sup>38</sup>

Williams' classic article focuses on what diversity practices leaders must implement in academic libraries. It reinforces both Aronson's and the GAO's emphasis on the core

areas of leadership commitment, strategic planning, and recruitment and retention.<sup>39</sup> His best practices for leaders include

- making diversity an organizational priority
- developing a strong knowledge base about the value of diversity within the organization
- developing institutional allies beyond the library on the diversity agenda
- developing, focusing, and sharing one's vision of diversity
- practicing that vision
- committing human and fiscal resources to the diversity agenda
- demonstrating a consistent willingness to change policies and procedures to further the diversity agenda
- creating accountability and assessment among the management group.<sup>40</sup>

Acknowledging that implementing diversity in the workplace requires substantial time and commitment, Williams advises library leaders to

approach the library's diversity agenda with patience, optimism, creativity, persistence, a bias for input and assessment, an aversion to perfection, a willingness to learn from failure, a responsiveness in the face of discomfort and disagreement, a willingness to present and pursue multiple options and rationales to advance diversity, a willingness to pursue multiple starting points for action, and a willingness to rethink organizational structures in order to advance the library's diversity program.<sup>41</sup>

Academic libraries are experiencing the same pressures that challenge other twenty-first century businesses and organizations. They must respond effectively to an increasingly diverse workforce, an expanding multicultural customer base, and growing competition for "market share" from other providers.<sup>42</sup> However, unlike many businesses, academic libraries are on the leading curve of meeting these challenges. The library profession at many levels is actively recruiting and mentoring diverse staff.<sup>43</sup> In addition, for more than two decades, libraries have met diverse customer needs through collections that support the study and understanding of non-mainstream populations.

### **Diversity Benefits Libraries and their Campuses**

The benefits to libraries of building diverse organizations also parallel the benefits of diversity to businesses and other non-profit organizations. Successfully managed diversity enhances customer service and organizational performance, particularly in areas such as problem solving, creativity, innovation, and flexibility.<sup>44</sup> Encouragingly, some authors argue that diversity can be more readily accepted and implemented in academic libraries because they are, "by their very nature and missions, learning organizations."<sup>45</sup> Thus, their values support the learning and change processes required by diversity initiatives.

In addition to the internal benefits that accrue from a multicultural staff,<sup>46</sup> academic libraries can contribute externally to broader campus diversity goals by providing support and encouragement to diverse student populations. One way to encourage diverse students is to show them a welcoming face by actively recruiting minority students for library public service positions.<sup>47</sup> Libraries can also collaborate with academic support programs such as Upward Bound or summer teaching programs for incoming first-year



students. This collaboration can help build information literacy components into the teaching and learning activities offered to diverse and traditionally under-represented groups.<sup>48</sup>

A second way libraries can support campus diversity is through collection development diversity. Building targeted collections to support multicultural studies has become an important activity in academic libraries since the growth of area studies in the 1980's.<sup>49</sup> The mainstreaming of collection diversity is shown by the substantial number of titles now identified as "basic" for the six area studies included in *Resources for College Libraries*,<sup>50</sup> a tool used to identify core titles for college library collections.

Welburn suggests an additional way in which libraries can support academic thinking about multiculturalism through an unusual—and very proactive—approach to collection development. He builds on Fox-Genovese's observation that most academic approaches to teaching and researching multiculturalism focus on group-defined differences (such as the area studies referred to above) rather than focusing on very real, but far more controversial, diversity of ideas and values.<sup>51</sup> This superficiality of diversity discourse presents libraries with an opportunity. Librarians should support students' critical thinking skills about diversity by collecting and providing access to materials that enable students "to pursue ideas and opinions that conflict with those presented in classrooms."<sup>52</sup> Assisting students—and by extension, faculty—to think outside of traditional diversity definitions can provoke new ways of thinking about collection management. Rather than defining diversity collections in terms of traditional area studies, collection development librarians should themselves re-think collection boundaries. Restructuring collection development "around the concept of diaspora, or the flow of cultural groups and populations from one geographic region to another" would bring a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach to collection diversity.<sup>53</sup>

Libraries are well-positioned to play a significant role in campus diversity. Through outreach to disadvantaged student populations, such as recruiting diverse student workers, publicizing diverse collections, and providing targeted information literacy skills programs, libraries can support existing campus diversity initiatives. Building collections that reflect a nuanced understanding of diversity issues beyond accepted societal definitions enables libraries to support a more radical level of academic diversity dialog. Successfully managing these internal and external diversity initiatives will position libraries to respond strategically to the diversity opportunities they and their institutions face. It will help academic libraries survive—and thrive—in the decades to come.

## **FURTHER PROGRESS: ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH**

### **Assessment**

Successful workplace diversity requires a strategic, long-term commitment of organizational resources by senior management. Those resources must focus on the diversity goals the organization has identified as most valuable to helping it achieve its business goals. Even organizational leaders who are thoroughly committed to diversity still must be assured that diversity initiatives are successful—they want return on their diversity investments.<sup>54</sup> Diversity managers must build assessment into their strategic plans: first, to set a benchmark and identify where organizational change is most needed;

and second, to document progress and re-align specific diversity programs and actions with goals if necessary.<sup>55</sup>

Undertaking a diversity assessment before initiating change brings several organizational benefits.<sup>56</sup> First, it provides a perspective based on qualitative and quantitative data—identifying the most significant issues. Second, it enables systematic analysis of root causes rather than symptoms, which helps target resources more effectively. And, finally, the assessment process involves staff broadly, helping to set the stage for needed changes. However, before undertaking baseline assessments or designing metrics for ongoing diversity programs, diversity leaders and HR directors should thoroughly ground their planning and management in the best practices detailed in two chapters of the *Handbook of Diversity Management*: Plummer’s extensive analysis of how to do an initial assessment, “Diagnosing Diversity in Organizations;” and Hubbard’s thorough introduction to “Assessing, Measuring, and Analyzing the Impact of Diversity Initiatives.”<sup>57</sup> These chapters explain the best ways to assess and measure organizational diversity and progress toward goals both qualitatively and quantitatively. They refer the reader to many excellent assessment tools, more of which can be found in the literature.<sup>58</sup> In addition, professional societies and organizations provide assessment guidance and may recommend commercially-produced tools or diversity assessment consultants.<sup>59</sup>

There are few areas in organizational leadership where assessment at the micro-level (measuring changes in a single organization) and assessment at the macro-level (researching diversity best practices broadly) are so productively interconnected. In the field of diversity management, leaders and HR directors must update the best practices they use with current research findings to ensure they are using and measuring practices that are proven effective.

Many research findings can be immediately and practically useful to the diversity practitioner. Kalev et al.’s extensive analysis demonstrates the value of scholarly research in understanding which organizational-level best practices result in measurably more diverse workplaces.<sup>60</sup> The five-year-long project by the Diversity Research Initiative identifies targeted ways leaders can leverage the potential benefits of diversity in their organizations and assess those initiatives more concretely.<sup>61</sup> Harrison, Price, Gavin, and Florey studied diversity perceptions in diverse teams to identify concrete best practices that promote successful social integration and result in higher team/task performance.<sup>62</sup> The research studies done by Kirby and Richard and by Zane identify specific communication methods and means that are successful in garnering employee acceptance of organizational change and the unintended negative effects of diversity initiatives.<sup>63</sup>

Success in implementing diversity on the practical organizational level is dependent on the findings of diversity scholars studying which best practices yield genuine results. Some of the most solid and useful current research findings have been highlighted in this paper. However, there are still many areas of workplace diversity in which research and data are “sadly lacking and mostly anecdotal.”<sup>64</sup> Many diversity researchers call for improvements in theoretical frameworks and, in particular, how diversity is conceptualized.<sup>65</sup> However, the area for further research that is most critical to practitioners is studying how workplace diversity exerts a positive effect on business goals and profits.<sup>66</sup>

A 2005 Gallup survey found a positive correlation between organizations with a high level of employee satisfaction and those having strong diversity programs.<sup>67</sup> However, the survey does not make a compelling case for an individual organization to commit significant resources to diversity initiatives. Leaders and diversity managers need more research that carefully analyzes specific best practices in a variety of organizational environments and shows how those practices influence organizational goals, profits, and outcomes.

Another area of diversity research that would be valuable to practitioners is examining more closely the roles individuals play in the organizational changes needed to create a diverse workplace. Employees, especially managers, play a key role in the success of an organization's diversity efforts. For example, how do managers handle specific diversity environments and challenges?<sup>68</sup> What is the relationship between diversity definitions, individual actions, and organizational outcomes?<sup>69</sup> Only with carefully crafted research will diversity managers be able to advocate successfully for workplace diversity and assure themselves and their senior management that they have chosen the most effective practices for their organizations.

## CONCLUSION

Twenty-first century organizations are living with and being challenged by diversity on three levels—an increasingly diverse workforce, a multicultural customer base, and a growing challenge for market share from international competitors. To take advantage of the benefits diversity can bring to an organization and minimize its potentially negative effects, an organization must manage diversity strategically: with data-driven planning, carefully articulated goals, judiciously applied organizational changes, and soundly gathered and ruthlessly analyzed metrics. Senior managers must support diversity initiatives and be willing to commit sufficient resources to the effort. Managers must recognize that effectively implementing workplace diversity requires sustained commitment to organizational change. Their commitment must be made with the recognition that strategic diversity management is not an exact science, but an evolving one. Even with the best practices outlined in this paper and research findings that can be leveraged to hone those best practices, “understanding diversity and leveraging its potential requires a deeper understanding than we currently possess.”<sup>70</sup>

Although diversity managers do not yet have a definitive roadmap to know which specific best practices optimize each organization's diversity efforts, leaders and HR directors should remember diversity's most exciting and concrete workplace promise. As individuals, “we're limited in our abilities. Our heads contain only so many neurons and axons. [But ] collectively we face no such constraint. We possess incredible capacity to think differently. These differences can provide the seeds of innovation, progress, and understanding.”<sup>71</sup>

## **Selected Annotated Bibliography**

### **for Human Resources Managers and Organizational Leaders**

Introductory Readings  
Diversity Definitions  
Diversity Best Practices  
Management Commitment to Diversity  
Business Case for Diversity  
Driving Cultural and Organizational Change  
Organizational Assessment and Diversity Metrics  
Training  
Managing Diverse Work Teams  
Communication  
International Diversity Management  
Downsides of Diversity  
Research Directions

#### **Introductory Readings**

Carr-Ruffino, Norma. *Managing Diversity: People Skills for a Multicultural Workplace*. Cincinnati, OH: Thomson, 1996.

This book is written for managers and supervisors who want to be diversity “workplace leaders.” HR professionals can recommend this to leaders and managers who want to develop specific diversity management skills. It includes chapters on team building and on handling one’s own and others’ prejudices. Other chapters focus on African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, gays, people with physical disabilities, older persons, and obese people. Each of these chapters covers myths and facts, stereotyping, cultural profiles, values, issues and perceptions, and leadership opportunities and challenges.

Cox, Taylor, Jr. *Creating the Multicultural Organization: A Strategy for Capturing the Power of Diversity*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Written by one of the most-cited authors in the field of diversity, this book provides a short overview of the benefits of well-managed, genuine multiculturalism. It explains the author’s five-part change model for implementing and continuously managing diversity. Each chapter identifies and gives examples of best practices. One of the most important observations in the book is “commitment at that [top] level is a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective leadership on managing diversity. Success requires many leaders.”<sup>72</sup>

Kossek, Ellen E., and Sharon A. Lobel, eds. *Managing Diversity: Human Resources Strategies for Transforming the Workplace*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996.

This is a foundational work for any HR manager responsible for organizational diversity. Chapters written by subject experts cover all aspects of HR’s roles in diversity management, providing theory, best practices, and substantial bibliographies. The chapters on organizational change management, assessment and accountability, training, strategic planning, and emerging trends are excellent. The chapter on performance appraisal provides HR managers with a clear understanding of how cultural assumptions are embedded in appraisal systems and in the people

conducting them. The chapter also identifies best practices for performance evaluation changes that better support diversity.

Dobbs, Matti F. "Managing Diversity: Lessons from the Private Sector." *Public Personnel Management* 25 (1996): 351-368.

This article is invaluable for the lessons it presents and for how it identifies the HR manager's role in managing diversity initiatives. The lessons are derived from interviews with executives and HR managers assessing the diversity initiatives in three companies and a city government. The article's findings mirror the best practices described earlier and include "top management commitment and leadership, a clearly articulated mission tied to business goals, a supportive culture, a variety of interventions, active employee involvement, an ongoing process for institutionalizing the change, and evaluation and modification."<sup>73</sup> Like Thomas, this article warns that there is no diversity quick fix in organizations. Rather, if diversity goals are integrated into strategic planning and become part of the company's business objectives, they will ultimately be embedded in the company's processes. The role HR managers play in diversity management is pivotal; they are "the experts regarding the theory, knowledge and process of diversity."<sup>74</sup>

Mor Barak, Michàlle. *Managing Diversity: Toward a Globally Inclusive Workplace*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005.

This book uses examples and case "mini-studies" to illustrate a broader concept of multiculturalism than the traditional North American definition. The first section contains overviews of legal, social, and political issues, including detailed analyses of workplace demographics and the socioeconomic causes and consequences of globalization. The second section addresses social and psychological perspectives on workforce diversity, focusing on how different groups approach the same issues. The third section applies a model of an inclusive workplace to various institutional levels—within an organization, between a corporation and a community, through state/nation collaborations and, finally, on an international level.

Thomas, R. Roosevelt, Jr. *Beyond Race and Gender: Unleashing the Power of your Total Work Force by Managing Diversity*. Saranac Lake, NY: AMACOM, 1991.

This is a classic work. Clearly and succinctly written, it first introduces the expanded concept of diversity and then explains its value to an organization. Chapters cover in detail the steps needed to change corporate culture. It provides an excellent sample of a cultural audit. The author does not trivialize the challenges of diversity implementation; he identifies the time required and some of the obstacles faced by organizations implementing diversity initiatives.

## **Diversity Definitions**

Digh, Patricia. "Coming to Terms with Diversity: Don't Reinvent the Wheel." *HR Magazine* 43 (1998). <http://www.shrm.org/hrmagazine/articles/1198dighc.asp> (accessed February 13, 2007).

This Web resource reproduces 12 definitions of diversity mission statements and goals statements from a range of organizations. The variety illustrates that culture, values, and business goals can create significant differences in how an organization approaches diversity.

“How Should my Organization Define Diversity?” 2007.

[http://www.shrm.org/diversity/library\\_published/nonIC/CMS\\_011970.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.shrm.org/diversity/library_published/nonIC/CMS_011970.asp#TopOfPage) (accessed February 13, 2007).

This short article emphasizes that there is no one answer to how an organization should define diversity. It reproduces five organizations’ diversity definitions and identifies seven assumptions and belief systems that underlie diversity management principles.

Johnson, Joseph P., III. “Creating a Diverse Workforce.” 2003.

[http://www.shrm.org/hrresources/whitepapers\\_published/CMS\\_005379.asp#P-4\\_0](http://www.shrm.org/hrresources/whitepapers_published/CMS_005379.asp#P-4_0) (accessed February 13, 2007).

This article contains an often-reproduced graphic illustration showing the dimensions of an individual’s diversity. The image, entitled “The Four Layers of Diversity,” is useful in presentations to senior management and staff when defining diversity.

Maier, Christoph. “A Conceptual Framework for Leading Diversity.” *International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management* 5 (2005): 412-424.

Maier’s article is an excellent example of an approach to diversity and HR management that is broader than the standard U.S. perspective. He presents a three-part model for managing diversity that incorporates the rational, emotional, and spiritual processes involved in human interactions. In addition, his definition of diversity is more subtle and self-actualized than the mainstream U.S. definition. Observing that group-defined diversity is externally imposed, he argues for a diversity model that allows each individual to identify which group aspects of diversity apply to him or her and to what extent. Using his model, an individual might say her female gender is 30% important, and the fact that she is a freed prisoner of apartheid defines another 40% of what she considers unique about herself.

McMahon, Anne M. “Responses to Diversity: Approaches and Initiatives.” 2006.

[http://www.shrm.org/hrresources/whitepapers\\_published/CMS\\_017028.asp](http://www.shrm.org/hrresources/whitepapers_published/CMS_017028.asp) (accessed February 13, 2007).

This paper outlines four ways an organization can approach diversity and then shows through a series of tables how those approaches differ in terms of core programs, communication roles, information and data gathering activities, and community leadership. This paper is valuable in helping HR managers assess how an organization defines its diversity stance. Using that assessment, the HR manager can craft an effective strategic plan in alignment with the organization’s culture and its philosophical assumptions about diversity.

## **Diversity Best Practices**

Aronson, David. “Managing the Diversity Revolution: Best Practices for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Business.” *Civil Rights Journal* 6 (2002): 46-66.

Asserting that in a “nation that is becoming increasingly multiethnic, and in a world that is ever more interconnected, diversity has become an inescapable business reality,” Aronson explains how businesses can manage workplace diversity to their advantage and avoid the inevitable costs incurred by poor management.<sup>75</sup> He examines the intercultural and institutional factors that affect diverse groups’ relations and surveys the diversity literature. He also describes a best practices approach to

managing diversity that enables it to flourish while preserving the unity of focus and corporate purpose every business needs to succeed.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Diversity Management: Expert-Identified Leading Practices and Agency Examples*. GAO-05-90. Washington, D.C.: GAO, 2005. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0590.pdf> (accessed February 13, 2007).

This report identifies best practices through a combination of expert interviews, literature reviews, and surveys of federal agencies with the highest rankings on diversity measures within the federal government. It describes nine diversity management best practices and illustrates each with implementation examples from the agencies studied. Appendices contain a brief description of relevant federal antidiscrimination law and the list of experts whose writings and opinions formed the basis of the nine core best practices.

Kalev, Alexandra, Frank Dobbin, and Erin Kelly. "Best Practices or Best Guesses? Assessing the Efficacy of Corporate Affirmative Action and Diversity Practices." *American Sociological Review* 71, no. 4 (2006): 589-617.

Using federally-reported data from medium- and large-sized businesses about workforce composition from 1971-2002 and following that analysis with surveys of the sampled businesses' diversity and affirmative action practices over time, this report compared a variety of best practices to see which had the most effect on moving white and black women and black men into management positions. The authors found that setting diversity goals and assigning formal organizational responsibility for achieving those goals were the most effective best practices a business could implement. Particularly effective strategies were creating a diversity position and staffing it with an expert, appointing diversity committees or task forces, or establishing concrete affirmative action goals and identifying individuals responsible for ensuring the organization met those goals. Strategies such as diversity training and evaluations, networking, and mentoring were only effective when coupled with organizational responsibility. Top management and HR managers need to view diversity management as a systematic process of organizational change requiring a complex, interdependent set of best practices to succeed.

### **Management Commitment to Diversity**

Makower, Joel. "Managing Diversity in the Workplace." *Business and Society Review* 92 (1995): 48-54.

This article describes what top leaders and middle managers must do to implement and support diversity in their organizations. It paraphrases and quotes Paul Fireman, a sporting goods company CEO, who speaks eloquently about the need for and the benefits of diversity. Complimenting Fireman's perspective are descriptions of two more examples of diverse organizations, Inland Steel and Tabra, Inc. This is a useful article to raise top management awareness of the true value of workplace diversity.

"Becoming Champions of Diversity Just Makes Good Business Sense". New York, NY: Catalyst, Inc., 2003.

[http://www.shrm.org/diversity/library\\_published/nonIC/CMS\\_012379.asp](http://www.shrm.org/diversity/library_published/nonIC/CMS_012379.asp) (accessed February 13, 2007).

Although this summary is only one page, it provides mini best practices for managers, concrete action steps, and a list of the business benefits of diversity. One insight it offers could become the one of the core action-items of any diversity initiative: if managers want to benefit personally and organizationally from an inclusive work environment, then managers at all organizational levels must challenge organizational patterns and make change happen.

Soutar, Sammi. "Beyond the Rainbow." *Association Management* 56 (2004): 26-33. Aimed at the CEO/management level of an organization, this article is another valuable introductory piece that describes the business case for diversity from a financial and performance perspective. It identifies the critical elements of a diversity strategic plan.

Thomas, R. Roosevelt, Jr. "Diversity Management: An Essential Craft for Leaders." *Leader to Leader* 41 (2006): 1-5.

<http://www.leadertoleader.org/knowledgecenter/L2L/summer2006/thomas.html> (accessed February 21, 2007).

This is a fascinating article describing Thomas' ten predictions for how future leaders will conceptualize, manage, and ultimately master the craft of diversity.

### **Business Case for Diversity**

Gardenswartz, Lee, and Anita Rowe. "The Strategic Business Case for Diversity." 2002. [http://www.shrm.org/diversity/library\\_published/nonIC/CMS\\_012413.asp](http://www.shrm.org/diversity/library_published/nonIC/CMS_012413.asp) (accessed February 13, 2007).

———. "Still Being Asked to Explain the Business Case for Diversity? Articulating the 'Why.'" 2006. [http://www.shrm.org/diversity/CMS\\_019274.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.shrm.org/diversity/CMS_019274.asp#TopOfPage) (accessed February 13, 2007).

These two articles, with the SHRM resource listed below, cover the arguments an HR director needs to help both management and employees understand how diversity is relevant to the organization's goals, needs, and employees.

"What Is the 'Business Case' for Diversity?" n.d.

[http://www.shrm.org/diversity/library\\_published/nonIC/CMS\\_011965.asp](http://www.shrm.org/diversity/library_published/nonIC/CMS_011965.asp) (accessed February 13, 2007).

This article explains five key factors that make diversity initiatives important for businesses. These factors should be included in any business case justification for diversity.

Lynch, Frederick R. "Managing Diversity: Multiculturalism Enters the Workplace." *Academic Questions* 6 (1992): 81-87.

This article is critical of the emerging field of diversity management. Lynch recounts a quote from Kevin Sullivan, who was the keynote speaker at the First Annual National Diversity Conference held in May 1991 in San Francisco. Sullivan advised his listeners to sell top leaders on diversity by emphasizing the bottom line, i.e., the cost savings and the competitive advantages of gearing up for workforce and customer cultural diversity. He warned, "It's business, not social work."<sup>76</sup> HR managers advocating diversity with senior management must remember Sullivan's perspective.



Thomas, R. Roosevelt, Jr. *Building on the Promise of Diversity: How We Can Move to the Next Level in Our Workplaces, Our Communities, and Our Society*. Saranac Lake, NY: AMACOM, 2005.

Echoing Sullivan's perspective, Thomas observed that he has seen few "truly compelling" business cases for diversity.<sup>77</sup> He attributed this to the fact that many senior managers do not understand that the people working in an organization are a critically strategic business resource. Management perception of diversity's value and importance to the organization suffers from diversity's characterization as a "people issue" and from being too closely connected in management's minds with affirmative action. HR managers need to recognize and adjust for this often unrecognized but limited mental model of diversity.

Kwak, Mary. "The Paradoxical Effects of Diversity." *MIT Sloan Management Review* 44 (2003): 7-8.

HR directors advocating a business case for diversity must present a balanced case. They need to understand and communicate the fact that a commitment to diversity does not automatically result in bottom-line benefits. Diversity requires thoughtful choices and constant gardening. This article summarizes a lengthy research study that identified a variety of contextual variables that help determine whether diversity boosts or lowers a firm's performance. Diversity initiatives benefit organizations that promote collective over individual achievement, emphasize stability or customer relationships rather than growth, train employees in diversity-related values, and foster an integration-and-learning perspective throughout the organization. For a more complete explanation of the study's findings, see Kochan.<sup>78</sup>

## **Driving Cultural and Organizational Change**

Dass, Parshotam, and Barbara Parker. "Strategies for Managing Human Resource Diversity: From Resistance to Learning." *Academy of Management Executive* 13 (1999): 68-80.

Pointing out that there is no one "best" way to manage workplace diversity, this article explains how to analyze an organization's diversity approach. Particularly useful are the three strategies the authors identify as most effective in managing diversity. The figures are also valuable in that they summarize some of the paper's key ideas very clearly. Figure 2, "Diversity Perspectives and Associated Strategic Responses," provides a helpful, high-level matrix for analyzing the way an organization is thinking about diversity and, thus, the types of actions and outcomes an HR manager can expect to achieve.

Friday, Earnest, and Shawnta S. Friday. "Managing Diversity Using a Strategic Planned Change Approach." *Journal of Management Development* 22 (2003): 863-880.

This article offers an eight-step diversity management process emphasizing the critical role strategic planning plays in achieving positive diversity results. The diversity goals and initiatives an organization wishes to achieve must be aligned realistically with the organization's broader long-term objectives and strategic positioning. A lack of alignment contributes "to the purported ineffectiveness of many diversity initiatives."<sup>79</sup> HR managers can use the strategic planning process

diagrammed on p. 867 to begin aligning diversity strategy with organizational business strategy.

Schein, Edgar H. "Three Cultures of Management: The Key to Organizational Learning." *Sloan Management Review* 38 (1996): 9-20.

Schein examined barriers to organizational learning. While such barriers are valuable to keep in mind when undertaking any type of organizational change, they are most useful when planning to implement diversity education and training. In Schein's analysis, the "classic" diversity differences were insignificant when compared to the differences between the professional cultures, values, and assumptions of the three groups studied—executives, engineers, and operators.

Stoner, Charles R., and Lori A. Russell-Chapin. "Creating a Culture of Diversity Management: Moving from Awareness to Action." *Business Forum* 22, no.2-3 (1997): 6-12.

This article presents a four-phase model for achieving diversity. It argues that HR managers and organization leaders must plan a focused process for creating cultural change, or a diversity program will fail. The authors identify specific problems that could slow down or stall diversity management process-building. They pay particular attention to the damaging effect that building isolated programs has on an organization. Uncoordinated programs often occur because of a lack of high-level commitment.

Zane, Nancie C. "The Glass Ceiling Is the Floor my Boss Walks On: Leadership Challenges in Managing Diversity." *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 38 (2002): 334-354.

This article should be required reading for all HR managers and organizational leaders who want to implement diversity. Analyzing a financial institution's conversational patterns over 2 ½ years, it documents an alternative to diversity training for changing organizational behavior—in effect, "the power of language to influence thinking."<sup>80</sup> Using qualitative and quantitative data, the author shows how a sustained commitment by the CEO and his involvement with "discourse communities" within the organization ultimately results in employees' taking responsibility for defining and implementing positive cultural changes that support diversity.

## **Organizational Assessment and Diversity Metrics**

Pierce, Karla, K. "Nine Habits of Effective Data-Driven Performance Management." *Government Finance Review* 22 (2006): 36-40.

This article is an excellent overview of the value created by measuring the right data in the right way. Before implementing diversity initiatives, HR directors and diversity managers must create a baseline or assessment of an organization's existing diversity, attitudes, and practices. The assessment's findings will help management and HR professionals establish the organization's diversity goals and then design a change strategy. This article identifies nine best practices to keep in mind when measuring organizational performance: (1) Find it, use it, name it; (2) Let the data tell the story; (3) Keep priorities in your sights; (4) Drive data up, drive data down; (5) Do not let the perfect stop you from the possible; (6) Have the courage to share your results; (7)

Iterate intelligently; (8) Manage; and (9) Invest. Paraphrasing one of the author's conclusions, "effective data gives diversity managers the power to manage for results."<sup>81</sup>

Thomas, R. Roosevelt, Jr. "Diversity Management: Some Measurement Criteria." *Employment Relations Today* 25 (1999): 49-62.

Thomas warns HR managers that they must be able to explain their diversity progress in terms of quantitative and qualitative metrics. As diversity efforts in an organization mature, senior managers will want to know what they are getting for the cost and effort. Diversity managers must plan assessment—both in advance of implementing diversity to create benchmarks and, after making diversity investments, to assess the return on those investments for the organization. One section covers the three core questions: What shall we measure? How should we measure it? When should we measure it?

Chang, Shanton, and Phyllis Tharenou. "Competencies Needed for Managing a Multicultural Workgroup." *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources* 42 (2004): 57-74.

Managers at all organizational levels are critical to diversity's success. This article researched the managerial competencies needed to manage a multicultural group of subordinates. HR managers can use these competencies to assess managers' current skills and design training programs to help managers develop the full repertoire of skills needed.

Greenholtz, Joe. "Assessing Cross-Cultural Competence in Transnational Education: The Intercultural Development Inventory." *Higher Education in Europe* 25 (2000): 411-416.

Focusing on the needs of transnational companies, this assessment tool inventories an individual's multicultural/transnational sensitivity and competence. Using this tool, the HR manager of a transnational company can identify management training needs and design targeted programs to address those needs. The article also offers an excellent description of the importance of multicultural competence in expatriate populations, which can be used both to choose and to justify potentially expensive training programs.

Stutz, Jonathan, and Randy Massengale. "Measuring Diversity Initiatives." 1998: Reviewed May 2000 and January 2002.

[http://www.shrm.org/hrresources/whitepapers\\_published/CMS\\_000237.asp](http://www.shrm.org/hrresources/whitepapers_published/CMS_000237.asp) (accessed February 13, 2007).

Two critical areas HR managers must continue to measure, no matter what other diversity initiatives they manage, are federally mandated Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action program (AAP) data. This article introduces the SMG Index (the letters of the acronym are taken from the family names of the index's inventors, who worked at Microsoft). The SMG Index uses existing data points within the standard required EEO reports but broadens this data to "measure the success or failure of specific diversity work over time and to quantify its effect on the organization."<sup>82</sup> This index helps HR and diversity managers answer the question, "What's the bottom line?" No warranty of the software is implied by inclusion of this abstract, but it sounds like a useful analytical tool.

Love, Johnnieque B. "The Assessment of Diversity Initiatives in Academic Libraries." *Journal of Library Administration* 33 (2001): 73-103.

This is an excellent description of how to do diversity assessment in libraries using seven basic questions. The author illustrates the process with clear and well-focused tables throughout the text. He developed the questions based on three pilot studies conducted in libraries and reproduces both the variables he used for a diversity assessment survey and the actual survey instrument.

Chow, Irene Hau Siu, and Ronald B. Crawford. "Gender, Ethnic Diversity, and Career Advancement in the Workplace: The Social Identity Perspective." *SAM Advanced Management Journal* 69 (2004): 22-32.

This article covers a large number of issues about diversity management. It is useful for HR managers planning assessments because it explains many of the metrics used in measuring diversity. It not only helps HR managers understand how group membership and perception of group status affect understanding of inter-group relationships, but it provides a conceptual model on which assessment processes can be grounded in workplace activity—the task/function model. Finally, it provides a copy of the assessment tool used.

Plummer, Deborah L. "Diagnosing Diversity in Organizations." *Handbook of Diversity Management: Beyond Awareness to Competency Based Learning*, edited by Plummer, 243-269. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003.

Hubbard, Edward E. "Assessing, Measuring, and Analyzing the Impact of Diversity Initiatives." *Handbook of Diversity Management: Beyond Awareness to Competency Based Learning*, edited by Deborah L. Plummer, 271-305. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003.

HR/diversity managers should read these two articles in tandem. Plummer's chapter provides the business case and the practical case for conducting an organizational audit before committing to any specific diversity practices or programs. Hubbard's article is a mini-textbook for measuring and carefully analyzing diversity's impact. By beginning diversity planning with a clear understanding of the organization as it now exists, HR managers can design achievable programs that meet the employees' and the organization's needs.

Lockwood, Nancy R. "The Glass Ceiling: Domestic and International Perspectives." *SHRM 2004 Research Quarterly*, 2004.

[http://www.shrm.org/research/quarterly/0402glass\\_essay.asp](http://www.shrm.org/research/quarterly/0402glass_essay.asp) (accessed February 13, 2007).

When designing organizational audits and planning assessment metrics, HR managers must develop methods to capture and analyze data on the relative progress and pay of women compared to men. This article is an excellent overview of the ways in which women, and in particular women of color and women employed internationally, are at a disadvantage compared to men. It recommends ways HR managers can help to break the glass ceiling in an organization. Considering the data that Lockwood reports that companies with more women in their top management have higher stock prices and higher total return to shareholders,<sup>83</sup> enabling women to succeed on an equal playing field may offer a strong business case for diversity.

## Training

Moore, Sarah. "Understanding and Managing Diversity Among Groups at Work: Key Issues for Organizational Training and Development." *Journal of European Industrial Training* 23 (1999): 208–217.

Diversity initiatives in the 1980's and 90's over-relied on diversity training programs that were not founded on reputable pedagogical, sociological, or psychological theory and practice. Horror stories abound and still taint training efforts. Yet learning through training is crucial for the success of all participants in an organization that wishes to become diverse. The section in this article on diversity training initiatives (pages 213-215) provides an excellent introduction to the challenges an HR director should anticipate when implementing diversity training, a clear overview of the differences between awareness-based diversity training and competence and skills-based diversity training, and a valuable warning that diversity issues are multidimensional and must be approached in the context of the organization.

Hastings, Rebecca R. "An Inclusive Workplace: How to Know One When You See One." 2006.

[http://www.shrm.org/diversity/library\\_published/nonIC/CMS\\_019237.asp](http://www.shrm.org/diversity/library_published/nonIC/CMS_019237.asp) (accessed February 13, 2007).

This short article repeats many points covered by other readings. However, it includes some observations from Oris Stuart, managing partner of Global Lead Management Consulting, which should focus diversity training efforts:

"People join organizations but leave managers. But organizations don't do a good job of teaching managers how to manage a diverse team and their own biases. Instead, diversity and inclusion are often presented to middle managers as yet another thing they have to deal with."<sup>84</sup>

Combs, Gwendolyn M. "Meeting the Leadership Challenge of a Diverse and Pluralistic Workplace: Implications of Self-Efficacy for Diversity Training." *Journal of Leadership Studies* 8 (2002): 1-16.

Combs summarizes the failures of traditional diversity training. Too often, managers are asked to become change agents without proper training. They need concrete skill development, practice, and feedback to build new skills to a level where they are willing to risk attempting to use those skills. He argues that training designed to develop individual self-efficacy, defined as the individual's judgment of his or her ability to perform a certain task successfully, is the needed bridge between ineffective diversity training and that which truly empowers managers to risk new behaviors.

Von Bergen, C. W., Barlow Soper, and Robert Masters. "Mismanagement by the Golden Rule." *Industrial Management* 43 (2001): 6-11.

While not specifically written about diversity, this article discusses how the golden rule maxim of management ("do unto others...") is inadequate and can lead to employee alienation. Although a management style based on the golden rule assumes many positive attributes, such as respect and fairness, it presumes everyone desires the same treatment, discounting the diverse viewpoints and needs of others. The fable of the monkey and the fish can be used in training sessions to illustrate the golden rule taken to a disastrous extreme.

Von Bergen, C. W., Barlow Soper, and Teresa Foster. "Unintended Negative Effects of Diversity Management." *Public Personnel Management* 31 (2002): 239-252.

This article is particularly valuable for itemizing the things that can go wrong with diversity training. Poorly designed diversity training can result in employees' feeling devalued or demoralized, in more discrimination and reinforced stereotypes, and, in the worst cases, in increased legal liabilities. Given this potential for organizational damage, HR directors should evaluate diversity training efforts for unintended negative consequences and should ensure that diversity training focuses "on rules of civil behavior rather than trying to change people's beliefs."<sup>85</sup>

### **Managing Diverse Work Teams**

Wright, Patrick M., and Scott A. Snell. "Understanding Executive Diversity: More than Meets the Eye." *HR Human Resources Planning* 22 (1999): 49-51.

HR managers must recognize the ways in which group diversity can enhance performance but can also have neutral or negative effects. This article provides a quick overview of the types of diversity that matter for job-related teamwork. The performance impact of diversity is inconsistent because organizations often fail to manage group processes effectively. Team managers need to know how to ensure successful behavior integration among diverse group members. HR managers must ensure that team managers have adequate training to help them develop needed skills in the emotional aspects of group management, intervention techniques, communication, and team building so that they can manage diverse work teams effectively.

Schwenk, Charles R. "The Case for 'Weaker' Leadership." *Business Strategy Review* 8 (1997): 4-9.

This article champions an organizational culture that does not force a top-down corporate ideal and conformity on all employees—and by extension, on teams and work groups. A corporate culture that values eccentricity and rewards critical thinking, constructive conflict, and vigilant problem-solving will derive maximum benefit from the diversity of work groups. If teams are not trained and managed to permit constructive conflict, then the positive effects of diversity will be lost. Schwenk offers guidelines for effectively using intentionally-managed conflict to improve diverse work group performance.

Cummings, Jonathon N. "Work Groups, Structural Diversity, and Knowledge Sharing in a Global Organization." *Management Science* 50 (2004): 352-364.

This article is an excellent illustration of Wright's assertion that team performance is dependent on many aspects of diversity—not just the traditional, overt differences between and among people.<sup>86</sup> By examining the degree to which a team's external knowledge-sharing activities bring increased team performance and outcomes, this study found that structurally diverse work groups outperformed demographically diverse workgroups. Thus, work groups that differed in geographic location, functional assignments, reporting managers, and business units brought a wider variety of unique knowledge to team tasks than did work groups composed of members who differed demographically. Managers must remember "that not all sources of diversity in work groups enhance the value of knowledge."<sup>87</sup> Different

diversity characteristics should be chosen to enhance team performance and should be aligned to the team's purpose and goals.

Mannix, Elizabeth, and Margaret A. Neale. "What Differences Make a Difference? The Promise and Reality of Diverse Teams in Organizations." *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 6 (2005): 31-55.

Mannix and Neale's extensive literature review finds both positive and negative effects of diversity on teamwork. This article is useful for diversity managers who want a thorough understanding of team diversity benefits and drawbacks. It also analyzes extensively the gaps in practical research and theoretical development. The last section, "Advice for Organizational Teams," covers how to organize team processes to maximize positive outcomes and to minimize the negative effects of team diversity. Based on current understanding of diverse work groups, the authors conclude that the business case for diversity is hard to build since managing diverse teams in organizations requires significant additional human and financial costs. They assert that a human resources-based case for diversity, which they define as "more effective utilization of talent and leadership potential, increased marketplace understanding, [and] enhanced creativity and problem solving," is a stronger argument for persuading senior management to embrace workplace diversity and team workgroups.<sup>88</sup>

## Communication

Harris, Phillip R., and Robert T. Moran. "Chapter 2: Leadership in Global Communications." In *Managing Cultural Differences*, 4th ed., edited by Harris and Moran, 18-39. Houston, TX: Gulf, 1996.

Seventy-five percent of a manager's time is spent communicating to people; indeed, "communication is at the heart of all organizational operations and international relations."<sup>89</sup> This pragmatic chapter covers several key areas of communicating—particularly understanding context without attribution, active listening, and both verbal and non-verbal "speaking." The section on international body language and the 20 guidelines (best practices) for English and foreign languages are particularly valuable.

Ayoko, Oluremi, Charmine E.J. Hartel, Greg Fisher, and Yuka Fujimoto.

"Communication Competence in Cross-Cultural Business Interactions." In *Key Issues in Organizational Communication*, edited by Dennis Tourish and Owen Hargie, 157-171. London: Routledge, 2004.

This article is a useful blend of communication principles, theories of multicultural communication, and research findings. It summarizes the skills and competencies needed for cross-cultural communication: cultural awareness, emotional competence, openness to dissimilarity, and conflict management skills. The authors call for more multicultural research on communications, noting that the majority of studies have been done in the United States and have a distinctly American ethnocentrism.

Sadri, Golnaz, and Hoa Tran. "Managing Your Diverse Workforce Through Improved Communication." *Journal of Management Development* 21 (2002): 227-237.

Focusing on Dow Chemical and Texas Commerce Bank case studies, this article gives examples of how to improve the supervisor-subordinate communication

process. The authors show how effective communication can promote integration and equality in the workplace. The two strategies are managing the personal growth process (MPG) and mentoring. MPG develops an individual's understanding of his/her role in the supervisor-subordinate relationship and his/her skills in communicating with supervisors. Championing mentoring, the authors assert that reciprocal and open communication with the mentor gives the mentee practice in communication skills as well as many other benefits.

## **International Diversity Management**

Albrecht, Maryann H., ed. *International HRM: Managing Diversity in the Workplace*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

Managing international businesses successfully is one of the twenty-first century's top challenges. This textbook covers HR responsibilities in an international context and is divided into six sections with chapters in each written by subject experts. The sections include understanding cultural diversity in global business; strategic human resource management; recruitment, selection, and placement in a global context; training and development; employee relations; and issues in global and cultural diversity. Each section includes at least two case studies, and all chapters contain extensive bibliographies.

Jackson, Terence. *International HRM: A Cross-Cultural Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002.

This book offers a more advanced approach than Albrecht's introductory work on HRM. It uses case studies and research studies to show how international cultural differences influence HR practice. Jackson contrasts the individualized, contractual approach of HR in the United States with other cultures particularly the Japanese, who take a moral and spiritual approach to managing workers. The author gives an overview of key cultural values of selected countries and regions: Japan, the UK, Europe, China, Post-Soviet region (eastern Germany and Czech Republic) and post-colonial regions (Africa and India).

Harris, Phillip R., and Robert T. Moran. "Unit III—Culture Specifics and Business/Service Abroad." In *Managing Cultural Differences*, 4th ed., edited by Harris and Moran, 192-391. Houston, TX: Gulf, 1996.

The third unit of this textbook provides a useful basic explanation of cultural specifics of doing business and providing service in different regions. Chapters on North America, Latin America, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa describe tips for doing business and negotiating in the countries within those regions. This is a good starting point for understanding the cultural differences that affect international workplace diversity.

Holden, Richard "Managing People's Values and Perceptions in Multi-Cultural Organizations: The Experience of an HR Director." *Employee Relations* 23 (2001): 614-626.

This article is a real-life description of the issues and challenges HR directors face in international organizations. The author uses his experiences in three global companies to illustrate problems and offer solutions.



“Six Regional Perspectives on Diversity.” *The Diversity Factor* 12 (2004): 7-24.

In this article, six HR directors and diversity consultants from Africa, Canada, Europe, Australia, India, and the Middle East describe what diversity means in a country or region. They explain the extent of diversity in their areas of expertise and the challenges their cultures present to foreign leaders and HR managers. They identify best practices and offer a list of “do’s and don’ts” for businesses and organizations wishing to operate successfully.

Von Glinow, Mary Ann, Ellen A. Drost, and Mary B. Teagarden. “Counterintuitive Findings in International HRM Research and Practice: When Is a Best Practice Not a Best Practice?” In *The Future of Human Resource Management: 64 Thought Leaders Explore the Critical HR Issues of Today and Tomorrow*, edited by Mike Losey, Sue Meisinger and Dave Ulrich, 392-399. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2005.

Based on the results of a standardized survey completed by approximately 2,200 managers and engineers, this article describes eight universal best practices organized into four HRM areas: selection, training and development, compensation, and performance appraisal. Respondents were asked to identify those human resources practices currently in existence and also those which will be important for the future. The findings illustrate the care with which HR managers must operate in a global corporate culture to ensure they design appropriately nuanced HR policies and processes.

Littrell, Lisa N., and Eduardo Salas. “A Review of Cross-Cultural Training: Best Practices, Guidelines and Research Needs.” *Human Resource Development Review* 4 (2005): 305-334.

This article is an excellent resource for the HR manager responsible for training programs for expatriate employees. Cross-cultural training (CCT) promotes “intercultural learning through the acquisition of behavioral, cognitive, and affective competencies required for effective interactions across diverse cultures” and has been identified as a major technique for improving international management.<sup>90</sup> Using an extensive literature review, the authors identify the components that make up the design and delivery of typical CCT programs; the best practices in the design, delivery, and evaluation of those programs; and the activities multi-national corporations should undertake to improve and extend their expatriate training.

Markoczy, Livia. “Us and Them.” *Across the Board* 35 (1998): 44-48.

This article provides a needed balance to the wealth of literature that analyzes and explains international cultural differences. Markoczy makes a powerful argument that too often individuals interpret each other’s actions based on an effort to be sensitive to the impact of cultural differences. Using several examples from her own research and others’ findings, she illustrates how simpler explanations for behaviors can be more accurate in many circumstances. She warns HR directors and overseas managers not to overuse explanations based on national and cultural differences. While cultural differences are real, using them as the only lens through which international human behavior is interpreted leads to missed cues, missed opportunities, and mistakes.

## Downsides of Diversity

Putnam, Robert D. “*E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture.*” *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30 (2007): 137-174.

Putnam studies how social networks, and in particular their associated qualities of reciprocity and trustworthiness, influence individuals’ perceptions and behavior and create a form of “social capital,” the “tools” with which people operate in society.<sup>91</sup> In this paper, Putnam explores how the transition to a more diverse and multicultural society has affected social capital in the United States. He uses a nationwide survey conducted in 2000 with a sample size of approximately 30,000 people, including an embedded national sample of 3,000 and smaller samples representative of 41 widely different U.S. communities. After five years of data analysis, he discovered that “diversity seems to trigger *not* in-group/out-group division but anomie or social isolation. In colloquial language, people living in ethnically diverse settings appear to ‘hunker down’ – that is, to pull in like a turtle.”<sup>92</sup> Individuals lose trust on many levels. “Diversity does *not* produce ‘bad race relations’ or ethnically-defined group hostility,” concludes Putnam. “Rather, inhabitants of diverse communities tend to withdraw from collective life ... and to huddle unhappily in front of the television.”<sup>93</sup> While Putnam’s findings have not been tested in the workplace, organizational diversity advocates should be aware of his research for two reasons. First, his conclusions have provoked significant debate. The popular press is reporting them with varying levels of neutrality, ranging from neutral synopses to headlines declaring that “Greater Diversity Equals More Misery.”<sup>94</sup> In addition, senior management and HR directors must be prepared to respond to criticisms which use Putnam’s findings. Second, if this “hunkering down” happens in organizations, then diversity managers should assess this behavior and include it in their strategic planning. Diversity audits and ongoing assessments can identify if employees are “turtling.” Strong leadership commitment and communication, accompanied by inclusive practices, can help staff move beyond this initial reaction. Organizational leaders can communicate to staff Putnam’s analysis that their goal is not to make everyone the same but to create “a new, more capacious sense of ‘we,’ a reconstruction of diversity that does not bleach out ethnic specificities, but creates overarching identities.”<sup>95</sup>

Porter, James C. “Facilitating Cultural Diversity.” *Journal of Management in Engineering* 11 (1995): 39-43.

HR managers need to know which “worst” practices to avoid. This article summarizes some of the practices that inhibit and discourage diversity. The author focuses on the critical role of the manager, recognizing that unless diversity has “management support and leadership, the differences in individual values and organization culture can be too great to be assimilated naturally.”<sup>96</sup> In particular, he points out areas requiring cultural change and analyzes existing ways organizations limit criticism and conflict, thus creating a homogeneous culture that discourages diversity.

McMillan-Capehart, Amy. "Heterogeneity or Homogeneity: Socialization Makes the Difference in Firm Performance." *Performance Improvement Quarterly* 19 (2006): 83-98.

Organizational diversity goals are often seen as antithetical to an organization's need to have a successful person-organization fit. This article describes two sets of socialization techniques: those that promote homogeneity and those that are considered best practices for socializing the employee while supporting organizational and individual diversity.

Graham, Julia. 2004. "Performance-Based Culture." *Journal for Quality & Participation* 27 (2004): 5-8. <http://www.asq.org/pub/jqp/past/2004/spring/jqpSP04graham.pdf> (accessed February 15, 2007).

Diversity initiatives are often criticized as either quota filling—without regard for a candidate's skills and abilities—or management-driven PR—without any real effect on how employees are managed and treated. Responding to these criticisms, diversity experts stress that initiatives must be accompanied by a results-oriented accountability. This article emphasizes the need for all employees to be held to high performance standards. In addition, it stresses that responsibility for diversity management and participation must be built into performance expectations.

Bassett-Jones, Nigel. "The Paradox of Diversity Management, Creativity and Innovation." *Creativity and Innovation Management* 14 (2005): 169-175.

Two of the strongest benefits diversity brings to the workplace are creativity and innovation. This article gives HR managers a realistic understanding of both the benefits and possible negative consequences of diversity. Without a significant effort by HRM to manage sub-systems including "recruitment, reward, performance appraisal, employee development and individual managerial behaviours," the organization will fail to support the conditions necessary for positive effects of diversity, such as creativity and innovation, to flourish.<sup>97</sup>

Kirby, Susan L., and Orlando C. Richard. "Impact of Marketing Work-Place Diversity on Employee Job Involvement and Organizational Commitment." *Journal of Social Psychology* 140 (2000): 367-377.

As Digh observed, it is very easy for employees to resent an organization's efforts to become more diverse.<sup>98</sup> Employees' perceptions of a company's diversity efforts are based on how top management and HR directors communicate their motives for engaging in diversity management. Employees' willingness to believe in those explanations influences their job involvement and organizational commitment. Differing ways of achieving fairness include approaches such as organizational justice, distributive justice, procedural justice, and systemic justice. These approaches influence how accepting employees are of the organization's diversity efforts. This article's findings are invaluable for helping HR managers see that employees must understand HR process and procedures and perceive them to be fair. They will be motivated by reasons they can accept. Positive perceptions of "process" fairness and of "purpose" fairness can offset the potentially alienating effects of outcomes that are not perceived as fair.<sup>99</sup>

Barry, Bruce, and Thomas S. Bateman. "A Social Trap Analysis of the Management of Diversity." *Academy of Management Review* 21 (1996): 757-790.

This fascinating article discusses how to undertake activities that foster constructive diversity management. It also points out what to watch for in terms of unintended consequences and side effects of certain types of diversity outcomes.<sup>100</sup> The social trap model used by the authors provides a framework for analyzing how diversity initiatives work. Small, individual decisions made by managers and employees often support or derail the organization's diversity intentions. Some choices create conflicts between the individual's desired or near-term outcomes and the organization's desired collective or long-term consequences; thus managers are often put into social decision traps because they have conflicting responsibilities and goals. By applying this model to situations where employee behavior seems contradictory, HR directors and diversity managers can better understand—and control for—the conflicts that managers experience.

### **Research Directions**

Barry, Bruce, and Thomas S. Bateman. "A Social Trap Analysis of the Management of Diversity." *Academy of Management Review* 21 (1996): 757-790.

Workplace diversity, the authors observe, is a "virgin field lacking in theoretical frameworks."<sup>101</sup> Along with recommending that social trap theory be applied to other topics such as leadership, group processes, etc., the authors suggest an interesting area of diversity study: Future researchers should examine how individuals work within organizational expectations through studying managers' thought processes as they navigate through particular types of diversity environments and challenges. They suggest using simulations or problem-solving scenarios and then tracking managers' verbal protocols. This would help understand the impact of organizational diversity efforts and expectations on the managers who must implement them.

McMillan-Capehart, Amy. "Heterogeneity or Homogeneity: Socialization Makes the Difference in Firm Performance." *Performance Improvement Quarterly* 19 (2006): 83-98.

Reviewing what is known to date on diversity's effects on firm performance, the author calls for research that examines this relationship from a more nuanced and multi-dimensional perspective. The author argues that researchers do not yet know how an organization's culture, its socialization techniques, and an individual employee's preferences and choices interact to determine whether the organization can create a successful diversity culture. HR directors could use such nuanced findings to analyze how their organizations can better implement diversity and reap the performance benefits it brings.

Lauring, Jakob, and Colin Ross. "Research Notes: Cultural Diversity and Organizational Efficiency." *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations* 29 (2004): 89-103.

The authors affirm and broaden McMillan-Capehart's call for further research into diversity's ostensibly positive effect on business goals and profits. "This positive link is only supported to a limited degree by in-depth research;" more often it is based on opinion.<sup>102</sup> They provide an excellent bibliography on the business case for diversity and extend the study of that business case to multinational corporations.

van Knippenberg, Daan, and Michaela C. Schippers. "Work Group Diversity." *Annual Review of Psychology* 58 (2007): 515-541.

This extensive article reviews work group diversity literature from 1997–2005, assessing the state of research in this field and identifying areas for further research. It concludes that the field needs a "more complex conceptualization of diversity" and a focus on the "processes that are assumed to underlie the effects of diversity on group process and performance."<sup>103</sup> The bibliography is comprehensive and the concluding section highlights many areas for research and experimentation.

McMahan, Gary C., Myrtle P. Bell, and Meghna Virick. "Strategic Human Resource Management: Employee Involvement, Diversity, and the International Issues." *Human Resource Management Review* 8 (1998):193-214.

While the literature review and the call for research are slightly dated, this article makes a point that is still extremely germane—the field needs research that helps understand the employee's role in diversity initiatives. The section on research ideology gives a good overview of models and approaches to date, noting that most of the theoretical research and model building that has been done is U.S.-centric. This is one of the few research review sections that examines diversity research models from other cultures.

Pitts, David W. "Modeling the Impact of Diversity Management." *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 26 (2006): 245-268.

Pitts reviews the literature on diversity management and concludes that "despite increased research; scholars have been slow in developing knowledge that can be used by the public sector manager."<sup>104</sup> Joining with many other scholars, he also laments the "atheoretical (sic) nature of diversity research to date."<sup>105</sup> He observes that most of the benefits have been championed by consultants and illustrated by case study literature that can only probe incompletely into some of the relationships between diversity constructs, individual actions, and organizational effects. His literature review and bibliography form an excellent basis for research in public sector diversity issues.

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