

Summer 2011

DIVERSITY TRAINING IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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DIVERSITY TRAINING IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS: ISSUES AND
CHALLENGES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

by

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B.S., Southern Illinois University, 2008

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Public Administration.

Department of Political Science
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

August 2011

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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Master

in the field of Public Administration

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5/9/2011

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DEDICATION

This body of work is dedicated to the memory of my father, Rodrico Jackson Sr. Throughout life; he always taught me the meaning of hard work and what it takes to achieve my goals. Without his insight, his guidance, and life lesson teachings, I would not be the person that I am today or possess the infinite will to accomplish so much of what I have done and what I plan to do in my future. A dream of mine was for him to see me finish this portion of my academic tenure, but his life expectancy did not allow that. He was not only a shining light that fueled my desire for success but he was also one of the greatest men I have come to know and for that purpose is why this is my dedication to him.

In memory of Rodrico Jackson Sr.

06/15/1963-04/11/2011

INTRODUCTION

The issues of diversity have become an ongoing discussion in many of today's businesses. Not only has it been a regular practice implementing diversity initiatives in major businesses, but it also has become a common feature in trying to shape the minds of Americans in the educational field and in government entities. "Moreover, diversity has become a buzzword in the media when focusing on the future of America" (Karp & Sammour, 2000, p. 451). In human resources, this topic will forever be an evolving matter into the structure of the workforce since it is a constant reminder of our stride towards equal treatment for all individuals.

As stated before, the issues of diversity reach all forms of daily operations in America. Therefore, it affects public organizations as well as private ones. The problem with this as a dilemma within public organizations is that in reality, these bureaucracies aim to reflect their constituencies in the understanding that they can relate better to as many different citizens as possible according to their mission.

Selden and Selden explain that "Some scholars argue that a bureaucracy will be more responsive to public interests (and will therefore better serve democratic principles) if its personnel reflect the public served in characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and gender" (2001, p. 308). "The central tenet of the theory of representative bureaucracy is that passive representation, or the extent to which a bureaucracy employs people of diverse social backgrounds, leads to active representation or the pursuit of policies reflecting the interests and desires of those people" (Selden & Selden, 2001, p. 308). The goal of this research is to examine diversity training within public organizations and analyze where improvement can occur.

Several factors contribute to developing diversity training for an organization, but there are also factors that play a part on how receptive the current employees will be in utilizing the training. This research will first describe the historical structure of diversity in America. The historical reference to diversity is an important part in understanding the birth of diversity training. In relation to the history of diversity, the research will look at the context of public agendas founded to assist with the implementation of diversity throughout the country, specifically addressing the uses of the civil rights movement and affirmative action.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of diversity training in public organizations and to help determine how it contributes towards workforce development. Workforce development is defined as the initiatives organizations utilize to increase not only agency productivity, but also individual employee growth. Public organizations always should be pushing for this more so than any other field because of the ever-evolving ways of handling public dilemmas.

This line of inquiry requires studies addressing diversity beyond the external display of its issues into the generalized thoughts towards it. This study aims to assess the intrinsic aspects of diversity and to demonstrate how the implementation of training in this area contributes to external manifestations. In turn, this will expand the understanding of what is really considered diversity, specifically within the public sector. The public sector would benefit not only from being diverse, but from looking at alternative ways to stabilize diversity and the outcomes that an enhanced representation of government brings. So the research question this work attempts to answer is: How is

diversity training in public organizations contributing to produce a better representation of government?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature allows identifying the various challenges in implementing diversity training, along with the backlash from failed attempts and organizational barriers that hinder success. The literature came from peer-reviewed articles, academic journals, and books that shed light on these training techniques while focusing on the issues of success and failures, changes in attitudes, and lastly, the overall assessment of it.

Diversity Training

So exactly what is diversity training? “Diversity training is frequently referred to as training and education to raise awareness about individual differences and the changes in the work force and to create behavior changes that are required to effectively manage and work within a more diverse work force” (Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1999, pg. 216). This improvement constituted by behavior changes has some self-reliance that comes from diversity training, more so on the end of employee interaction. Therefore this means that the valued success of changes from these differences by diversity align with the way that the company’s employees interact with each other; which seems vital to the productivity of the organization. To explain, the inner workings of an organization reflect on its output which is contributed by the employees and that output ties in with the creation of diversity training to assist in keeping this projected positive output constant (Choi, 2008).

History of Diversity

Wentling and Palma Rivas (1999) posited that diversity is something that has transpired as a need for survival and success for many organizations. One of the best

places to incorporate diversity is in the workplace and bringing awareness to employees in training can be a great preliminary tool to an organization's success (Mor Borak, 2000). "According to Nobile (1997), diversity is one of the greatest concerns and one of the top ten legal issues that face HR professionals today" (Karp & Sammour, 2000, p. 451).

In lieu of knowing the importance of diversity training, the major portion of the term is "diversity", which comes with all types of meanings such as different, variety, unlikeness, change, variation, etc. However, the United States itself has a reputation today to be one of the best in acceptance of its various cultural differences in comparison to other countries around the world (Anand & Winters, 2008). However, what makes this thought prevalent to some is encompassed around the historical framework of diversity. By reviewing different types of literature on diversity, it appears that the misconception around diversity of any sorts is what drives the misunderstanding in handling it when associated with the workforce environment. Throughout history, separation of difference has been noted since the beginning of time, but the law making structure to acknowledge these differences in a positive manner are owed to the 1960's time period. "Rooted in social justice philosophy, civil rights legislation, and more recently, business strategy, diversity has evolved into a rather amorphous field where the very word itself invokes a variety of meanings and emotional responses" (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 356).

When addressing diversity, the first thing that comes to mind for most is race. Although race is definitely apart of promoting a diverse workforce, there are other attributes that make people diverse such as age, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, religious beliefs, education, etc., just to name a few (Johnson, 2006).

Johnson explains that “the trouble around diversity, then, isn’t just that people differ from one another” ... “The trouble is produced by a world organized in ways that encourage people to use difference to include or exclude, reward or punish, credit or discredit, elevate or oppress, value or devalue, leave alone or harass” (2006, p.16).

The moments in history addressing diversity begin off the basis of race and fair treatment, but the issues of diversity nowadays are more than just arguments on racial debates. Since the start of integration within the workforce on diversity, individuals of different races and ethnicities have indeed found fair employment within public organizations. “When figures are broken down by specific racial and ethnic groups, the results indicate that all four minority groups have increased their share of executive branch positions between 1984 and 1996” (Selden & Selden, 2001, pg. 304).

Nonetheless, the same increase has been done in comparison to gender, age, disabilities, and religion. This increase has been gradual over time but complaints on discrimination from diversity groups are still increasing as well today, the highest being disabilities. Its reported on the HR hero website from the EEOC how complaints of discrimination for individuals with disabilities has risen 17% as of 2010 and the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is 5.5% higher than those with no disabilities. When combining the all of the diversity complaints for fiscal year 2010 in comparison to the previous year, the increase was by 7% causing more lawsuits to justify discriminatory practice. The EEOC reportedly grossed the most money, out of those employers being accused, ever distributed since its creation at a total of \$404 million. These forms of discrimination portray why diversity training is important to the longevity

of any organization. The following sections briefly describe the history of two important times in the past that led the forefront in birthing diversity.

The Civil Rights Movement

The origin of diversity gains its roots from the 1960's with the onset of what we know as the "Civil Rights Movement" (Coombs, 1972). According to the diversity officer magazine (Vaughn, pg. 1), "Many organizations, communities, military sectors, and higher education institutions have been conducting some form of diversity education since the 1960s in the United States". Before this time, many of the laws in the United States were enacted and designed around a monotonous viewpoint on the political spectrum (Norgen & Hill, 1964)). In other words, Whites in general were the majority in public organizations overall. They were the majority in the schools, the workplace, and most importantly the government (Norgen & Hill, 1964; Coombs, 1972). Because of that, they were highly influential in the segregation of not only just Blacks but also other races as well for being able to enter a public organization let alone receive fair treatment (Norgen & Hill, 1964). Even though the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was not the first stride towards equal opportunity, it was the year that the accountability of it was enforced more to be adhered to than comparison to its previous call in 1875 (Coombs, 1972). Nonetheless, what makes the civil rights movement such a pivotal point in relation to diversity is that it was the first initial step to gaining rights in this country for different groups who were not the majority.

Within the attempts to gain these unalienable rights, Blacks had no option but to hope for an individual whom had the power to make change on the governmental side to see it come to past for public awareness. "By the time the 1960 Presidential election

approached, both political parties had become aware that the racial issue could not be ignored” (Coombs, 1972, p. 197). The candidates running for office of presidency during that era were John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon. “John F. Kennedy, the Democratic candidate, easily maneuvered his Republican opponent, Richard M. Nixon, in the search for Afro-American votes. Kennedy had projected an image of aggressive idealism, which captured the imagination of white liberals and of Afro-Americans” (Coombs, 1972, p. 197). In doing so, Kennedy was elected the next president of the United States and it became a duty of his to enforce the desegregation of the country, which would allow Afro-Americans the right to fair employment along with many other rights.

Coombs (1972) explains that President Kennedy remained steadfast on the goal of securing Civil Rights in spite of the mounting tensions amongst citizens as well as political leaders and felt the need for a radical action to take place of submitting the bill to Congress. While the Bill was still up for discussion amongst Congress, Kennedy was shot during a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. The nation sunk into an era of disbelief over the assassination, but most importantly the supporters of the Kennedy administration and the Civil Rights movement felt that the bill would never be reinforced due to it. However, his vice president/predecessor, Lyndon B. Johnson wanted to keep the goals of Kennedy on a continuous stride specifically the Civil Rights Bill was very important. “By the time Bill passed in the spring of 1964, civil rights supporters felt that Johnson was as dependable an ally as Kennedy had been” (Coombs, 1972, p. 200).

Once this bill was actually enacted, it did not secure the fair treatment it was built on for African Americans at the time (Coombs, 1972). In fact, the reaction from its

passage caused a big uproar in certain parts of the country and violence increased heavily as a result of it (Coombs, 1972). There were more acts of brutal beatings, discrimination, and even murders all because of the start for change in this country addressing levels of diversity.

Although African Americans are not the only culture of race that dealt with adversity in gaining rights in this country, they appear to be the most prevalent in sparking the change of individual rights towards equality. “By 1965, the Federal Government had enacted legislation guaranteeing almost all the citizenship rights of America to Negroes and had also provided mechanisms with which to enforce this legislation” (Coombs, 1972, p. 202). The biggest dilemma facing the enactment of a bill to the degree of the Civil Rights one was the enforcing of it on the local level. Nationally it was apparently known, but on the local side it was an uphill battle still that required a re-occurrence of effort in order for the local bureaucracy to really adhere to its true meaning (Coombs, 1972).

The movement for Civil Rights remains a crucial reminder of the strenuous efforts behind the change to diversify everyday living. Most importantly though, it displays the highly built attitudes and perceptions formed into society which to this very day still has an effect. “The Civil Rights movement had, no matter what its critics said of it, accomplished one sweeping victory—the destruction of legal segregation in the United States” (Coombs, 1972, pg. 202).

Nevertheless, the endorsement of White superiority from as far back as the slave trade is the predecessor of the actions, disputes, and beliefs that brought on the division of the United States which as a result has a hand on the fight for civil rights (Anand &

Winters, 2008; Arnwine, 2007). Consequently, from this division, the whole trail behind the separation of class, gender, race, etc. may very well be attributed to the launch of training for diversity since it appeared a major issue. The controversy on diversity from this time is what looks to be the onset to get the wheels turning under the government's actions to incorporate a permanent change for the acceptance of differences in the United States; however it was just the beginning (Arnwine, 2007). A few more actions following this one in history that rallied off this movement are known as Affirmative Action & Equal Employment, which structured another action of positive steps to diversify the operation of this country.

Affirmative Action & Equal Employment

The battle for civil rights was simply the onset of the issues surrounded around equality within the United States. However, one of the most pivotal leaders who fought towards equal rights, Dr. Martin Luther King, is well known for making the most substantial mark for beginning the move towards change (Arnwine, 2007). Through numerous speeches, rallies, and movements, King believed that one day these dreams of equality can be achieved for not just African Americans, but for all groups that are viewed as the minority. "Honoring his vision, large segments of society came together to promote legislation and initiatives designed to end discrimination and to strive for true inclusiveness. In this environment, affirmative action was born" (Arnwine, 2007, p. 159).

The implementation of affirmative action is the first step in legislation around the mid 1960's at offering the disadvantaged a chance to reach what is called the ideal American dream. "President Lyndon Johnson was the first to use the term "affirmative action" in a 1965 Executive Order requiring federal contractors to take affirmative action

to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin” (Arnwine, 2007, p. 159). The result of this action has been a re-occurring dilemma for quite some time for those who view it based off the same injustices that it was created upon. In addition, a part of it re-occurring is likely due to level of subjectivity utilized when addressing equality and diversity.

Consequently, when affirmative action became mandated into law, companies had the responsibility of making sure they filled certain guidelines pertaining to minorities. Therefore, it became a question or not on whether companies were hiring certain minorities just to meet requirements or actually assessing an individual’s true abilities to do the job that is being applied for. “Much has been made of whether affirmative action calls for setting goals, which employers must make a good faith effort to reach, or if it imposes actual numerical quotas” (Hacker, 1995, p. 124).

In addition, another issue that stood at the forefront of affirmative action was the preferential treatment that also became associated with it. “Opponents argue that these measures are tantamount to unlawful preferences, quotas, and reverse discrimination” (Arnwine, 2007, p. 161). When this plan of promoting equal opportunity arose from the executive body around the time of its creation, the purpose was clear in itself for helping any and all to gain a foot in the door which took hold on the private as well as the public sector. “Both private and public institutions have implemented various types of race-conscious affirmative action measures, primarily in the contexts of education, employment, and government contracting. Some of these programs are intended to remedy past discrimination, while others are aimed at promoting diversity and

inclusiveness” (Arnwine, 2007, p. 160). “The purpose of affirmative action is not simply to avow good intentions but to register results. Showing you have tried to find qualified people will not suffice” (Hacker, 1995, p. 126).

Although the public sector originated the legislation to provide equal opportunity with affirmative action, it also endured the highest impact of it as well. “Public employment has been prominent target in affirmative action cases partly because it relies more heavily on tests and also because government is held to higher standard than enterprises committed to pursuing profits” (Hacker, 1995, p. 131). Also, official agencies cannot use the defense of “business necessity” when their hiring practices are challenged” (Hacker, 1995, p. 131).

Nevertheless, the plan within affirmative action has done the latter of its goal to make designated groups equally yoked in the workplace to enjoy career advancement opportunities. “In fact there is evidence that this has not happened, and that continuing discrimination and harassment – including white male backlash – have contributed to job dissatisfaction and turnover among affirmative action groups” (Agocs & Burr, 1996, p. 32). Therefore, these factors clarify the positive intent behind this action, but it also points out the short comings of what it was meant to do. As long as we have diversity, we will always have issues surrounding affirmative action. However, if companies can strive to shed more clarity on diversity training results for all levels of the workforce, especially in public organizations, then affirmative action has the ability to make the most out of its purpose and as a result increase diversity awareness throughout society. At this juncture it is pertinent to review the strategies employed in the public sector to deliver diversity training.

PUBLIC SECTOR STRATEGIES ON DIVERSITY TRAINING

When developing diversity training in the workplace, the objectives should be the main priority in making sure that they produce long-term effects over short-term ones. In many organizations, the methods of training sometimes lack a link in the midst of training that institutes towards a true level of success (Rynes & Rosen, 1995). Therefore, limiting its potential and allowing it to be viewed by management as a waste of money. The start of training begins with awareness. “The immediate training goal is true awareness, which starts when individual behavior is interpreted in the context of another’s culture, but it is not encumbered by cultural stereotypes regarding competence, power, or personality” (Sanchez & Medkik, 2004, p. 518). However, the following objectives of a diversity training program, which seem to be typical as a format towards set up by most organizations, are to “define diversity, examine demographic changes contributing to diversity, develop awareness of the effect of diversity on social perception, discuss cultural factors that hinder effective communication, and recognize how cultural values, biases, assumptions, and prejudice influence decision making” (Sessa, 1992, p. 37).

Following the first step of awareness in training, is the ability to zone in on breaking individual mindsets that are pre-determined by a thought process that usually takes place at a younger age. The focus is shifted here, “to go beyond the initial category and its immediate cognitive, affective, and behavioral correlates, perceivers should be motivated to attend to other individual attributes and to integrate all of these attributes into an impression of the target” (Sanchez & Medkik, 2004, p. 519). An accomplishment from this as a guide for diversity training is projected that by “attending a training session

that warns about the biasing effects of thoughtless categorization ought to motivate perceivers to increase their attentional resources when interacting with culturally different individuals” (Sanchez & Medkik, 2004, pg. 519). In order to assist in this portion of training, viable topics of discussion should be centralized around the organization’s potential for growth which would entail with buying into organizational goals, how the effects that these pre-conceived notions of thought concerning difference turn into action, look at past issues of comparable companies that encountered issues due to the lack thereof concerning diversity, and lastly an exercise to highlight the current difference of the workplace and the prior topics discussed (Rynes & Rosen, 1995; Sanchez & Medkik, 2004).

Next, to follow up as a consistent reminder, there should be an established support network. “This supportive work context should facilitate behavioral change by providing consequences for the newly learned behaviors, and adequate organizational policies and procedures” (Sanchez & Medkik, 2004, p. 520). If implemented correctly, these methods of carrying out a training technique for diversity are good tools to follow as a guide. Nonetheless, somewhere along the lines of this format, organizations whether public or private, seem to miss the connectivity of the previous listed methods. A major part of public sector perception with this originates from conflicting outlooks on training that have been constant over time and not noting the areas for agencies on where change should take place collectively.

Conflicting Outlook of Diversity Training

When it comes to the public vs. private sector techniques of handling business, it is safe to say that a majority of practices are different considering the objectives of each

organization (Kellough & Naff, 2004). However, in relation to diversity, the impact of training for most is meant to increase production (Pitts, 2005). But does this mean the same for public organizations? There are two main factors that incorporate with diversity training that seem to dictate the view of training for the public sector and ties with its success or failure in implementation. "Evaluation of diversity training programs and the conditions under which they succeed or fail is important for several reasons, one which is cost" (Rynes & Rosen, 1995, p. 248).

One factor has always been and will be the distribution of funding when it comes to public sector programs (Rynes & Rosen, 1995). Training itself is indeed a part of that equation. With comparison to the private sector, the outcome of training techniques for that market, whether it is diversity, development, or basic training, is forecast to provide an initial profit growth. Consequently, with that growth, it is believed that it will give them a higher amount of finances to work with for future years to use towards the increasing of operations.

However, in public organizations pending on the economy, lack of efficiency within programs, the approach of different interest, and many other reasons, it can sometimes offset the receipt of funding in this sector. Due to this fluctuation of funding, it makes one wonder if the budgets of certain departments within government barely meet expected needs at times, do they invest in diversity training programs or do they put it on the back burner. Selden & Selden (2001) state out of the "Models of Excellence in Workplace Diversity" by Chambers & Riccucci (1997) that, "Because of constrained budgets and growing demands for more efficient government, public organizations have not invested as heavily in diversity programs as their private sector counterparts, even

though many public sector organizations are committed to diversity efforts (p. 305).

It appears however, during this current time of economic woes, that this same thing is still the case today. It is fact that the United States is still in a recession at the moment, therefore, budgets are still in constraint more than ever. So chances are higher that today's investment in diversity programs may still be less accounted for due to the budgetary issues that control their operation.

Nevertheless, budget issues are just one view on training or lack thereof so to say when it comes to the public sector that affects diversity training because it takes money to achieve the desired result. The second issue around the viewpoints of training also stem from the differences noted between equal employment opportunity/affirmative action and actually managing diversity within the workplace (Agoes & Burr, 1996; Kellough & Naff, 2004; Pitts, 2005). Equal employment and affirmative action is described prior to this mention of diversity management, but the importance on recognizing the difference between them is the misconception that has existed and somewhat still presently exists in public organizations understanding to this day. "In general, previous research on diversity in public administration focused on offering equal employment opportunities to historically discriminated minority groups of the society rather than on enhancing organizational effectiveness as in the private sector"(Choi, 2008, p. 604). Although diversity training has been around for about half a century, it was just eleven years ago where the move to change policy had been reported in the sole purpose of bringing awareness to the lacking view on managing diversity within government (Soni, 2000). "In a very general sense, diversity management programs reflect an organizationally commitment to "recruit, retain, reward, and promote a heterogeneous mix of productive,

motivated, and committed workers” (Ivancevich & Gilbert, 2000, pg. 77), but the report from Workforce 2000 (Johnston & Packer, 1987) exemplified different. In the report it stated, “The institute warned that existing human resources policies and practices, developed when the workforce was largely young, White, and male, would become ineffective as the workforce became older, increasingly non White, and composed of more women than ever before (Kellough & Naff, 2004, pg. 63). Therefore, this concept of old human resource practices is what is being referred to as taking grasp in the public sector environment. It exemplified to management that it was best to change with the times “to recruit and retain needed employees in such a diverse labor market” (Kellough & Naff, 2004, p. 64).

That was then, and still today publicly there seems to be no difference shown to prove that the view is different. The government administers the enactment of promotion for diversity in operations by its distribution of literature, updating of websites, and proverbial statements of it. However, while on the search for specific diversity management programs in government, it seems from a personal perspective that it exhibits more focus on meeting standards of equal employment/affirmative action rather than focus on ways to strengthen the concept of diversity with training. “Although affirmative action programs have helped women, racial/ethnic minorities, and older workers get on board, their exclusion from circles of influence in the organization keeps them from fully contributing and benefiting from their involvement in the corporate workplace” (Mor Barak, 2000, p. 48).

In some way this may appear as a cause to low receptivity of diversity itself for public organizations. “Given the importance of achieving representative bureaucracies, it

is imperative to understand whether, and to what extent, federal agencies have adopted diversity management initiatives” (Kellough & Naff, 2004, p. 63). Now what scholars such as R. Roosevelt Thomas (1990) set out to do was to simply move the thoughts of government standpoint on diversity into another realm. His reason more so was on the way the objectives of affirmative action seemed more like favor to one group when in reality, it is about more than just that one group. His reflection of diversity and government “suggested that our goal should be to promote productivity within organizations by enhancing the ability of all individuals to achieve as much as their potential will allow and to “do it without artificial programs, standards --- or barriers” (R.R. Thomas, 1990, pg. 112). “Moreover, R.R. Thomas contended diversity is not just about race, ethnicity, and gender. Rather, it includes other ways in which people differ from one another, including age, background, education, work role, and personality” (Kellough & Naff, 2004, p. 63). Overall, the views of training have distinct similarities since they are the start to not only enacting the programs but giving it a chance to succeed. In order for employees to grasp the importance for the use of this type of training, then that is when the acknowledgement of these differences has a heightened chance of increasing productivity, enhancing mood of the work environment, and also has the ability to make a difference on those outside of the training as well by these learned actions.

Training’s Relationship to Attitudes

The views of training focus exhibits an overall observation of the reputation from the public sector on diversity training, but as a form of contributing to its success, a component in it is said to be the effect training ends up having on attitudes. Attitude

adjustments possess the ability to transform into a positive outcome in handling workplace problems as well as the interaction amongst public officials and employees with each other and when it comes to citizens; thus creating a perspective that Selden and Selden refer to as the “learning to effectiveness perspective” (pg. 315). “Agencies adopting this perspective value diversity because it improves internal processes by incorporating the varied perspectives and approaches to work that different group members offer an organization “(Milliken & Martins, 1996, pg. 402).

However, this is where the biggest problem within the training seems to evolve. The reason is on account of the attitudes from those of upper level management first. An account for change has to start from up top before it can trickle down to the bottom when an impact as big as diversity training is involved.

Consequently, this situation is a representation of an issue that correlates directly with discrimination and unfair practices. Under the explaining of the paradigm Discrimination-And-Fairness being a reason for failure on public organization’s part of diversity by Thomas & Ely (1996), “public organizations pursue diversity under the guise of equality and fairness and are concerned primarily with compliance with EEO and affirmative action legal requirements” (p. 5). Organizations that want to manage diversity tend to adopt the principles for diversity programs within their structure to maintain the reputation of being diverse, which in addition is helpful in avoiding legal hassles. “Other organizations and agencies have been drawn into court and penalized because of blatantly discriminatory, exclusionary policies and practices” (Allison, 1999, pg.79).

Nevertheless, the dimensions of diversity are different for each organization, so the reception of the diversity training programs makes it just as difficult when

implementing them. Being receptive of diversity in the workplace involves breaking down the organizational barriers associated with it first in order to find a way to measure some form of success from diversity training. “It is crucial to involve the entire organization in diversity-related efforts” (Overmyer Day, 1995, p. 28). “In order to accept and commit to a diversity initiative, the entire workforce must understand the issues and goals of the initiative and know how those goals relate to individual employees on the job” (Overmyer Day, 1995, p. 28). Therefore, whomever the trainer is that coordinates the diversity efforts would have to develop a way to show employees the best way to incorporate it into their everyday work environment, in addition to an increased effort from management.

Along with management’s strong push to effect attitudes of employees, the training once implemented needs to be directed at noting differences of all kinds (Soni, 2000). They have to show the different backgrounds from individuals within the organization and relate it to how the various perspectives can solve problems and complete task collectively. Nevertheless, all different types of barriers can hinder this from being effective. “Barriers may range from blatant forms of prejudice and discrimination, to more subtle program-specific manifestations such as inappropriate program offerings, agency nonresponsiveness, agency insensitivity, and indiscriminate bureaucratic regulations” (Allison, 1999, pg.80). In other words, the barriers from an organizational standpoint have restrictions that come off as blatant insensitive ways of individual bias and these biased feelings sometimes create more subtle ways of shaping workforce programming to restrict others in different areas from those that do not accept workforce diversity.

In relation to organizational barriers for the acceptance of diversity within public organizations, those barriers stem from something else, which are individual feelings (Allison, 1999). Individualistic perceptions and behaviors truly are the main reason that diversity is even an issue in the world today. The worldly restraint towards diversity correlates with the initial attitudes that come from the restraint of diversity training when organizations strive to implement it. In order to understand these attitudes, we must first look at what factor over time has molded these perceptions. Since as far back as time goes in American history, the world has operated as a white-male dominated society. Due to this act of dominance by the race known as the majority, it has given people “privilege” over others (Johnson, 2006).

With that mindset being so prevalent in the majority’s upbringing, it makes it difficult to alter the thought process of individuals towards being open for diversity. “Most organizations’ failure in the area of diversity occurs not because they’re run by mean spirited bigots—few are—but because they deal with issues of privilege badly or not at all, unless a crisis forces the issue” ... “Even then, they deal with it only enough to make it seem to go away, which usually doesn’t include confronting the reality of privilege and oppression” (Johnson, 2006, p. 65). Therefore, an organization can do all it feels is necessary to get diversity and training for diversity within their operations, but the complex issue is getting individual attitudes to open up to it in order to see it show a true form of success. It is the individual attitudes that have to be shifted in accepting diversity in order to change the challenges to implementation on an organizational level (Milliken & Martins, 1996).

The Role of Training

In assessing the needs of training towards diversity, managers have to observe all the possibilities of success and failures associated with it. “Given the widespread use of diversity training, it is important to assess the extent to which such training can be an effective means of achieving the learning objectives associated with it”(Hanover & Cellar, 1998, p. 106). It is known that the training is very beneficial, which is why a majority of organizations actually implement the training (Hanover & Cellar, 1998).

However, the outcome of diversity training also involves the action of development to assist with its success to improve its workings for public organizations. What this does, is set the tone for new employees entering the organization and helps with a re-evaluation of self for older ones. “New employees frequently need training to help them understand their tasks, technologies, and procedures unique to the organization, and to correctly implement key rules and regulations” (Berman et al., 2010, p. 276). “Existing personnel periodically need to acquire new abilities, giving real meaning to lifelong learning” (Berman et al., 2010, p. 276). In other words, it gives new employees a mindset for diversity going into working for the company and makes older employees assess their way of normally doing things. In the end, it breeds a more cohesive workplace environment, which shows benefits of the training.

As stated before, the environment within the workplace affects the output so organizations also believe that the goals of diversity improve business reasoning. “Many organizations have stated that they want to value or manage diversity for business reasons—for instance, to reflect their markets better or to improve products and services” (Overmyer Day, 1995, p. 26). However, on the side of public agencies, business reasoning is not the first objective; the citizens are. Even though the training is the first step of

showing beneficial results for an organization, it is the development of the diversity training techniques that strengthen a company for future performance. “Development increases staff potential, assists in succession planning, and is tied to strategic organizational development, ensuring that agencies have the employees with relevant skills” (Berman et al., 2010, p. 276).

Within the specific context of government agencies, this development is a need with it being one of the nation’s largest employers. The better the training and development is for public organizations, then the better retention rate of employees for it as well (Choi, 2008). Overall, the benefits of diversity training vary. They can be helpful to the organization in many perspectives, but it is the various ways of what program they implement and how it is implemented that dictates the actual success of the training (Rynes & Rosen, 1995; Hanover & Cellar, 1998; Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1999; Naff & Kellough, 2003; Anand & Winters, 2008).

Managing diversity is an initiative that all leaders should take personally to help success rates of programs. The shifts in the racial and ethnic population of the U.S. in the workforce over the past few years are a prime example to why employment policies aimed at promoting diversity have a chance of improving the work environment. It starts with the strong push from the administrative standpoint that needs to show continuous effort.

Norma M. Riccucci (2006) discusses that there are a number of possible recommendations that may have the possibility of assisting employers for the diversity shifts for now and the future. The first recommendation says, “Obtaining a strong commitment and support for diversity initiatives from not only agency leaders, but also

from government CEOs, such as mayors, governors, and the President” (Ricucci, 2006, p.59). To explain, if administrative personnel believe strongly in the diversity efforts and integrate it within the objectives of the organization, the company then sets the benchmark for its goal and that expression of commitment displays the level of significance for the outlook. The second recommendation stated says, “Developing an organizational culture that supports and values diversity” is helpful (Ricucci, 2006, p. 60). Once administrative support is gathered, the exchange within the organization relies on acceptance from the culture, which they view being crucial to having those efforts institutionalized in policy.

The third recommendation discussed focuses on “developing family-friendly benefits and policies” (Ricucci, 2006, p. 60). The benefits that come from employers are extremely vital for any employees’ occupation, so in return a sense of security is produced with those benefit packages. That sense of security given from the benefits will serve as a likely tool for an individual to open themselves up to diversity efforts so they can avoid job loss. Public organizations are very well known for their secure effort in producing the best benefits for public service employees more so than anything in comparison to its counterpart in the private sector. Compensation has mostly displayed itself as the direct drive behind private sector business strategies with benefits based more so on position as well as their organization’s amount of income. However, in the public sector, the utilization of these family-friendly benefits and policies serve as strengths to public organizations.

The fourth recommendation is “Developing training and development programs” (Ricucci, 2006, p. 61). Training and development needs to be consistent for diversity to

have longevity within public organizations. The education has to be equal for managers, supervisors, and employees so that they will know how to handle discriminatory acts when they occur.

The final recommendation emphasizes, “Developing opportunities for promotion and advancement” (Ricucci, 2006, p. 61). “A glass ceiling or sticky ladder has worked to prevent women and people of color from reaching upper-level, higher paying jobs” (Naff, 2001, p. 67). When the “flood gates” open up for room of promotion and advancement of diverse groups, the opportunity serves as a symbolic representation of managing diversity well within an organization’s operations, which in public organizations makes the representative bureaucracy more evident.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Once diversity training has been applied for the better making of an organization, there has to be a way to actually see changes that have taken place by the training. Out of those that are heavy on diversity training, they make it a requirement so that the return on investment produces positive results. In addition, when it comes to public organizations these results come back in forms of representative policies, plans, objectives, and changes that ultimately bring out the ideal outlook of public organizations (Kellough & Naff, 2004).

Some organizations have been fortunate enough to benefit from diversity training efforts, but measurement issues of diversity programs have problems when assessing the effectiveness of the programs. “To be sure, one measure of the success of diversity programs is the extent to which organizations are moving women and people of color into upper-level positions of power” (Ricucci, 2006, p. 65). However, in the article “The Pitfalls of Diversity Training,” it states “reports of positive results, while growing, are still hard to come by” (Overmyer Day, 1995, p. 27).

The success of diversity training programs vary for many reasons but ideally, the program’s effectiveness is difficult to measure due to lacking expectations from management as a factor. Any organization that uses these training programs on diversity has the perplex task of assessing the success of it if what is expected is not clear. Once they have reached that point, not knowing where to go from there is viewed as a factor that impacts the measurement of effectiveness (Anand & Winters, 2008).

Nevertheless, there is proof that an investment in diversity is existent in the public sector through its growth in numbers of other races, but data is lacking in respect to

showing the use of other diversity management techniques on behalf of these public organizations. “Fifty-five percent of agencies responding to the NPR (National Performance Review) survey reported using measures such as productivity and performance to assess the effectiveness of the diversity initiative. However, closer examination revealed that these measures primarily consisted of a comparison of agency demographics with the civilian labor force (already required by the EEOC) or referred to performance elements included in managers’ and supervisors performance plans” (Naff & Kellough, 2003, p. 1312). A part of the reason for this is due to the vast array of public organizations that exist in the United States.

Every bureaucratic agency is mandated to abstain from discrimination and be more inclusive of diversity, but an actual account of use is just as equally difficult to find as it is to determine effectiveness of training. “Objectives are typically stated in more concrete and immediate terms” (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 367). Over the numerical measurement of evaluation, the other side of it is the action side of things from people once it is over and their thought process. Rasmussen (1996) said in the ASDT trainers sourcebook, “It’s not the workshop that’s important, it’s what people do afterwards that counts” (p. 7). Therefore, it varies one organization after the next.

Measurement/Impact

The measurement of impact in diversity training has to be done with clear distinction on how it will be accounted for to determine a positive correlation to benefit over cost. Evaluating the impact of diversity training after its use for companies is assessed through various different ways pending on the company, but it must be clear exactly what factors will be measured. “To assess its effectiveness, there must be a clear

understanding of what diversity training is intended to achieve” (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 367), but with public organization the desired outcome of the training misses clarity for the long term projection. “Very little research in public administration has sought to understand the impact of personnel diversity on organizational outcomes (Pitts, 2005, pg. 6). In essence, public organizations seem to lack ways to properly measure diversity training’s impact to evaluate a degree of success (Soni, 2000). However, from some studies that have tried to determine causality among effectiveness to measure training, Sungjoo Choi hypothesizes two components that are possible: job satisfaction and retention of employees, in other words employee turnover (p. 609). These two factors make for possible numerical calculations that can serve as measurement tools for training.

Consequently, one affects the other, but they are likely to not have strong validity in measuring or assessing an impact because many other factors outside of diversity training effect the outcome of this as well. “As with goals, performance must be measured using multiple indicators, and this is a problem when comparing organizations with disparate performance outcomes” (Pitts, 2005, p. 15). “Even though there is prevailing belief among practitioners that diversity training is valuable, the reality is that many questions remain about its effectiveness” (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 367). Currently, “minimum research exists on empirically studied data coming from the public sector with focus on diversity management process and how it effects organizational outcomes” (Naff & Kellough, 2003, p. 1312), therefore explaining where the problem exists for a highly accurate evaluation.

An example of diversity’s measurement for public organizations is carried out in a

case study by Vidu Soni (2000) on diversity management and its reception in the 21st century for federal agencies. What makes the federal agency a great example in assessing diversity efforts of public organizations and its receptive effects from employees is because of where it ranks on the hierarchy scale in comparison to state and local. Federal is a great representation of an overall national effort compared to a sectional effort that comes from a state or local agency.

In other words, they are at the top of the bureaucratic food chain therefore their model makes it a great one to follow. “A case study of the diversity practices of a regional office (referred to as the Agency throughout the article) of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was conducted to examine the extent to which the Agency’s employees valued workplace diversity and supported diversity-management initiatives of their employer” (Soni, 2000, pg. 396). In the article, it states that to assist with the training of diversity initiatives in this experiment the agency requested the services of a diversity task force, which carried out a program to increase diversity awareness amongst its employees. “The primary components of the Agency’s diversity program included: (1) issuance of a formal policy statement by the regional administrator; (2) establishment of a diversity task force to monitor progress; (3) agency-wide mandatory diversity awareness training conducted in 1993; (4) special emphasis programs (including rotational assignments) to recruit more minorities in scientific and administrative positions; (5) leadership development programs for women and minorities; (6) observance of a variety of commemorative events” (Soni, 2000, pg. 397).

The percentages for the results of this experiment were divided between the majority, which was the White male and female along with all other being part of the

minority category instead of dividing them by race. Employees responded to a questionnaire that included twenty questions, focused on diversity practice and receptiveness, “designed to measure different dimensions of diversity” (Soni, 2000, p. 398). Once the project was complete, the measurement of receptivity to diversity and management initiatives showed that for White males, 29% reported a high receptivity to diversity compared to 56% of White females, 68% of minority males, and 71% of minority females (Soni, 2000, p. 400).

The results from this experiment display that from a major public entity how even with the implementation of a diversity program, personal feelings from it varied response wise in acceptance of it. Since the work environment is encountered differently from minorities and white females over white males, it appears to show they are more in support of diversity initiatives over white males. With this outcome, it is hard to determine if this is the result for all organizations but the problem with it is the likelihood of it being the case, meaning what if this is the same thought process for most employees in public organizations.

If this is indeed the case, as an assessment and evaluation of diversity training for public organization, it shows that more needs to happen from the public sector in order to improve the development of employees from the stance of training. An evaluation assessment of diversity training on a numerical basis will probably always be difficult to come about when feelings and perceptions are involved, however, the stride towards altering this and producing more positive feelings is the outcome that is best to achieve better results of evaluation. As time moves on, there will possibly be more factors that grow in helping evaluate diversity training programs overall, but the differences noted in

the public sector for it and its outcome in the end needs a slightly different approach due to the objective of who the public sector serves, which are the citizens.

CONCLUSION

No matter the job field, the expertise, or specialization, diversity in any form is a help in establishing multi-cultural change outside of the norm for any organization (Selden & Selden, 2001). In public organizations specifically, the use of it makes them better equipped to serve the public while allowing the best effort to come about with a representative workforce. “Public organizations have the social and political opportunity to utilize the diversity of their employees to foster the active participation and contribution of individuals from nondominant cultural backgrounds” (Selden & Selden, 2001, p. 321), which as a result from it has the ability to ameliorate public sector workforce development for the future. “The potential barriers to and dynamics to multicultural understanding are not mysterious” (Guy & Newman, 1998, p. 75).

However, these barriers can be lessened in public organizations with a change in perceptions from those up top in higher public administrator positions and more commitment from their end to implement this training to their employees with a more direct approach (Rynes & Rosen, 1995). The views of training will change along with the change in perceptions, as well as the role that diversity plays on training in general and when this change happens, “public organizations will realize their capacities to comprehend, value, and benefit from cultural diversity through their movement toward creating a climate of genuine acceptance of and sincere respect for ethnicity, gender, and other characteristics that define individual’s cultural background” (Brown & Harris, 1993, p. 108).

Recommendations

This is not to say that some public organizations do not have good diversity management initiatives currently in play but as an overall representation, review of the literature shows the internal & external discrepancies associated with diversity training which displays that somewhere a re-assessment of current practice needs to take place and more needs to occur. Here are a few recommendations that can be helpful in making sure this enhance government's reputation for it.

First, is to find a way to input it into funding request each year which can be right on the agenda with earmarks during budget request. By doing this, public organizations would then be able to guarantee that finances are put to the side to implement it more instead of having the excuse of money being the issue. "To effectively go deeper, many companies realize that they have to dedicate resources to diversity learning" (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 370).

Next, once this is secured, another route would be to make the training more prevalent amongst existing employees instead of doing so on a once a year basis while making it mandatory over voluntary (Rynes & Rosen, 1995). In addition, administrators and managers should make a mandatory "new employee" training session that focuses on diversity when newly hired instead of just mentioning it in basic training for the position. The benefits from this would have a higher chance of employees buying into the company's goals of it which is aligned with a rate of success. Therefore, this can be attributed as an asset as well to public organization's reputation. "As such, organizational goals, or mission, are inherently tied to any diversity initiative and should appear in any model attempting to link diversity practices to outcomes" (Pitts, 2005, p.

14).

Last, they could take factors such as turnover, discrimination complaints of employees, and client/citizen survey in response to treatment at bureaucratic offices and combine them as tools of measurement to assess if the prior changes have an effect compared to what is currently being utilized. According David W. Pitts (2005), “If diversity results in increased organizational performance, then an organization may wish to enact policies that encourage continued diversity and make it desirable for women and people of color to remain in the organization. If diversity results in decreased performance, then an organization will wish to understand how policies and practices might be put into place to manage the diversity present and make it productive. In either case, an organization needs to understand how its diversity is affecting performance” (p. 8).

The world is adapting significantly to the changes of diverse backgrounds. These diverse groups of people from all types of backgrounds bring contrary knowledge to handling all forms of situations that affect the carrying out of business. For an organization to get the intended effect that comes from diversity training, owners, managers, supervisors, and leaders have to be the trendsetters to getting employees to follow suit. “In order to accept and commit to a diversity initiative, the entire workforce must understand the issues and goals of the initiative and know how those goals relate to individual employees on the job” (Overmyer Day, p. 28). The objectives have to be defined and show sense of clarity for the goals that the company plans to achieve for constant success.

The concept of diversity training remains in a pioneer phase and with that in

mind, it still has an extensive way to go to eliminate the failures associated with it. As a whole, the process of opening up to difference and seeing diversity for what it is starts with an internal factor. People have to take an individual assessment of “self” to change within for a collective to replicate the change. The acknowledgement of privilege is the first step towards change. However, the conversion of changing mindsets ingrained in privilege, power, and difference from its origin of dominance is the most momentous account for when diversity training will be ultimately effective towards the development of employees in not just the private sector but in the entire workforce.

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