

**BUILDING A DIVERSE AND
INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE**

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



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Defining Diversity

Diversity

The Oxford English Dictionary defines diversity as “A diverse range; a variety.”

If you look around this room, you will see a diverse range of people; after all, we’re all individuals with unique qualities.

Diversity is about more than just differences, it is about recognizing those differences, accepting them, and allowing them to change our perceptions.

A person’s primary dimensions of diversity are described as core because they exert an important impact on our early socialization and a powerful, sustained impact through every state of life. These six dimensions represent the core of our diverse identities:

- **Age**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Gender**
- **Mental/physical abilities and characteristics**
- **Race**
- **Sexual Orientation**

For some individuals there may be a seventh and even an eight dimensions of diversity included in the core: i.e. religion is a core difference for some of us, but not for all.

In defining core dimensions it is the immutability and sustained power that certain dimensions exert throughout life that separates them from other important secondary dimensions.

Beyond the six core dimensions, there are many secondary dimensions that play an important role in shaping our values, expectations, and experiences as well. These include:

- **Communication style**
- **Education**
- **Family status**
- **Military experience**
- **Organizational role and level**
- **Religion**
- **First language**

- **Geographic location**
- **Income**
- **Work experience**
- **Work style**

Like core dimensions, these secondary dimensions share certain characteristics. Generally they are more mutable, and less visible to others. They also vary in the degree of influence they exert on our individual lives.

Many of these secondary dimensions contain an element of control or choice. Because we acquire, discard, and modify these dimensions, their power is less constant and more individualized than is true of our core dimensions.

The Diversity Wheel illustrates both the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity that exert an impact on us in the workplace as well as in society.

While each dimension adds a layer of complexity, it is the dynamic interaction among all of the dimensions that influences one's self-image, values, opportunities, and expectations.

Together the primary and secondary dimensions give definition and meaning to our lives by contributing to a synergistic, integrated whole – the diverse person!

Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity is the variety of human societies or cultures in a specific region, or in the world as a whole.

Cultural Diversity includes:

- Language
- Race
- Ethnic background
- Country or region or origin
- Dress
- Values
- Religion and associated practices
- Social and community responsibilities
- Sexuality
- Disability
- Notions of family
- Family responsibilities
- Political views

“We need to understand diversity as more than skin colour. Cultural differences have more of an impact. Inclusion needs to incorporate these differences, not assimilate them into a system where there is diversity of faces, but not different ideas and perspectives.” Statement from the Corporate Knights Board Diversity Roundtable Participants. January 2010

A person’s culture determines his/her:

- **Beliefs** – about how the world works and how people should interact
- **Behaviours** – including gestures, use of eye contact, facial expressions, manner of dress, and rituals for greetings
- **Values** – what is considered important, such as family or personal life, career, religion, and social responsibility

We learn culture from many different sources using different methods, all of which are culturally driven, whether we learn this information when we are children, or now as adults, formally or informally. Some sources of culture include:

- Parents
- Family members
- Neighbourhood and community members
- Educational institutions
- Social institutions
- Religious situations
- The media
- Written documentation
- Observation of others in our own culture
- Historic legends and stories

These cultural forces influence virtually everything we do. They help us form our beliefs, thoughts, and how we act as individuals and as members of a group. Yet, we rarely think about these influences.

How often do you think each day about the language you speak, the actions you take, the material items you value, or your attitude towards others?

If you are like most people, not very often.

Yet when we come into contact with a person or group of people from a different culture, we are often reminded – sometimes even shocked into awareness – by our own values, beliefs, and likes or dislikes.

When we have this reaction, we are commonly experiencing an emotional cultural barrier, so that we are interpreting a behaviour from our own cultural lens, while the other person is acting out of his or her own cultural framework.

Culture can be defined not only at a national level, but also at the regional, organizational, or group level. For example, people working in a large banking environment may have a significantly different culture than a group of people working at a software development company.

Therefore, culture can also be described as beliefs, behaviours, and values held collectively within a group, organization, region, or nation.

Canada's Best Diversity Employers

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Canada's Best Diversity Employers recognizes employers across Canada that have exceptional workplace diversity and inclusiveness programs. This annual competition is sponsored by BMO Financial Group and the diversity consulting firm TWI Inc. Applications are reviewed by Mediacorp Canada Inc. and TWI Inc. and the top companies are featured in Mediacorp's newspapers and partner magazines across the country.

The competition examines a range of diversity initiatives covering five major employee groups:

- Women
- Members of visible minorities
- Persons with disabilities
- Aboriginal peoples
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered/Transexual (LGBT) peoples

You can read the editors' Reasons for Selection, together with TWI's scores for each employer by clicking the names of the winning employers on the website www.canadastop100.com/diversity/. All of the winners for 2010 are listed on this website.

This small sample of winners was chosen as Canada's Best Diversity Employers for 2010, for the following reasons:

Royal Bank of Canada

- Maintains a diversity leadership council that meets four times per year to review the bank's diversity initiatives
- Recruits disabled and Aboriginal employees through a special diversity recruitment program
- Provides paid internships to disabled individuals through the Ability Edge program
- Operates employee resource groups for Aboriginal, LGBT, disabled and visible minority employees

Toronto Police Service

- Established a Diversity Management Unit to oversee their diversity policy and procedures, and diversity management and training programs
- Created a recruiting coalition comprised of employees from Asian, Black, Somali, Jewish and LGBT groups to promote policing as a career in their communities

- Hosts women-only prep sessions, where women interested in a policing career, but unsure about the physical testing component, receive training and mentoring from women police officers
- Developed a recruitment strategy to hire from underrepresented groups and regularly attends job fairs, community events and other functions to recruit new officers from the city of Toronto's various cultural and ethnic groups
- Recently reviewed their promotional process to ensure it was equitable and accessible for women, visible minorities, Aboriginal people, LGBT employees and persons with disabilities

Ontario Public Service

- Released a formal three-year diversity strategic plan in 2009, with the goal of integrating diversity into all OPS programs, policies and services, and representing Ontario's population at all levels of their workforce.
- Provides nine-month internships to disabled jobseekers through the "Ability Edge" organization. Interns work as recruitment assistants, sitting on interview panels and educating hiring managers on accessibility matters.
- Offers a diversity mentoring program that pairs mentors with mentees from under-represented groups in OPS management ranks, including visible minorities, LGBT employees, Aboriginal employees and persons with a disability.
- Demonstrates commitment to diversity at the highest levels, by including diversity commitments into all deputy ministers' performance plans.

As you can see, these companies and the other winners are at the **Managing Diversity** goalpost on the Diversity Continuum and are known as exceptional workplaces.

To get there, they have had to change and they made the choice to move to an inclusive environment some time ago. This change did not happen overnight and many lessons were learned along the way. We often tell people who are being faced with change: "don't worry, don't be afraid!". This is nonsense! Inclusion is about change and change is scary!

The Five Phases of the Diversity Continuum

Cultural diversity is not new, but until the 1980s it was not considered a significant factor in the way policies and procedures were designed, nor in the way expectations were set in most organizations.

Although diversity has always existed in the labour force, organizations managed it using a one-size-fits-all approach. As such, assimilating into a corporate environment was the responsibility of every employee. In return, treating all employees the same was the responsibility of every employer and **was** considered to be fair treatment by most.

Since “awareness” of the need for cultural change first became evident, many organizations began the long journey from valuing sameness, assimilation, and a one-size-fits-all approach to employee and customer diversity towards the creation of cultures that are more flexible, open, and able to leverage the talents and perspectives of a diverse group.

As a result of increased awareness of the benefits that diversity in the workplace offers, we now see organizations at many points on the Diversity Continuum.

Some organizations have remained traditional in their outlook, using a standardized approach to managing customer and employee diversity. These organizations remain unconvinced that diversity can become a competitive advantage.

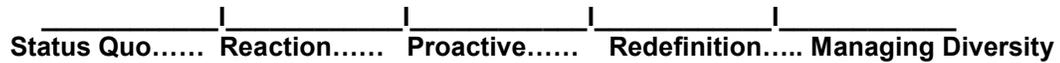
As organizations move up the continuum, diversity implementation is focused more on changes in basic norms, operating assumptions, and expectations.

Once diversity becomes a desired asset it is easy to recognize the ways in which operating assumptions and systems must change to achieve the end result.

Valuing diversity is viewed as a fundamental part of many strategic business plans – not as a stand-alone effort.

Leaders of organizations moving up the Diversity Continuum are also embarked on a personal journey. They recognize that increased knowledge of multicultural issues is critical for continued success. They seek out opportunities to expand their multicultural knowledge to become more self-aware and grow. They look for ways to mentor people different from themselves, challenge their peers to support diversity, and remain willing to take risks in order to move forward.

The Five Phases of the Diversity Continuum



1. **Status Quo** – At this phase the leadership of an organization selects employees who are similar to themselves in terms of race, culture, education, or other characteristics. The belief in these organizations is “we’ve always done it this way, and that’s OK.”
2. **Reaction** – At this phase the Human Resource Department will bring attention to any deficiencies in policies such as hiring practices or progressive discipline. The organization responds quickly by ensuring these policies are in place – but they may or may not be consistently followed.
3. **Proactive** – At this stage an organization begins to notice marked improvements in areas where diverse skills and talents are effectively assessed. The organization’s leaders decide to establish diverse teams and task forces as a conscious choice.
4. **Redefinition** – When an organization moves to this phase, the leadership is thinking about diversity efforts in concrete terms, and decides to make the diversity initiative a component of its strategic plan. The leadership realizes that having a diverse workforce becomes the right thing to do AND the smart thing to do.
5. **Managing Diversity** – The final phase of the continuum is ongoing. The leadership makes a conscious effort to recruit, develop and manage the best and the brightest – regardless of age, race, ethnicity, and so forth. Diversity efforts become an integral component of organizational systems, processes and activities. Organizations in this phase have an enviable public image and are capable of recruiting and retaining a skilled, committed workforce.

Linda Gravett, Ph.D, SPHR

Regardless of where your organization is today, it can continue to move up the continuum with the help and support of those committed to change.

Managing Change

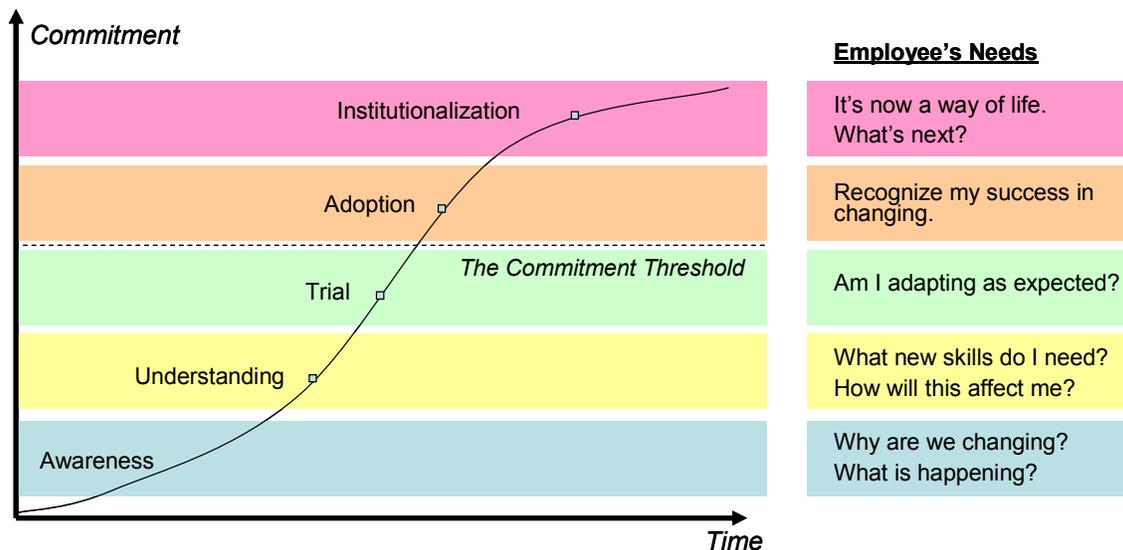
Stages of Adapting to Change

Everyone adapts to change at different rates. This is influenced by their past history in dealing with change, the training and mentoring made available to them and the effectiveness of the communications about the change that is taking place.

The most vital aspect of introducing change is recognizing that people are at different stages of commitment in the change process and because of this, they will require different forms of assistance to help them adapt.

For example, those with limited awareness of the change need a clear message of what is changing and why. Building on this awareness, they are ready to learn how the change will affect them and what is expected of them as the organization moves through the change. The next plateau of commitment can be reached as they receive feedback on how well they are adapting to the new situation.

The organization nears the tipping point of change when its critical mass reaches the commitment threshold and with the growing momentum, the changed state soon becomes a way of life for the individual and the organization.



The Leader's Role

For the Province of PEI to succeed in building an increased awareness of diversity, its senior leaders must become champions for this change.

- Communicate why Diversity is important to the Province of PEI
- Encourage individual contribution
- Model the behaviour expected from others - awareness, acceptance, etc.
- Set expectations
- Be accountable for becoming Diverse
- Help others leave their Comfort Zone
- Lead the charge of overcoming barriers to becoming a model of Diversity

Developing a Change Plan for Building a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

The most difficult stage in the change process is not initiating change as many people believe. The most challenging part, and the reason that more organizational change efforts do not work, comes during the persistence stage where the going gets tough and you look around to find out where the tough have gone.

In order to create strategic and long-term change with diversity initiatives, we must develop long-range plans be committed to following it to the desired outcomes.

- 1. THE WHAT:** Include valuing diversity as a critical part of the mission, purpose, vision, values and daily strategies of the organization. Define diversity and don't assume you are all talking about the same thing. Challenge assumptions and create dissatisfaction with the parts of the status quo that are not working to benefit ALL people.
- 2. THE WHO:** Develop a diversity strategy team to guide the change process for the next three to five years. It will take a committed and diverse group of leaders from all levels of the organization to drive this process to completion. They will decide direction, be advocates for change and diversity, listen, monitor, evaluate and adjust the plan.
- 3. THE WHY:** Determine where you are starting and where you want to end up. Get consensus on what has been accomplished so far, what the short- and long-range outcomes will be, success indicators, ways to celebrate successes and how to develop a purpose statement. Solicit as much feedback from employees and clients as you can (surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.) to determine the baseline of where you are starting and the goals and objectives people need to experience success.
- 4. THE WHERE:** After the data gathering is complete analyze it carefully with the diversity strategy team and develop into an action plan. Write out a detailed plan: action steps, rationale, people in charge of making it happen, deadlines to meet, necessary resources and inevitable obstacles. Make sure the plan is aligned with the mission, vision and values of the organization.

5. **THE HOW:** Start acting. Just do it. Implement your action plan. Remember that you will be evaluated by others on outcomes that you achieve and not just good intentions. Create a shared vision of how things can be better in the organization. Build consensus, competence and cohesion. Conduct the necessary dialogues, training and education. Communicate agendas so that others will want to buy in. Establish a learning community around the issues of diversity and encourage creativity. Celebrate small successes and keep moving, reflecting, adjusting and changing.
6. **THE NOW WHAT?** Persist, persist, persist until the action plan is accomplished and exceeded. Your baseline conditions were not developed in six months, so don't expect them to be eradicated in that amount of time. You will come up against resistance. That is a sign that your change process is working. Take a non-defensive attitude and use the resistance to education yourself. If something is not working well across the board, change it; find a better way to meet important goals. The only rule is to persist and keep learning. This is a developmental process.
7. **THE SO WHAT?** The end result of your hard work is a high-achieving learning organization. In this discrimination-free workplace, all obstacles are removed that will keep any employee from reaching their full potential. There is a climate of trust, collaboration, productivity, innovation, shared power, healthy humour and creativity. Barriers are removed and systems are in place for continuous learning and change. The effects and results are influencing the entire community through employees' families and increasingly diverse and satisfied customers.

Maggie Finefrock – The Learning Project, Kansas City

The Legal Framework

In the past ten years the workforce has changed dramatically. More than ever, a workplace is a diverse collection of individuals proud of whom they are: their gender, their sexual orientation, their religion, their ethnic background, and all the other components that make an individual unique.

Failing to embrace diversity can also have serious legal ramifications. The Human Rights Legal Framework follows the International, National, and Provincial Laws and originates with the United Nations.

APPENDIX

Human Rights Legal Framework
The Canadian Way
What is Diversity in the Workplace?

THE HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL FRAMEWORK

International:

To date, Canada has ratified six United Nations core human rights treaties. The names of these treaties and the dates Canada ratified or acceded to these treaties are as follows:

- *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR), 1976
- *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR), 1976
- *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (CERD), 1970
- *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW), 1981
- *Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (CAT), 1987
- *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), 1991

The two over-arching treaties (ICCPR and ICESCR) are known as “covenants,” while the treaties specific to certain issues or population groups are known as “conventions.”

Entering into a human rights treaty is a two-step process: first signing, then ratification. A treaty does not become legally binding until the state has ratified it. Although the power to sign international treaties is within federal jurisdiction, many of the provisions of the treaties fall within areas of provincial and territorial jurisdiction.

Canada signed a seventh convention, the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD), on May 11, 2007. Since then, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments have been working towards ratification of the CRPD. In November 2009, Prince Edward Island expressed its support for ratification. It is expected that Canada will ratify the CRPD very soon.

Canada must report periodically to UN committees on its efforts to enhance its compliance with each of the treaties it has signed. The Continuing Committee of Officials on Human Rights (CCOHR) is a federal/provincial/territorial committee of officials who each represent his or her jurisdiction for the purpose of discussing, consulting, disseminating information about, and preparing reports regarding the UN human rights conventions. At the provincial level, officials from most government departments work together to gather information for PEI’s submissions to Canada’s reports.

National:

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* came into force on April 17, 1982.

Section 15 of the *Charter* (equality rights) came into effect three years after the rest of the Charter, on April 17, 1985, to give governments time to bring their laws into line with section 15.

The *Charter* is founded on the rule of law and entrenches in the Constitution of Canada the rights and freedoms Canadians believe are necessary in a free and democratic society. It recognizes primary fundamental freedoms (e.g. freedom of expression and of association), democratic rights (e.g. the right to vote), mobility rights (e.g. the right to live anywhere in Canada), legal rights (e.g. the right to life, liberty and security of the person) and equality rights, and recognizes the multicultural heritage of Canadians. It also protects official language and minority language education rights. In addition, the provisions of section 25 guarantee the rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Provincial:

a) Legislation:

The Prince Edward Island *Human Rights Act* became law on September 11, 1976. The Act prohibits discrimination in certain areas on the basis of certain personal characteristics or "grounds". Discrimination is the unequal, stereotypical and prejudicial treatment of persons.

Under the PEI *Human Rights Act*,

"discrimination" means discrimination in relation to age, colour, creed, ethnic or national origin, family status, marital status, physical or intellectual disability, political belief, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or source of income of any individual or class of individuals.

The Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission administers and enforces the Prince Edward Island *Human Rights Act*. The Act establishes a complaint process under which the Commission has the authority to receive, investigate, attempt to settle and make rulings on complaints.

b) Policy:

The PEI Public Service Commission's Diversity and Equity Policy applies to the provincial public service. The purpose of this policy is to support an innovative and inclusive workforce which, at all levels, is representative of the diverse population it serves, and which recognizes, respects, and accommodates "diversity of individuals" as a basic human right and makes use of the full range of talents and perspectives available to the business of government.

Designated Groups recognized under this policy are the groups who have experienced employment disadvantage in the past and are currently under-represented in the workplace. These groups include, but are not limited to: Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority groups, women in leadership and management roles, and men and women in non-traditional occupations.

*Prepared by: Ellie Reddin, Director, Justice Policy Division, Office of the Attorney General and Public Safety
February 2010.*

An amendment to the Civil Services Act in 1998 states:

Article 2.1 The purpose of the Public Service Commission is:

- (a) to maintain a professional and independent civil service;
- (b) to foster the development of a public service that is representative of the province's diversity;**
- (c) to provide the public with a service which is responsive and flexible to their needs;
- (d) to foster a constructive working relationship among the Government, its employees and their representatives. 1998, c.83,s.2.

Skills Without Borders – A Brampton Board of Trade Initiative, Connecting employers and skilled immigrants.

The Canadian Way

Canadian workplace culture and cultural diversity

“Canadian diversity is increasingly recognized as an asset in both the domestic and international market and as a major contributing factor to Canadian economic prosperity” – Creative Immigration and Business Consultants Ltd. Website, (www.creative-bd.com)

Culture influences every aspect of our lives, yet many employers are unaware of this. If asked whether or not culture has a significant impact in the workplace, many will answer that it does not, based on their understanding that culture means music, literature, arts and language and that, therefore, only language (mother tongue other than English/lack of sufficient proficiency in the English language) has an impact in the Canadian workplace.

In fact, culture has a much deeper meaning and significance, impacting what we do, how we feel, how we think and act, how we communicate and interact, influencing all aspects of our lives.

Culture is learned, taught and shared by a group comprised of people from the same country of origin, ethnicity or religious background and it represents, describes and symbolizes common characteristics, behaviours and beliefs of such a group.

To a great extent culture is the lens through which we see, perceive and assess others.

And although there are differences among people from the same culture, there is no culture of one; culture is a collective concept that manifests itself with some variations among different individuals from the same background.

We, Canadians, by and large are people whose work culture points to the realization that respect for rules and regulations is critical; that attendance and punctuality are important; that respect for authority together with personal initiative and team work is essential and that performance and accountability must be observed and assessed at all times. We are polite, civil, amiable, respectful and non-confrontational in the workplace. We are friendly but keep our personal and family life mostly private and separate from our professional one. For business we wear business attire, whether formal or casual depending on the nature of position, the nature of our duties and the specific corporate culture.

We welcome immigrants from all over the world to come, settle, work and live in our country, but, as employers, we should not assume or take for granted that they share our workplace culture, customs and ethics. However, we should not assume either that newcomers' cultures are so different that they won't be willing or able to compromise and adapt to Canadian culture and the specific corporate culture of the company.

Employers should pay more attention to the fact that immigrants bring with them not only different languages and experiences, but also different cultures to the workplace.

On the other hand, quite often employers fail to see the need for enlightening immigrant employees as to the Canadian work culture and company's specific corporate culture.

These two sides of addressing the issue of employment of newcomers to Canada can be summarized by a combination of awareness and commitment based on immigrant's cultural adaptation/integration, and employers' cultural tolerance and accommodation. In the Canadian workplace, cultural differences are one of the most valuable assets of any business but at the same time they represent a possible troublesome source of conflict.

The failure of both employers and employees to fully comprehend these cultural differences may lead to personal and social problems affecting the harmonious functioning of the workplace.

Failure to recognize and adapt to these differences can mean the difference between success and failure in building and managing a diverse workforce, with obvious consequences to the bottom line.

In the workplace, communicating across cultures is imperative, and it takes awareness, commitment and great sensitivity to achieve successful inter-cultural communication.

By understanding other cultures both employers and employees become more insightful and adaptable in their communication efforts to work together as a productive team.

As employers welcome and embrace cultural diversity into the Canadian workplace, it is imperative that every effort is made to learn about each other's cultures to be able to successfully work together and avoid conflicts in the workplace. After all, that's the Canadian way!

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What is the value of diversity in the workplace?

by Michelle Powers

"Workplace diversity is a people issue, focused on the differences and similarities that people bring to an organization. It is usually defined broadly to include dimensions beyond those specified legally in equal opportunity and affirmative action non-discrimination statutes." (Woods, 2001). In this paper the writer will explore how gender, age, race, ethnicity, and religion affect individuals in the workplace and the work environment. The writer will also discuss the importance of having a culturally diverse workforce.

Gender plays a vast role in the workplace for several reasons. "The research on working women in general tells us that there are very few differences between men and women that affect job performance. However, women are reported to be more conforming and to have lower expectations of success than men do. And women's absenteeism rates tend to be higher than those of men."(Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2005). The explanation for women being more conforming in the workplace is rooted in history. When women joined the workforce, they were paid less than men, and this practice still continues. Women do not feel secure in the workforce because they are treated dissimilarly, therefore, causing women to be more conforming. Women often do not want to draw attention to themselves because they desire to stay employed.

Finding a sense of balance between work and family life is a struggle many women face. Some women find that working full-time while raising a family is not cost effective, so they opt for part-time work, or to not work until their children are of school age. Women's absenteeism will always be slightly higher because they can give birth. A woman working is not always cost-effective, because of the high costs of child care, and women are not usually the primary financial provider. Women's absenteeism is higher than men but not because women are any less dedicated; it is because they are ordinarily the primary caregiver. This could change as more men are becoming primary caregivers and the gap between men and women's salary is closing.

As a woman the writer has received a great deal of pressure from other women and men to either chose a career or a family. Men in the writer's workplace have not faced such pressures because society does not see them as primary caregivers; men are allowed to be career orientated. If a woman chooses not to have children, society speculates why, while men would not be questioned. According to society a woman should not focus only on her family or only on her career; she has to have both. Gender plays a big role in workplace; hopefully, as society matures stereotypes will be dismissed and the family unit will encompass less rigid roles.

"Older workers are susceptible to being stereotyped as inflexible and undesirable in other ways. In some cases, workers as young as age 40 are considered to be 'old' and complain that their experience and skills are no longer valued."(Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2005). Being an older employee carries stereotypes that are unwarranted. It is

unproductive to judge someone based on his or her age because each person is unique. Many older employees are just as knowledgeable as young college graduates because they have experience. Experience is what people rely on when making choices or decisions, and experience is a valuable characteristic in the workplace. Having varied ages in the workplace offers a well-rounded workforce and the finest of worlds. Younger employees can share their knowledge regarding the latest information and methods while older employees can offer experience and skill. This type of mindset goes both ways; older employees sometimes stereotype younger employees as stupid because they have less experience. An employer who desires a constructive workplace needs to ensure the employees have the mindset that age is only a number and does not dictate a person's ability.

"Consistent with some current literature, we use the term "racial and ethnic groups" to reflect the broad spectrum of employees of differing ethnicities or races who make up an ever-increasing portion of the new workforce."(Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2005). Race and ethnicity have been barriers in the workplace for several years. Frequently people are judged and stereotyped in reference to their race and ethnicity. Judging people before they know each other is not productive in any manner, including the workplace. When employees judge coworkers, it results in tension, stress, poor communication, and an inefficient workplace. Unproductive staff will negatively affect the financial wellbeing of an organization. Open-minded employers are very important, and it is crucial for the employer to hire open minded employees. A diverse workforce can share a variety of perspectives and allows the workplace to be more efficient.

Religion plays a large function in many peoples' lives. Religion gives people guidance, belief in a higher power, a sense of community, and values. "Accommodating employees' religious beliefs, whether they are strict and full of rituals or atheistic, is a basic precept of the respectful workplace." Employees who are respected are likely to be more productive, foster a healthy workplace, and be more flexible.

Being religious is not always an easy feat, because some people pass judgment, and make generalizations. The writer had a co-worker who was Jewish and practicing; her name was Shirley. Shirley wore the Star of David, which is a religious symbol, everyday to work. Shirley's religion meant a great deal to her and she was proud of her customs. A client of the company protested to the owner that Shirley was "parading her religion to influence others." The client did not know Shirley as a person nor did she know her professionally. The client was judging Shirley by a piece of jewellery. The owner explained that she supported Shirley, and respected her choice to wear the medal. Passing judgment is outrageously ridiculous because of a piece of jewellery and the religion it represents. Respect is the foundation of a healthy workplace.

"The concept of managing diversity in organizations emphasizes appreciation of differences in creating a setting where everyone feels valued and accepted."(VAULT, 2008). Age, gender, religion, race, and ethnicity can negatively affect the workplace only if the employer allows it. If the employer desires a productive and healthy workplace; the employer must embrace diversity and ban hatred. Hatred spreads like a disease, and

infects everything it comes in contact with. Employees who feel unappreciated, judged, and mistreated will not foster a productive and healthy workplace. Diversity in the workplace is a gift and a tool for success. Diversity allows many different types of people to bring their perspectives to the table offering a well rounded view. A healthy diverse work environment will foster success, dedication, hard working employees, and a star organization.

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Schermerhorn, John R., Hunt, James G., & Osborn, Richard N. (2005). *Organizational Behavior* (9th ed.). , John Wiley & Sons, Inc...

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