Chapter 1
Integrating Diversity into Organization and Career Development: A Changing Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This chapter’s goal is to describe the confusion that occurs within organizations where there is no clear definition of diversity from which all employees operate. Integrating diversity into organization and career development is vital but cannot occur without an operational definition of the term diversity. There is also misunderstanding between the terms career management and career development. The terms are not interchangeable, although they are treated as though they are within organizations. Eliminating the confusion and misunderstandings will assist organization leaders’ efforts to integrate diversity into organization and career development.

INTRODUCTION

Unimaginable is the term often first expressed by individuals after they have witnessed or experienced a significant change. One example was the election of the 44th President of the United States of America, the Honorable Barack Hussein Obama, an American Black man. It was unimaginable, world-wide, that this level of change was possible in America in 2008. Yet, it occurred because of an impact of diversity. Not only because of a diversity in appearance of the citizens in the United States, but also because of a diversity of thought within the citizenry of the American voting population. There is not enough of any one group of citizens in American society to be a super majority, and there may never be again.

The term unimaginable may become obsolete with respect to diversity because of the above described change. For some individuals the obsolescence was almost immediate as they began to speak of a post-racial America. This may be a bit premature, but it is imaginable as citizens continue to accept and embrace change that occurs through...
the impact of diversity on organization and career development within organizations. The American
government has provided the world with a view
of the impact of diversity on an organization and
ultimately its impact on individual careers. The
world is witnessing resistance, acceptance, and
infinite ways in which diversity is experienced
by non-diverse and diverse individuals.

There is no definitive definition of diversity
within society; however, the federal government
has provided a definitive definition for organiza-
tions. The federal government’s definition origi-
nated from the 1964 Civil Rights Act legislation,
but has evolved through Presidential, Executive
Orders to provide protection for individuals who
are discriminated against within the workplace.
The following list contains the classification by
which groups of employees are currently protected
within organizations that have federal contracts
and are enforced by the Equal Employment Op-
portunities Commission (EEOC):

1. **Age**: Age Discrimination in Employment
   Act of 1967;
2. **Disability**: Vocational Rehabilitation and
   Other Rehabilitation Services of 1973 and
   Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;
3. **National Origin**: Civil Rights Act of 1964;
4. **Race/Color**: Civil Rights Act of 1964;
5. **Religion**: Civil Rights Act of 1964;
6. **Sex**: Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Civil Rights
   Act of 1964; and
7. **Sexual Orientation**: Executive Order
   11478. (2014, ¶ 1)

Having federal contracts requires organizations

(ADEA), and the Americans with Disabilities
Act of 1990, (ADA); pregnancy (Pregnancy
Disrimination Act); retaliation; sexual harass-
ment; genetic information (Genetic Information
Nondiscrimination Act of 2008); and veteran status
(Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance
Act of 1974 and Uniformed Services Employment
and Reemployment Rights Act).

This text reveals that across a spectrum of situa-
tions and issues, there is a need to clearly delineate
the difference between legal, mandated diversity
and diversity of thought. Organization leaders
have permitted and perpetuated the mudding of the
waters by allowing the word to, in essence, simply
represent difference. This choice has benefitted
neither the organization nor the individual. It has
resulted in over $8-10 billion spent on ineffective
diversity training without evidential, positive
change as reflected in the continuous claims,
lawsuits, and settlements made through the Equal
Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC)
and the United States Department of Labor as a
result of discriminatory workplace practices. U.S.
EEOC Chair Berrien noted that the EEOC had
filed 21 systemic lawsuits in Fiscal Year 2013
securing “a record $372.1 million in monetary
relief for victims of employment discrimination
in private sector and state and local government
workplaces” (Performance and Accountability

This chapter suggests that some of these prob-
lems can be addressed if organizations pursue a
change towards career development evaluations as
opposed to the traditional performance evaluation
systems that are currently used. The majority of
Human Resource (HR) professionals do not like
their performance evaluation systems because they
are too subjective and subsequently inaccurate
and ineffective. Most employees enter organiza-
tions with the expectation of career advancement
and/or career change, yet organizations typically
do not have career development and/or career