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WORKFORCE DIVERSITY: THE NEED FOR ORGANISATIONAL PARADIGM SHIFT

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Abstract: *The focus of this paper is to review the literature of workforce diversity and offer explanation for why diversity efforts are not fulfilling their promise in most organisations today and present a fresh paradigm through which organisations can understand and leverage the diversity that exists in their domain for the organisations benefit. This review paper elucidates the questions of what is workforce diversity. Why should an organisation concern itself with diversity? What is workforce diversity management? What perspectives have guided diversity till date? How should organisations see workforce diversity? What are the benefits of workforce diversity in organisations? What can management do to enhance work force diversity in organisations? What are the disadvantages of workforce diversity? These questions and many more would be the main purpose of this paper!*

Key words: Workforce diversity, diversity Management, paradigm shift, organization,

Introduction

Human diversity has existed throughout the world from the beginning of time. Ethnic, cultural and racial differences could be readily found between tribes and other groups of people across the continents before recorded history (Arredondo, 1996). Throughout all centuries, civilizations have included people who are different from one another by virtue of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, class and physical ability.

Today's workplaces are not different either. Workforce are becoming increasingly diverse due to globalization, internationalization and changing demographics. As borders shrink and populations grow, migration and immigration are causing local, national and international shifts in demographics.

Worldwide, people are on the move and with advanced transportation methods, increased work opportunities and accelerated processing times many people are coming to Canada (Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, 2011). Lured by prospects of peace, prosperity or education, people from many parts of the world are immigrating and starting new lives for themselves and their families. To survive in today's cut throat competitive world, organizations have to hire an effective and efficient workforce that can handle such competitive environment. As the forces of globalization spread around the world, employing varied workforce is now of essence to every organization. Only organizations that employ quality and competitive workforce regardless of their age, attitude, education,

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ethnicity, perception, language, gender, culture, sex, religion, experience, professional qualification etc. can compete. Diversity is mandatory to sustain economic growth, for a country, a sector or even a company.

According to Forbes Insight (2011), today, workforce diversity is a necessity for almost all companies. Executives understand that their companies can't be successful on a global platform if they don't have a diverse and inclusive workforce. It is necessary to drive innovation, foster creativity, and guide business strategies. Multiple voices lead to new ideas, new services, and new products, and encourage out-of-the box thinking. Companies no longer view diversity and inclusion efforts as separate from their other business practices, and recognize that a diverse workforce can differentiate them from their competitors and help capture new clients.

The workforce is the key player in any organisation. In fact, there is no driver of the organisation apart from the employees. Capital and physical resources, by themselves, cannot improve efficiency or contribute to an increased rate of return on investment. This is because it is through the combined and concerted efforts of the workforce that monetary or material resources are harnessed to promote and achieve organizational goals. In view of the foregoing, workplace diversity unlike before has been paid more attention by managers and academic researchers.

Research has shown that the positive aspects or transformation expected from a diverse workforce are not really been felt. This is because organisations leadership believes the basic assumption that workforce diversity is synonymous with increasing ethnic, home, gender, or class representation, in other words, recruiting and retaining more people from usually underrepresented groups. This line of thinking inhibits organizational effectiveness. Workforce diversity goes beyond increasing the number of different identity-group affiliations on the payroll to recognizing that such an effort is merely the first step in managing a diverse workforce for the organization's utmost benefit. According to (Harvard Business Review, 1996), men, women, boys, girls, Africans, Arabs, Indians etc. these and those outside bring different, important, and competitively relevant knowledge and perspectives about how to actually do work—how to design processes, reach goals, frame tasks, create effective teams, communicate ideas, and lead. When allowed to, they can help organisations grow and improve by challenging basic

assumptions about an organization's functions, strategies, operations, practices, and procedures. By doing this, they are able to bring more of their whole selves to the workplace and identify more fully with the work they do, setting in motion a virtuous circle. From the above, we can deduce that it is only when companies start thinking about diversity as providing fresh and meaningful approaches to work and stop assuming that diversity relates simply to how a person looks or where he or she comes from, will they be able to reap the full benefits of a diverse workforce.

Consequently, the goal of this review paper is to address the questions of what is workforce diversity. Why should an organisation concern itself with diversity? How to best manage workplace diversity, what perspectives have guided the way organisations see diversity till date? How organisations should see workforce diversity? What are the benefits of workforce diversity in organisations? What can management do to enhance work force diversity in organisations? What are the disadvantages of workforce diversity and the role of organizational leadership in creating and supporting successful diversity initiatives? Using concepts of workforce diversity, this review will analyze benefits and opportunities of diversity in the workplace, strategies or best practices for managing a diverse workforce.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

In the literature, many researchers draw on three main theories on workforce diversity and its effects on teams as well as employee performance, this include: social identification and categorization theory, similarity and attraction and information and decision making, (Williams and O'Reilly 1998). The first two theories focus on the emergence of subgroups within the team. These subgroups are either defined by salient social categories like age or gender, or they consist of team members who are perceived to be similar on dimensions such as interest or attitudes. According to social identification and categorization and similarity and attraction theories, diversity in teams leads to decreased communication within-work groups impacting negatively on organization's performance. In contrast, the information and decision making theory overrides the above by predicting a positive effect of diversity on performance, because the decision making process is based on a larger information set. Overall, the



impact of diversity on performance depends on the relative strength of the effects described by these theories.

Social Identification and Categorization Theory

Social category diversity is defined as differences in social category membership. It can arise, for example, if team members differ in terms of gender or age or if they belong to different ethnic groups, Jackson (1992). These differences can lead to lower levels of cohesiveness and a lower level of satisfaction within the team. If teams fail to manage these disagreements, relationship-oriented conflicts arise with negative effects on performance, (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; Tjosvold et al 2003).

According to social Identity theory, people develop personal identity based on part of the categories to which they themselves belong (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995). In effect people stereotype themselves by attributing to themselves the attitudes, behaviors and other attributes they associate with membership in a particular group. The process of seeing oneself as a member of a group is described as self-categorization (Kulik& Bainbridge 2006).

Similarity and Attraction Theory

The similarity and attraction stream of research is predicated on the notion that similarity in attributes, particularly demographic variables, increases interpersonal attraction and liking. Individuals with similar backgrounds may find that they have more in common with each other than with others from different backgrounds, making it more comfortable for them to work together and collaborate toward producing a product or solving a problem. Similarity allows one to have his or her values and ideas reinforced, whereas dissimilarity causes one to question his or her values and ideas, a process that is likely to be unsettling. Research has shown that in a situation where an individual has the opportunity to interact with one of a number of different people, he or she is most likely to select a person who is similar (Berman, et al, 2001; Cassel 2001).

Information and Decision-Making Theory

The stream of research on information and decision-making in groups is predicated on the notion that the composition of the work group will affect how the group processes information, communicates, and makes decisions (Greenfield et al., 1996; Wittenbaum&Stasser, 1996). One might expect, given the orientation of the first two theories of group interaction, that this theory would also predict a negative relationship between diversity and outcomes. If theories of social identification and

categorization and similarity and attraction theory tend to argue that diversity will cause breakdowns in collaboration and communication, then it would seem to follow that diversity would also cause problems in information generation and decision-making.

However, the literature on information and decision-making in groups tends to show that, for these two specific functions (producing information and making decisions), the faulty processes that result from high levels of heterogeneity are overcome by benefits gained from more creativity, a larger number of ideas, and a larger pool of knowledge (Tziner& Eden, 1985). Research has shown that, even in situations where diversity has a clearly negative impact on work processes, the increase in information available to the group that comes from diversity is enough to offset process problems (Ancona& Caldwell, 1992; Jehn et al., 1997; Zenger & Lawrence, 1989). The idea that diversity brings a number of new perspectives to the table, making it possible for an organization to be more effective, has served as the basis for a number of claims that diversity is a strength and resource for organizations (Adler, 2003; Dobbs, 1998; Thomas, 1990).

Workforce Diversity

Workforce diversity is not a matter for debate, it is a fact. It presents one of the greatest challenges facing organisations today. There seem to be no real consent as to the answer of what diversity is. This is because everyone seems to have an opinion. For some, diversity refers to racial, ethnic and gender differences and for others it includes a much broader scope of differences among people, for example religion, social class and age (Harvey & Allard, 2002). The definition can be enlarged to accommodate sexual orientation, physical abilities, communication and learning style etc. (Sonnenschien, 1997).

On the basis of above statement, Loden, (1996), in his dimensions of diversity model, defined and distinguished individuals from each other both in terms of primary dimensions such as age, race, gender (core characteristics that do not change) and in terms of secondary characteristics such as education, religion and communication style that can change. Workplace diversity can be defined as the physical characteristics, family status, cultural differences, disabilities and a variation of the academic abilities possessed by different individuals who live and work together. Other scholarly works define workforce diversity as the ability of



individuals to work together and tolerate the differences found in other individuals due to education, skill, economic and social status (Pendry, 2007). According to Carrell (2006) defines workforce diversity as the variety of ways in which people differ and consequently affect a task or relationship within an organization such as age, gender, race, education, religion and culture.

Dimensions of Workforce Diversity

At the heart of the diversity are nine broad diversity dimensions amongst others viz: Age, Gender, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Race, Ethnicity, Class, Disability, and Nationality

Age

Ageism is discrimination and stereotyping based on age. Although people of all ages are susceptible to unfair practices and social policies that shape behaviors, people who are 65 years of age and older are most affected. In most countries, youth and youthful beauty are highly valued over the age of 65-plus citizens (also known as "senior citizens"). It is not only difficult for older people to find or keep jobs, but they are often ignored and, if ill or fragile, subject to abuse and neglect. These vulnerable populations should not be viewed as less worthy members of society rather as people who have valuable experience and knowledge to contribute to society.

Gender

The social constructs of our male-dominated society have created inequality within the sexes. Socially constructed gender roles give advantage to males, ensuring their needs and desires to be primary and providing them greater access to, and control over, societal resources, such as money, status, legal rights. For example, in the U.S., men generally receive better wages or salaries than women, even when they perform the same or similar jobs. Globally, women often lack basic human rights: they do not have access to the economic, education, health, or political systems. The United Nations Population Fund reports "worldwide, women are twice as likely as men to be illiterate

Religion

Diversity in religion has been an issue throughout the ages. Wars have been waged and people have been persecuted because of religious beliefs. Cultures are often founded on and shaped by religious doctrine. Religious principles can influence every aspect of a person's life --from what they eat, who they choose to marry, and how they are treated in death. While the world is filled

with different systems of faith, each ideology is a philosophy concerned with the cause, purpose, and ethics of human existence. According to statistics, there are thousands of different belief systems practiced in the world today.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is often confused with sexual preference. While they both refer to a pattern of sexual attraction, preference indicates a choice, but orientation is an involuntary disposition toward heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and Androgyny/Asexual (LGBTQIA) individuals are people who differ from our socially constructed system of feminine and masculine. Because the feminine/masculine gender system is the dominant pattern, there is a strong social bias against people outside of this system.

Race

Race is a convenient means by which people are grouped and identified based on geographic origins and physical attributes, such as skin color, hair texture, and facial shape. In fact, race is purely a social construct and does not have any biological significance. Nevertheless, the racial grouping of people by these characteristics has become a worldwide phenomenon and access to societal advantages depends upon a group's standing in a socially constructed racial hierarchy. Inequalities within education, health care, employment, criminal justice, and politics are based on this racial hierarchy, which results in people at the bottom end of the hierarchy being the poorest, sickest, and most under-educated populations worldwide

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a group identity based on cultural traditions and rituals, ancestry and heritage, and/or religious beliefs. In many cases physical or cultural traits such as, customary dress, dialect, and religious practices will separate a group of people into different ethnic groups. An ethnic distinction may cross national borders and is often identified as a minority group within a larger national context.

Class

Social class is a hierarchical system predicated on economic status. Three general categories of lower, middle, and upper class are used. While social mobility is possible with access to employment, education, and fair opportunities, today the lower and middle classes are becoming poorer while the upper class is



smaller and growing more wealthy. This growing population consists of the most vulnerable citizens in our society; children, the elderly, women, individuals with disabilities, and people of racial/ethnic minority backgrounds. A person's class, or socio-economic status, is a determinant in their predisposition to homelessness, hunger, lack of education, unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual exploitation, and crime.

Disability

According to the U.S. Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), "disability" is defined as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity." A disability may be present from birth, or occur during a person's lifetime. As an umbrella term, disability includes impairments (a problem in body function or structure), activity limitations (a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action), and participation restrictions (a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations). Because a person may experience a combination of these conditions, living with a disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

Nationality

National identity is determined by an individual's citizenship or their country of origin regardless of where they currently reside. Nationality is a membership that can include people of different races, religions, and cultures, such as Nigerian citizens. Nationality is among the strongest forms of group identity, and can embody a sense of pride, patriotism, and sentiment for one's national history and values. Around the world discrimination based on nationality ranges from unfair treatment to physical abuse, imprisonment, or even murder.

Organization is a network of people who work together to achieve some common objective. It can be viewed as an ordering of relationships. It consists of members accustomed to obedience: an administrative staff that holds itself at the disposal of the masters; and the masters themselves, who hold power to command, not derived from a grant of power by others. Its rules regulate the possession and scope of authority in the organisation. Organisations differ in many ways, most are not even in the same industry but they are united by one similarity: diverse workforce! Now, if this network has some loopholes, then it would be very difficult to achieve its objectives effectively. One way through

which this loophole can arise is the way organisations view and handles its diverse workforce.

The positive aspects of a more diverse workforce far outweigh the disadvantages. According to (Harvard Business Review, 1996) some of these benefits amongst others include increased profitability, increased organizational effectiveness, productivity, learning, creativity, flexibility, organizational and individual growth, increased access to new segments of the marketplace, and the ability of a company to adjust rapidly and successfully to market changes. These are some of the advantages but organisations do not seem to feel these impact or transformation. The main undoing of diversity in the workplace is increase in conflicts. According to White (1999), these conflicts arise largely due to ignorance, prejudice feelings or derogatory comments that cause lack of acceptance. These lead to negative dynamics such as ethnocentrism, stereotyping, cultural or gender clashes with the feeling of being superior to others. If management ignores such conflicts; the company performance may suffer (Otike&Mwalekwa, 2005). Also, there is an increase in the cost of training. This increase comes from costs associated with seminars, programs and lectures given to promote diversity in the corporation. These types of training are given to all levels of staff within the organization. They teach employees how to accept the personalities and ideas or thoughts of others.

They also teach one how to deal with conflicts and prejudice in a professional and civil manner (White, 1999). The most common conflict comes from one feeling superior. If management ignores such conflicts, the company's performance may suffer. If conflicts can be managed and controlled, creativity and performance can be increased. Employers will work harder to gain acceptance by creating a solution or invention first. This can be the case when managers reconcile competing goals, promote in a representative manner, stand behind the minority group member, and act when resources are plentiful and cultural differences are low or well understood (White, 1999). Conflicts always arise wherever they are human beings' but they should be managed properly for the benefit of the organization. Increases in labour turnover and absenteeism are another disadvantage in having a diverse workplace

It is on record, that while many organizations have embraced diversity, others still consider it merely an issue of compliance with legal requirements. A firm with a diverse workforce could



argue that they are not guilty based on the face value of their workforce demographics representing the demographics of the local community. This ought not to be so. This flawed and underlying assumption has to go and be replaced with a broader understanding. There is the need for a paradigm shift in the attitudes and behaviors of organizations leadership in the way they view workforce diversity

Managing Workforce Diversity

Managing diversity is a strategic effort, and allows companies to take advantage of the economic, creative and innovative advantages that diversity brings. It is a strategy used by many organizations seeking to create a working environment that allows employees to reach their full potential as they pursue organizational objectives (Thomas, 1990). This type of management is an ongoing, systemic and planned commitment on the part of the organization to recruit and retain employees with diverse experiences and skills (Basset-Jones, 2005).

Cox (1993), in his elaborated work on diversity in organizations explains the importance of managing diversity in workplace. According to him, diversity itself does not automatically have positive effects. It must rather be managed effectively to improve organizational effectiveness. Cox defines the goals of diversity management and discusses the importance of managing diversity in the organizations. He identifies the importance of planning and implementing organizational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximized while the potential disadvantages are minimized. He uses the term diversity climate to define collectively the influence of individual, group and organizational factors that supports diversity in an organization.

Diversity management is a process that “involves creating a positive environment where employee’s attitudes and behaviours are altered through training and awareness” (Ewoh, 2013,). This commitment moves beyond the economic benefits of diversity, and into the realm of social responsibility. Addressing social responsibility and enhancing organizational performance can both be achieved by effectively managing cultural diversity. This strategy involves helping individuals reach their full potential and ensuring quality of life for all members of an organization (Doherty and Chelladurai, 1999).

Organizations that champion diversity provide leadership and social responsibility such as mentoring, succession planning,

family friendly programs, flexible work arrangement, training and accountability (Sabharwal, 2014). Organizational leaders must be the drivers behind effective management of diversity, and must establish safe and positive environments for educating diverse work groups towards respect and acceptance of diversity. Managing diversity includes the recognition that diversity is valuable, and that yielding that value involves both employers and employees establishing inclusive behaviours, processes, and cultures (Stewart, Crary and Humberd 2008).

From a management perspective, valuing collaboration and inclusion benefits all. When work is organized in this way, employees at various levels participate in decision-making forums where the different backgrounds, experiences, and different perspectives are understood to enhance the productive potential of teams. As employees engage in diverse social activities and language practices, workplace culture and a valuing of difference are seen as the basis for employee motivation, public image and organizational effectiveness (Solomon, N. 2001).

Diversity issues are now considered important and are projected to become even more important in the future due to increasing differences in the population of many countries. The increasing globalization and rapidly changing organizational structures accelerated the development of managing a diverse workforce. More and more organisations are entering joint ventures with organisations in other countries, setting up branches and factories and even buying companies. Managing such global companies necessitates knowing something about the character and values of the host or partner countries. Managing diversity in the workplace should be the concern of every organization. In order to survive, a company needs to be able to manage and utilize its diverse workplace effectively. It should be a part of the culture of the entire organization (Anderson, 2012).

Each individual is different from each other because of their different religion, educational background to which they belong, age and the perception. When different types of people in terms of thinking, perception, generation come together to work at the same place then definitely a situation may come where all these different types of people may not agree at the same point. At that point of time, it is going to affect the interpersonal relationship among people. Cordial interpersonal relationship among the employees is one of the major ingredients for smooth functioning of an organization. Rationales for diversity management abound.



Some authors evoke a competitive argument, stating that organizations need diversity management to maintain a competitive edge. Gilbert and Stead (1999) argue that this is because so many new hires in the years to come will be women and racial minorities. This effect is further intensified by the group work demanded by the flatter structures common to contemporary organizations (Schneider & Northcraft, 1999). Such discussions often refer to Cox and Blake's (1991) "six benefits to organizations". A variant on the competitive argument is the strategic approach, which proposes that organizations need to design a strategy based upon the way in which diversity affects its competitive edge (Soni, 2000). Another rationale for diversity management is based on ethical concepts such as the golden rule, the disclosure rule, the rights approach, and the valuing approach (Dobbs, 1998; Gilbert, et al., 1999). According to Stoner & Russel-Chapin (1997) to manage diversity is to deal with the process of creating organizational culture in which workforce differences are understood and valued and each individual has the opportunity to be fully utilized. It is concerned with establishing a new framework and approach, in which a new set of core values governing the role of individual difference can be developed, i.e. a refocusing and reorientation of organizational culture. Cox (1994) used a different explanation for managing a diverse workforce: planning and implementing organizational systems and practices to manage people so that the potential advantages of diversity are maximized while the potential disadvantages are minimized.

Managing diversity prescribes approaches that are philosophically broad enough to encompass all dimensions of diversity. It also emphasizes managerial skills and policies needed to optimize and emphasize every employee's contribution to the organizational goals. Furthermore, diversity management refers to a strategic organizational approach to workforce diversity management, organizational culture change and empowerment of the workforce. It represents a shift away from activities and assumptions defined by affirmative action to management practices that are inclusive, reflecting the workforce diversity and its potential. It is a pragmatic approach, in which participants anticipate and plan for change, do not fear human differences or perceive them as a threat and view the workplace as a forum for individuals' growth and change skills and performance with direct cost benefits to the organisation (Arrendo, 1996).

Henderson, (1994). Leach, George, Jackson, and LaBella (1995) used the term "working with diversity" in place of "managing diversity." They implied that working with diversity calls forth the challenge to be curious, inquire, interact, reflect, and experiment. It requires individuals to be respectful, curious, patient, and willing to learn. Workforce diversity is a demographic phenomenon playing upon not only to the local organizations but also multinational corporations and institutions in other countries around the world (Morosini 1998). Increases in competition and demographic changes have convinced many business leaders that diversity should be an essential part of their business strategy (Carnevale & Stone, 1995). According to Loden and Rosener (1991), leading-edge organizations have numerous unique efforts under way to deal with their diverse workforce. Some common practices that distinguish these organizations from others include diversity linked to strategic vision; systems and procedures that support diversity; ongoing monitoring of personnel recruitment, promotion, and development; organizational commitment to technical. This review paper so far elucidates workforce diversity, the advantages and limitations it holds for a company, its dimensions of culture, age, ethnicity and workforce diversity management. As we proceed, we will look at the theoretical review, the concept of workforce diversity, perspective from which organisations today view workforce diversity and the need for a paradigm shift

Perspectives from Which Organizations See Diversity Today

It is on record, that many organizations that have embraced diversity have only done so on the surface level, they still consider it merely an issue of compliance with legal requirements. A firm with a heterogeneous workforce could argue that they are not guilty based on the face value of their workforce demographics representing the demographics of the local community. Organisations leadership believes the basic assumption that workforce diversity is synonymous with increasing ethnic, home, gender, or class representation, in other words, recruiting and retaining more people from usually underrepresented identity groups. This flawed and underlying assumption needs to be replaced with a broader understanding. The above illustration also known as the 'compliance with legal requirements' paradigm is one common way through which companies have approached workforce diversity initiative till date. When upper management views diversity only from the point of view of mandated



requirement rather than an economic incentive, then all investment in promoting diversity becomes expenditure and acts as a fixed cost rather than a return on investment. Two major problems arise from this: The first being that some group feel excluded which breeds bad employee morale and encourages the notion that diversity is a new, politically correct term for special treatment (Roberts, Evan 2011). This resistance is destructive to the firm's homogenous work culture as diversity initiatives are supposed to set out to unify employees with different backgrounds.

Secondly, framing a diversity initiative only in terms of legal or regulatory compliance tends to focus the firm's attention improperly. Instead of combating institutional racism and sexism or maximizing employee output, equating the plan to legal guidelines signals that the firm is only interested in meeting a metric objective associated with hiring or retaining diverse people. These policies only intensify division within the company and need to be addressed first and foremost before any progress can be made. This paradigm is the most used. Most organizations take this route and usually focus on equal opportunity, fair treatment, recruitment, and compliance with the law of the land. The thinking here is that certain demographic groups have been treated unfairly e.g. when it comes to recruitment or promotion or occupying certain positions. To redress this, and in an attempt to be fair and to be seen to comply with the employment law, a reorganization takes place within the company to reflect that of society. Under this model, progress in diversity is measured by its recruitment and retention goals rather than by how well organizations allow employees to draw on their personal assets to effectively perform their task.

Some advantages of this paradigm are that, it tends to increase demographic diversity in the workplace and ultimately succeeds in promoting fair treatment. One significant disadvantage is that it is not desirable for diversification of the workforce to influence the organizations work or culture. Again, its color blind, gender blind idea is to some extent built on the assumption that we are all the same with its emphasis on equal treatment; it puts pressure on employees to make sure that important differences among them do not count.

Unlike the above perspective which is adopted as a result of social or legal mandate, the 'access and legitimacy perspective' is usually adopted in organisations by choice. An organization needs

a demographically diverse workforce to help it gain access to segregated segments. They need employees with multilingual skills to understand and serve the customers better and to gain legitimacy with them. The access and legitimacy paradigm is predicated on the acceptance and celebration of differences. It works by matching the demographics of the organization to those of critical consumer or constituent groups. More often than not, the effort has led to substantial increases in organizational diversity. Many consumer-products companies that have used market segmentation based on gender, racial, and other demographic differences have also frequently created dedicated marketing positions for each segment.

This perspective promotes greater diversity in the workplace. We see this in the hospitality and service industries where we see a high percentage of diverse workforces, accommodating a diverse customer base. According to Harvey and Allard, 1995 - the access and legitimacy perspective is likely to be associated with an accommodative strategic response. Rather than tolerate diversity until people can be assimilated, this perspective promotes greater diversity in the workplace. They advocate that organisations with an accommodative response are likely to reflect a higher level of diversity and inclusion than those with a defensive one. They outline that the perspective may often be guided by demographic pressures.

This paradigm has therefore led to new professional and managerial opportunities for women and people of color. One characteristic of organizations that have successfully used the access-and legitimacy paradigm to increase their demographic diversity is that such companies almost always operate in a business environment where there is increased diversity among customers, clients, or the labor pool. Again, this paradigm has its strengths. Its market based motivation and the potential for competitive advantage that it suggests are often qualities an entire company can understand and therefore support. This paradigm is perhaps more notable for its limitations. Companies that have adopted this model tend to emphasize the role of cultural differences in a company without really analyzing those differences to see how they actually affect the work that is done. Whereas 'compliance with legal requirements' leaders are too quick to subvert differences in the interest of preserving harmony, access-and-legitimacy leaders are too quick to push staff with niche capabilities into differentiated pigeonholes without trying to



understand what those capabilities really are and how they could be integrated into the Company's mainstream work. Having outlined the two perspectives from which organisations currently see workforce diversity, we also take a peep at the limitations of the previous paradigms that has given reasons or caused the need for a paradigm shift.

The Need for A Paradigm Shift: Emerging Paradigm

While the 'compliance with legal requirements' paradigm is organized around the theme of accommodation in which the aim is to achieve a demographically representative workforce whose members treat one another exactly the same, the access-and legitimacy paradigm can be regarded as uniting around an almost opposite concept: differentiation, in which the objective is to place different people where their demographic characteristics match those of important constituents and markets. Unfortunately, these two approaches and diversity efforts put into them have not delivered on organizational effectiveness. Rather, efforts to increase diversity in the workplace have rebounded, sometimes even heightening conflict in the workplace. According to David et al (1996) this is because organisations assume that workplace diversity is all about recruiting and retaining more people from underrepresented identity groups. Armed with this commonly held assumption as a starting point, they set out six years ago to investigate its link to organizational effectiveness. They found out that thinking of diversity simply in terms of identitygroup representation inhibited effectiveness.

Some noticeable limitations of the 'compliance with legal requirements' and the access-and legitimacy paradigms are: The color-blind, gender-blind ideal is to some degree built on the implicit assumption that "we are all the same" is not desirable for diversification of the workforce to influence the organization's work or culture. An organisation should be able to operate as if every person were of the same race, gender, and nationality. Managers should explore how people's differences generate a potential diversity of effective ways of working, leading, viewing the market, managing people, and learning. Secondly, the two approaches puts pressure on employees to make sure that important differences among them do not count. Genuine disagreements about work definition are sometimes wrongly interpreted especially when honest disagreements are accompanied by tense debate. Thirdly, workplace approaches should be able to channel organizational thinking in powerful

ways. However, by limiting the ability of employees to acknowledge openly their work-related but culturally based differences, the paradigms weakens the organization's capacity to learn about and improve its own strategies, processes, and practices. And it also keeps people from identifying strongly and personally with their work. Fourthly, in their pursuit of niche markets, the paradigms tend to emphasize the role of cultural differences in a company without really analyzing those differences to see how they actually affect the work that is done. And finally, leaders under these paradigms are too quick to push staff with niche capabilities into differentiated cubicles without trying to understand what those capabilities really are and how they could be integrated into the company's mainstream work. These enumerated limitations and many others are the reasons why these paradigms have not delivered or fulfilled their promise. The evolving model known as the learning and the effectiveness approach is actually not a new paradigm but has been around for a while now. It incorporates aspects of the first two paradigms but goes beyond them to connecting diversity to aspect of work. In contrast to previous models, organizes itself around the all-encompassing theme of integration. . According to David & Ely (1996), this new model surpasses both. Like the fairness paradigm, it promotes equal opportunity for all individuals. And like the access paradigm, it acknowledges cultural differences among people and recognizes the value in those differences. Nevertheless, it lets the organization internalize differences among employees so that it learns and grows. This perspective on diversity involves three characteristics that distinguish it from the other two perspectives. It sees similarities and differences as dual aspects of workforce diversity. It seeks multiple objectives from diversity, including efficiency, innovation, customer satisfaction, employee development and social responsibility. It views diversity as having long-term as well as short-term ramifications. This perspective encourages legal compliance and training but also encourages active participation in finding better and more efficient ways of compliance beyond those legally mandated. Its emphasis on unity-in-diversity may be described as multiculturalism. Organisations taking this approach adopt diversity policies that nurture equality and diversity, addressing core issues of race, ethnicity and gender. It also recognizes the important role of conflict and debate in creating a common sense of vision and beliefs within the organisation. The pressures for



diversity range in intensity, and can vary and even conflict (Harvey and Allard, 1995). Though the benefits of this new model includes increased profitability, it goes beyond financial measures to encompass learning, creativity, flexibility, organizational and individual growth, and the ability of a company to adjust rapidly and successfully to market changes. Some companies have developed an outlook on diversity that enables them to incorporate employees' perspectives into the main work of the organization and to enhance work by rethinking primary tasks and redefining markets, products, strategies, missions, business practices, and even cultures. Such companies are using the learning-and-effectiveness paradigm for managing diversity and, by doing so, are tapping diversity's true benefits.

According to Harvard Business Review (1996), unless organizations that are currently in the grip of the other two paradigms can revise their view of diversity so as to avoid cognitive blind spots, opportunities will be missed, tensions will most likely be misdiagnosed, and companies will continue to find the potential benefits of diversity elusive. Hence the question arises: What is it about the law firm of Dewey & Levin and other emerging third-paradigm companies that enable them to make the most of their diversity? Our research suggests that there are eight preconditions that help to position organizations to use identity-group differences in the service of organizational learning, growth, and renewal.

Conclusion

Our world of work is changing, including how we learn at work and the role of organizational leaders in creating inclusive environments that capitalize on individual strengths. There are many guidelines and suggestions for effective diversity management, and organizations that plan for diversity as well as recruit, train and motivate their work teams will place themselves advantageously to gain economic, managerial, social and educational returns on their diversity investment. Integrating these perspectives will allow companies to realize the range of benefits and opportunities that diversity brings and provide a fuller understanding of such an important and timely issue.

We have described the two of the most prevailing angles toward diversity and some of their advantages and limitations, together with an emerging new context for understanding and managing diversity. Accordingly, the emerging new context i.e. the learning-and-effectiveness paradigm is indeed, still in an evolving

phase and only few organisations are trying to exemplify it. Accordingly, a shift toward this paradigm requires a high-level commitment to learning more about the environment, structure, and tasks of one's organization, and giving improvement-generating change greater priority. This will definitely not be an easy challenge, but unless organizations take this step, any diversity initiative will fall short of fulfilling its rich promise.

Recommendations

Building and sustaining a diverse workforce is not the responsibility of one person in an organization, but rather a shared responsibility. Therefore for diversity to deliver on its promise, the followings must be put in place viz:

- Management has to lead by example by making a definite commitment to diversity.
- Management must continuously push for effective policy reforms and periodically reevaluate existing policies to ensure their effectiveness. After all, if diversity isn't impacting a company's bottom line then why do it.
- Few things are faster at killing a shift to a new way of thinking about diversity than feelings of broken trust. Therefore, managers of organizations that are successfully shifting to the learning-and-effectiveness paradigm must take one more step at a time. They make sure their organizations remain "safe" places for employees to be themselves.
- Managers recognize that tensions naturally arise as an organization begins to make room for changes. They should start by experimenting with process and product ideas, and learn to reappraise their mission in light of suggestions from newly empowered constituents in the company.

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