Enhance Your Future
Professional Training Consultants

BSBDIV301

WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH DIVERSITY

LEARNER RESOURCE

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TOPIC 1 – RECOGNISE INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND RESPOND APPROPRIATELY

RECOGNISE AND RESPECT INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN COLLEAGUES, CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS

WHAT IS WORKPLACE DIVERSITY?

Workplace diversity is about acknowledging differences and adapting work practices to create an inclusive environment in which diverse skills, perspectives and backgrounds are valued.

It is about understanding the individual differences in the people we work with that arise from a broad range of backgrounds and lifestyles, and recognizing the value of using those different perspectives, ideas and ways of working to enhance the quality and outcomes of work.[1]

Our diversity is shaped and informed by a variety of characteristics including:

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Disability
- Language
- Religious beliefs
- Life stages
- Education
- Career responsibilities
- Sexual orientation
- Personality
- Marital status

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[1] http://prsastlouis.org/content.php?page=Workplace_Diversity

RESPOND TO DIFFERENCES SENSITIVELY

We are all the product of our own upbringing and experiences so it is natural that we will have differences in opinions on a variety of issues.

Prejudices
Unfortunately, many people put up barriers to protect themselves instead of opening themselves up to others. This, in turn, leads to a mistrust of others regardless of colour, religion, gender or any other stereotypical excuse given as to why we fear others and, on a global scale, this is often borne out in the wars that we see around the world and in an increase in terrorist activities. We all know that these kinds of responses only really fuel further mistrust yet, even in our own immediate environments such as the workplace or even in our local pub, we all tend to congregate in our little groups without giving much thought to others around us.

Benefits of Being Open to Others
When we get to learn about others and respect our similarities and our differences, we get to learn so much more about the world and about ourselves and this helps us to grow spiritually, instead of stagnating. It also opens the doors to many other opportunities, be they friendships, work prospects, travel possibilities or a wider understanding of the world in which we live.[10]

At work, you will deal with a range of people including work colleagues at all levels of the organisation. You will deal with managers and supervisors, internal customers, stakeholders and people from other organisations. Everyone, you deal with will be different from you in some way. Some of these differences may not concern you at all, while for other differences you may need to make adjustments in your work practices or your usual way of thinking. Other people may need to make adjustments to accommodate you.

Everyone needs to cooperate to ensure that your organisation performs successfully.

You have learned that there are many different forms of diversity including age, beliefs and value systems, culture and race, expertise, experience and working style, gender, language, physical and mental characteristics and capabilities, politics and religion.

[10] http://www.lifecoachexpert.co.uk/AcceptingOtherPeopleDifferences.html

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ACCOMMODATE DIVERSITY USING APPROPRIATE VERBAL AND NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION

NON-DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE

The thing to consider about being non-discriminatory in the way you treat your colleagues and customers is the way that you speak. This includes the language you choose to use.

Language, both spoken and written, is the main official method that people use for communicating in business, regardless of whether the communication is between:

- Staff of the same organisational responsibility
- Staff with different levels of organisational responsibility
- Staff and customers

However, even written and spoken language can be used to show discriminatory feelings and attitudes towards particular individuals or groups of people.

Professional communication requires people to consider:

- Their own feelings and attitudes
- The feelings and attitudes of others
- By using language which does not discriminate against anyone unfairly

Discrimination in language means that the language is not respectful or accurate in its references to particular individuals or groups of people.

Consequently, when communicating at work, everyone is obliged to:

- Use inclusive language
- Avoid stereotypes

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TOPIC 2 - WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

RECOGNISE AND DOCUMENT KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS IN RELATION TO TEAM OBJECTIVES

RECOGNISING THE SKILLS OF OTHERS

One of the most important things you can do before looking for work or an alternative career is to consider what skills and abilities you already have. These are your most valuable assets and are very important.[15]

This is also true when working with other people. It is important that you can recognise the skills and knowledge of other people so that they can be utilised the correct way in the business. For instance: Jack knows a lot about working with people with a disability as he has 2 family members with disabilities. So, who would you ask for advice from if you were dealing with a customer with a disability. Likewise, why would you put a computer expert in the clothing area of the department store?

Let's look at the types of skills people can have? Three kinds of skills you need in the world of work are:

- Technical
- Transferable
- Personal

Technical skills *are the specialised skills and knowledge required to perform specific duties, sometimes referred to as 'work skills'. For example:*

- *Driving a forklift*
- *Information technology*
- *Bookkeeping/MYOB*
- *Machine operating*

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[15] http://careercentre.dtwd.wa.gov.au/findingajob/recogniseyourskillsandabilities/P...

The PDP (personal development plan), also called an IDP (individual development plan) or PEP (personal enterprise plan), usually includes a statement of an employee's aspirations, strengths or competencies, education and training, and stages or steps to indicate how the plan is to be realised. Personal development plans may also include a statement of an employee's career and lifestyle priorities, career positioning, analysis of opportunities and risks, and alternative plans (Plan B), and a curriculum vitae.

Personal developments plans are often a requirement for employee CVs. Employees who are participating in business training are often asked to complete a personal development plan.

A five-year personal development plan can be developed by any individual to organise personal goals and make them achievable within a certain time period.

Creating a personal development plan for each employee means that you have identified all current skills and knowledge, looked at where their weaknesses are and are planning to strengthen those weaknesses to enhance work capabilities.

ENSURE RELATIONS WITH CUSTOMERS AND CLIENTS DEMONSTRATE THAT DIVERSITY IS VALUED BY THE BUSINESS

VALUING DIVERSITY

Vauing diversity is vital in any organisation to encourage a harmonious work environment however; customers and clients should also see that your organisation values diversity too. Valuing this diversity needs to be evident by everyone who work in or enters your workplace.

Valuing diversity is reaching beyond how a person looks or appears and putting a value on their behaviour, ideas and perspectives. In other words, 'valuing' means going out of your way to gain advantage from different ideas and perspectives. The goal is to create the conditions where difference does not stop people from participating. This is a far cry from the normal state of affairs where difference tends to inhibit participation.

So, what are the key valuing diversity behaviours? They may include:

- Finding out about peoples' different backgrounds and skills
- Listening hard to different viewpoints and perspectives
- Treating people as individuals, not as representatives of a group
- Creating opportunities to interact with people who are different
- Actively supporting people who are treated unfairly because they are different
- Avoiding jokes/comments at the expense of minority groups
- Challenging practices and policies that disadvantage minorities
- Welcoming everyone as a contributor
- Consulting widely
- Teasing ideas out of people rather than expecting them to be volunteered
- Finding ways to encourage participation in discussions/meetings
- Giving people ample opportunity to prepare their ideas before being called upon to put them forward

Whilst valuing diversity may be a little time consuming and somewhat confusing at times, there is a great deal of value in it.

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SUMMARY

Now that you have completed this unit, you should have the skills and knowledge required to recognise and interact productively with diversity in the workplace.

If you have any questions about this resource, please ask your trainer. They will be only too happy to assist you when required.

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