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Position Paper

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In the world today, all businesses have a goal of operating effectively and efficiently. They have this goal so that the jobs that they are doing get done and so that the limited resources they have are not wasted. In order to achieve this goal, businesses need management. Management is defined as the organization and coordination of the activities of a business in order to achieve defined objectives (WebFinance, Inc., 2013). In other words, it is the process of working with and through others to achieve organizational objectives in a changing environment. People who are given the title of “manager” are people who have the power and responsibility to make decisions and oversee an enterprise (WebFinance, Inc., 2013). Managers have a lot of responsibilities and they face challenges in the workplace all the time. One responsibility and challenge that is very prevalent in today’s society that managers must deal with is diversity in the workplace.

Diversity is very important in the workplace today. It is important because times have changed and the growing labor force is now comprised of more female, immigrant, minority, and older workers. It is also important because if managers and staff know how to work effectively in a diverse environment then it helps an organization prevent discrimination and promote inclusiveness. There is evidence that managing a diverse work force can contribute to increased staff retention and productivity. It can enhance an organization's responsiveness to an increasingly diverse world of customers, improve relations with the surrounding community, increase an organization's ability to cope with change, and expand the creativity of an organization (University of California, Berkley, HR., n.d.). This means that in order for businesses to thrive, for some to just even survive, managers have to have the ability to manage diversity in the workplace. Managing diversity in the workplace is the process of creating an organizational culture that provides all employees, including women and minorities, with assistance and opportunities to help them realize their full potential.

In my research for this paper, I found two articles about management and diversity in the workplace that really stood out. These articles were Managing Diversity in the Workplace: An Immense Challenge for Both Managers and Workers by Dean Elmuti and Making Managers Accountable for Diversity by Amanda Silliker. Both articles were very informative on the importance of diversity in the workplace. In Managing Diversity in the Workplace: An Immense Challenge for Both Managers and Workers, there is a quote from David Keens, president and CEO of Xerox Corp, in which he states that “It is absolutely clear that we have to manage diversity right now and much more so in the future. American businesses will not be able to survive if we do not have a large diverse workforce because those are the demographics--no choice! The company that gets out in front of managing diversity will have a competitive edge.” (Elmuti, 1993). This article also talks about some of the things that managers need to do or the responsibilities that managers should assume in order to deal with diversity in the workplace. For example, managers can promote women, minorities, immigrants and the handicapped to positions of authority. They can also integrate task forces and committees so that people learn to work together and become dependent on each other's accomplishments as well as change attitudes by having people work with people who are different than themselves (Elmuti, 1993). A similarity I noticed was that both articles advocated diversity management training strategies. In other words, training and education on diversity in the workplace should not only be offered to managers but to all employees and it should move beyond general sensitivity training to occupation-specific education. Also, this education should be offered on an ongoing basis with many refresher courses being given. A difference I noticed between the articles was that the second one, Making Managers Accountable for Diversity, placed a huge emphasis on manager accountability for diversity whereas the first article, Managing Diversity in the Workplace: An Immense Challenge for Both Managers and Workers did not. For example, the second article advocates having a

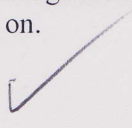
sound accountability framework be put in place, in writing, as a performance indicator so that a manager's performance in diversity can be measured, monitored, and rewarded (Silliker, 2011).

Management and diversity in the workplace is extremely applicable to real life. As a person living in New York City, one of the most diverse places in all of America, I see all different kinds of people working all different kinds of jobs. A lot of businesses such as Home Depot or Lowes actually have signs on the entrances to their brick-and-mortar stores that indicate that they have all different kinds of employees who speak many different languages such as Spanish, French, Arabic, etc. This is done because managers of these establishments understand that they are in a community full of all different kinds of people and if they want their businesses to thrive and succeed then they will have to cater to their diverse customer base as well as have the ability to manage their diverse employee workforce.

These articles that I have read are extremely informative and I have learned a lot from them. As someone standing on the outside looking in, I never really gave any thought to diversity in the workplace. As a person living in New York City I constantly see all different kinds of people working all different kinds of jobs. After reading the articles and doing my research however, I have finally realized just how much thought, work, and effort go into the concept of diversity in the workplace and how managers have to handle it. I never knew that companies had come with diversity management training strategies to handle diversity in the workplace. I just thought that managers knew how to handle it and if they didn't, then they would learn on the job through different situations and experiences.

While the articles were very informative, there were a few things I read that agreed with and other things that I disagreed with. First off, diversity in the workplace is very important; there is absolutely no denying that fact especially in today's society. I agree that managers have to be able to handle diversity in the workplace because if they don't then the work environment can get very bad very fast and their business can suffer. I also agree that managers should promote women, minorities, immigrants and the handicapped to positions of authority as well as integrate task forces and committees with different kinds of people because both ideas force workers to work with different kinds of people which ultimately encourages diversity in the workplace. Another thing I agree with is that in the second article, Making Managers Accountable for Diversity, it says that in order effectively manage diversity at the workplace; managers need to have good communication with their employees. This helps managers to recognize that different employees have different kinds of perspectives on things and priorities in life and work and upon knowing that, managers will be able to customize some of their coaching and mentoring activities to meet those needs (Silliker, 2011). One thing that I disagree with however, is how the second article puts such a huge emphasis on manager accountability in regards to diversity in the workplace. That article brings up a point to create sound accountability framework be put in place, in writing, as a performance indicator so that a manager's performance in diversity can be measured, monitored, and rewarded. I don't agree with that because I don't see that framework as a realistic idea. Yes, there has to be accountability on a manager in terms of diversity but I don't see how someone can create a performance indicator for a manager's work in diversity.

Society has definitely changed from years ago and the workforce then is not even close to the workforce today. All different kinds of people have entered into the workforce such as women, minorities, immigrants, etc. Because of this, managers have to be prepared to handle this kind of diversity in the workplace it. It is the reason why companies and organizations put so much emphasis on diversity training and manager accountability in regards to diversity. As long as managers and employees are trained to handle diversity not just one-time, but multiple times throughout their careers, then diversity in the workplace should get easier and easier to handle as time goes on.



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