

VALUE OF DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

This paper is prepared and submitted by

(Name)

In partial fulfillment of the course syllabus

SOCIOLOGY

Submitted on

(Date)

There is a massive evolution going on in workplace organizations nowadays. Homogeneity of workforce, which once dominated the workplace are now very hard to find as globalization brings together people from various countries with various cultural backgrounds to start with. It is a common thing to find people from various culture and race, socioeconomic background, and even those from various locations work on the same project as advances in technology, immigration, and globalization bridged the physical gaps between cultures, strata, and geography. While the physical distance may seem to have been bridged, there are still much about socio-cultural identity that are not yet bridged resulting to unfavorable situations. This isolation of culture from the rest often hurts organizations particularly when there is a need for cultures to meet and unite in order to meet the expected outcome – but did not.

One particular example about the inability of an organization to resolve issues or come up with a good idea from a collective effort people from a diverse background happened in my previous job. I was assigned to take a role as a junior executive to the project manager and part of my job is to attend meetings with the people involved in the planning and marketing of the new products that are to be released in the market. There are seven key personnel involved in the planning and marketing of the said products (including me), four of which are White Americans, two are Asians, and one is Black American. Three members of the group are females and another two members of the group do not hold a managerial position. Age bracket is also not uniform since only one of the group has an age of more than 50; four of which are aged 30-50; and a couple of us aged less than 30 years old, so one gets the idea of a fairly diverse project development and marketing group.

The project leader was the 58 years old White male who dominated every conversation and reporting sessions in the team. He always brandishes the fact that he is a senior member of the team and he wants everyone to follow and agree to his ideas. The team is planning about the advertising strategies for the product that will be released in the market – a detergent product for social classes C and below but could not come up with a good plan because of the leader's insistence of his ideas. The leader wanted pretty White females to appear in the commercial which the female members of the time disagreed (based on feministic claims) and the members of the team from other races object (citing discrimination). More importantly, the team is in uproar because they believe that doing what the project manager wanted would not give the best result for the organization because of the disparity between the general emotions conveyed by the commercial ad and the target market of the product. Because there is so much disagreement within the original team, the project manager decided to form another team which is more homogenous.

Weeks later, the commercial advertisement that the project manager wanted was released in local television stations and in newsstands. Just as expected, the advertisement never captured the target market and sales never reached the target sale for the next three or four months. Because of this result, the original team was again assembled and was allowed to provide honest assessment of the project outcome. The project leader was also replaced because of his cultural biases and strong tendencies to discriminate his members. With the original team and their critical thinking plus the fact that the team is composed of people from a very diverse background, a new commercial advertisement was launched that features women from various social status and race buying the product

and enjoying the benefits they have from it. As a result, the target market became captured audiences and the sales increased proportionally.

The project manager of the original team was very apologetic after the ideas of the team went successful. He highlighted learning points which he missed during the informal meeting. Here are some of the things he told us he learned from us:

- In the marketing industry, a diverse workforce offers more benefits compared to a homogenous workgroup because of the number of ideas they can offer and share between and among each other.
- Working with people from different walks of life and from a different social perspective is enriching since communicating ideas, perspectives, ideals, and concerns within the group breaks down the solid wall called biases.
- Pooling different ideas from people who have various standpoints socially and culturally can be beneficial to the organization because of the exciting possibilities their ideas can bring.

What the previous project manager has realized is right in some context. He has been wrong in thinking that just because his team members have views that are different from his, his idea is far superior to what they have. As what is seen in the situation, collective effort from people with diverse backgrounds worked perfectly in achieving the objective of the organization. In the general sense, homogeneity is no longer the norm of organizations and discrimination is willfully eradicated in the workplace.