
Multicultural workforces: Managing and maximizing America's rich mosaic

Best Practices from the
Network of Executive Women
Consumer Products and Retail Industry

SEVENTH IN A SERIES



Recruiting, retaining and managing the multicultural workforce

America's workforce is changing fast. Just-released figures from the U.S. Census Bureau predict that by 2042 more than half of the nation's population — 54 percent — will be comprised of those who identify themselves as Hispanic, African-American, Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander or multiracial. "No other country has experienced such rapid racial and ethnic change," according to Mark Mather, a demographer with the Population Reference Bureau.¹

And it's not just ethnicity that is driving change. Many human resource experts include factors like gender, age, physical ability, religion and sexual orientation when discussing the rich mosaic that comprises America's multicultural workforce.²

You don't have to look a generation ahead to see the impact that multiculturalism is having on business and the consumer products and retail industry. Three-quarters of the American population and nearly two-thirds of the nation's workforce is already comprised of women and minorities.³ The Baby Boom generation that has long dominated American business (and culture) is entering its retirement years and it is being replaced by a far different workforce.

Globalization makes the multicultural workforce even more imperative. "We simply cannot create brands and products to improve the lives of the world's consumers unless we understand and value the diversity of those with whom we work," says Procter & Gamble Chairman and CEO A.G. Lafley. "The people we serve, and those we have yet to serve, are unique individuals. The better we understand them, the better equipped we'll be to create products and brands that meet their needs."⁴

To improve team performance and achieve greater financial results, organizations must make every employee a partner in maximizing the increasingly multicultural workforce. Companies need to engage and enlist every employee in the process, from assessment and accountability to recruiting and retention. Organizations must provide employees with the tools they need, including genuine input, real authority and, most importantly, the committed leadership needed to drive cultural change.

INDUSTRY REPORT CARD

In the CPG/retail industry "diversity and inclusion has been embraced intellectually but not at the emotional level needed to impact leadership styles," according to a report that emerged from "Leveraging Your Multicultural Workforce," a Network of Executive Women conference.⁵ Line managers, human resource personnel and diversity and inclusion managers from more than forty of the CPG/retail industry's top companies attended the event, which was designed to share best practices and help position CPG/retail as an industry of choice for the diverse workforce.⁶

"The workforce has changed but leadership hasn't," according to Trudy Bourgeois, session leader of the event. "Developing intercultural leadership competencies is critical," she says. "The multicultural workforce can only be leveraged if individuals are accepted for their differences, encouraged to bring their whole selves to work, and allowed to play to their strengths."⁷

Multiculturalism is different from earlier diversity efforts like affirmative action. Affirmative action is legally driven, quantitative,

problem-focused, assimilated and reactive, whereas diversity is productivity driven, qualitative, opportunity-focused and proactive — the emphasis is on strategic advantage.²

Multiculturalism impacts the workforce three ways: personally, by affecting the individual's morale, career growth, professional development and personal productivity; interpersonally, by affecting teamwork, problem-solving and innovation; and organizationally, by affecting the firm's relationships with customers and vendors, its ability to attract and retain talent, and its capacity to develop new markets.⁸

FROM TALK TO ACTION

Three-quarters of attendees at NEW's multicultural workforce conference who responded to a survey afterwards believe that leaders still struggle with styles different from their own. Sixty percent indicated that "little has been done to move from talk to action."

Many multicultural employees do not feel they can bring "their entire selves to work but must find ways to assimilate." Instead of cultural differences being celebrated for their potential, they are being wasted through a culture of assimilation. Other industries do it better, respondents said, citing the technology, financial services and consulting sectors as examples.⁵

More active and widespread inclusion programs were identified as a way to increase the ability to manage across differences. More than 75 percent of respondents said there were too few conversations and too little exploration of issues important to multicultural workforce members. Diversity efforts are seen as forced rather than viewed as a source of competitive advantage.⁵

A recent study confirms that not enough is being done. The study of 206 organizations found that 53 percent of companies do not sponsor diversity training in their organizations, 66 percent do not have specific diversity councils, and 77 percent do not have affinity groups in place to support minorities. The study also found that 68 percent of the firms lack a high-level executive who oversees diversity initiatives.⁹

START AT THE TOP

"CEO commitment is the most critical factor in diversity success," according to DiversityInc magazine, which ranks companies on a variety of diversity factors. The magazine surveyed 317 companies and found a direct correlation between CEO commitment and overall diversity success. The magazine measures CEO commitment with three metrics: Management compensation is tied to diversity; the CEO meets regularly with employee resource groups; and the CEO chairs the firm's diversity council.¹⁰

"CEOs must establish diversity and inclusion as a business imperative," Bourgeois says.⁷ At PepsiCo, for example, diversity metrics are reviewed 13 times a year right along with volume and profit. "When you have that kind of commitment, [diversity] becomes part of your DNA," says Ronald Parker, chief diversity and inclusion officer for PepsiCo.¹⁰

Diversity-driven CEOs can move mountains. Retired PepsiCo CEO Steve Reinemund said diversity and inclusion efforts were his number one contribution in 23 years at PepsiCo — more important

than increasing shareholder value by 68 percent or acquiring Gatorade, Tropicana and Quaker Oats. Reinemund attributed 20 percent of PepsiCo's business growth to diversity and inclusion. His commitment to diversity continues under current PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi, the first woman of color to head a Fortune 100 company.¹⁰

But even the most committed CEOs need support. Unless a company's board of directors is fully engaged in setting diversity as a strategic priority, it is virtually impossible for even the most diversity-driven CEO to make the structural and cultural changes necessary to transform a company into a true multicultural organization.¹⁰

THE ROLE OF WHITE MEN

A key concern of executives at the NEW multicultural workforces conference was the role of white men. The majority of respondents to the post-event survey expressed a desire to see white men fully engaged as part of their firm's diversity and inclusion plan. They said organizations should understand the reality that white men represent the dominant group influencing the culture, "while other team members are considered to be a part of a subordinate group trying to survive by the rules and norms created by white men for white men."

The respondents said they were willing to serve as "ambassadors of change" if their organizations were sincerely committed to transforming their corporate culture.⁵ These potential ambassadors are ready to help change their companies, Bourgeois said, "but they can't do it without the full support of line managers."⁷

White men must engage for diversity to succeed, agrees Dr. Anthony Ipsaro. Sharing power with women and minorities will result in more talent, new ideas and increased corporate creativity, boosting the bottom line for everyone. "White men," he says, "will learn to spend more time at home, with their families, enriching their lives with relationships instead of professional affiliations."¹¹

"There are certain members of the white male group and others who are never going to get it," Bourgeois says. "Go around them," she advises. "Look for that certain someone in the organization who has the power to make that change and who you believe will make an impact. Focus on the pockets of readiness and partner with them."⁷

Two who "get it" appeared at NEW's multicultural workforces conference in 2008. Mike Nathanson is PepsiCo's vice president, financial planning and analysis. Paul Glenn is the human resources manager for the Southwest Division of the Kroger Company and an executive sponsor of the company's employee resource group, Women's Excellence.

"Mike and Paul were very frank when they talked about their personal journeys in multicultural workforce management," Bourgeois says. "They are typical of the many men who are vital players in their organizations' diversity efforts."⁷

RECRUITING DIVERSITY

The looming shortage in skilled labor makes the recruiting and retention of multicultural workers all the more urgent, Bourgeois says. To win the battle for talent, industry employers must build corporate cultures where everyone can thrive. Many in the CPG and retail

industry are playing catch up.⁵

"Leaders must be clear about what their expectations are," says Sherri Toney, vice president, diversity and inclusion and employee engagement, for the Kellogg Company. "People understand the company's commitment but don't necessarily understand what behaviors are [required] to embed diversity and inclusion," she says. "Once leaders are clear about the expectations, linking compensation to their behavior drives a higher level of accountability. It gets back to great leadership. In a global economy leaders must develop the skills and competencies needed to manage a global workforce."¹²

"Leaders must make a paradigm shift," Toney says. Not until executives examine their beliefs — unconscious or conscious — "can they begin to grow the intercultural competencies that are needed to successfully manage today's workforce."

One expert suggests employers commit to diversity with a top-level mandate, then communicate that commitment to candidates, starting on the company's Web site. Effective tactics include employee testimonials, enlisting grassroots support from within the firm,

increasing visibility at diversity events, and competing for diversity awards and rankings.¹³ Other best practices for multicultural workforce recruiting include hiring multicultural recruiters and using diversity recruiting firms; utilizing multicultural recruiting events; partnerships with diverse professional groups; ensuring placement of multicultural executives on the board of directors and in high-profile positions; and showing commitment to multicultural communities by donating time and money to worthwhile advocacy groups and charities like HACE and Inroads.

Many American companies are too "U.S.-centric" when it comes to recruiting, according to Keith Mitchell, director of staffing at the Kellogg Company. "Our markets are global, so we must have a global marketing perspective," he says. "It comes down to branding as a culturally diverse company, and that includes multi-generational issues, because it's all intermixed." Mitchell notes that multi-generation diversity is a universal in all of Kellogg's global markets.¹²

Diversity recruiting must be governed by real diversity inside the company, attendees at NEW's multicultural workforces conference said.⁵ According to one study, 44 percent of African Americans will eliminate a company from employment consideration if it lacks gender and ethnic diversity.¹³

ACCOUNTABILITY THE KEY

While 63 percent of companies have goals for increasing workforce diversity, only 36 percent have set the goals necessary for recruiting diverse candidates in the first place. Accountability is even scarcer. Only 12 percent of smaller companies take the vital step of linking compensation to diversity results.¹³

Compensation, including salary, bonuses and promotions, are the most powerful tool to effect change, HR experts say. "Establishing clear accountability requires linkage to senior executive [compensation] and senior executive ego," according to diversity workforce expert Peter Bye. Have conversations with each senior executive so that they are clear about what is being asked of them, he advises. Get them to buy in to diversity and then tell them how their results will be measured. Firms should "design scorecards for each

"The workforce has changed but the leadership hasn't"

business unit that clearly show the initiative, the objectives and the metrics, the owner, and progress/status.” Most importantly, Bye says, companies should design a firm-wide scorecard that compares results between business units and individual executives. Showing “relative progress across the senior executive team frequently appeals to senior executive ego and helps ensure progress.”¹⁴

NEW COMPETENCIES

“Organizations must develop a level of effectiveness that enables them to obtain a competitive advantage,” Bourgeois says. “What is needed is for leaders to develop new leadership competencies — managing multicultural employees and mastering intercultural skills,” she says. Such intercultural skills enable a leader to value other cultures as they value their own.”¹⁷

Globalization and changing workforce demographics make this urgent. A survey of Fortune 500 companies identified having culturally competent leaders as the most important factor in business success. The same survey indicated that these companies overwhelmingly recognize the need for their leaders to develop additional knowledge and skills to be effective. Doing business globally is easier said than done. The traditional American work style — frank, direct, accountable — is almost unique around the world and can be the source of conflict and misunderstanding.¹⁵

Experts stress that the process is about changing employees’ workplace behaviors to be in accordance with the company’s values, not changing an employee’s personal beliefs and values. Developing core competencies for multicultural workforce management requires a two-prong approach, according to a growing body of research and practical experience. The first prong is building intercultural sensitivity and competence; the second is aligning multiculturalism directly with key business objectives.¹⁶

Improving intercultural communication is essential to managing the multicultural workforce, and much work needs to be done. Given its diversity, the cultural literacy of the American workforce is surprisingly low, experts say. According to one study, the average American believes the U.S. accounts for 25 percent of the world’s population, while the actual percentage is less than 5 percent.¹⁵

Communications expert Stella Ting-Toomey defines effective intercultural communication as “each party feeling that they have been understood, respected and supported.” To achieve this, a person encountering a cultural difference must recognize and understand it; react positively and avoid prejudices; and communicate and collaborate effectively with those who have different backgrounds.

Behavior can be modified through a comprehensive company diversity strategy that builds intercultural communication skills and aligns with your key business objectives. Steps in developing such a plan include: Identifying all relevant stakeholders, both internal and external; staying aligned with your business purpose through consultation with the executive team; analyzing your current situation by reviewing recruitment and retention metrics, exit interviews and complaints; and gathering new data through surveys and focus groups.¹³

Some companies build accountability for these new behaviors into their performance management system by measuring “how”

individuals do their work in addition to “what” they do. This evaluation is necessary but insufficient, according to Bye. “People need learning and tools to develop a more effective way of thinking and feeling about cultural difference that enables and supports their behavioral change.” Too often great performance management processes are only partly implemented, he says. Appraisals and development plans frequently minimize the importance of cultural effectiveness or address surface-level issues to the detriment of long-term behavioral change.¹³

RETAINING DIVERSITY

Turnover is a thorny — and costly — problem. The total cost of replacing a management-level employee is estimated to be 200 to 250 percent of that person’s annual salary.¹⁷ The problem is even more critical among multicultural managers, where competition for talent can be fierce and where the “revolving door syndrome is particularly evident among women and minorities.”¹⁸

Lack of sponsors or mentors was one of the main barriers to success cited by attendees at NEW’s multicultural workforces conference. It was also the leading concern of multicultural women who participated at the town hall meetings hosted by Working Mother Media.¹⁹

Forward-looking companies in the CPG/retail industry understand the importance of mentoring to retention. Fifty-six percent of all managers at Procter & Gamble participate in mentoring, and the firm says that it has helped P&G’s retention rates stay statistically equal across genders and race and ethnicity. At General Mills 40 percent of employees are engaged in mentoring. PepsiCo has a similar enrollment rate.¹⁹

Mentoring can address some of the key causes of turnover: Feelings of exclusion, being stuck, and of being unappreciated and

underutilized. In addition to mentoring, best practices for retaining multicultural workforces include career development, work/life programs, cultural literacy training and community involvement — all of it developed and guided by affinity groups and internal and external diversity councils.

Nothing, however, impacts multicultural manager retention more than a clear corporate commitment to promoting diverse talent. At Coca-Cola, 40 percent of promotions were earned by minorities last year, 56 percent by women. The company is reaping the benefits of this commitment — its management is already 33 percent minority and 48 percent women.²⁰ One metric affecting retention is the underrepresentation of multicultural managers in succession planning. Fifty-six percent of HR executives in one survey said that minorities were underrepresented in the succession planning; 46 percent said women were underrepresented.¹⁸ Presence in the succession plan is indispensable to career advancement and career advancement is critical to retention.²⁰

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE?

Even when diversity efforts are energetically backed by upper management and a company’s HR and diversity departments, they often falter when they hit mid-level or line managers who don’t understand their importance or relevance.

Attendees at NEW’s multicultural workforces conference identified

“Globalization and demographics makes multiculturalism urgent”

line managers as key players in achieving retention goals. Effective managers create employee retention, but they need training and support.⁵ Company efforts should focus on producing clarity, setting goals, delivering feedback, and coaching and training executives to manage across multicultural differences. Managers' retention rates should be monitored across demographic groups to root out bias, and promotions and pay should be linked to their retention rates.

Some of the best-rated companies for diversity receive frequent complaints and low employee satisfaction scores, according to workforce expert Barry Callender. "Employees throughout the organization are most influenced by their direct supervisors; these are the people who deliver the message of diversity — or fail to."²²

"The message has to be sent to that group by the CEO and senior management that diversity is a key value for them," says Tony Jenkins, vice president of cultural competence and diversity for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida. "If a mid-level manager doesn't hear that from the CEO and their management, and they hear it [instead] from human resources or a diversity office, that [manager] is going to prioritize what their boss prioritizes."²³

"You must include [middle managers] from the start," according to Ernest Hicks, manager of the corporate diversity office at Xerox. "Middle managers will be your leading champions — they will help bring along those who are slower."

GAME CHANGERS

Middle managers at Procter & Gamble "get training, coaching and mentoring from their immediate managers," says Maxine Brown-Davis, vice president of global diversity and organization performance for P&G. The CPG giant expects its middle managers to participate in the development and training of others and be role models of diversity-management practices. "You learn best by teaching, so we use line managers to teach diversity practices, leadership practices, and financial-planning practices," she says. "That keeps diversity in the front of their minds and helps them establish relationships with folks lower in the organization."²⁴

"It's not unusual for mid-level managers to face, or even create, many obstacles to full participation in diversity efforts," Callendar says. Common problems include: Managers' failure to understand their connection to and role in the organization's business case for diversity; managers promoted for their technical proficiency instead of their leadership abilities; overworked managers who do not make diversity a priority; and managers who believe that diversity does not apply to them because their teams are not diverse. Mid-level managers "connect the visionaries to the actual doers. Their concerns must be addressed in the planning stages of any initiative, especially one as emotion-laden as diversity," Callendar says.²²

What is the best way to motivate middle management in the multicultural workforce? Diversity and inclusion managers suggest linking the accomplishment of diversity metrics to middle managers' compensation; including diversity goals in performance appraisals; mandatory diversity training; and the robust use of employee resource groups and surveys. Many firms' "business case for diversity" is so far removed from the day-to-day experiences of line managers that it fails to resonate or motivate. Callender suggests building a secondary business case more relevant to mid-level managers.

"Expectations tied to diversity are part of our middle managers' performance development," says Brown-Davis. At Procter & Gamble, a manager's pay can be affected by his or her performance evaluation depending on the manager's level in the organization. Once a

manager is evaluated, results are turned into a rating and the rating places them in different pools of compensation.²⁴

"In my experience, the top-down commitment has to be there, but if it's not engrained in objectives and reward systems that people see day to day, it's not part of the culture," says Judy Yost, talent acquisition executive for Chase.²⁴

FROM TRAINING TO LEARNING

There's a difference between multicultural awareness training designed to persuade the mind and experiential learning designed to reach the heart, says Trudy Bourgeois. "It takes an emotional investment to make the behavioral changes necessary to create inclusive work cultures," she says. "Experiential learning helps us align the head and the heart."⁷

Research shows that diversity issues frequently cause discomfort, or disequilibrium. "Often [people] simply don't know what to say when they encounter an individual different from themselves," according to a paper by Donna Tromski and Glenn Doston. "This disequilibrium can cause individuals to avoid encounters and discussion or to avoid taking direction on diversity issues — perhaps this is why multicultural and diversity education has mostly remained in the cognitive realm and has been slow to move into the experiential training mode."²⁵

Experiential learning ranges from low-impact exercises such as diversity quizzes, icebreakers, games and discussions, to more intensive learning activities such as dramatizations, role-playing, small-group exercises and encounter sessions. Experiential learning activities with the highest impact take place outside the training room: Participating in mentoring relationships, being active in affinity groups, joining diversity organizations like NEW, and training others.

Teaching others has the highest retention rate of any instructional method (90 percent), followed by practice-by-doing (75 percent) and discussion groups (50 percent). Passive learning methods have much lower retention rates: demonstrations (30 percent), audio/visual presentations (20 percent), reading (10 percent) and lecture (5 percent).²⁶

"NEW was established on the action-learning principle," says Bourgeois. "Hundreds of our members have learned critical diversity lessons by serving on our committees, mentoring and attending our workshops and events. Some executives have said they really didn't 'get diversity' until they got personally involved."⁷

A MATTER OF TRUST

Multicultural women are faced with extra challenges in the workforce. In the executive suite, they have fallen behind the even modest progress made by white women. Many suffer from isolation caused by a lack of role models, sponsors or mentors. Respect and trust are key issues.²⁷

"There's no way to build a relationship without trust," Carol Evans, CEO and founder of Working Mother Media, told NEW's multicultural workforces conference. "Try to open another person's fist — you can't do it unless you communicate the need and the underlying motive to them. Then the person opens her hand willingly."⁶

Evans broached the subject of distrust among white managers (including white women) on the opening day of the event. She said Working Mother did 14 town halls with more than 1,400 women. When participants were asked who they didn't trust at work, 47 percent picked white men, followed closely by white women at

32 percent. “The white women present were shocked, and some even cried,” Evans reported. “They didn’t know, and many of these women had been working in the diversity field for years.”⁶

Cristina Benitez, president of Latino marketing firm Lazos Latinos, framed the relationship among white and multicultural women in personal terms. “How much risk are you willing to take to have diversity and inclusion?” she asked. “We have to be intentional about our relationships.” Kelly Tullier, vice president and general counsel for Frito-Lay, put it this way: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”⁶

Demonstrating mutual respect and following through on commitments, the Working Mother attendees said, was the most important factor in establishing trust at work.¹⁹

WHAT IT TAKES

Leveraging the multicultural workforce starts at the highest level, Bourgeois says, “Engaging across difference is the trait of a great leader.”⁷ It is also the mark of a great company.

When Lou Gerstner took the helm of IBM in 1993, the company was already well-respected for its equal opportunity practices. But when Gerstner looked at his senior management team, he felt it didn’t reflect the diversity of the available workforce or the diversity of IBM’s customers. He launched a sweeping diversity process that transformed the company. In less than a decade the number of U.S.-born ethnic minority executives increased 233 percent; female executives increased 370 percent; LGBT executives increased 733 percent; and the number of executives with disabilities tripled.

Four elements are needed: Strong support from company leaders; employees who are fully engaged; management practices that are integrated and aligned with the effort; and a strong and well-articulated business case for action.²⁸

IT’S AN INSIDE JOB

Accountability is the key to achieving a successful multicultural workforce. Thirty-eight percent of multicultural women surveyed by Working Mother Media said holding managers accountable should be the top priority for their companies.¹⁹ Human resource experts agree. “Failure to designate accountability may cause [diversity] efforts to fall by the wayside as line managers juggle competing demands,” according to one study. “The report suggests that programs targeting managerial bias through feedback and education show virtually no effect on the representation of white women, black women and black men at managerial levels.”²⁹ In other words, it takes more than talk.

The stakes are high. Accenture estimates that intangible assets like employee engagement, innovation and relationships represent 75 percent of the market capitalization of companies in the S&P 500, compared to just 20 percent in 1980.³⁰ The difference between success and failure today is people. Your organization can’t afford to leave any behind. ■

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NEW Multicultural Agenda

Compiled at NEW's Multicultural Workforces conference

ACTION ITEMS

Leadership commitment. It takes a big lever to move a company. Your board of directors, CEO and other C-level executives must be fully committed to achieve your multicultural agenda. Leadership accountability is critical and compensation is the “magic bullet.”

Light a fire. Senior-level management must communicate the business imperative of multiculturalism throughout the organization. Start at the top and work down. While most employees appreciate the power of diversity on an intellectual level, many have not yet internalized it. That's your job as leader.

Assess your need. What grade do you give your organization on multiculturalism? What grade do your multicultural employees give? Survey your workers to measure your progress. Ask them what they think of current diversity programs.

Stretch those goals. Does your leadership look like your customer base? If not, you may be missing significant opportunities. Set big goals for recruiting, retention and career development. Establish meaningful metrics and measure them throughout the year. Give them the same weight as volume and profits.

Core competencies. Diversity awareness is a continuous process that should be incorporated into every level of your company, in every company function, and at every stage of an employee's career. Focus on core competencies like cultural literacy, intercultural communication, developing a global outlook, and individual self-development.

Strengthen your structures. Support your internal diversity structures and populate them with passionate people from within your own ranks. Let them develop ideas to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. Your diversity council should help solve important business issues by aligning directly with key company objectives. Give your council the resources — and teeth — it needs. Many companies have several councils, and some firms have external diversity councils that provide an outside perspective.

Ambassadors of change. Let your multicultural managers and others passionate about this mission be ambassadors of change within the organization. Give them the resources and support they need. Share best practices — while some parts of your organization excel at inclusion, others do not. Create communication channels that allow the sharing of best practices across your firm.

Move from head to heart. Many companies err by making multicultural workforce training safe and bland. That's a recipe for failure. Use experiential learning to breakdown barriers and instill intercultural skills. Mentoring and other action-learning activities can create profound and lasting change.

Align your policies. Your diversity intentions are only as good as your diversity actions. Review your programs and policies and then measure their alignment with your multicultural workforce strategy. Enlist line managers. Make middle managers change agents within your company. Use a carrot and stick approach. Give line managers the time, training, resources and leadership they need to meet multicultural goals.

Accountability. What is measured is what gets done. Make every manager — from the CEO on down — accountable for achieving multicultural recruiting and retention goals.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Because everyone is unique, multiculturalism embraces everyone. Ask yourself what you leave at home before you come to work — your language, your kids, your upbringing, your opinions, your real personality?

How would you rank the effectiveness of the diversity organizations in your company? What would you do to improve them?

Mentoring is a key workforce inclusion strategy. Do you think it's better for a person to be mentored by someone from her own background or someone from a different background altogether? Is it even important?

What are the primary barriers to the advancement of multicultural employees in your company?

Do you consider the consumer products and retail industry an “employer of choice” among multicultural managers? Why or why not?

All hands on deck

The worldwide competition for markets requires all your company's human capital. But too many organizations are failing their employees, their stakeholders and their firms by not fully leveraging their multicultural workforce.

Multiculturalism makes the most of every worker by extracting the whole of their experience. It says we not only accept your differences, we celebrate them. It says we need every ounce of your knowledge and passion to win.

A comprehensive multicultural approach converts diversity, the issue, into diversity, the opportunity. Properly led multicultural workforces beat yesterday's homogeneous hierarchies hands down. Multicultural workforces are better motivated, more productive, more innovative and offer deeper insights into consumer markets. The multicultural organization is more efficient and more profitable, too. The fact is, without a deep commitment to multiculturalism in your workforce, you can't expect to reach the multicultural consumer in your markets and around the world.

Earlier this year representatives from the consumer products and retail industry's largest companies got together at NEW's first multicultural workforces conference. They said not enough was being done to make CPG/retail an industry of choice for diverse employees. They said the benefits of multiculturalism are not fully understood. They said they often felt forced to assimilate. They said many senior-level leaders were not fully committed, and line managers too often failed to execute.

New competencies, fresh methods, and a sense of urgency are required. Leadership and support, communication and training, and benchmarking and accountability are critical to success. If your diversity efforts are stuck, you are probably falling short in one or more of these areas.

The Network of Executive Women can help. We offer best practices, career development, professional networking, outreach,

scorecarding and other benefits to help you leverage your multicultural workforce. For more information on how we can help your organization, visit our website, www.newonline.org, or contact our Executive Director, Joan Toth, jtoth@newonline.org, telephone (312) 693-5393.

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Benefits of a multicultural workforce

- Increased innovation
- Better insights into consumers
- Develop new products and services
- Greater alignment with vendors
- Improved employee morale
- More robust talent pipeline
- Increased retention
- Aligns global teams
- Increased productivity
- Access to new markets
- Increased profitability



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