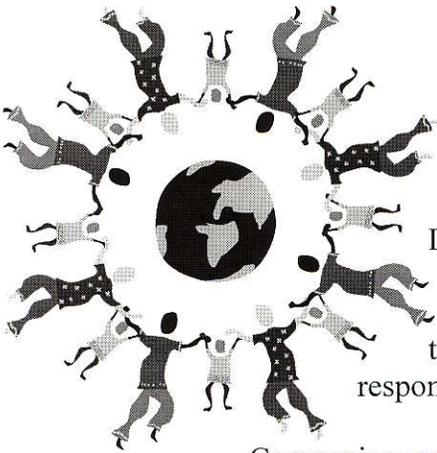


# Diversity

by Susan Seitel, president of Work & Family Connections, Inc.



Diversity has been through several iterations in the past ten years. From its affirmative action beginning it has morphed into an all-inclusive effort to help every employee contribute to his/her full potential no matter what their - fill in the blank (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, home life responsibilities, etc.).

Companies are inventing new approaches, sending new messages and finding new ways to say "Each of us will bring value to our workplace because of our differences, and those differences will not keep us from contributing fully."

The online news service <http://www.DiversityInc.com> put together a team of experts recently and published their ideas about some inexpensive ways to leverage diversity in 2002. Here are some of those ways, identified by a team of experts, and described here with permission:

1. Reward employees for a job well done by ordering in a smorgasbord, with foods representing a variety of ethnic backgrounds, or host a pot luck and ask staff to bring in their favorite ethnic dishes and relay family traditions surrounding that meal.
2. Set aside space on a department or company wall for employees to contribute artwork (oil painting, collage, sculpture) that illustrates the way a particular culture (including people with disabilities, etc.) helps advance creativity and productivity.
3. Write an article on a positive workplace experience related to diversity for the corporate Intranet or newsletter. Show how a culture encounter helped solve a departmental challenge.
4. Share personal stories with cultural insights in casual conversation.
5. Set up a "diverse speakers" bureau to help explain to young people the need for cultural competency.
6. Form diversity circles where employees lunch together and seek solutions or engage in dialogues. Each group would have a staff member who has had some training in the basics of facilitation and handling sensitive issues.
7. Track departmental successes and record ways in which diversity contributes to the bottom line.
8. Reward staff members who show high levels of cross-cultural skills and competencies.

And a related article from DiversityInc.com says, "You know your program is working when you see appropriate representation in senior ranks, and a substantial pipeline of top multicultural talent behind them."

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