

CHAPTER 15



Valuing Work Force Diversity

TIP OF THE ICEBERG | CHARGES OF DISCRIMINATION INCREASE

CHAPTER PREVIEW

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying Chapter 15, you will be able to

- 15-1 Define the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity.
- 15-2 Discuss how prejudiced attitudes are formed.
- 15-3 Develop an awareness of the various forms of discrimination in the workplace.
- 15-4 Understand why organizations value diversity.
- 15-5 Identify ways in which individuals and organizations can enhance work force diversity.
- 15-6 Discuss the current status of affirmative action programs.

Throughout the past decade, America has experienced a major demographic transformation. Nearly 92 percent of the nation's population growth—25.1 million people—came from minorities of all types, including those who identified themselves as mixed race.¹ Despite the overwhelming evidence that workplace diversity improves innovation, problem solving, product development, and new customer acquisition, many organizations have been slow to embrace diversity in the work force.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) received nearly 100,000 charges of discrimination during the 2011 fiscal year, the most in its 46-year history. Charges of religious discrimination jumped by 9.5 percent, the largest increase of any category. Claims of bias based on ancestry or country of origin rose 5 percent.² Federal law restricts employers from discriminating on account of a worker's race, gender, or age, among other protected categories.

During a period of economic decline, companies need to thin their ranks and sometimes unfairly target certain workers, especially older and disabled employees. Laid-off workers who can quickly find another job are more likely to move on with their lives and avoid the hassle of filing a bias claim. But when jobs are scarce, an unemployed person is more likely to sue.³

Legal action initiated by the EEOC has involved a wide range of companies. A large-scale employment discrimination lawsuit was filed against Abercrombie & Fitch in 2005. The retailer was accused of refusing to recruit, hire, promote, and retain minorities who did not fit Abercrombie's "All American" look. The retail giant was slapped with a fine of \$50 million. The company agreed to institute a range of policies and programs to promote diversity. Today those employees who self-identify as Asians, African Americans, and Hispanics represent more than half of the Abercrombie & Fitch workforce.⁴



Photo: © 1998, News/News.com

Some employers such as Abercrombie & Fitch historically known for promoting a narrow "All-American" male image have begun to scale back those policies and feature more women in their advertising campaigns.

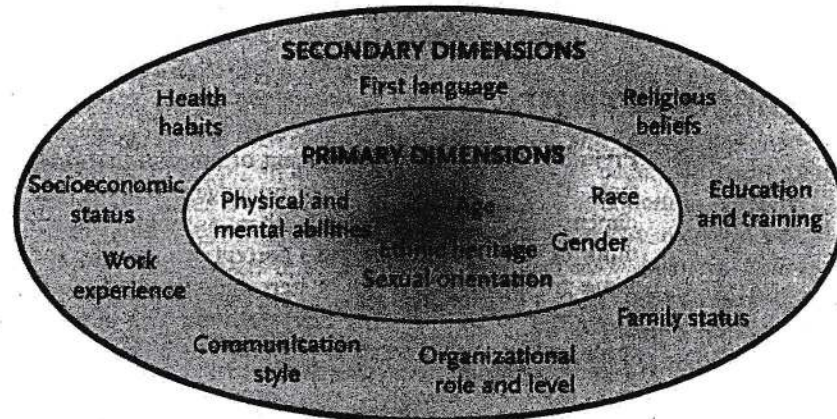
WORK FORCE DIVERSITY

5-1 Diversity can be a source of competitive advantage in the marketplace. It gives organizations an enhanced ability to understand the needs of different market segments. One of the guiding principles at PepsiCo is "Win with diversity and inclusion." The company recognizes that diversity brings new perspectives into the workplace and encourages innovation as well as the ability to identify new market opportunities. New products inspired by members of the diverse PepsiCo workforce include a wasabi-flavored snack aimed at Asian Americans; guacamole-flavored Doritos Chips aimed at Hispanics; and Mountain Dew Code Red, which appeals to African Americans.⁵

America has always served as host to a kaleidoscope of the world's cultures, and the diversity movement will continue. Growing minority and immigrant populations will contribute to increased racial and ethnic diversity. The American work force is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, increasingly female, increasingly older, and increasingly nonwhite.⁶

Valuing diversity means appreciating everyone's uniqueness, respecting differences, and encouraging every worker to make his or her full contribution to the organization. Organizations that foster the full participation of all workers will enjoy the sharpest competitive edge in the expanding global marketplace.

Figure 15.1 ■ Primary and Secondary Dimensions of Diversity



Source: This model is adapted from *Workforce America!* Authored by Marilyn Loden and Judy B. Rosener.

Dimensions of Diversity

There are primary and secondary dimensions of diversity. The primary dimensions are core characteristics of each individual that cannot be changed: age, race, gender, physical and mental abilities, ethnic heritage, and sexual orientation (see Figure 15.1). Together they form an individual's self-image and the filters through which each person views the rest of the world. These inborn elements are interdependent; no one dimension stands alone. Each exerts an important influence throughout life. Marilyn Loden and Judy Rosener describe individual primary dimensions in their book *Workforce America!* They say, "Like the interlocking segments of a sphere, they represent the core of our individual identities."⁷

The greater the number of primary differences between people, the more difficult it is to establish trust and mutual respect. When we add the secondary dimensions of diversity to the mix, effective human relations become even more difficult. The secondary dimensions of diversity are elements that can be changed, or at least modified. They include a person's work experience, health habits, religious beliefs, education and training, first language, family status, organizational role and level, communication style, and socio-economic status (see Figure 15.1). These factors all add a layer of complexity to the way we see ourselves and others. The blend of secondary and primary dimensions adds depth to each person and helps shape his or her values, priorities, and perceptions throughout life.⁸

Each of us enters the work force with a unique perspective, shaped by these dimensions and our own past experiences. Building effective human relationships is possible only when we learn to accept and value the differences in others. Without this acceptance, both primary and secondary dimensions of diversity can become roadblocks to further cooperation and understanding.

Global Diversity

A large number of American companies are attempting to develop global diversity initiatives. Many of these programs fail because they are based purely on an American perspective. The primary and secondary dimensions of diversity featured in Figure 15.1

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reflect an American perspective. Social class, for example, is often a forgotten component in U.S. based diversity initiatives. However, it is a very important dimension of diversity in some regions such as Latin America.⁹

PREJUDICED ATTITUDES

- 15-2 **Prejudice is a premature judgment or opinion that is formed without examination of the facts. Throughout life, we often prejudice people in light of their primary and secondary dimensions. Rather than treat others as unique individuals, prejudiced people tend to think in terms of stereotypes—perceptions, beliefs, and expectations about members of some group. In most cases, a stereotype involves the false assumption that all members of a group share the same characteristics. The most common and powerful stereotypes focus on observable personal attributes such as age, gender, and ethnicity.¹⁰**

Total Person Insight

"Understand that diversity initiatives that may make a lot of sense at home, in their current form, could lose their importance abroad, because other nations have different issues and experiences to consider."

Source: Neal Goodman, "Diversity Dimensions," *Training*, November/December 2011, p. 66.

One of the most common stereotypes in the workplace has been labeled "singlism." This stereotype is based on the assumption that singles have lots of time to spend at work because they have no life away from work. Human-resources managers have been trying for years to discredit the notion that heavy travel, weekend work, and overbearing jobs should be reserved for unmarried employees.¹¹

How Prejudicial Attitudes Are Formed and Retained

Three major factors contribute to the development of prejudice: childhood experiences, ethnocentrism, and economic conditions.

Childhood Experiences. Today's views toward others are filtered through the experiences and feelings of childhood. Children watch how their family members, friends, teachers, and other authority figures respond to different racial, ethnic, and religious groups. As a result, they form attitudes that may last a lifetime, unless new information replaces the old perceptions. Prejudicial attitudes are not unalterable. Whatever prejudice is learned during childhood can be unlearned later in life.¹²

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CLASS-BASED BIAS

Paul C. Gorski, professor in the Graduate School of Education at Hamline University, states that many of us need to examine our own class-based prejudices. We sometimes stigmatize victims of income inequality (children, parents, and coworkers), forgetting that they may have experienced savage inequalities in such areas as education, health care, housing, and employment opportunities. Try to avoid letting class-based prejudices color your assumptions about others.

Source: Paul C. Gorski, "The Question of Class," *Teaching Tolerance*, Spring 2007, pp. 26-29.

Ethnocentrism. The tendency to regard our own culture or nation as better or more “correct” than others is called **ethnocentrism**. The word is derived from *ethnic*, meaning a group united by similar customs, characteristics, race, or other common factors, and *center*. **Ethnic identity** is the part of a person’s identity that reflects the racial, religious, or cultural group to which the person belongs.¹³ When ethnocentrism is present, the standards and values of our own culture are being used as a yardstick to measure the worth of other cultures.

In their book *Valuing Diversity*, Lewis Brown Griggs and Lente-Louise Louw compare ethnocentrism in an organization to icebergs floating in an ocean. We can see the tips of icebergs above the water level, just as we can see our diverse coworkers’ skin color, gender, mannerisms, and job-related talents and hear the words they use and their accents. These are basically “surface” aspects of a person that others can easily learn through observation. However, just as the enormous breadth of an iceberg’s base lies beneath the water’s surface, so does the childhood conditioning of people from different cultures. As icebergs increase in number and drift too close together, they are likely to clash at their base even though there is no visible contact at the water’s surface.¹⁴ As organizations increase the diversity of their work force, the potential for clashes resulting from deep-seated cultural conditioning and prejudiced attitudes also increases.

Economic Factors. When the economy goes through a recession or depression, and housing, jobs, and other necessities become scarce, people’s prejudices against other groups often increase. If enough prejudice is built up against a particular group, members of that group may be barred from competing for jobs. The recent backlash against immigrants can be traced, in part, to a fear that the new arrivals will take jobs that would otherwise be available to American workers. Prejudice based on economic factors has its roots in people’s basic survival needs, and, as a result, it is very hard to eliminate.

Increasingly, income and wealth inequality in America is viewed by many as a serious barrier to racial harmony. *Fortune* magazine reports that the average net worth of the top fifth of American households has more than doubled in real terms since 1962; the middle class has seen only a 25 percent rise; and the bottom 20 percent is deeper in debt.¹⁵ America is evolving into a two-caste society.

Total Person Insight

“At Prudential, valuing diversity and inclusion is the way we do business. And we take our business very seriously. Our senior leaders are held accountable for promoting an environment that values inclusion.”

Source: Emilio Egea, Chief Diversity Officer, Prudential Financial. [Cited 9 March 2010] Available from www.diversityinc.com

Unconscious Prejudices. Many people have biases that they don’t know they have. These *implicit biases* are acquired over a lifetime, absorbed from our culture, and work automatically to color our perceptions and influence our choices. A massive national study, *Project Implicit*, investigates thoughts and feelings that exist outside of conscious awareness or conscious control.¹⁶

Research results based on several million participants in the study were carefully studied before the 2008 presidential election. Findings indicate white voters have an implicit negativity toward African Americans and the elderly. Senator McCain (age 72) and Senator Obama (African American) both had handicaps during the campaign.

THE MANY FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

- 15-3** Discrimination is behavior based on prejudiced attitudes. If, as an employer, you believe that overweight people tend to be lazy, that is a prejudiced attitude. If you refuse to hire someone simply because that person is overweight, you are engaging in discrimination.

Discrimination is behavior based on prejudiced attitudes.

Individuals or groups that are discriminated against are denied equal treatment and opportunities afforded to the dominant group. They may be denied employment, promotion, training, or other job-related privileges on the basis of race, lifestyle, gender, or other characteristics that have little or nothing to do with their qualifications for a job.

Gender

Discrimination based on gender has been, and continues to be, the focus of much attention. The traditional roles women held in society have undergone tremendous changes in the past few decades. Women enter the work force, not only to supplement family income, but also to pursue careers in previously all-male professions. Men have also been examining the roles assigned them by society and are discovering new options for themselves. Most companies have recognized that discrimination based on gender is a reality and are taking steps to deal with the problem. Chapter 16 is devoted to an in-depth discussion of overcoming gender bias.

Age

People who make up today's work force are working longer and living longer. Meaningful employment is a source of well-being for many of these workers. In light of our extended life span, it's time to rethink the concept of age. Tom Lowry, author of a *BusinessWeek* article entitled "Extreme Experience" says, "If 60 is the new 40, then 80 is the new 60." He describes 25 persons, who range in age from 75 to 100, who run their companies or wield real influence in the business world.¹⁷ CVS Caremark, a large drugstore chain, is currently recruiting baby boomers and other older workers. Stephen Wing, director of CVS workforce initiatives, says, "When you're in your 50s and 60s, you're in your prime."¹⁸

Of course not every organization has adopted an enlightened view of age. Some companies fail to understand that workers in their 50s and 60s are productive, cost-effective employees. During the recent recession, age-discrimination complaints processed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) reached a record high. Some companies replace older workers with younger workers in order to reduce compensation expenses.



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GENERATIONAL TENSION

Many of today's younger workers are hoping older Americans will retire and make room for them. Many older workers have seen their retirement funds disappear in the wake of the stock market collapse, and they can't afford to retire. In addition, many of the older workers who lost their jobs during the recent recession face discrimination getting new ones. Add to this complex picture thousands of baby-boomer generation workers who are more interested in *renewal* than *retirement*. They want to secure work with social value—work they can feel proud of. An expanded AmeriCorps may be the answer for some of these people.

Source: Ellen Goodman, "Worker Longer, with Pride," *News & Observer*, March 21, 2009, p. 15A.

Age bias is still pervasive in hiring. Older workers should anticipate the most common fears employers have about older workers and defuse them. This means showing plenty of energy, flexibility, reasonable pay expectations, and up-to-date skills.¹⁹

Race

Few areas are more sensitive and engender more passion than issues surrounding race. Race denotes a category of people who are perceived as distinctive on the basis of certain biologically inherited traits, such as skin color or hair texture.²⁰ Because people cannot change these inherited traits, they can easily become victims of discrimination.

Throughout American history, we have seen attempts to place people in racial categories and judge them as racial symbols rather than as unique individuals. During World War II, many Americans of Japanese ancestry were confined in concentration camps because they were considered a security threat, merely because of their racial heritage. Because of the war on terrorism, today's "racial" targets often include immigrants from Pakistan, Iraq, and other Middle Eastern countries, as well as their American-born children.

There is as much genetic variability between two people from the same "racial group" as there is between two people from any two different "racial" groups.

The Myth of Race. Critics of racial categories view them as social inventions that intensify and reinforce racist beliefs and actions. They believe that one way to break down racial barriers and promote a race-free consciousness is to get rid of traditional racial categories. A growing number of geneticists and social scientists reject the view that "racial" differences have an objective or scientific foundation.²¹ The American Anthropological Association (AAA) has taken the official position that "race" has no scientific justification in human biology. The AAA position is that, "There is as much genetic variability between two people from the same 'racial group' as there is between two people from any two different 'racial' groups."²²

It is important to keep in mind that some race categories include people who vary greatly in terms of ethnic identity. The Asian label includes a wide range of groups, such as Vietnamese, Filipino, Chinese, and Korean, with distinct histories and languages. The label "African American" does not take into consideration the enormous linguistic, physical, and cultural diversity of the peoples of Africa.²³

Multiracial and Multicultural Trends

Marriage across racial and ethnic lines has reached a new high in the United States. About 15 percent of new marriages in 2010 were between individuals of a different race or ethnicity. About 9 million people living in the United States identify themselves as

100 companies that want only applicants who are currently employed. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is holding hearings to determine if screening out jobless applicants is a form of discrimination.³³

What Can You Do?

What should you do if you discover you are the target of some form of subtle, unprotected discrimination because you are different from others at work? If you want to stay in the organization, you will need to determine whether the “difference” is something you can change—your weight, the way you dress, your manner of speaking. If the difference is something you cannot or choose not to change, you may need to address the situation directly. Review the assertiveness skills you studied in Chapter 13. Your assertiveness may help change other people’s attitudes and in turn alter their discriminatory behaviors. Another powerful method of eliminating subtle discrimination is to compensate for it by excelling in your work. Become an expert on the job, and work to increase your skills and your value to the organization. As your colleagues gain respect for your talents, they will likely change their attitudes toward you.

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TOOLS FOR TOLERANCE: WORKPLACE

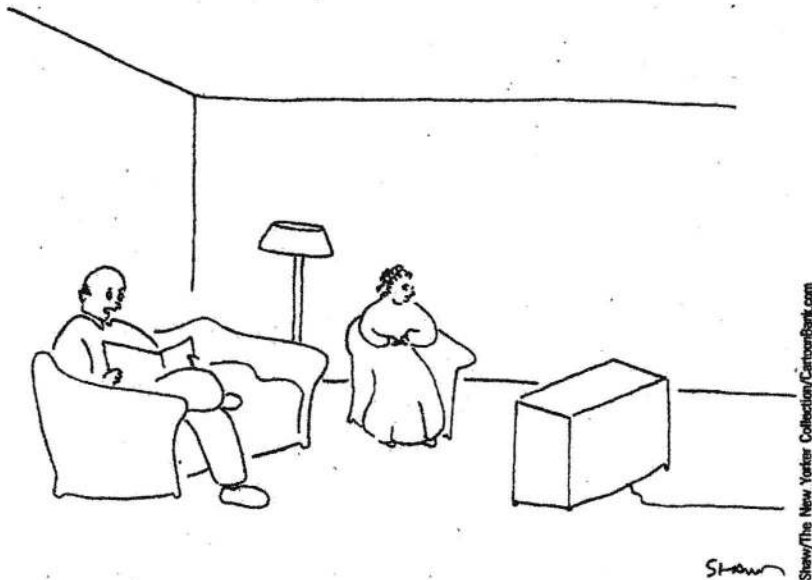
- Hold a “diversity potluck” lunch. Invite coworkers to bring foods that reflect their cultural heritage.
- Suggest ways to overcome any barriers that might prevent people of color and women from succeeding.
- Value the input of every employee. Reward managers who do.
- Push for equitable leave policies. Provide paid maternity and paternity leave.
- Start a mentoring program that pairs employees of different ages, such as seniors with entry-level workers.
- Vary your lunch partners. Seek out coworkers of different backgrounds, from different departments, and at different levels in the company.

Source: “Tools for Tolerance: Workplace,” adapted from *101 Tools for Tolerance: Simple Ideas for Promoting Equity and Celebrating Diversity*. Copyright © 2000, Southern Poverty Law Center, Montgomery, AL. Reprinted by permission of Southern Poverty Law Center. *101 Tools for Tolerance* is available free from the SPLC. For more information, visit <http://www.splccenter.org>.

THE ECONOMICS OF VALUING DIVERSITY

- 15-4 The new millennium has brought greater understanding that diversity can be a source of competitive advantage. This occurs when a company makes full use of the ideas, talents, experiences, and perspectives of all employees at all levels of the organization. Joe Watson, a recruiter of minorities, believes that if you want to satisfy clients and customers from diverse backgrounds, you need a diverse mix of employees who are more likely to understand them.³⁴

A study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management revealed diversity initiatives within organizations can affect an organization’s bottom line by reducing costs associated with turnover, absenteeism, and low productivity. In addition, efforts to value workers’ and customers’ diversity reduce complaints and litigation and improve the



"Gays and lesbians getting married—haven't they suffered enough?"

Source: Steven Petrow, *Complete Gay & Lesbian Manners*, New York: Workman Publishing, 2011, p. 188.

The price tag for not helping employees learn to respect and value each other is enormous.

organization's public image.³⁵ Organizations that pursue diversity and make it part of their culture usually outperform companies that are less committed to diversity.

The price tag for *not* helping employees learn to respect and value each other is enormous. Many highly skilled and talented employees will leave an organization that does not value diversity. A comment, gesture, or joke delivered without malice but received as an insult will create tension among workers and customers alike.

MANAGING DIVERSITY

15-5 **Managing diversity** is the process of creating an organizational culture where the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity are respected. This process can be a challenge now that the work force is composed of so many different nationalities. Managers at some Marriott Hotels work with employees from 30 different countries. The employees who are part of the Toyota Formula 1 race team represent 27 nationalities. Even some small retail stores have become a kind of United Nations. The Kroger supermarket in Durham, North Carolina, has employees from ten countries. The issue is further complicated when an organization's diverse work force is in global satellite

offices separated by thousands of miles. Microsoft's research unit, for example, is staffed by 700 multinational scientists and engineers working in six laboratories on three continents.³⁶

Learn to look critically and honestly at the particular myths and preconceived ideas you have been conditioned to believe about others.

What Individuals Can Do

You cannot totally eliminate prejudices that have been deeply held and developed over a long time. But you can take steps to change

those attitudes and behaviors that may have a negative impact on your employer's efforts to enhance diversity.

1. *Recognize the powerful influence of entrenched stereotypes.* Research findings indicate that stereotypes are so well learned and so ingrained that they may be activated automatically and without conscious awareness. Prejudice is ingrained, but it can be reduced.³⁷
2. *Learn to look critically and honestly at the particular myths and preconceived ideas you have been conditioned to believe about others.* Contact among people of different races, cultures, and lifestyles can break down prejudice when people join together for a common task. The more contact there is among culturally diverse individuals, the more likely it will be that stereotypes based on myths and inaccurate generalizations will not survive.
3. *Develop sensitivity to differences.* Do not allow gender-based, racist, or antigay jokes or comments in your presence. If English is not a person's native language, be aware that this person might interpret your messages differently from what you intended. When in doubt as to the appropriate behavior, ask questions. "I would like to open the door for you because you are in a wheelchair, but I'm not sure whether that would offend you. What would you like me to do?"
4. *Develop your own diversity awareness program.* The starting point might be creation of a "diversity profile" of your friends, coworkers, and acquaintances. How much diversity do these individuals have in terms of race? Ethnicity? Religion? Assess the cultural diversity reflected in the music you listen to and the books you read. Study Islam, Buddhism, and other faiths that may be different from your own.³⁸

What Organizations Can Do

A well-planned and well-executed diversity program can promote understanding and defuse tensions between employees who differ in age, race, gender, religious beliefs, and other characteristics. Programs that are poorly developed and poorly executed often backfire, especially in organizations where bias and distrust have festered for years. A comprehensive diversity program has three pillars:³⁹ organizational commitment, employment practices, and training and development (see Figure 15.3).

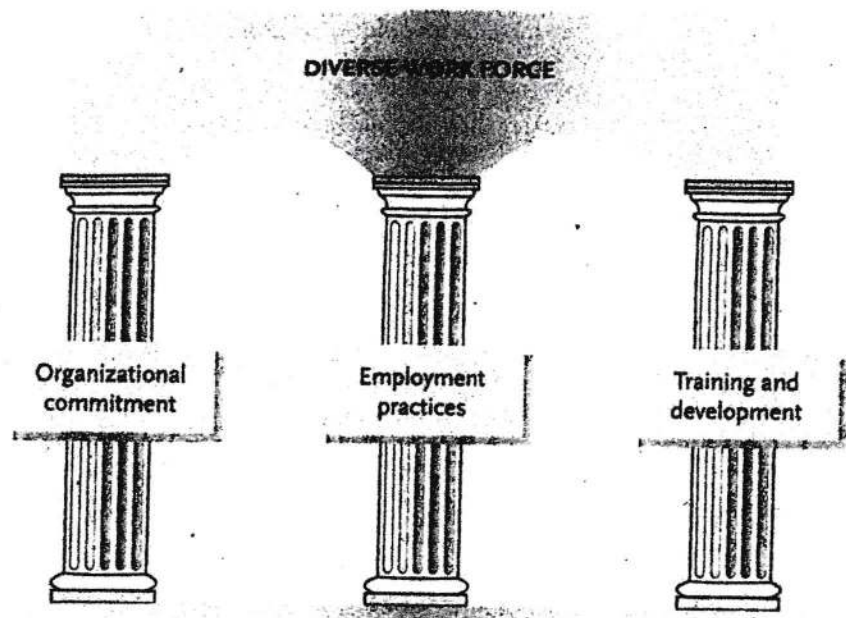
Organizational Commitment. Catalyst, a research and advisory group, conducted a survey of 106 global companies to determine why these companies use diversity strategies as part of their overall business plan. Nearly 90 percent said their diversity program was designed to help them gain a competitive advantage.⁴⁰ When the objective of the diversity initiative is to achieve a stronger competitive position, the commitment is usually quite strong. Ron Glover, vice president of global diversity at IBM, says how we think about diversity and how we deliver it has to be directly connected and deeply embedded in the organization's business objectives.⁴¹

Companies that see diversity programs as a quick-fix event—a one-day workshop that promotes the advantages of a diverse work force—often create greater, not less, divisiveness among workers. Companies that see diversity programs as a *process* know that the key to a successful diversity program is long-term commitment.

Employment Practices. To achieve work force diversity, organizations need to design a plan that actively recruits men and

To achieve work force diversity, organizations need to design a plan that actively recruits men and women of different ethnicities, family situations, disabilities, and sexual orientations. Diversity should not be limited to race and gender.

Figure 15.3 ■ Three Pillars of Diversity



women of different ethnicities, family situations, disabilities, and sexual orientations. Diversity should not be limited to race and gender. One approach is to make a special effort to plug into networks that are often ignored by corporate recruiters.

Organizations must also foster a climate for retention. Newly hired people who are different from the majority must often contend with an atmosphere of tension, instability, and distrust and may soon lose the desire to do their best work. Subtle biases often alienate these employees and create unnecessary stress.

✕ **Training and Development.** To develop a culture that values and enhances diversity, organizations need training programs that give managers and employees the tools they need to work more effectively with one another regardless of their backgrounds. Unfortunately, most of the diversity training efforts at American companies are ineffective for these reasons:

- Mandatory programs, often undertaken mainly to avoid liability in discrimination lawsuits, are frequently ineffective and may even be counterproductive. Voluntary diversity training, undertaken to advance the organization's goals, is more effective.⁴²
- Middle managers, who play a key role in hiring, development, and promotion decisions, often do not support diversity efforts. To overcome this roadblock, top management must champion diversity and model ideal behaviors to middle management. They should also reward middle managers who take steps to enhance diversity initiatives.⁴³

Done well, diversity training programs can promote harmony, reduce conflict, and help give the organization a competitive advantage. Participants should learn which

specific behaviors will not be condoned and the basic rules of civil behavior. We may not be able to stop people from bringing their prejudices to work, but they can learn to act as though they have none.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: YESTERDAY AND TODAY

15-6 The Civil Rights Act of 1964 marked the beginning of antidiscrimination employment legislation. In an attempt to make up for past discrimination in the areas of employment, education, and business, affirmative action policies were initiated by the federal government. **Affirmative action** involves intentionally seeking and hiring employees from groups that are under-represented.⁴⁴

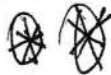
The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is charged with enforcing employment-related laws. One recent EEOC lawsuit filed against Lockheed Martin Corporation illustrates the high cost of discrimination. Charles Daniels, an African-American electrician at the company, said he was subjected to racial harassment by coworkers on a daily basis and death threats once he complained to supervisors. After a long trial, Mr. Daniels was awarded \$2.5 million.⁴⁵

Although affirmative action has stirred controversy for many decades, there is no doubt that this initiative has helped minorities gain access to large corporations and top universities. The number of African Americans at the nation's top 50 colleges and universities has doubled in recent decades. Women have also benefited, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, when they began breaking into traditionally male-dominated fields.⁴⁶ The flow of controversy over affirmative action sometimes includes references to quotas. Quotas are not legal in the United States.⁴⁷

Affirmative Action Issues. Many people say it is time to rethink affirmative action or even eliminate it. Recent political and legal interpretations of affirmative action have stimulated a nationwide debate over the merits of any program that grants preferential treatment to specific groups. The following are some factors that should guide decisions related to the implementation of affirmative action policies:

- Affirmative action's purpose is not to give unqualified people special rights.⁴⁸
- Affirmative action in the best sense promotes equal consideration, not reverse discrimination.⁴⁹
- One of the most significant changes brought about by affirmative action laws has been the publication of job announcements.⁵⁰
- The definition of employment selection tests has been expanded to include any procedure used as a basis for an employment decision. Informal and formal interviews, performance tests, physical requirements, and other procedures qualify as "tests."⁵¹

Those who say affirmative action causes companies to hire and promote less qualified people fail to realize that the hiring process usually goes beyond the abilities, knowledge, and skills of the job candidate and includes additional merit-based factors, such as education and experience. When these factors are included in the hiring process, recipients of affirmative action are less likely to feel stigmatized. The way people react to a preferential selection procedure will often depend on how well it is structured and implemented.⁵²



LOOKING BACK: SUMMARY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity.

Primary dimensions of diversity include gender, age, race, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientation, and ethnic heritage. Secondary dimensions include religious beliefs, work experience, communication style, organizational role and level, family status, socio-economic status, first language, education and training, and health habits.

2. Discuss how prejudiced attitudes are formed.

Prejudice is a premature judgment or opinion based partly on observation of others' differences and partly on ignorance, fear, and cultural conditioning. Prejudiced people tend to see others as stereotypes rather than as individuals. Prejudicial attitudes are formed through the effects of childhood experiences, ethnocentrism, and economic factors. Many people have unconscious prejudices, biases they don't know they have.

3. Develop an awareness of the various forms of discrimination in the workplace.

Discrimination is behavior based on prejudicial attitudes. Groups protected by law from discrimination in the workplace include people who share characteristics such as gender, age, race, disability, religion, and sexual orientation. More subtle discrimination can arise when individuals have different appearances or educational backgrounds. These subtle forms of discrimination may not be illegal, but they are disruptive to a productive work force.

4. Understand why organizations value diversity.

The issue of valuing diversity is an economic one for most organizations. The work force will soon be made up of a minority of white men and a

majority of women, people of color, and immigrants. To remain competitive, organizations must value the contributions of all of their diverse workers and make full use of their ideas and talents. Only then will they be able to understand their equally diverse customers' needs. Valuing diversity is not just a nice idea, but a business imperative.

5. Identify ways in which individuals and organizations can enhance work force diversity.

Individuals can enhance diversity by letting go of their stereotypes and learning to critically and honestly evaluate their prejudiced attitudes as they work and socialize with people who are different. They will need to develop sensitivity to differences and their own personal diversity awareness programs. Organizations must commit to valuing individual differences and implementing effective employment practices that respect and enhance diversity. Their diversity training programs should be an ongoing process rather than a onetime event. They need to seek out, employ, and develop employees from diverse backgrounds.

6. Discuss the current status of affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action involves intentionally seeking and hiring employees from groups that are under-represented in the organization. Affirmative action guidelines have helped bring fairness in hiring and promotion to many organizations. Today, however, some people believe these guidelines are discriminatory because they allow preferential treatment for the people they were designed to protect.

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