Diversity Matters:

Becoming Culturally Competent

Diversity 2.0: A definition for the modern workplace

Diversity is being redefined every day: while it traditionally referred to racial, ethnic, and gender difference, now it is seen as comprising many more dimensions. A diverse workplace has differences in:

- Socio-economic status
- The age of co-workers
- Religion
- Physical abilities
- Political Beliefs
- Sexual identity

Today, we even discuss diversity in terms of different thinking and problem solving backgrounds, different personality types, and different learning types.

Cultural Competence: Embracing Diversity

Like diversity, cultural competence is a complex term. To put it simply, you are culturally competent when you actively build and encourage behaviors, attitudes, and policies in your workplace that encourage positive cross-cultural communication.

Check out our Cultural Competence Action Plan. What are you already doing? What do you need to do to be culturally competent?
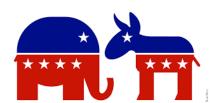
Cultural Competency Action Plan

⇒ Treat people in a way they wish to be treated rather than the way you wish to be treated. Social activities, practices and customs that you find comfortable may not be so for someone else.

⇒ Know your own cultural biases. Identify the stereotypes (conscious or unconscious) that you have of people from different groups and how well they may perform on the job? Work to differentiate between your personal preferences and the skills needed to perform the job.

⇒ Educate yourself about differing viewpoints and potential areas of conflict – and work to educate others. When someone begins to generalize or stereotype a fellow employee, you'll more prepared to counter their arguments and defuse tension.

September Cheat Sheet: How to Keep the (Political) Peace at Work

Election season is in full swing, and it seems like everyone has different perspectives and opinions on everything. Unlike social media, your workplace doesn't come with an instant "Block button" to hide those you disagree with. Follow these rules to create a respectful environment for dealing with political diversity.

Is it worth it? Best practice dictates that employees avoid political discussion of any form during official business, but the line isn't as clear when you're socializing with co-workers. Before you start talking, ask yourself whether the side-effects of such a conversation are worth it.

Ask for consent. Before you start talking about your candidate of choice, ask the people in earshot whether they're comfortable with the subject matter and/ or if they mind overhearing your discussion. Remember, silence is not consent; if they're quiet, that could signal that they are uncomfortable.

Accept difference. You aren't the only one with a deep and honestly-held conviction, and no matter how reasonable your arguments are, there will be those who disagree. When you've reached the limit of civil dialogue, agree to disagree…and return to more common ground for conversation.