

DIVERSITY - THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

“A MANAGER’S TOOLBOX”

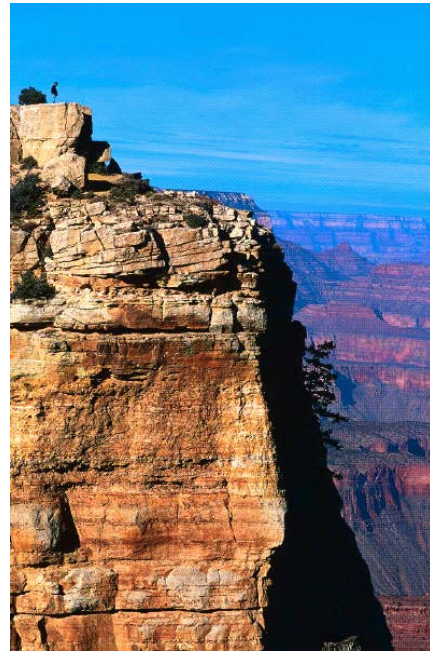
Part 6 in a Series



Overcoming Barriers – Conflict Resolution

1. Create a proactive environment. Coach employees on resolving diversity-related conflicts *before* they become a problem. This can be done by role-playing, mentoring, personal consulting, written sensitivity guidelines, staff meetings, training, and framing inspiring quotes.
2. When dealing with conflict, foster a non-confrontational two-way interchange between yourself and the other party involved. At the beginning of the conversation, start by identifying areas of mutual agreement. Address the others’ positive characteristics before pointing out areas of disagreement or negative characteristics.
3. In a conflict, use descriptive statements. Describe objectively what occurred; describe your reaction to the event and what you believe to be their positive intent. For example, “The Friday project deadline was missed. This was very frustrating for me because I needed the project and I want to be an effective manager. I assume your intent is also to be successful. Is this accurate? This deadline was a pre-arranged agreement, so I’d like to discuss what went wrong with our accountabilities.” This method will help you in understanding the positive drive behind the behavior while assisting you in avoiding any unfair biases.

4. Actively manage conflict in diverse teams by facilitating rules of conduct prior to discussions. Establish an agreement that during the discussion, the team shouldn't acquiesce to solutions too soon or too easily. This will stifle excellent ideas and resolutions.
5. When faced with a diversity conflict, reflect inwardly on your own feelings. Locate the part in your body where you are experiencing the most emotion and ask yourself, "What positive message is being communicated to me through this distress? And, how can I use this information for more insightful leadership?" Then take action!



***"The greatest rewards come only
from the greatest commitment."***

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