



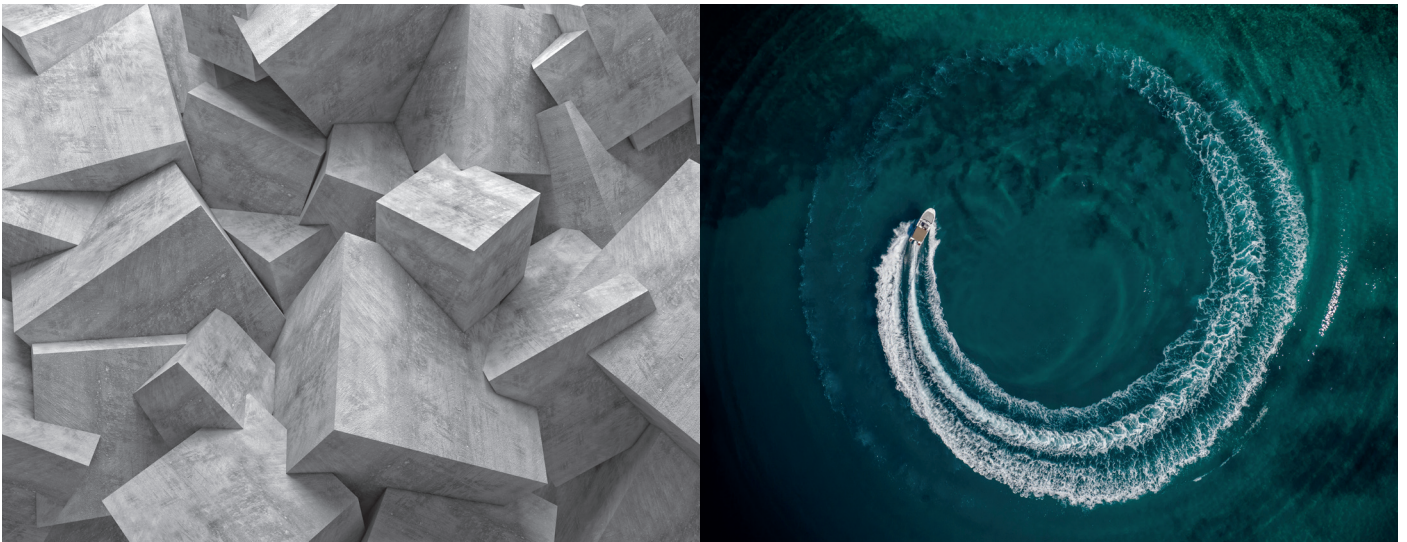
The House of The Mighty

#Diversity #Workplace #Business advantage

# Diversity represents a business advantage... but hiring a diverse workforce is not enough.

A diverse workforce does not necessarily improves business performance. It might even reveal to be counterproductive in many ways, such as complicating working relationships between colleagues who are not used to work together, or lead to less commitment and satisfaction from individuals not valuing to work with diverse people.

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Therefore, it is key to build an efficient management of a diverse workforce in order to leverage the multiple opportunities and comparative advantages that diversity can bring to a business.

### **But, first, what does diversity mean?**

Diversity usually refers to gender, i.e. a fair representation of men and women. However, we define diversity as encompassing also ethnic background, age, sexual orientation, but also cultural (values, beliefs, ways of thinking and processing information) and human (physical differences, personal preferences, life experiences and disability) diversity. Diversity is multidimensional and is reflected in one individual in various ways. And on top of that complexity, not all diversity components are perceived by professionals at the workplace as a source of discrimination.

However, these three business advantages do not come in simply hiring people with diverse backgrounds. The organisation has to set up programmes and metrics to assess their results in order to really enjoy the business comparative advantage of a diverse workforce.

### **The types of programmes to make the most of a diverse workforce**

Before setting up programmes, an organisation must communicate to its staff the rationale behind those diversity initiatives, and which diversity the organisation is aiming for. In other words, the management committee must explain why the organisation is allocating resources for a diverse workforce; and how it would like to have the workforce to look like in the future.

This would allow employees to assess the validity of the narrative, and increase the commitment and loyalty of a range of employees being in line with the values of their company.

The company should therefore explain the underlying reasons of such a strategy for diversity? Is it for ethical reasons? For equity? Or is it to align with the demographics changes happening in society?

Once the rationale and the diversity representation are clear for the organisation and transparently communicated to the staff, then the programmes can take place, here are some concrete examples, with their corresponding metrics to measure their efficiency.

### **Three business reasons to include a diverse workforce in an organisation.**

#### **1 – Increase market share**

A global economy requires that organisations have a diverse pool of employees who can deal with an international customer base. This opens the way to a greater market share.

#### **2 – Attract more talents**

Competition for the best talents requires an organisation to enlarge its candidates supply to a diverse labor pool with a diverse set of knowledge, hard and soft skills and experiences.

#### **3 – Unleash creativity, innovation and group problem-solving.**

Demographic diversity unleashes creativity, innovation and improved group problem-solving, which in turn increase the competitiveness of the organisation.

Programmes	Metrics
<p><b>1</b> Recruit, retain and develop a diverse workforce.</p>	<p><b>1a</b> Number of professionals with the desired diverse background hired in year x, as a percentage of total new joiners.</p> <p><b>1b</b> Number of professionals with the desired diverse background have left in year x, as a percentage of total leavers.</p> <p><b>1c</b> Number of diversity-based programmes followed programmes (such as mentoring, coaching, trainings), as part of the total development programmes provided in year x.</p>
<p><b>2</b> Developing external relationships with underrepresented groups, such as professionals with a refugee status, young apprentices, long-term unemployed professionals, professionals with disability.</p>	<p><b>2a</b> Number of career fair events aimed at the desired diverse background candidates, as a percentage of total career fair events in year x.</p>
<p><b>3</b> Reward success in achieving and maintaining diversity.</p>	<p><b>3a</b> Credit a team within the company who has successfully managed to retain diverse talents for x years, OR organised a diversity (event see programme 2) and award the team with internal communication and a bonus.</p>
<p><b>4</b> Trainings to settle conflicts and to neutralize discrimination behaviours.</p>	<p><b>4a</b> Number of such trainings held as percentage of total trainings provided in year x.</p> <p><b>4b</b> Ratio of attendance to these trainings on the total of attendance to all trainings in year x.</p>

It is important to emphasise that the probability of success of those programs is likely to depend on context factors, such as organisational culture, corporate strategy, working culture, types of jobs, values and motivations of the people. It is therefore necessary to have an extended analysis of the above-mentioned aspects before designing and implementing programmes promoting diversity.

In conclusion, a diverse workforce is a double-sword. If effectively promoted and managed, it can unlock a great potential of skills, market competitiveness, agility, all that in an inspiring and dynamic workplace.

On the contrary, with a blurred diversity strategy line, it will disrupt working processes and lead to unsatisfied employees. Companies must get ready before going for diversity.

### *References*

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