Leaders' Toolkit on Diversity

This is a toolkit on diversity designed for:

- leaders
- managers
- supervisors
- anyone who has direct reports.

It offers specific actions that individual managers can take to improve their work environment by addressing diversity issues.

Any company or organization is free to take this Toolkit and customize it to their environment.

DiversityCentral.com is the official distributor of the Leader's Toolkit on Diversity.
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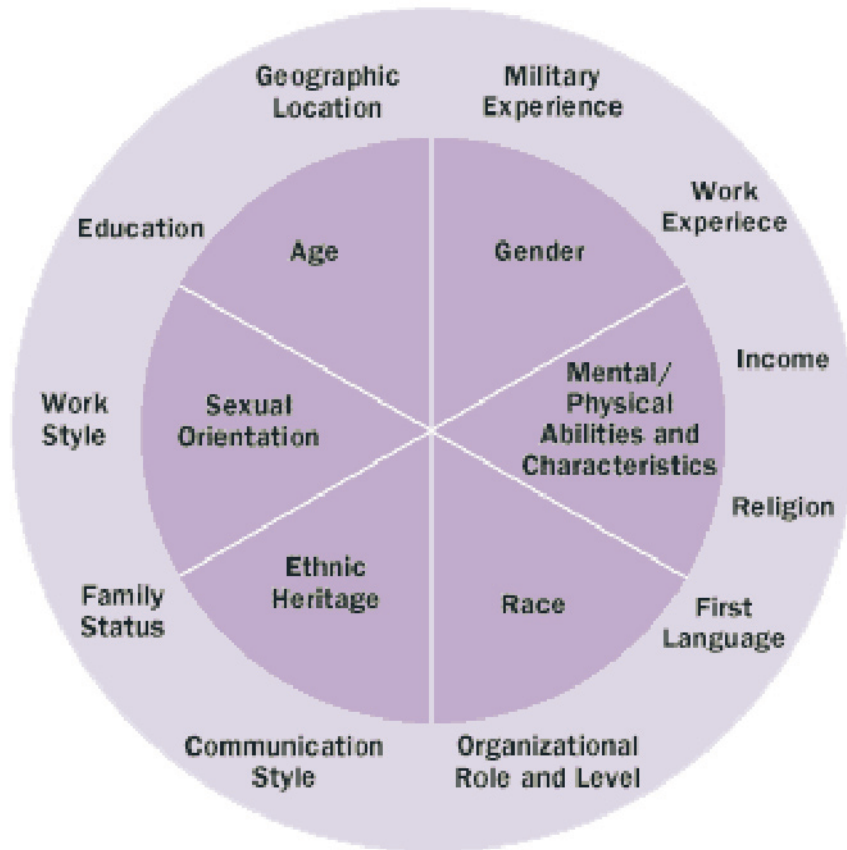Email: orders@diversitycentral.com

Definition of Diversity

Technology Workforce Partners believes in a broad definition of diversity that includes all employees. We believe that the Dimensions of Diversity Wheel, developed by Marilyn Loden, does a good job of identifying many aspects of diversity:

| Primary Dimensions | Secondary Dimensions |

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Note: *Each company downloading this toolkit should insert a statement of its corporate definition of diversity and inclusion, its diversity policies, and any other company-specific information that would be relevant and useful to their leaders, managers, supervisors, and employees who will be working on diversity issues.*

Where to Begin

In order to understand the breadth and depth of potential work on diversity issues, you should familiarize yourself with the typical steps in a diversity initiative process that are described in this section. Many of the steps below have links to relevant parts of the toolkit.

Planning and analysis steps

Review corporate-wide initiative: Your plan for diversity work within your organization must be consistent with any corporate-wide diversity initiative. You should look to adopt any new programs that are being implemented throughout the company as well as participate in any events or activities.

Review the business case for diversity: You should review the business case for diversity and select the three or four reasons why a diversity plan makes sense for your organizational unit.

Review answers to tough questions: Resistance to diversity work is very common. Often, employees resist change and diversity work involves change. You should review the Answers to Tough Questions section so you are prepared to respond to employee resistance.

Participate in diversity training: Before identifying diversity issues within your organization, you should participate in some type of diversity training. This training will familiarize you with the wide range of diversity issues and prepare you for what you may find in your organization.

Identify specific issues: The Measurement Section identifies many measurements used to assess how a company looks in terms of visible diversity. However, you also will want to identify diversity issues your employees are facing. You may want to meet with individual employees or have an internal or external consultant conduct confidential interviews and/or focus groups with employees to gather specific information on what they see as critical diversity issues within your organizational unit. If available, you should review any 360° feedback, findings from exit interviews and other post-separation follow-up. In conducting your research, you must remember that some of the employee feedback will likely surprise you --- Don't despair --- Just acknowledge the issues and use this toolkit to begin addressing them.

Mid-level and senior managers may want to undertake an employee survey to identify diversity issues in the work environment, depending upon the number of employees in their organization. For the design and implementation of the survey, you will want to utilize the services of either an internal or external consultant.

In addition, senior managers may want to consider conducting a cultural audit of the organization. A cultural audit is a comprehensive review of all relevant company data in an effort to identify diversity issues in the organization. It typically takes about six months and involves the systematic review and analysis of demographic data on representation, hiring, promotion, and turnover; in-depth research of employee opinion; and evaluation of human resource policies, programs and systems. Cultural audits are usually part of large, corporate initiatives on diversity. While conducting a cultural audit is preferable, it is not required to address diversity issues and to implement the actions recommended in this toolkit.

Where to Begin

Implementation steps

Consider setting up a diversity council or task team: In larger organizations, it is useful to set up a diversity task team or council to spearhead the diversity initiative. The diversity council can help analyze the research and make recommendations about interventions. You will want to make sure that representatives are chosen from horizontal and vertical cross-sections of the organization. You also want to make sure that visible diversity is represented on the team.

Select one or two areas: Once you have identified specific diversity issues from your employee feedback, you should select one or two areas to focus on for the next year.

Obtain baseline data: After you have identified the one or two focus areas, then you should select a few measures that capture the situation you are trying to improve. For example, if you are trying to reduce the turnover of women, then you should calculate the turnover of women and compare it to the turnover of men over the past few years.

Communicate: Clear, honest communication is essential throughout the diversity initiative process. In the beginning, you should inform your staff that you are researching diversity issues and solicit their input. Once you have identified your one or two focus areas, then you should communicate them in writing and in person to your employees with a statement of the current situation and what you hope to change. You may need to have this communication reviewed by legal and human resource staff prior to its dissemination. As you take action and measure progress, you should provide your employees with periodic updates.

Utilize the toolkit: Once you have your focus areas, then you should review the appropriate topics in this toolkit.

Identify a few personal actions: As a role model, you need to demonstrate leadership on diversity. You should review the Diversity Commitment Action section of the toolkit and commit to undertaking at least one or two actions.

Where to Begin

Tracking and follow-up steps

Measure progress: Once you have taken action, it is important to measure and track your progress against the original baseline measurements.

Make necessary adjustments: If you have not made significant progress, you'll want to determine the reasons and decide whether to continue or modify your current initiatives.

Communicate progress and plans for future: If you have made progress on your focus areas, you'll want to communicate this improvement to your employees. If you have not made progress, you should be upfront with your employees and communicate what you intend to do differently in the future. After you have some success, you should identify additional diversity issues to address.

Business Case for Diversity

Before embarking on a diversity initiative, it's a good idea to identify why working on diversity issues will benefit your organization. Some of the key reasons are listed below. You should review the list and select three or four reasons that best apply to your organization.

Cementing the employee relationship

Improving employee satisfaction: By working on diversity issues that your employees are facing, you will improve employee satisfaction. In turn, your employees will become more productive, creative and innovative. Satisfied employees will improve your customer relationships and help market the company. Satisfied employees stay with their companies longer, so your employee retention improves, saving the company money in lost productivity, and recruiting and hiring costs.

Facilitating recruitment: The demographics of the workforce are changing. African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics make up over 25 percent of the workforce. A diverse workforce helps you to recruit talent among all demographic groups. Potential employees want to see their ethnicity reflected among your employees as well as among the senior management. They want to know that they will be able to access development opportunities. Having a diverse workforce sends a message that all employees are valued and welcome.

Enhancing retention: Surveys show that one major reason why employees leave a job is their relationship with their manager. By acknowledging diverse viewpoints and working styles, you will improve your relationship with your employees. In turn, they will be less likely to seek opportunities outside the company.

Becoming an employer of choice: Increasingly, companies must compete for the best employees in what has often been called a "war for talent". In order to compete effectively, many companies have embarked on a series of programs to become recognized as an employer of choice. By addressing diversity issues, companies become attractive to employees in all demographic groups both within and outside the company. A well-earned reputation as an employer of choice facilitates recruitment among potential employees and enhances retention among current employees.

Business Case for Diversity

Enhancing the ability to compete

Improving your company perception among customers: Like the workforce, the demographics of your customers are changing. Customers want to do business with companies that have a diverse workforce. In addition, customers often make decisions based on a company's reputation for diversity. In the global arena, having a culturally diverse workforce helps the company understand the culture, language and business style of international customers.

Enhancing the supplier base: A focus on diversity in your supplier base will result in costs savings as competition among suppliers brings down costs. Supplier competition also encourages innovation. In addition, customers and business partners expect a company to have a robust and diverse supplier base. Without one, a company may lose customers to a competitor with a stronger commitment to supplier diversity.

Strengthening Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) performance: Federal, state, and local governments require contractors to meet EEO/AA requirements just to qualify as bidders. A robust diversity effort helps companies meet and exceed these requirements and win lucrative contracts.

Business Case for Diversity

Improving organizational performance

Sustaining innovation: A diverse workforce will bring the company a consistent influx of ideas for new products, services and/or processes. Research has shown that heterogeneous groups outperform homogeneous groups, if the diversity is managed. With a constant source of innovation, a company's competitive advantage will be enhanced.

Improving teamwork: Increasingly, employees are working in teams. Moreover, many quality and other concepts rely on teamwork. By addressing communication and tensions between different employee groups, you will improve the functioning of your unit's teams.

Improving global competency: Diversity initiatives help a company become sensitive to cultural differences among various countries around the world. This sensitivity is needed to compete in the global marketplace. Mastering diversity issues improves a company's ability to handle complexity, thus enhancing its ability to deal with the complexity found in the global marketplace.

Enhancing the success of acquisitions: Dealing with diversity issues means learning how to integrate the values and styles of different cultural backgrounds. These integration skills are similar to the ones needed to integrate acquisitions into an acquiring company.

Reducing the cost of discrimination and harassment suits: A proactive diversity effort can help to prevent costly discrimination and harassment suits. In addition to the dollar cost of any settlements, the negative publicity can harm a company's reputation and have a huge impact on future sales and recruiting programs.

Optimizing performance: When diversity issues are addressed, employees can become more productive and effective, thereby increasing the financial performance of the company.

Answers to Tough Questions

What is diversity all about? Diversity is about all of the various differences each of us brings to the workplace or customer base. Diversity can refer to differences such as race, gender, language, where we went to school or even in what professions we choose to work. Managing diversity is the process by which we are educated about those differences in order to fully leverage the talents and skills of all employees. It is about creating an inclusive environment in which all employees can contribute.

Is diversity just an American issue? With the growing global marketplace, diversity is not just an American issue. Organizations all around the world now conduct business with customers and hire employees with different backgrounds, languages and customs.

Do diversity initiatives include white males? Yes, absolutely. White males are diverse; for example, they have varying levels of education, different religious beliefs, divergent thinking styles, etc. For diversity initiatives to be truly successful everyone in a company should be included. Successful diversity initiatives are based on inclusion, not exclusion.

Why do I/we need diversity training? Diversity training is essential because each of us looks at the world through filters that are developed based on our own unique experiences. Diversity training helps us learn about those filters and how they impact business decisions, work styles and personal relationships that ultimately affect the success of an organization. By learning how to work more effectively together within our teams and organizations, we can ensure success in the global marketplace.

Isn't diversity just a current business fad, a politically correct thing to do? No, diversity is a business issue. In the global marketplace, corporations compete for top talent as well as customers. Companies with robust initiatives for managing diversity will be more effective at attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse workforce as well as developing and selling to a diverse customer base.

Isn't diversity just a new look for Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)? EEO and Affirmative Action (AA) are legally mandated requirements that address the representation and treatment of minorities and women in the workplace. Managing diversity focuses on maximizing opportunities for all employees to contribute in the workplace, thus enhancing business success. For more information, see Background Information in the Resources section.

Doesn't diversity work take time and resources from more important work like quality and customer service? With a global marketplace, demands for quality and customer service come from an increasingly diverse customer base. Who better to respond to a diverse customer base than a diverse workforce? A diverse workforce will be able to respond to quality and customer service issues with first-hand knowledge of the communities they are serving.

Why do we need to change our work environment? It works fine for me. Each of us is different. It's not enough for the workplace to be fine for one person. It is imperative that the work environment functions well for everyone. By managing diversity, a company can make sure that every employee feels included and respected and is able to fully contribute to the success of the organization.

What's really in it for me? By addressing diversity issues and personal biases, managers will improve their relationships with employees, thereby enhancing their success. For individual employees, participating in diversity initiatives improves their communication and teamwork skills, reduces conflict in the workplace, and improves their ability to work effectively in the global marketplace.

Training

Background

Typically, training is part of a diversity initiative. Diversity awareness training is used to enhance employees' understanding of and sensitivity to cultural and other differences. By building awareness and understanding, training provides a foundation for behavior change.

Diversity training also provides a structured environment for discussing controversial topics like bias and discrimination. It is very important to note that diversity training will not solve all of your diversity challenges, for example, with recruiting and retention. It also will not remove organizational barriers, for example, in succession planning and promotion systems.

Diversity training also is used to improve the performance of organizations where employees from different cultural backgrounds are required to work together. By addressing cultural differences, intercultural conflict is decreased and thus, productivity is increased. Research has shown increases in innovation among heterogeneous groups, when the diversity is managed.

Diversity training focused on the US will include the difference between equal employment opportunity (EEO) requirements, affirmative action, and diversity as well as sections on sexual harassment and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Diversity skill-building training focuses on providing employees with specific behavioral tools to improve their interactions in the workplace with people who are different from them. For example, the training might focus on how to provide performance evaluation and coaching of people from different ethnic backgrounds. It also can address teambuilding and conflict resolution.

Training

Issues to evaluate when considering training

Conduct a needs assessment: Before rushing out and signing you and your staff up for diversity training, you will want to spend some time identifying the specific issues you are trying to address or resolve. You will want to consult with your training and education and/or diversity departments for help with this process.

Determine delivery method: In order to select an appropriate delivery method, you will need to identify the role of training in your overall diversity effort. If you envision that diversity training will play a large role, then you probably will want to allocate one or two days to training delivered by internal or external trainers to small groups of employees. If, on the other hand, your diversity effort is more focused on recruitment or retention activities, then you may want to investigate shorter, and sometimes cheaper, web-based and CD-ROM options, or schedule training for a large group. In addition, training can be provided in informal settings, for example, over lunch (called Lunch-n-learns). It also can be one component of a longer, organization-wide business meeting.

Decide whether attendance at diversity training will be voluntary or mandatory: Every company, manager, and individual has an opinion on whether attendance at diversity training should be voluntary or mandatory. In order to decide, you must first evaluate your company's culture. Does your company have a tradition of mandating training on other topics, for example, on quality? Making diversity training mandatory sends the signal that you are serious about your commitment to the diversity effort within your organization. It also ensures that everyone receives training. However, employees may resent mandatory training, especially if they believe that they don't need it. On the other hand, when attendance is voluntary, it's hard to ensure that the employees who most need it will choose to come.

Research available options: There are literally hundreds of trainers providing diversity training. You should work with your corporate training and education and/or diversity department to identify appropriate vendors of diversity training. Since diversity training sometimes doesn't work well, you will want to take responsibility for selecting the diversity training material and provider. In particular, you will want to attend a training session and/or review the material prior to proceeding with training for your employees.

Note: Each company should customize this section by identifing company-approved resources with links to those resources (e.g. company universities).

Determine mix of employees for training: In larger organizations, you will need to decide whether to mix employees from different levels or different work groups in the same training session. You also need to decide whether you want to have a minimum level of visible diversity within each training group. In organizations with little visible diversity, it may require some employees to attend multiple sessions of diversity training.

Integrate diversity training into existing training: Ideally, information on your organization's commitment to diversity would be incorporated into new employee orientation and new manager training.

Consider a diversity session geared to your leadership team: Before offering or mandating diversity awareness training for your organization, it's a good idea to arrange for a separate diversity training session for your leadership team. In conjunction with an internal or external consultant, you first should research what the feelings and beliefs with respect to diversity are among your leadership team in order to design an effective learning experience.

Recruiting

As a manager, you are constantly sourcing, recruiting and hiring new employees. Who you hire directly affects the diversity within your organization. This section offers specific suggestions for using an inclusive process to meet your organization's hiring needs.

Workforce planning

Before you begin to recruit and hire new employees, you should develop a comprehensive workforce (or staffing) plan based on your organization's current business plan. The workforce plan may identify specific demographic groups that you wish to target because they are currently underrepresented in your organization's workforce. As part of your workforce planning, you also should do the following:

Participate in diversity training. You, along with everyone else who interviews candidates, should participate in diversity training to increase your awareness of personal biases that may inhibit a fair evaluation of all candidates.

Develop clear qualifications for each position. You should review all job descriptions to ensure that only the specific qualifications necessary to performing the position are included. Often, job descriptions are filled with superfluous credentials – for example, a master's degree -- that may unnecessarily restrict the pool of available candidates. In other instances, job descriptions emphasize specific types of experience, when competencies gained from other experiences would be just as applicable or useful.

Develop recruiting materials that reflect visible diversity. You should review all recruiting materials (brochures, videos, etc.) and make sure that a visibly diverse group of employees are represented. You also should include a statement of your commitment to diversity and inclusion in all recruiting materials.

Assemble a diverse interviewing panel. Because everyone brings their personal biases into the process of evaluating candidates, it's important to have as many employees from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible participate in the interviewing process. In this way, qualities that may turn off some interviewers may be explained as cultural differences that have no impact on the candidate's ability to perform the job.

Ensure that policies and benefits are attractive to potential diverse recruits. Different policies and benefits will be attractive to different groups. For example, women, and increasingly men, often select employers based on the organization's work/life balance policies. Family-friendly policies typically provide opportunities for flexible working hours, telecommuting, job-sharing, and permanent part-time positions. Domestic partner benefits can be offered to attract gay and lesbian employees. Floating holidays or personal days are appealing to non-Christian employees.

Recruiting

Sourcing

In order to increase the diversity within your organization, you may need to expand your efforts beyond your traditional sources of new employees. Some suggestions are provided below:

Encourage the placement of diverse interns and co-op students. Often interns and co-op students become new employees. At the very least, they become ambassadors to their communities. If they have had a good experience working within your organization, they will tell their fellow students and positively influence them in their selection of potential employers.

Establish relationships with schools that have diversity in their student body. As a manager, you can establish a personal relationship with the heads of engineering or computer science departments at colleges and universities with significant minority populations, and other institutions with high populations of students of color. You may fund a class project or other activity. By building a personal relationship, you will enhance the organization's profile among the student body as well as get the inside track on hot talent.

Develop relationships with organizations that cater to the needs and interests of minority and other diverse candidates. There are many external organizations that serve women, minorities, peoples with disabilities, gay and lesbians and other diverse groups. These groups work not only to increase representation in the workforce, but also to provide support throughout their careers. The organizations include the National Society of Black Engineers, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, and the Society of Women Engineers. You also can support their events/conferences as well as your employees' participation in these organizations. For more information, see the list of National Technical Diversity-Related Organizations in the Resources section.

Cultivate partnerships with community organizations. You should get involved with local and national organizations that serve diverse populations; for example, the Urban League, the NAACP, League of United Latin American Citizens, etc. In this way, you will increase your familiarity and comfort with people from different cultural backgrounds. For more information, see the list of community organizations in the Resources section.

Utilize non-traditional networking venues. You should attend a wide range of networking events in order to reach as diverse an applicant pool as possible. In particular, you can attend events hosted by community groups, religious organizations, and local schools, colleges and universities.

Involve your employee groups in outreach efforts. You should build your personal relationship with employee network groups and then partner with their representatives in your outreach activities.

Instruct all recruiters, referral, and search firms to present a diverse candidate pool. As a manager, you need to insist that both internal and external recruiters present a diverse group of employees for you to interview.

Involve visibly diverse senior managers in outreach efforts. In order to send the message that all employees have opportunities to attain senior levels, it is important that visibly diverse senior managers are actively involved in recruiting activities.

Develop a comprehensive relationship model. If you are a senior manager, you can influence the corporation's philanthropy efforts. When trying to increase the diversity within your organization, consider linking scholarships to internships and providing mentors to interns and/or students.

Retention

Background

As a manager, you play a key role in employee retention. Many studies have confirmed the role of a "great manager" in promoting a climate where employees want to be committed on a long-term basis. To achieve this goal, you must help your employees leverage existing human resource systems and create a work environment within the overall company culture that makes employees want to stay.

Before deciding where to focus, you should review information on why employees leave or might leave your company. This information can be gleaned from employee surveys, focus groups, confidential interviews, exit interviews and post-separation feedback.

To enhance employee retention, the actions you might consider fall into three categories – career development and planning, work/life balance, and rewards and recognition.

Retention

Career development and planning

Dissatisfaction with development is one of the primary push factors driving employees to look for new jobs. As a manager, you provide employees essential information about career development systems at the company, you often control access to training and development opportunities, you may be involved in promotion decisions, and you work with employees one-on-one to help them plan their careers. In order to ensure that all employees are receiving the maximum benefit from career development and planning systems, you will want to consider the following:

Strengthening the employee relationship

Participate in diversity awareness training. By participating in diversity training, you can better appreciate the individuality of each and every employee. You should supplement the training with books, videos, and friendships with people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. As you increase your knowledge and understanding of differences, you will learn that individuals from various cultural and ethnic groups approach career development differently. In the dominant culture, you expect your employees to ask for what they want and take charge of their career. Nevertheless, employees from other cultures may need more coaching, you may need to offer them specific suggestions of training they'll need to move ahead, and you may need to encourage them to participate in developmental opportunities like task forces and special projects.

Build authentic relationships with every employee. Building authentic relationships will facilitate two-way, open and honest conversations. You will be able to discern individual employee needs and help them leverage the appropriate human resource programs. In turn, they will feel comfortable giving you crucial feedback about the work environment.

Identify "high potential" employees and let them know that they're valued. You should determine whether your company has any special programs for high potential employees and make sure a diverse group of employees are included. Even if there are no formal, company-wide programs for high potential employees, you should let them know that they are valued. The retention of these key employees is one of your most important managerial tasks.

Make sure that performance evaluations are fair and unbiased. It is in performance management that you will be able to apply the lessons of all of your diversity awareness activities. Often, we do not realize how our beliefs and attitudes can influence our evaluation of an individual's performance. You will want to be careful to evaluate employees on objective measures of what they have achieved instead of subjective measures of the style of that performance. In addition, during performance management conversations, you will want to explore potential turnover triggers that may encourage employees to seek opportunities outside the company. By building an authentic relationship with each employee, you hopefully will be able to identify and address turnover issues before an employee starts looking.

Involve employees in the community. You should encourage your employees to seek leadership opportunities with community groups. By representing the company, they will naturally feel a stronger tie to your organization.

Involve employees in recruiting events and activities. When employees have to "sell" the company to potential recruits, it will reinforce the company's strengths to them.

Retention

Focusing on employee development

Ensure that all employees have an individual development plan. Having a written development plan helps employees navigate the career development programs and maximize their opportunities within the organization. In particular, written development plans have been found to be helpful for women and people of color. You should consider your employees as free agents and make sure that they have opportunities to grow within the company. You will want to meet with your employees at least once a year to have a conversation on where they would like to be in one, five and ten years and help them identify the competencies and experiences that they will need to achieve these goals.

Communicate key competencies and attributes for success. Employees are often unfamiliar with exactly which competencies and attributes are needed to assume positions with increased responsibility. For example, technical employees may be unfamiliar with the keys to ascending the technical ladder. You can hold open forums so all technical employees can learn about the technical ladder. Similarly, you can disseminate information on key competencies for other departments such as sales, etc.

Identify training opportunities within and outside of the company for every employee. Training is essential to employee development. You can help your employees make the time to take advantage of these opportunities. If necessary, you can encourage employees to take an "English as a Second Language" course.

Support employees in taking advantage of developmental opportunities. You should encourage your employees to take lateral, rotational, or special, short-term assignments. Similarly, you can encourage your employees to volunteer for internal task forces or project teams. They can also assume leadership roles in employee identity groups as a developmental experience.

Make sure that a diverse group of employees are offered the opportunity for high-risk, high reward assignments. Typically, managers select employees with whom they feel most comfortable to take on the high-risk assignments. Often, this comfort comes from sharing the same general characteristics like race, sex or educational background. You want to make sure that you move beyond relying on comfort as the criteria for making important recommendations for high-risk, high reward assignments. You also want to allow candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply for these assignments.

Provide every employee with the opportunity to be mentored. Several research studies have documented the essential role of mentoring in advancing within the organization. Mentoring can be accomplished in many ways – through formal programs, informally through employee network groups, and/or by developing a culture of mentoring. You should make sure that mentors receive training that includes communicating and coaching across differences. You also want to encourage (and support) your employees in participating in external development/mentoring/leadership programs.

Provide opportunities for formal and informal networking. Like mentoring, many research studies have documented the benefits of networking in career progression. By having a large network, employees are more likely to be considered for new jobs and developmental opportunities when they become available. However, many employees fail to see the value of cultivating a network. You should educate your employees about networking as well as serve as a role model by attending a wide variety of networking events.

Know the specifics of the corporate succession planning process. As the navigator of employee development, you need to be familiar with any corporate succession planning system. In particular, you will want to make sure that a diverse group of employees are considered for inclusion in any special fast track or high potential programs.

Retention

Issues for senior managers

Senior managers may want to consider the following additional recommendations:

Embed diversity in career development programs and processes. Senior managers can influence the design and implementation of career development programs and processes. You will want to make sure that none of these programs unintentionally excludes certain groups from participating. Moreover, you should make diversity an explicit component of these programs. For example, the promotion system should require that a diverse slate of candidates be considered for every position. Similarly, the succession planning process should include a diverse group of employees.

Identify and remove any barriers to the promotion of internal candidates. At higher levels, there might be barriers to promotion for certain groups of employees. Senior managers should research these barriers. Once identified, you may need to implement a new program, such as formal mentoring, or modify an existing human resource system, such as expanding the group of candidates included in high potential programs. At the very least, you can make sure that information about all position openings and developmental opportunities are listed in a company-wide posting system.

Partner with internal staff. If you want to begin a major retention initiative, senior managers should partner with staff from organizational development, change management, or training and development to identify appropriate tools and programs. You will want to make sure that diversity is incorporated into the design and implementation of any retention initiative.

Retention

Work/life balance

Numerous studies have confirmed the importance of work/life issues in employee retention. Simply stated, the inability to achieve work/life balance drives employees to seek opportunities outside the company. In fact, work/life balance is often more important to retention than compensation and benefits. Nevertheless, work/life balance is one of the hardest things to achieve. Managers play a key role in allowing employees to take advantage of the full range of company work/life programs. Specifically, you should:

Allow employees to take advantage of flexible working hours. As a manager, you can encourage your employees to vary their working hours so that they can better meet their personal needs, even in the absence of a formal corporate policy on flexible work schedules. Research has shown that employees are more successful when they feel that they have more control over their schedule. Flexible work arrangements can be accomplished by varying the start and end time each day, by compressing the two work weeks into 9 days, by compressing one work week into 3 or 4 longer days, or by allowing employees time off during the work day. Some employees will seek a permanent flexible work arrangement, while others will only need to use them from time to time. All employees will appreciate knowing that you are open to meeting their need for flexibility.

Allow employees to work at home if possible. This arrangement is commonly referred to as telecommuting. Many employees do not need to be in the office to get their job done. With as little as a computer and a phone line, employees often can be more effective at home, away from corporate distractions and interruptions. They only need to come into the office to participate in important meetings. While not every employee can be accommodated with a full-time telecommuting arrangement, many employees will benefit from telecommuting part-time or on an as-needed basis. Your flexibility in allowing employees to work from home will help increase their loyalty to the company.

Allow two employees to share one job. Although less common, often you can retain two good employees by allowing them to share one job. In this way, each employee is able to work part-time. As a manager, it may be more difficult to manage two employees instead of one. However, the benefit of retaining two valuable employees should outweigh the inconvenience.

Identify positions that could be done on a permanent part-time basis or positions that could be separated into two or more part-time positions. Some employees, especially working mothers, would like to stay in the workforce but are unable to work a full-time job. You may be able to retain key employees by redefining their position so that it can be accomplished on a part-time basis.

Retention

Rewards and recognition

The role of rewards and recognition in improving retention is often overlooked. You will want to do the following:

Apply rewards and recognition in a fair and inclusive manner. Employees are very sensitive to signs of recognition as well as concrete rewards given to their peers. You will want to give out rewards and recognition such that every employee feels like he or she has an equal chance to receive them. In addition, you will want to make sure that you are rewarding concrete accomplishments (substance) instead of the manner in which something was accomplished (style).

Tailor reward and recognition systems to meet the individual needs of employees. Reward programs often are designed to appeal to the majority. Winning a round of golf at a local club may not appeal to all of your employees. You will want to look for rewards with broad appeal to many groups as well as vary the type of rewards given out.

Diversity Commitment Actions

As a manager, you are a role model. Your employees will look to see what you say and do to evaluate your dedication to addressing diversity issues. It's essential that you understand the business case for diversity, why it's important for your organization to address diversity issues, and what the specific diversity issues are that you want to resolve within your organization. In short, you'll need to have some talking points around diversity.

Senior managers will want to develop a diversity statement for their organization. You also will probably want to have your leadership team participate in a team-building exercise around diversity.

The suggestions below fall into three categories: communication (what you say), action (what you do), and accountability (what you're willing to take responsibility for).

Communication

You will need to communicate throughout your diversity initiative from the time you first begin to identify issues until you implement and measure your results. In short, communication is an on-going process that will need to reach many audiences both internally and externally. Listed below are some suggestions for demonstrating your commitment to addressing diversity issues through communication.

Write a memo or letter to employees stating your commitment to identifying and resolving diversity issues. You will want to be as specific as you can in this letter and delineate the process you intend to pursue. If this is your first communication, you want to balance your enthusiasm for creating a diverse and inclusive work environment with the realistic understanding that change is complicated and takes time. You should not write a letter that merely states your commitment to a diverse workforce that is free of bias and discrimination. Employees will see through such an empty gesture.

Develop and deliver a formal presentation on diversity to internal audiences. It's important that your employees see and hear you speak about diversity issues. You can kick off the diversity effort with a formal presentation, or you can save the presentation until after the research phase. Once changes have been implemented, you can update your presentation with any progress and the outlook for the future.

Talk about diversity in regular business forums. It's important that diversity is integrated into the typical operations of the organization. Because diversity can improve your performance in many ways, it is desirable to ask about diversity results during routine business update meetings.

Talk about diversity in informal settings. You should look for opportunities to have a two-way dialogue about diversity, for example, using town hall meetings, or brown bag luncheons. During these sessions, you may want to speak for 15 minutes at the beginning and then take questions. Allowing your employees to air their concerns will be a powerful demonstration of your commitment to diversity.

Make speeches about diversity outside the company. Talking about diversity in external forums demonstrates your commitment to diversity and enhances the company's reputation in the community among employees, customers and other business partners.

Diversity Commitment Actions

Actions

In addition to talking about diversity, you will need to become personally involved and there are many ways you can do this.

Participate in diversity awareness training. As discussed in the Where to Begin section, it's important for you to learn about typical diversity issues. While you can read books and view videotapes, these intellectual tools may not have as much emotional impact as participating in a well-run diversity training session. Ideally the training should have experiential exercises so you can begin to understand the impact of differences at an interpersonal level. The learnings from such training will strengthen your commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Recognize diversity champions within your organization. A diversity change process requires the commitment and energy of as many employees as possible. One way to sustain the momentum during what is often a long process is to periodically recognize the efforts of individuals who have contributed to the diversity effort in a positive way. By recognizing and rewarding employees, other employees will be persuaded to get involved.

Participate in and support the activities of employee network groups. Many companies have employee network groups so employees who share a similar demographic characteristic or other characteristics can get together. These groups can be very helpful in the diversity change process. They educate other employees about their cultural background, they provide mentoring and career development guidance to their members, they often assist with recruiting, and they provide crucial feedback to an organization's diversity effort. You should look for ways to interact with these groups by attending their functions, speaking at a forum, or meeting with their leadership.

Encourage your employees to participate in employee network groups. As described above, employee network groups have many benefits. Your employees are more likely to participate if they feel that their manager supports their involvement in these groups.

Get involved with community organizations that serve diverse groups. When you interact with people who are different from you, you will expand your understanding of diversity issues. In addition, you will be demonstrating that your commitment to diversity extends beyond your formal position as a manager. For more information see the list of community organizations in the Resources section.

Get to know a diverse group of employees. You need lots of personal interaction with people from different backgrounds in order to enhance your understanding and appreciation of cultural differences.

Diversity Commitment Actions

Accountability

It's not enough to talk about diversity and take some actions around diversity. You need to assume responsibility for improving your work environment with respect to diversity issues. If you have developed the business case for diversity, it's easy to link improving diversity performance to enhancing overall corporate performance. Addressing diversity issues also may support the achievement of specific corporate strategies, for example, expanding internationally or becoming an employer of choice.

Identify relevant diversity performance measures for your organization: You will want to review the measurement section and identify both quantitative and qualitative measurements for tracking the progress of your diversity effort.

Evaluate all employees, including individual contributors. As part of performance management, every employee should be given feedback on their commitment to addressing diversity issues within your organization. In this way, every employee takes ownership for creating a work environment that is fair and inclusive.

Establish an on-going feedback mechanism. Quantitative and qualitative measurements describe only part of the story of your diversity effort. Employee feedback often fills in the gaps and suggests reasons why your measures on diversity performance are improving, or not improving. You should develop a process to get feedback from employees, individual business units and/or teams.

Monitor and report progress. It's easier to begin a diversity initiative than to sustain the energy and commitment necessary to resolving diversity issues in the workplace. Nevertheless, your accountability as a manager requires that you monitor the impact of your diversity initiatives and periodically report on your progress.

Take action and show results. You shouldn't just talk about diversity. You need to have on-going results, even if they're small.

Mid-level and senior managers also should consider the following:

Make a high level appointment of a qualified woman, person of color, or person with a disability. Nothing signals your commitment to increasing the diversity within your organization like the selection of a woman, person of color, or a person with a disability to a senior role.

Hold managers accountable for 'mutual familiarization' – getting to know a diverse group of employees. Just as it's important for you to get to know a diverse group of employees, it's important for your managers. By increasing their familiarity and comfort with employees from different backgrounds, they will be more likely to recommend someone who is different from them for a new position, a high risk assignment, or a special program.

Evaluate the performance of all managers. As your diversity effort progresses, you may want to tie a portion of manager bonuses to the achievement of specific diversity objectives.

Consider the use of a balanced report card for diversity. A balanced report card utilizes a wide variety of agreed-upon measures to evaluate a diversity effort. You should review the Measurement Section in order to select the most appropriate measures for your organization.

Measurement

Measurements in diversity work can be used in a variety of ways. In this toolkit, we are concerned with using measurements to create a baseline picture of how an organization looks and feels before beginning diversity work and to track progress once a diversity effort has begun. There are an infinite number of measurements to do this. The following are examples of potential measurements. Not all measurements will be relevant to your organization and what you want to accomplish. Some may not be available.

Quantitative Measurements for managers within the US

Many quantitative measures focus on how an organization "looks" and rely on traditional affirmative action definitions of diversity. Since almost all US companies are required to have an Affirmative Action plan, you will want to make sure that your diversity effort positively impacts the representation, hiring, pay equity, promotion and turnover of women and people of color. Quantitative measurements also can measure supplier diversity and the results of multicultural marketing efforts.

Representation: What does your organization look like in terms of visible diversity? You should analyze your organizational unit and identify the percent of men, women, Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. Are these percentages consistent with similar organizational units within your company? Outside your company? Which groups are under-represented? The Recruiting section has some ideas for expanding the sources of hiring and accessing all available talent. If applicable, you also should analyze the demographic diversity of technical employees and compare the percentages to non-technical employees within your company as well as to other companies in the technology industry.

Hiring: Who is getting hired within your organization? You should analyze the demographic diversity of new hires within your organization as well as the demographic diversity of the applicants and candidates who received interviews. Does this reflect the range of diversity available in the pipeline? Are certain groups less represented? What does the diversity of applicants and hires look like for external candidates vs. internal candidates? What does it look like for various recruiting sources? The Recruitment section has some ideas for expanding the sources of hiring and accessing all available talent.

Development: How many employees have an individual development plan? Dissatisfaction with development drives employees to seek opportunities outside the company. Having a development plan helps employees to see beyond their immediate position to longer-term opportunities, which ties them to the company, thereby preventing future turnover. In addition, written development plans have been found to be helpful for the advancement of women and people of color.

Pay equity: Are women, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans being paid the same as white males in similar positions? The human resource department can conduct a pay equity review to determine if all employees are being paid the same for similar responsibilities. You should review this data to make sure that there are no discrepancies.

Promotion: Who is getting promoted within your organization? You should analyze the promotion rates of men, women, Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans within your organization. Are the rates similar for men and women? Are the rates similar for Whites and people of color? If not, then you will need to research potential reasons for the disparity. The career development and planning section may give you some ideas for resolving the disparity.

Measurement

Turnover: Who is leaving your organization? You should analyze your voluntary and involuntary turnover by demographic category. If the turnover rates for each demographic group are not similar, then you will need to research the reasons for the disparity. You also may want to look at the retention of high performers. Some companies set goals to retain a certain percentage of high performers; for example, at least 90%. The retention section of this toolkit will give you some ideas for decreasing turnover and improving retention.

Supplier diversity: What percent of purchases are made from women-owned and minority-owned businesses that are suppliers to the company? Customers and partners expect a company to have a robust and diverse supplier base. Without one, a company may lose customers to a competitor with a stronger commitment to supplier diversity.

Multicultural marketing: What have been the results of your efforts to market to multicultural communities within the US? The populations of African Americans, Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans is growing. Many companies tailor their marketing messages and programs to these different constituencies. You should be familiar with your company's programs and successes within these major groups. As a manager, you are a role model. Your employees will look to see what you say and do to evaluate your dedication to addressing diversity issues. It's essential that you understand the business case for diversity, why it's important for your organization to address diversity issues, and what the specific diversity issues are that you want to resolve within your organization. In short, you'll need to have some talking points around diversity. desirable to ask about diversity results during routine business update meetings.

Measurement

Quantitative Measurements for Senior managers within the US

In addition, senior managers will want to consider the following measurements:

Representation of executive employees: What is the visible diversity within the executive population? You should analyze the executive population – usually defined as the direct reports to the CEO – and identify the percent of men, women, Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. Are these percentages consistent with the rest of the organization? Which groups are under-represented?

Representation of senior managers: What is the visible diversity of the direct reports to executives? You should analyze the direct reports to executives and identify the percent of men, women, Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. Are these percentages consistent with the rest of the organization? Which groups are under-represented? The Career development and planning section may give you some ideas for resolving the disparity

Representation of senior management pipeline: What is the visible diversity of the people most likely to replace the direct reports to executives? You should analyze the people most likely to replace the direct reports to executives and identify the percent of men, women, Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. Are these percentages consistent with the rest of the organization? Which groups are under-represented? The career development and planning section may give you some ideas for resolving the disparity.

Measurement

Quantitative Measurements for managers outside the US

Many quantitative measures focus on how an organization "looks", for example, the percent of women as compared to the percent of men, or the percent of minorities as compared to the majority culture.

Representation: What does your organization look like in terms of diversity? You should analyze your organizational unit and identify the percent of men, women, and minorities. Are these percentages consistent with similar organizational units within your company? Outside your company? Which groups are under-represented?

Hiring: Who is getting hired within your organization? You should analyze the demographic diversity of new hires within your organization as well as the demographic diversity of the applicants and candidates who received interviews. Does this reflect the range of diversity available in the pipeline? Are certain groups less represented? What does the diversity of applicants and hires look like for external candidates vs. internal candidates? What does it look like for various recruiting sources?

Development: How many employees have an individual development plan? Dissatisfaction with development drives employees to seek opportunities outside the company. Having a development plan helps employees to see beyond their immediate position to longer-term opportunities, which ties them to the company, thereby preventing future turnover. In addition, written development plans have been found to be helpful for the advancement of women and people of color.

Pay equity: Are women and women being paid the same as males from the dominant culture in similar positions? The human resource department can conduct a pay equity review to determine if all employees are being paid the same for similar responsibilities. You should review this data to make sure that there are no discrepancies.

Promotion: Who is getting promoted within your organization? You should analyze the promotion rates of men, women, and minorities within your organization. Are the rates similar for men and women? Are the rates similar for minorities and people from the dominant culture? If not, then you will need to research potential reasons for the disparity. The Career development and planning section may give you some ideas for resolving the disparity.

Turnover: Who is leaving your organization? You should analyze your voluntary and involuntary turnover by demographic category. If the turnover rates for each demographic group are not similar, then you will need to research the reasons for the disparity. You also may want to look at the retention of high performers. Some companies set goals to retain a certain percentage of high performers; for example, at least 90%. The Retention section of this toolkit will give you some ideas for decreasing turnover and improving retention.

Measurement

Qualitative measurements

Qualitative measurements can be outcome-oriented or activity-based. Outcome measures focus on how an organization "feels", for example, the perceived level of inclusion felt by all employees. Activity-based measurements assess the robustness of an organization's diversity effort in its recruiting, retention and training areas.

Outcome measures

Employee inclusion: What are the results of employee satisfaction surveys? Most companies survey their employees on a wide range of work-related issues. You should be aware of the major findings of any employee research and the actions or programs that result from it. In addition, if available, it is useful to analyze the employee survey results by demographic categories to identify which issues are most important to each group.

Customer feedback: What has been the customer feedback on your diversity programs? Changing customer demographics means that your customers will be evaluating your visible diversity as well as the robustness of your diversity effort. You may want to ask current as well as potential customers for what they perceive are critical diversity issues for your organization.

Employee groups: Do you have employee identity groups at the company? How many employees participate in these groups and/or their events? Do these groups operate within the US or globally? Active employee identity groups are typically found at companies working on diversity issues. These groups can be a resource for their constituencies, provide honest feedback to human resources and senior management, and be an integral part of an overall diversity effort.

Measurement

Activity-based measures

Recruiting activities

The robustness of your recruiting focus can be assessed by answering the following questions:

- Has everyone involved in interviewing candidates received diversity training?
- Have all job descriptions been reviewed for superfluous credentials, experiences and criteria?
- Are diverse interviewing panels assembled for all job openings?
- Have policies and benefits been reviewed and improved to attract a wider range of employees?
- How many diverse interns and co-op students does your organization have?
- How many relationships have been formed with schools that have diversity in their student body?
- How many partnerships have been formed with organizations that cater to the needs of minority and other diverse candidates?
- How many partnerships have been formed with community organizations?
- Have all position openings been posted in publications and websites that cater to demographically diverse employees?

Retention activities

The robustness of your retention focus can be assessed by answering the following questions:

- How many employees have an individual development plan?
- How many employees have attended training classes/courses to enhance their development?
- How many employees have taken advantage of some type of development opportunity?
- What is the diversity of employees being offered high-risk, high reward assignments?
- How many employees are participating in a formal mentoring relationship or program?
- How many employees are involved in community organizations or events?
- How many employees are taking advantage of flexible work hours?
- How many employees are taking advantage of telecommuting?

Training activities

You can track the number of employees who have participated in diversity training as well as the evaluations from the training sessions. You should review the employee evaluations of such training for insight into potential diversity issues in your work environment as well as to assess the effectiveness of diversity training.

Measurement

Diversity commitment

Answering the following questions can assess the extent of your diversity commitment:

- How many times have you communicated to your employees on diversity, in writing, and in person?
- Have you recognized diversity champions within your organization?
- How many community organizations that serve diverse groups are you involved with?
- Have you evaluated your employees on their commitment to addressing diversity issues?
- Have you established on-going mechanisms to provide vital feedback on your diversity effort?

Resources

Background Information

History of Affirmative Action: Affirmative action is a term that was first used in 1961 in Executive Order 10925 by President Kennedy. The order, in part, stated, "the contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, creed, color, or national origin. The contractor will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin. Such action shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship."

President Johnson's 1965 Executive Order 11246, as amended, stated in part, "each Government contractor with 50 or more employees and $50,000 or more in government contracts is required to develop a written affirmative action program (AAP) for each of its establishments." President Johnson amended the order in 1967 to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, as well as require that federal contractors make good-faith efforts to expand employment opportunities for women and minorities.

In 1970, under President Nixon, the Labor Department, issued Order No.4, authorizing flexible goals and timetables to correct "underutilization" of minorities by all federal contractors. This order was revised in 1971 to include women.

Difference between Affirmative Action, EEO, and OFCCP: Affirmative Action refers to the legally mandated policies created to provide equal opportunity in employment for all qualified persons and to prohibit discrimination in employment based on race, creed, color, national origin or sex. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for identifying and eliminating discrimination in the workplace. The Office of Federal Compliance (OFCCP) within the Department of Labor is charged with implementing Executive Order #11246, which prohibits employment discrimination and established affirmative action requirements for federal contractors and subcontractors.

Difference between Affirmative Action and managing diversity: Affirmative Action is a legally mandated program, while managing diversity is not. Managing diversity is a process used by businesses to fully utilize their most important capital, employees. Managing diversity deals with recognizing and leveraging the differences each of bring to the workplace. It also is about creating an environment that builds on those differences and manages them in a way that positively contributes to the success of the organization.

Resources

Helpful Web sites

National Technical Diversity-Related Organizations

- http://www.nsbe.org/ (National Society of Black Engineers)
- http://www.shpe.org/ (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers)
- http://www.swe.org/ (Society of Women Engineers)
- http://www.witi.org/ (Women in Technology, Inc.)
- http://www.nshmba.org/ (National Society of Hispanic MBA's)
- http://www.nbmbaa.org/ (National Black MBA Association)
- http://www.iwt.org/ (Institute for Women and Technology)
- http://www.maes-natl.org/ (Mexican American Engineers and Scientists)
- http://www.aises.org/ (American Indian Sciences and Engineering Society)
- http://www.bdpa.org/ (Black Data Processor Association)
- http://www.sacnas.org/ (Society Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans)
- http://www.naaap.org/ (National Association of Asian Professionals)
- http://www.awib.org/content_frames/directory/asian/ (Asian Women in Business)

General Diversity Links

- http://www.public.iastate.edu/~savega/divweb2.htm (diversity organization links)
- http://www.ahaplanet.com/Nation/Diversity.html (diversity organization links)
- http://www.africanamericanyearbook.com (African American diversity links by city)
- http://www.hispanicyearbook.com (Latino diversity links by city)
- http://www.ranks.com/home/lifestyle/top_ethnic_sites/ (diversity organization links)

Community Associations

- http://www.urbanleague.org/ (National African American Community-Based Organization)
- http://www.lulac.org/ (League of United Latin American Citizens)
- http://www.hace-usa.org/ (Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement)
- http://www.nacme.org/ (National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering)
- http://www.uncf.org/ (United Negro College Fund)
- http://www.hsf.net/index.php (Hispanic Scholarship Foundation)
- http://www.aapd-dc.org/ (American Association of People with Disabilities)
- http://www.nod.org (National Organization on disabilities)

List of Colleges and Universities with Significant Minority Populations

- http://www.hbcu-central.com Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's)
- http://www.hacu.net/hacu_members/index.shtml Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU's)
- http://www.aihec.org/ American Indian Higher Education Consortium of Colleges
- http://ntidweb.rit.edu/ National Technical Institute for the Deaf

Diversity Calendar

http://www3.kumc.edu/diversity