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The Network Newsletter

The Workplace Diversity Network: A Project of Cornell University ILR and The National Conference

The Organizational Case for Diversity

The 1997 Fall Forum Visits Sandia National Labs

Sandia National Labs, winner of the 1996 ASTD Multicultural Network Award, provided the focus for this Forum's exploration of diversity as an issue of organizational effectiveness. Sixteen Network participants and invited guests convened in Albuquerque, New Mexico, November 17 to 19 for a stimulating and thought-provoking session. The Forum asked us to consider diversity from an organizational systems perspective: bridging diversity initiatives with organizational goals, linking EEO/AA strategies to organizational culture change and moving from the perspective of the organization to the individual and back.

The opening sessions with *Maurice Cox, Vice President of Corporate Development and Diversity at Pepsi-Cola* - "Connecting Diversity to the Organization" and *Rochelle Lari, Diversity Consultant and Trainer, Sandia National Labs* - "Connecting Individuals to Diversity" - framed the practitioners' dual challenge of managing diversity upwards to the strategic leadership level and downwards to the level of individual awareness and skills.

The following day participants traveled to Sandia National Labs to hear an in-depth presentation of Sandia's innovative approach to diversity led by *Berweida Learson, Manager of Diversity Programs*. Sandia is a government owned/contractor operated facility whose mission is to provide scientific and engineering solutions for national defense, energy needs, technology and the environment. As we learned, planning and implementing a successful diversity initiative for this multi-divisional organization employing a workforce of over 8,000 was no small order. The session also included a panel discussion with six divisional representatives who discussed the planned transition of diversity responsibility from human resources to line management. Berweida was joined by her colleague, *Pat Jerabek, IBIS Consulting*, for a demonstration of a new tool for diversity strategy planners called the "Lens Approach to Diversity," developed in part from lessons learned in the Sandia experience. The tool, still in the early stages of development, provides a framework for understanding the varied diversity strategies being adapted by organizations today. It triggered a lively discussion and provided an appropriate transition to the concluding session of the day, *Margaret White, Editor, The Diversity Factor*, sharing her views of "Stepping Back to Look Forward: What Have We Seen? Where Are We Headed?" Look for her remarks in the Winter 1998 issue of *The Diversity Factor*. We ended with a whistle stop tour of the facilities.

The Forum concluded with a panel discussion of "Affinity Groups: Experiences and Issues" moderated by *Scott Marshall, Director of Program Services, The National Conference* with *Margaret Harvey, Manager of EEO/AA Services, Sandia National Labs* and *Sheryl McCullough, Manager, Diversity Policies and Planning, U.S. Postal Service*. The session sparked a stimulating discussion of the allied roles of EEO/AA and diversity and led participants to pose the question - *"What would an inclusive workplace look like when it is achieved?"* The idea of identifying the organizational attributes of inclusion was suggested as a future focus for the Network. *So mark your calendars! The next forum will be held in conjunction with* ***THE NETTER SEMINAR, May 5-7, 1998*** *at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY; its theme - to identify the organizational criteria for inclusion using a format similar to that used by the Baldridge Award to identify criteria for quality.*

Under separate cover, Network organizations which did not participate in the Fall Forum will receive the complete Forum resource book. This Network Newsletter is designed to describe the contents of the resource book by briefly summarizing selected highlights of the 1997 Fall Forum.

Connecting Diversity to the Organization

Maurice Cox, Vice President, Corporate Development and Diversity, Pepsi-Cola

Maurice Cox introduced the opening session with a challenge: "We are at a crossroad with this work. We have the opportunity to raise it to the next level. The question is: Can we get there with the same processes? With the same approaches?" With about 80% of his time at Pepsi-Cola allocated to planning strategy execution, Maurice is concerned with the importance of moving diversity work beyond the human resources function and the challenge of creating partnerships with other functional responsibilities in the organization.

To spark our thinking on this issue, Maurice asked us to identify how strongly diversity is connected to each of our organizations' missions and goals. Using a continuum model, we identified how the connection was made, on a basis of "social justice" or "business justification." Secondly, we were asked to describe the functional role clarity and support needed for effective diversity management. For example, who designs selection systems? If this is given to line management, are there ways the diversity manager can collaborate to provide input and support? Are diversity goals reflected in functional accountability? Are there ways to create partnerships with different functions to align diversity with other organizational objectives?

The discussion that ensued was quite thought-provoking. Maurice emphasized the importance of articulating diversity goals as part of the organization's mission. Managing diversity becomes an issue of operationalizing the mission, linking diversity with accountability and recognition, making it part of "living out the mission." From his experience, the breakthrough for achieving organizational alignment comes with understanding how diversity relates to key elements of organizational performance.

Maurice shared with the Network an example of an out-of-date Pepsi Strategic Direction Statement, showing diversity included in the shared values statement and linking organizational philosophy - "The Right Side Up Company" - to strategic direction. At Pepsi, the strategic direction is shared with all employees in one day alignment meetings.

Connecting the Individual to Diversity

Rochelle Lari, Diversity Consultant and Trainer, Sandia National Labs

Shifting from the organizational perspective to the individual, Rochelle Lari led participants through a demonstration of the DiSC personal profile, a training tool Sandia has successfully used to introduce individuals to diversity awareness.

The DiSC Personal Profile System from the Carlson Learning Company identifies four behavioral styles as:

D: Dominance - emphasis on shaping the environment by overcoming opposition to accomplish results
i: Influence - emphasis on shaping the environment by influencing or persuading others
C: Conscientiousness - emphasis on working conscientiously within existing circumstances to ensure quality and accuracy
S: Steadiness - emphasis on cooperating with others to carry out the task

The self-scoring instrument allows individuals to identify their main behavior style and their integrated behavioral pattern based on the strength of each dimension. Rochelle uses the DiSC profiles to ask

persons with similar behavioral styles to group together and describe themselves, as well as those in other groups. The typical response is for each grouping to highlight what they consider favorable about their own characteristics and to describe other style groupings through comparisons with themselves, emphasizing what they consider the less desirable traits. The exercise illustrates interpersonal dynamics when dealing with differences. Discussion draws out the implications for the workplace. This approach has proved successful in introducing self-awareness and the importance of differences as concepts and laying the groundwork for further diversity awareness building. It creates a safe haven to talk about differences and helps move a group beyond the "my way is the best way" mentality.

KEYSTONE SESSION
Diversity at Sandia National Labs
Berweida Learson, Manager of Diversity Programs, Sandia National Labs

According to Charles Emery, Vice President for Human Resources, the cultural challenge with Sandia's strong scientific and technical focus is to move from a strictly engineering and science orientation to a culture that is more business oriented and people-sensitive. This may also be what makes Sandia's approach to diversity so unique. The initiative's design draws on the organization's expertise in large project planning, analysis and problem solving. One of its innovations, the MDPI, Managing Diversity Progress Index designed for measurement and guidance, builds on quality, organizational development and diversity research, applications and methods. Still under development, the MDPI is being tested in selected divisions.

Sandia's approach to workforce diversity addresses issues of "culture" differences from both an organizational change and a systems perspective. In the early 1990's when diversity was included among the organization's strategic goals, Sandia's senior management endorsed a five-year corporate-wide Workforce Diversity Initiative, with committed funding and dedicated staffing. In five years, the Diversity Planning Department was to design and implement a diversity change process for Sandia, to jump start the diversity effort and seed it in the organization well enough to transition responsibility to line management, leaving human resources in only a support role.

Six Strategic Human Resource Planning (SHRP) diversity objectives were established:

- Determine areas for improvement in terms of workplace environment issues and put in place appropriate processes and structures to address these issues
- Make those strides in Diversity that would improve employees' experience of fairness in the workplace as well as enhance Sandia's ability to attract future employees
- Develop a Sandia culture that fully utilizes all people and recognizes diversity as a competitive advantage
- Identify future workforce demographics, compare them with Sandia's workforce to determine and close gaps
- Establish and implement processes which support varied work styles and family needs
- Integrate diversity processes and structures with other SHRP strategic focus areas: staffing, performance management, and leadership/management development

The diversity leadership team worked initially with leading external experts in the field to create awareness and develop a knowledge base before transitioning responsibility internally. The result is a process that defines diversity using the dual pillars of inclusion and high performance and an approach which addresses diversity simultaneously at four levels: individual, interpersonal, managerial and organizational/system.

The first phases established the Corporate Diversity Team to address diversity from a corporate perspective and a Diversity Champions program. The next phase focused on the establishment of Division Diversity Councils at the line organization level, responsible for identifying diversity issues in their divisions, implementing Division Diversity Action Plans, and providing education and awareness in their organizations. The final phases of the plan shift ownership of the diversity culture changegoals to line management, continue diversity education programs and introduce managing diversity processes linked to the goals of inclusion and high performance. Responsibility is connected to accountability through quarterly metrics, survey trends and a reward and recognition process.

Today, over 300 Diversity Champions represent a larger group of volunteers who serve as resources on diversity issues. Internal Diversity Trainers are available to deliver awareness workshops and mini-modules. Initiatives include programs like eldercare and childcare to support an inclusive work culture; a corporate mentoring program; and training and development programs for employees. Through EEO/AA, Sandia supports six outreach committees and one networking group to enhance teaming with Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, Women, Persons with Disabilities and Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual employees.

To support future workforce development and foster community and professional relationships, Sandia participates in an array of summer learning programs, student internships, graduate research and assistantships in collaboration local public schools, historically black colleges and universities, and professional associations like the American Indian Science and Engineering Society and the Society of Hispanic Engineers. Sandia is an active participant in the community to improve the quality of life and build community support for diversity. Sandia was instrumental in the formation of The Diversity Leadership Council in New Mexico's Middle Rio Grande Region to promote diversity in business, education, government and the community.

The presentation was followed by a panel discussion with six divisional representatives, which provided insight into the evolving diversity process at Sandia. Given the size and complexity of the organization and the significant differences in operations and functional cultures -- as for example the Surety Assessment Center, responsible for the safety and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, and the energy and environment division, self-described as the "hippies over in solar power" -- the transition of diversity responsibility downward allows each division the autonomy to tailor its strategy for achieving high performance and inclusion to its own circumstances

Putting It All Together
Diversity as a Business Imperative at Sandia

To be a high-performing competitive organization in the twenty-first century, Sandia must hire and retain the best people, support learning and creative thinking, and develop employees who are aligned, focused, and committed to the organization's goals. Prejudice, stereotypes or isolation are barriers to this environment as are organizational policies and work cultures that are not aligned with Sandia's mission and values. To strengthen the business, Sandia's diversity efforts have addressed individual, interpersonal/team, management and organizational issues that hinder high performance and inclusion. Sandia's diversity initiative is targeted to bring these advantages to the business:

- *Enhanced worker retention, empowerment, alignment and productivity*
- *Integration of differing perspectives to problem-solving processes*
- *Enhanced group dynamics of teams working across boundaries*
- *Reduction of harassment and discrimination complaints*
- *Recognition of Sandia's reputation as an employer of choice*
- *Expanded pools of qualified applicants from all populations*

Source: *The Time Is Now,* Sandia National Laboratories

and readiness levels. Diversity Action Plans for each division ensure alignment of division activities to organizational goals and serve as a mechanism for performance evaluation. Cross-functional activities provide a mechanism for communication and information-sharing among divisions.

The outcome is an approach built on partnering among human resources, executive and line management, labor unions, the Department of Energy and the community. Working from the ideas of leaders in diversity and organizational change, Kaleel Jamison, Elsie Y. Cross, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge, and Roosevelt Thomas, among others, Sandia has crafted a process that is uniquely its own and integrally linked to overall organizational goals.

Lenses on Diversity

Berweida Learson, Sandia National Labs and Pat Jerabek, IBIS Consulting Group

Berweida Learson and Pat Jerabek introduced the "prism analysis of diversity" as a technique to better understand the breadth and depth of the diversity field, i.e. the various "lenses" of diversity.

We were invited to think about diversity as white light going through a prism. In their analogy, each of the colors in the light spectrum represent different components or lenses of diversity. They identified eight components:

- American Democracy and Social Justice
- Legal
- Cultural
- Valuing
- Managing
- Inter-cultural/Global
- Cultural Change/Org. Development
- Business Case

The various lenses of diversity, while distinct, are interdependent. An organization typically approaches diversity from multiple lenses at once. We were invited to participate in an exercise designed to help us identify 1) which of the diversity lenses most excite and motivate us personally; 2) which of the lenses best describe current organizational need; and 3) which best describe what our organizations are currently doing. An analysis of similarities and differences among the three responses is useful for suggesting areas that not being addressed by current strategy. This analysis is then used to structure recommendations for the future.

Berweida and Pat suggested that viewing the world through any given set of lenses influences organizational direction and outcomes. The demonstration provoked a lively discussion of the similarities and differences among our organizations and provided a useful framework for understanding the inter-connectedness of various diversity strategies.

THE NETTER SEMINAR OF THE WDN FORUM
Stepping Back to Look Forward: What Have We Seen? Where Are We Headed?"

Margaret Blackburn White, Editor, THE DIVERSITY FACTOR

Margaret White offered a provocative review of the development of "diversity" and her reflections on social progress. She referenced the Thomas and Ely diversity paradigms (*Harvard Business Review*, Sept.-Oct. 1996). Characterizing the diversity field pre-1990 as focused on Civil Rights, Social Movements, and "The Discrimination and Fairness Paradigm," she suggested the impact of the Workforce 2000 demographics stimulated the next distinguishable phase, roughly 1987-1997. Emphasis was placed on developing the business case for diversity and organizations adopted from "The Access and Legitimacy" paradigm.

As the current decade closes, the "valuing and celebrating of differences" is being connected to organizational change and performance, i.e. "The Learning and Effectiveness Paradigm". She suggested that from 1997 onward, these ideas are evolving into the concept of "diversity culture change" and challenged us to connect what we're doing with the underlying problems of racism,

sexism, ageism, homophobia, and other oppressions that need to be overcome. "We seem to have an inability to be up front about what we're doing." She expressed concern that we're working to make people feel good, but not "naming the problem." Margaret has published her remarks in the latest issue of *The Diversity Factor* (Winter 1998).

Affinity Groups: Experiences and Issues

Margaret Harvey, Manager of EEO/AA Services, Sandia National Labs
Sheryl McCullough, Manager, Diversity Policies and Planning, US Postal Service
Scott Marshall, Director of Program Services, The National Conference, Moderator

The closing session of the Forum brought our discussion of diversity as an organizational issue full circle by connecting diversity initiatives to the use of affinity groups or employee networks, a strategy often structured as a component of EEO/AA. Discussion revealed the aligned roles of EEO/AA and diversity. Unlike diversity councils or task forces, which are implemented as top-down initiatives and focus on the broad collection of similarity and difference in the workplace, affinity groups are employee driven initiatives, organized around a particular identifying dimension, and may or may not be officially sanctioned.

Sheryl McCullough from the U.S. Postal Service and Margaret Harvey from Sandia shared their organizations' experiences with affinity groups. Although the Postal Service does not officially sanction affinity groups, several grassroots employee groups, such as HOPE, Hispanic Organization of Postal Employees, have developed to give voice to common issues and provide personal and professional support to participants.

The Postal Service uses grassroots employees groups to broaden resources and add perspective for policy options. For example, when developing the sexual orientation non-harassment policy, the diversity policy and planning staff consulted with GLOBE, a federal organization of gay, lesbian and bisexual employees, as well as the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Organization of Postal Service Employees.

Sheryl pointed out that as part of the AA/EEO policy, the Postal Service does sanction three advisory committees covering AA/EEO, Hispanic and Women's issues. These function as the "the eyes and ears" of district and local management and advise on policy issues. These committees are not affinity groups. Position openings are posted and diversity specialists and district managers select participants from a variety of craft, clerk and carrier backgrounds. Meetings are held on paid time.

Sandia officially supports six outreach committees and one networking group through the EEO/AA Services.. The Asian Leadership, American Indian, Black Leadership, and Hispanic Leadership Outreach Committees, a Women's Program and a Disabilities Awareness Committee serve as a liaison between protected group employees and Sandia, identify concerns and make recommendations to address work-related issues. In addition to these inreach functions, they also participate in outreach activities to promote awareness of job opportunities, participate in career fairs and recruiting activities, and enhance community relationships. Most recently, gay, lesbian and bisexual employees formed a Networking group which identifies workplace issues and helps to create a positive work environment. Each maintains its own Web page.

As we added experiences from our own organizations to the discussion, we found ourselves again in a lively exchange, discussing the implications of diversity for of affinity groups and confronting the question: *"What will inclusion look like, when we achieve it?"*

This discussion will continue; join us in Ithaca, NY, May 5-7, 1998 for the Netter Seminar, being held in conjunction with The 1998 Spring Forum.

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