

The One Sheeter[©]

"Brief Insights into Meaningful Leadership"

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How I See It

Can Diversity Destroy Your Firm?

Charges filed at EEOC field offices throughout the country totaled 75,428 for FY 2005:

Race - 26,740 charges (35.5% of all filings)

Disability - 14,893 (19.7% of all filings)

Sex - 23,094 charges (30.6% of all filings)

National Origin - 8,035 (10.7% of all filings)

Retaliation - 22,278 charges (29.5% of all filings)

Religion - 2,340 (3.1% of all filings)

Age - 16,585 charges (22% of all filings)

Equal Pay - 970 charges (1.3% of all filings)

Additionally, there were 12,679 sexual harassment charge filings and 4,449 pregnancy discrimination filings in FY 2005 with EEOC offices and state and local Fair Employment Practices Agencies (combined). Of the total number of sexual harassment charges, 14% were filed by men.

Nearly \$380 million was awarded to charging parties through enforcement and litigation combined.

source:<http://www.eeoc.gov/press/2-9-06.html>

In the shadow of EEOC, politically-correct sensitivities, and the historical underpinnings of racism, sexism, and every other 'ism' - dare I pose the question above? I dare. I dare. As a person who runs a business, an organization, a nonprofit - why would you ever hire anyone? That may sound facetious, but as you look at the results, doesn't the whole argument of diversity look like a scheme to disrupt your operations, employ lawyers, take money, and ultimately provide a reason *not* to hire anyone without considering race, sex, age, disability, etc.?

Clearly the government tried to 'legislate' things where good people were being hurt. As with every regulatory action however, it also gave deadbeats an out and made leading, managing, and making a profit, that much tougher.

The value of diversity is over-played IF it does nothing to bring a group of people together to focus their energies on achieving the mission and goals of the enterprise and in accordance with the values outlined by the company.

The greatest lesson? Before you're tempted to hire anyone, think long and hard. Ensure they have the soft skills that will make them a 'fit' with your firm's culture. The greatest technician, the most experience, the loftiest degrees are no substitute for someone with 'a chip on their shoulder.' Always remember, it's easier *not to* hire than it is to fire. Spend more time on interviewing and you'll spend less time on discrimination issues.

Now of course, I'm not speaking against having a well-blended workforce of talented people from many backgrounds, experiences, and skill sets. I am saying, "make sure they *blend*." Leadership is about leading a diverse group that acts as a single force. Diversity can destroy - common ground builds. Make sure you keep the focus on achieving the firm's mission - through a well constructed strategic plan - carried out with shared values - demonstrated and enforced by a united team.

At least that's how I see it.

A Tip or Two

4 Incredible, Hard-Working Americans (*who happened to be black*)

George Washington Carver - Agricultural chemist who discovered 300 uses for peanuts and hundreds more uses for soybeans, pecans and sweet potatoes. His genius included recipes or improvements for adhesives, axle grease, bleach, buttermilk, chili sauce, fuel briquettes, ink, instant coffee, linoleum, mayonnaise, meat tenderizer, metal polish, paper, plastic, pavement, shaving cream, shoe polish, synthetic rubber, talcum powder and wood stain. He also developed the 'crop rotation method' revolutionizing southern agriculture.

Charles Drew - Discovered that by separating the plasma (the liquid part of blood) from the whole blood (in which the red blood cells exist) and then refrigerating them separately, they could be combined up to a week later for a blood transfusion. Prior to his discovery, blood could not be stored for more than two days because of the rapid breakdown of red blood cells.

Garrett Morgan - Credited with inventing the traffic light, demonstrated in downtown Cleveland Ohio in 1923. Later he designed the zigzag device for sewing machines, the first chemical human hair straightener, and a gas mask used to in WW I to protect U.S. soldiers from deadly chlorine gas.

Madame C. J. Walker - When she died in 1919, the 51-year-old, orphan of sharecroppers and former laundress made the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the first self-made American woman millionaire, having started out in 1905 with \$1.50 in savings and mixing formulas in her kitchen of hair products for the black community.

Thoughts from Here & There

Two things reduce prejudice: education and laughter.

Dr. Laurence J. Peter

You can blame a person for knocking you down but you can't blame that person if you refuse to get back up. However much slave history taught us about the injustice and misery we as a people had suffered, it did not excuse us from assuming responsibility for ourselves and each other by altering its course.

Malcolm X

... understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears HIM and does what is right is acceptable to HIM.

Acts 10:34

Respect those who labor among you and are over you... be at peace among yourselves... admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. Do not put out the Spirit's fire, do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5: 12-16, 19-23

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