

Blog Post

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Strategies for Promoting Diversity in the Workplace



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5 Strategies for Promoting Diversity in the Workplace



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Hult News (<http://www.hult.edu/news/author/hult-news/>),

1 year ago (<http://www.hult.edu/news/promoting-diversity-in-workplace/>)

 5 min

Promoting inclusiveness and diversity within your workplace is one of the best ways to foster an open-minded, global company culture. Not only does this make good business sense—helping your company to better understand colleagues, clients, and customers around the world—it also makes **the workplace a more interesting and personally enriching environment for everyone.**

Whether you're working at a small start-up or are part of a large multinational corporation, the **benefits of diversity in the workplace** are equally compelling in today's globalized business environment. And **diversity can take many forms**, from culture and nationality to gender, race, sexuality, educational background, and more. Whatever your current role, here are **five strategies you can implement straight away** to promote diversity in your workplace.

- Commit to boosting your own cultural competency

Cross-cultural communication is an invaluable workplace skill. Today, more than ever, you're likely to interact professionally with people from different cultural background to your own. Whether they're a team member, your manager, or a customer, developing a better understanding of different cultures and perspectives can help to improve communication and avoid misunderstandings.

Make a point of educating yourself—learn about different cultural traditions and approaches to work, and keep up to date with global events and international politics. Take the time to get to know your colleagues from different countries and backgrounds. Be open to travel opportunities, especially if you have the chance to visit an office or team overseas. Not only will you gain a greater sense of cultural appreciation and sensitivity, you're likely to make new friends by finding much common ground.

- Actively seek out new perspectives and ideas

Tackling a tough problem on the job? Ask for help and be open to new perspectives. People from different cultures and background may take a different approach to business issues. You'll find that your colleagues can offer valuable insight gained through a wealth of diverse life experiences. Looking at something in a new way may reveal a solution you would never have considered on your own.

Creating a workplace where different perspectives are valued and embraced can go a long way to foster productive business relationships. Whether you're in a junior role, a manager, or director, actively seeking advice, ideas, and expertise from your colleagues will improve communication and foster a more inclusive company culture. This

inclusive culture will, in turn, help your company to retain diverse talent and make your workplace an attractive option for globally minded job seekers.

- Treat others how *they* want to be treated

Remember that the so-called Golden Rule to “treat others how you want to be treated” doesn’t always apply in a diverse professional environment. Instead, it is better to follow what has become known as the Platinum Rule (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/janepark/2014/05/21/why-the-golden-rule-has-no-place-in-a-startup/#7224209637c5>): **treat others how they want to be treated.**

Always be considerate and sensitive to the boundaries and expectations of others. A request or activity you may be comfortable with could be in conflict with the values of someone else in your company. Even commonplace interactions could have subtle cultural nuances to take into account. For instance, understanding how different cultures perceive a handshake, maintaining eye contact, or the boundaries of personal space can help to avert misunderstandings.

When in doubt, **ask**. If you accidentally cause offense, **apologize**. Both scenarios are valuable opportunities to **improve your own cultural awareness**, and your colleagues will appreciate your sensitivity and effort. Being respectful of personal and cultural

boundaries, and encouraging your colleagues to do the same through your example, will **make your workplace more welcoming and productive for everyone.**

- Observe diverse traditions, celebrations, and holidays from other cultures

Diversity and inclusion activities can take many forms, but one of the easiest and most fun can be creating a culturally diverse holiday calendar. Encourage your colleagues to get involved and find appropriate ways to celebrate different traditions.

From Eid to Oktoberfest, sharing food, music, and celebrations from around the world can be wonderful for team-building and a great way for colleagues at different levels of the organization to connect.

However, when larger organized celebrations aren't practical, make a point to personally acknowledge a significant religious or cultural holiday. Well-wishes via email or over a coffee can be a small gesture that means a lot to a colleague, especially if they are far from home.

Beyond major holidays, sensitivity to your colleagues' regular cultural or religious practices is also important. For example, avoid scheduling client lunches during a time of fasting or holding meetings during a time of prayer.

- Contribute to the cultural diversity of your own workplace

Remember, diversity can take many forms. Don't underestimate the cultural value you can add to your workplace. Whatever your background, your unique perspective, culture, and experiences can enrich the professional experience of those around you.

Set an example for others to follow by positively contributing to your company culture. Something as small as sharing a traditional treat from home can be a wonderful way to spark a conversation and inspire others to share too.

The best way to promote diversity in your workplace is by embracing it and working to build an understanding. Getting to know your colleagues on a personal level, regardless of their culture and background, will help you to find common ground, deepen your appreciation of differences, and **promote an inclusive and welcoming work environment.**

“I truly appreciate the international exposure that I have been able to have at Hult. Having worked with people that come from every part of the world is like having a free lesson on diversity and cultural differences.”

*Jay Chen Liu
Hult Master of
International
Marketing Class
of 2016*

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3 Comments



Kairi Gainsborough

([http://drculture.com/keynote-
speaker-cross-cultural-and-
diversity/](http://drculture.com/keynote-speaker-cross-cultural-and-diversity/))

It's a great suggestion to ask for help from people with different backgrounds than you. Seeking out new perspectives is a great way to add diversity to your life and your business ventures. I also think that

listening to a speaker talk about ways
to promote diversity and inclusion
could be really beneficial.

1 year ago

(<http://www.hult.edu/news/promoting-diversity-in-workplace/#comment-17255>)

  Reply

(<http://www.hult.edu/news/promoting-diversity-in-workplace/?replytocom=17255#respond>)

Scott

(<http://defamationtheplay.com/index.html>)

I agree that one good way to become diverse is to seek out new perspectives and ideas. By doing this, you can learn what others think about a certain topic and understand why they think that. Also, this can also strengthen your own opinion or it can help you see something in another light.

10 months ago (<http://www.hult.edu/news/promoting-diversity-in-workplace/#comment-17282>)

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Brent Frayser

(<http://www.diversityinc.com/>)

I think it is very important to try to build strong business and personal relationships with your co-workers if possible. This will allow you to understand and appreciate any

differences you may have, which will more than likely make your organization stronger in the long run.

5 months ago

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