

Workforce Diversity

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

What is diversity? Why is diversity important to you and, most importantly, to the employers that you're eventually going to work for? This tutorial will cover the topic of workforce diversity. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. Workforce Diversity

Workforce diversity, simply defined, is employing people from a wide variety of backgrounds within an organization. You see, workforce diversity tends to benefit a company because all of these different backgrounds help to breed different ideas from different perspectives.

HR's role in workplace diversity is more than just hiring employees; HR plays a role with a lot of different issues surrounding that hiring issue. They also have to deal with issues such as temporary employees within an organization, for instance.

Now, diversity includes aspects of a wide range of categories:

- Backgrounds
- Race
- Gender
- Socioeconomic Status
- Age

All of these things go together to make up the totality of workforce diversity. As you can see, if companies include people from all of these different backgrounds, then not only is there a more diverse workforce, but there are also a lot of different perspectives that can be put to use to solve different problems throughout an organization.

The value of diversity is, as mentioned, is that it brings along a variety of perspectives for different aspects of the company, which leads to new ideas and innovation. It also serves to improve business reputation, because by being a more diverse employer, companies tend to have better relations with the community--which can really enhance a business's reputation.

There are a diversity of options to choose from as far as opinions that are put forth for different problems. These opinions that a diverse workforce brings to an organization can benefit the company overall, and conflict resolution, as a result, can be much smoother.

Workplace diversity creates a better workforce because employers are able to choose from a larger hiring pool. They're not limiting themselves to people from one particular educational background, ethnic group, race, or sex. Because there are a lot of different people to choose from, that workforce pool becomes much bigger. Lastly, it brings about increased flexibility for the workforce, such as different religious holidays for people of different cultural backgrounds, for example.



TERM TO KNOW

Workforce Diversity

Employing people from a wide variety of backgrounds within an organization.

2. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

The EEOC, or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, enforces federal laws against discrimination. The EEOC reviews actions like hiring, firing, and harassment when look for companies that are discriminating against a particular group of people.

Now, a business needs to have 15 or more employees in order for the EEOC to regulate it and start reviewing the practices that the company uses as far as hiring, firing, or harassment.

3. Affirmative Action Plans

An **affirmative action plan** is a plan put in place by an organization to increase workforce diversity and decrease the likelihood of discrimination. When a company has an affirmative action plan, it leads to increased workforce diversity because that company is affirmatively, or positively, and proactively looking at diversity and ensuring that they're getting the most benefit they can from a diverse workforce.

In addition to companies being proactive and voluntarily putting an affirmative action plan in place, it may also be required in order to meet one of the EEOC legal issues.

An affirmative action plan will have several components:

- *Analysis.* You have to understand where you are in order to make a plan that's actually going to work for you. The analysis involves collecting data to inform the plan and drive that plan forward--an understanding of where you are and where you need to be.
- *Action Plan.* This consists of planning out what you're going to do. Once you know where you are and where you want to be, you need to have an action plan to determine how to get there in the best way possible.
- *Auditing.* This is simply checking that what you actually did and what you said you were going to do is the same thing. If you're falling short on your action plan, then you'll need to make changes in the audit process to ensure that you're actually getting to the place, that end goal, where you intended to go.



TERM TO KNOW

Affirmative Action Plan

A plan put in place by an organization to increase workplace diversity and decrease the likelihood of discrimination.



SUMMARY

Today we learned about **workforce diversity**. We also learned about the **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**, or **EEOC**, which enforces federal laws against discrimination. Lastly, we learned about the **affirmative action plans** that businesses use in order to increase diversity and decrease the likelihood that they will discriminate against a particular group of people.

Good luck!

Source: adapted from sophia instructor james howard



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