

DIVERSITY - THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

“A MANAGER’S TOOLBOX”

Part 3 in a Series



Teaming for High-Performance

1. Acknowledge the uniqueness of your employees as a *valuable* benefit. Itemize or list the wide range of differences found in your employee base and strategically find teams and job assignments for these talents to be utilized.
2. Assemble a heterogeneous team by including diverse ages, genders, functional backgrounds, and experiences. Then have the team meet together regularly and often. This will build mutual confidence and familiarity.
3. Apply multiple and diverse mind-sets to any issue or problem. This can be accomplished through a well-developed team. Give the team the concern and then allow them to develop multiple perspectives through role-playing, putting themselves in the competitors’ shoes, or by conducting strategic games. Such techniques create fresh perspectives, actively engage team members, and spur creative interest in problem solving.
4. Appreciate others by valuing individual variations. Ask yourself, “In what context can this



particular employee trait be useful?” For example, if you find that one of your co-workers is continually negative, assign them to use this trait for identifying potential stumbling blocks in your strategic plan.

5. In determining the right person for the task, place greater emphasis on *character attributes* than on gender, workstyle, ethnic background, etc. Character attributes would include: strong work ethic, integrity, commitment, willingness to risk, etc. Most people want to be part of building something great!
6. In market positioning, create a team that has the right mixture and diversity that matches your target audience. Draw a marketing flow chart that matches the team (who) to the market (what).
7. Create diverse empowered teams by *mutually* developing and designing measurement systems. As a manager, sit down with the team to create stretch goals, milestones, and contracts for targeted results.
8. Look to others for help in solving problems and unexpected situations involving diversity. Bring together a diverse team with a specific diversity issue on the agenda. Hours before the meeting circulate critical information to the team for increased idea stimulation.
9. Strengthen people by giving power away through leadership roles, assignment of important projects, asking for input, acknowledging diverse ideas, assigning critical tasks through teaming, and promoting those who excel in diversity.

***“The greatest rewards come only
from the greatest commitment.”***

Arlene Blum, Team Leader - *American Women’s Himalayan Expedition*