

Cultural Competency in the Workplace

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Learning Objectives

1. Learn about dimensions of culture, diversity and cultural competency.
2. Discuss the value and importance of achieving cultural competency in the workplace.
3. Review techniques for acquiring cultural competency.

What is Culture?

What is Diversity?

CULTURE: The individual background or characteristics each person or group possesses.

DIVERSITY: The sum total of the ways we are both similar and different. Encompasses more than race and gender to include all those differences that make us unique.



What aspects of culture are most significant to you?

- Work Background
- Income
- Parental status
- Education
- Religious Beliefs
- Military Experience
- Marital Status
- Geographic Location
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Gender
- Physical Qualities
- Age
- Ethnicity

Cultural Competency

The ability to work effectively across cultures in a way that acknowledges and respects the culture of the person, group or organization.

Basic Cultural Competence

Individuals who are culturally competent:

- Value diversity and accept and respect the differences.
- Accept the influence of their own culture in relation to other cultures.
- Understand and manage the dynamics of difference when cultures intersect.

How does Culture Impact the Workplace?

- Different life experiences
- Flavor our interpretation of events
- Bring strength to the group if valued and integrated

Why is Workplace Cultural Competency Important?

Workplace Diversity

- Changing demographics of people entering the workplace in this Century.
- Since the late 1990s, the work force has shifted dramatically in participation of women, minority, older and foreign-born workers.
- The work force will continue to become more diverse in age, ethnicity, and nativity over the next several decades.

Market Rationale

- Changing demographics in the US are creating new customer groups.
- Opportunities continue to arise for servicing diverse consumers.

Talent Rationale

- Workforce retention is highly connected to environments where all employees feel valued and are encouraged contribute to their fullest.
- Diverse teams can be more effective and creative.

Acquiring Cultural Competence

Starts with awareness

Enriched with knowledge

Enhanced with specific skills

Polished through cross-cultural encounters



Getting off Automatic (pilot)

You can't teach an old dog.....
new tricks.

Big boys don't.....
cry.

You can lead a horse to water, but....
you can't make it drink.

What lens are you looking through?



What is your world view?

The 10 Lenses

1. Assimilationist
2. Colorblind
3. Cultural Centrist
4. Elitist
5. Integrationist
6. Meritocratist
7. Multiculturalist
8. Seclusionist
9. Transcendent
10. Victim/Caretaker



The 10 Lenses

1. **Assimilationist** – Immigrants and other subcultures should adopt the lifestyles, values, customs, and language of the dominant/majority culture.
2. **Colorblind** – All men and women are created equal. They believe that ignoring race and color will have an equalizing effect.
3. **Culturalcentrist** – Racial minorities and ethnic groups should detach from the dominant culture to survive, rebuild and/or maintain their cultural norms, customs and traditions.
4. **Elitist** – Lineage and innate qualities entitle some members of the culture to be advantaged within society.
5. **Integrationist** – Achieving greater racial and cultural equality, understanding and harmony through working, living and socializing side by side.

The 10 Lenses

6. **Meritocratist** – Opportunity should be based only on an individual's initiative, competence and accomplishments.
7. **Multiculturalist** – Celebrate the diversity of cultures in the United States and the contributions they make to our national character and history.
8. **Seclusionist** – It is best for our race to remain separate from other racial groups to preserve our position and control.
9. **Transcendent** – Our common divine origin transcends racial, national, ethnic or cultural identity.
10. **Victim/Caretaker** – People are still suffering from the generational impact of previous oppression. Therefore, they continue to deserve compensation from society and the dominant culture.

A few hot buttons

- **Speaks a language other than English in the workplace.**
- **Speaks English with a strong “foreign” accent.**
- **Stands too close to me during a conversation.**
- **Fails to acknowledge what I say or show understanding.**
- **Is never on time for an appointment or meeting.**
- **Does not answer questions directly.**
- **Always asks questions.**
- **Speaks very loudly.**



Ouch and Educate



Further Developing Cultural Competence

Value diversity

Cultural self-assessments

Dynamics of difference

Deep cultural knowledge

Adapt to culture differences

Our background and circumstances may have
influenced who we are,
but we are responsible for who we become.

Your Employee Assistance Program

Call toll-free or visit us on the web

24 hours a day/7 days a week

Thank you!

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