



# **EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSE TEAMS: A TOOLKIT FOR DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**

Programme for the Practice of Diversity Management

**Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs in  
Cooperation with the Australian Centre for International Business**

**EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSE  
TEAMS: A TOOLKIT FOR DIVERSITY  
MANAGEMENT**

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**Foreword**

The Programme for the Practice of Diversity Management has produced a range of diversity management resources. This Toolkit explains how firms can improve their bottom line through effective management of diverse teams.

**Resources for Diversity Management**

*The Business Case:*

HRM Case  
Knowledge Firm Case  
International Business Case  
Marketing Case  
Theory of Diversity and Group Performance

*Business Models:*

Diversity Management: The Big Picture  
Capturing the Diversity Dividend  
Engaging Senior Managers  
From Compliance to Strategy  
Managing Diverse Human Resources Effectively  
Adding Value Through HRM  
The Innovation and Learning Advantage from Diversity  
Managing Diverse Teams  
Going Global  
Expatriate Management

*Toolkits:*

Attract, Retain and Motivate  
Adding Value Through HRM  
Effective Management of Diverse Teams  
Innovation and Learning  
Using Diversity Climate Surveys  
Building Cross-Cultural Capabilities  
Keys to Expatriate Success  
Engaging Senior Managers

**PROGRAMME FOR THE PRACTICE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**

**The Programme for the Practice of Diversity Management is a collaborative arrangement between the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) and the Australian Centre for International Business (ACIB) funded through DIMIA's Productive Diversity Partnership Programme.**

The mission of the Programme for the Practice of Diversity Management is to meet the practical needs of business by developing a business case for productive diversity, providing business models for diversity management, and creating toolkits and checklists for assessing diversity. The Programme invites your firm to become a member of the electronic Diversity-Network, which brings Australian business together to promote good diversity practices.

Join the diversity network on-line at <http://www.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/acib/diverse>

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# Introduction to the Effective Management of Diverse Teams Toolkit

The Programme for the Practice of Diversity Management's *Managing Diverse Work Teams: A Business Model for Diversity Management* outlined why organisations should seek to manage diverse work teams more effectively. The Model demonstrated that these teams achieve substantially better outcomes when managed well.

The *Business Model* identified four action areas with associated key steps. The action areas are:

1. Selecting and structuring teams
2. Working with existing diverse teams
3. Resourcing teams
4. Measuring team performance

Each action area has a series of key steps. They comprise:

## Selecting and structuring teams

1. Use existing diversity data
2. Consider desired work outcomes
3. Shortlist candidates
4. Select candidates
5. Inform teams of diversity rationale

## Working with existing diverse teams

6. Assess diversity
7. Assess team processes

## Resourcing teams

8. Assess needs
9. Provide communication training
10. Provide conflict management training

11. Encourage the valuing of difference
12. Develop team identity
13. Give the team time

### **Measuring team performance**

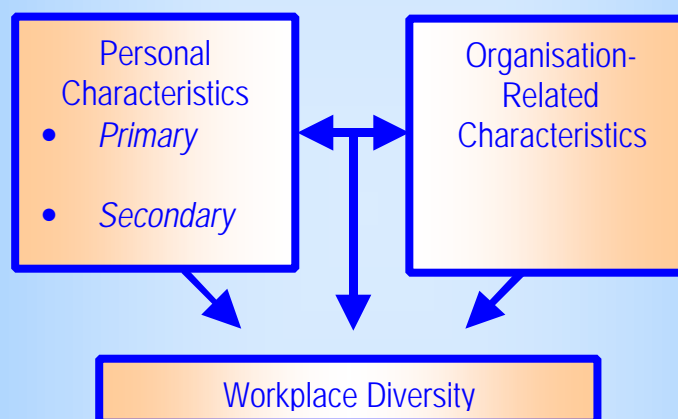
14. Clarify a team vision
15. Set goals that encourage diversity management skills
16. Reward at a team level

## Briefing notes

### *Defining Diversity*

Diversity is all the ways in which individuals differ, both on a personal basis and in terms of organisation-related characteristics. These characteristics are broadly categorised into observable and unobservable characteristics. Observable and unobservable characteristics include race, ethnicity, gender, age, tenure, functional background, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, education, physical and mental ability, values, and attitudes (see figure below). The recognition of the complexities of *diversity* as a multivariate concept forms part of the agenda for better understanding the complexity of productively managing diversity at work.

### Components of workplace diversity



Productive diversity management concerns itself with managing teams with diverse members to better communicate with one another. To sustain and develop competitive positions, Australian firms turn to their human resources for creativity and innovation. Creativity and innovation rests on the acquisition, dissemination and reaction to new knowledge. The success of this process depends on the employees' ability to share their diverse ideas and insights. Diverse teams have the potential to see problems from many different perspectives, contributing to enhanced decision-making, problem solving, and innovation. However, dysfunctional in-group and out-group behaviour may repress diversity capabilities. In-group or majority group members tend to marginalise out-group members, capping the potential pool of information. Dissatisfied out-group members tend to be less committed and more likely to engage in withdrawal activity. To achieve the HRM objectives of attract, retain, and motivate, Australian firms must adapt their HRM strategies to the diversity demands of their work force.

## Briefing notes

### *The value of productive diversity*

In addition to HRM cost reduction and minimisation benefits, there are clear performance benefits to be captured from diversity management. Once employees experience improved quality of work life, their contribution to decision-making and problem solving increase. As the group develops diversity capabilities, it is more likely to access and utilise latent information for enhanced creativity and innovation. These improvements flow through to bottom line benefits for the organisation.

The information and decision-making perspective purports that diversity is beneficial for group performance. Diversity will bring new knowledge, skills, information, and unique perspectives to the group. Diversity brings to the group greater potential access to information that can promote creative and innovative behaviour, enhancing decision-making, creativity and innovation. The information and decision-making approach predicts three positive diversity effects on group processes: diversity will increase the cognitive processing demands of work groups; diversity will improve analysis in the group, leading to more careful analysis of issues; and diversity will lead to better use of information in the work group. However, harnessing the diversity dividend rests on the ability to manage productive diversity.

# What are Toolkits?

## A Brief Guide To Using This Toolkit

The Programme for the Practice of Diversity Management has developed a range of Toolkits to provide guidance to, and examples of, the potential paths to effective diversity management. The Toolkits accompany a set of Business Models.

The Business Models are targeted at HR Managers and Senior Managers to assist in developing a strong business case argument to present to their CEO, their Board and their line/business managers.

The Toolkits are designed to assist in the operationalisation of the commitment to diversity management. The target audience is those individuals with functional responsibilities in the relevant areas e.g. HR, recruitment and training officers.

Each Toolkit involves a number of action areas and/or key steps. Action areas tend to reflect a particular set of functional requirements e.g. recruitment, expatriate selection, training and awareness. The key steps represent a potential implementation strategy in that area.

Each Toolkit is related to at least one of the Business Models. Often it will be more. A number of the Business Models suggest action areas and key steps from more than one Toolkit.

As there is often crossover, rather than replicate an action area or key steps, the Toolkits will, where appropriate, refer the reader to another of the Programme's Toolkits. All Toolkits will be available from the Programme's website: <http://www.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/acib/diverse>

## Introduction To The Selecting And Structuring Teams Action Area

Diversity within a work team may be more common in some organisations than others. If a workplace is diverse generally then it is probable that any team selected from that talent pool would also be diverse.

Less diverse workplaces may have to be more proactive in seeking greater diversity within selected teams. It may take an explicit policy of team diversity to achieve the desired results. Positive work experiences within such diverse teams will have positive spill over effects to the rest of the organisations and may generate broader support for greater diversity within the organisation.

Team members must be selected on the basis of their skill sets and expertise. Clearly it is important that there is a clear vision of the desired outcomes of a team and how team diversity may contribute to that outcome. Likewise it is important that team members are given a clear understanding of the principles behind an explicit *diversity in teams* policy.

It is important to acknowledge that different types of diversity are related to different types of conflict, which in turn effect team process and performance differently. How a team deals with diversity depends on the team's structure, and how it is resourced by the organisation.

Diversity has the potential to improve team and organisational performance. However, simply forming a diverse team will *not* produce positive results. Strategic planning, commitment by senior management, purposeful team structuring, comprehensive training and carefully structured reward programmes are **critical factors** in encouraging superior performance in diverse teams.

## Step one: Use existing diversity data

### The purpose

- To develop a clear understanding of the organisation's overall diversity
- To seek more representative work teams
- To improve team outcomes

### The process

- Establish baseline diversity
- Disaggregate data by function
- Establish guidelines and targets

### *Establishing baseline diversity*

Organisations seeking to increase the diversity in teams, or better manage the existing diversity in established teams need to establish the baseline diversity in their organisation.

Understanding the diversity across the organisation provides managers with the ability to better identify people for team membership, but also to identify patterns of under-representation within the organisation.

The purpose of establishing baseline diversity is to allow the organisation to build more representative teams to produce superior performance.

Managers seeking to build baseline diversity pictures of the organisation can use existing diversity data generated by diversity audits. Organisations who currently do not collect diversity data will find detailed information on *how* to conduct a diversity audit in *Using Diversity Climate Surveys: A Toolkit for Diversity Management*.

A good example of how baseline diversity statistics can be presented is offered in *Briefing Note: A Snapshot of the Australian Population*.

**Key steps for undertaking a diversity audit can be found in**  
***Using Diversity Climate Surveys: A Toolkit for Diversity Management***

### ***Disaggregating data by function***

Organisations interested in structuring effective diverse teams should disaggregate the data analysed in the baseline exercise to present a picture of the organisation by function.

- For example, the baseline diversity data can be broken down into functions such as engineering, marketing, human resource management, finance, sales and so on, to provide a snapshot of the diversity across the functions of the organisation.
- Alternatively it could be presented by hierarchical level such as team member, team leader, senior manager

Disaggregating the data also provides the opportunity to identify gaps in functions, or patterns of under-representation in the organisation.

- For example, is it possible to identify gender differences in representation across the functions; is there evidence of racial homogeneity in particular functions?

The aim of disaggregating the baseline data is to allow managers tasked with structuring teams to identify people from across the organisation to participate in more representative teams, but also to identify gaps in particular functions that may impede the organisation's ability to form diverse teams.

The key is to establish whether there is sufficient diversity across the pool of potential team members to create a team with the required skills and competencies to perform the required tasks.

## *Establishing guidelines and targets*

### **1. Establishing guidelines for team diversity**

To demonstrate commitment to diversity in team membership organisation should prepare guidelines for team formation. Ideally guidelines will set out that diversity should be a *priority* consideration in team member selection.

Using the baseline diversity information gathered on the organisation's people provides a starting point for establishing guidelines.

Guidelines should set out for those involved in team member selection what is required of them in terms of diversity management policies, including a statement on the organisation's commitment to valuing diversity and its strategy of increasing team diversity to enhance performance.

### **2. Establishing targets**

Using the diversity data will allow organisations to identify what their organisation diversity profile looks like. Analysis of existing teams will indicate whether there are problems with under-representation.

For organisations committed to establishing representative diverse teams, formal targets may be appropriate. This may involve, for example, formally requiring that there be:

- a certain number of women or men on each team
- a mix of employees with short and long tenure
- a mix of functional roles
- a mix of language skills

A means of setting targets would be to ensure that team member selectors are required to identify potential members from traditionally under-represented groups in the organisation, or the particular team. If

they are unable to do this, selectors should be required to put in place plans to increase their pool of potential members.

Organisations that are not comfortable with setting formal targets, or those who may encounter problems with finding sufficient numbers of under-represented people to sit on teams, should ensure that diversity is still included as a formal requirement in considering the formation of the team.

## Briefing notes

### *A snapshot of the Australian population*

- 25% of the population born overseas
- 27% of Australian-born have at least one parent born overseas
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is approaching 400,000 and grows at a rate higher than non-indigenous population
- Over 200 languages are spoken in Australia
- 2.5 million people speak a language other than English at home
- The largest growth in religious affiliation have been in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism
- 15% of working age people and 19% of the population live with some form of disability
- 33% of people living with a severe or profound form of disability participate in the labour market
- Female labour market participation rates are increasing at the same time as male rates decline
- Partnering and family patterns have changed enormously over the past 30 years with increasing numbers of same sex partnerships and lone parent households
- 54% of wage and salary earners hold a post-school qualification The proportion of the population aged 65-plus has tripled in the last 100 years
- 2.3 million people act as carers providing assistance to people who need help because of disabilities and ageing; 38% of carers are aged 35-54; 19% are identified as primary carers
- There are now more women than men in the Australian population

**Source: ABS, 1995-2000 (various documents)**

## Step two: Consider desired work outcomes

### The purpose

- To match team capabilities to goals
- To identify value in diversity
- To harness team capabilities

### The process

- Identify and articulate desired work outcomes
- Identify desired competencies
- Identify team mix required

Diverse teams outperform homogenous teams when managed effectively and resourced properly. Setting goals and identifying required competencies increases the likelihood of higher team performance.

### *Identifying and articulating desired work outcomes/goals*

One of the critical factors in team performance is the clear articulation of required work outcomes. Managers in conjunction with team leaders should work together to identify what the work outcomes for the team should be and ensure these are clearly linked to the organisation's strategic goals.

Team effectiveness is measured across a number of indicators, and these should be reflected in the desired work outcomes or goals:

- *Performance* – the output desired of the team e.g. quantity, quality, time-lines etc
- *Member satisfaction* – providing team members with a positive team experience e.g. job satisfaction, commitment, trust, supportive environment etc

- *Team learning* – the team's ability to adapt, solve new problems, make new decisions, approach new tasks, change norms and processes as required etc
- *Outsider satisfaction* – meeting the needs of those outside the team such as customers, suppliers, clients, other organisational members or departments etc.

(See *Briefing Note: A Model of Team Effectiveness*).

Setting out desired outcomes and goals across these four indicators provides a good framework for clarifying what the team's outcomes should be. It also demonstrates that output is not the only performance indicator that is important to measuring team success.

### *Identifying desired competencies*

Following the identification of desired outcomes, managers need to ensure that the required competencies to reach set goals are identified and clearly articulated. Think about the desired outputs and performance measures and what skills and competencies are needed to reach these.

- For example, if the team is tasked with creating new product lines what competencies are needed?
- How does this differ if the team is focussed on improving customer service?

It is important at this stage to focus on the *key competencies* required for team functions. Inclusion should be based on possession of the required key competencies, not irrelevant personal characteristics.

The ability to identify the desired competencies is critical to reaching goals – without the requisite skills and knowledge team effectiveness can be compromised.

## Briefing note

### *A Model of Team Effectiveness*

The following model shows how organisational culture, team design, and rewards affect team operations and hence team effectiveness. The model also shows how, over time through feedback loops, team operations and effectiveness interact over time.



**Team effectiveness** has four components or measures that should be linked to team goals:

- **Performance** - how well team members produce the required output and measured by quality, quantity, timeliness, efficiency and innovation
- **Member Satisfaction** – how well team members create a positive experience through commitment, trust, and meeting the individual needs of members
- **Team Learning** – how well members acquire new skills, perspectives, and behaviours as required by changing circumstances
- **Outsider Satisfaction** – how well team members meet the needs of outside constituencies such as customers and suppliers

The measures of effectiveness rely on **team operations**, which comprise:

- **Internal Team Processes** – how team members interact with each other to accomplish tasks and to keep themselves together as a cohesive team
- **Boundary Management** - how teams define their boundaries, identify external constituencies, and interact with outsiders

According to the model, team operations rely on the **context** within which they operation. The context comprises:

- **Organisational Culture** – the values and underlying assumptions about teams and teamwork
- **Team Design** – the way in which the team is put together including composition, nature of the task and structure
- **Rewards** – formal and informal rewards that contribute to how team members interact

**Source:** D. Ancona et al (1998). *Organizational Behavior and Processes*. South-Western College Publishing, Cincinnati, USA.

## *Identifying team mix required*

In addition to identifying required competencies and skills, team mix is important. Different tasks and goals require different mixes of members.

- For example, if the team is focussed on innovation it will be important to have people who think differently to create the task-based conflict that will fuel the innovation process. The clash of mental models forms the basis of new ways of thinking and doing which will be valuable for different goals.

Representatives from across the organisations functions will also provide multiple perspectives, as will those from different cultural backgrounds and those that are *left* or *right* brain thinkers.

The key is to know:

- What the goals are
- What the competency requirements are

and therefore to be able to identify

- What the membership mix should be

A commitment to diversity of membership may require those selecting team members to look outside their normal pool of potential members, and this should be encouraged.

## Step three: Shortlist candidates

### The purpose

- To ensure team diversity
- To draw on the broadest pool of candidates
- To maximise skill sets and expertise

### The process

- State desire for diversity
- Examine selection procedures

#### *Stating desire for diversity*

Prior to team selection it is important to articulate the desire for diversity of team members, whether that be on, for example, functional, skill, cultural, gender or tenure measures.

A clear statement that a diverse team is required or preferred for the project may assist in getting selectors to look at a broader talent pool. If a formal statement of diversity is not sufficient to generate diverse team member selection, then targets may be required to ensure that a broad talent pool is considered (See *Step one: Establishing guidelines and targets*).

#### *Examining selection procedures*

Examination of the selection process may highlight formal or informal processes that impede the selection of a diverse team. Examination of the process should consider key questions:

- Who selects team members?
- Is there a panel that makes selections?
- Is the panel diverse?
- Is there an individual that makes team appointments?

- Is there evidence that *like is selecting like*?
- Which people are short listed, nominated, or volunteering for teams?
- How are applicants selected for teams?

Selection should be based primarily on required skills and competencies, rather than irrelevant personal characteristics. Auditing the team member selection process may highlight the need for remedial action relating to selection processes in the organisation.

**Key steps for issues surrounding selection can be found in**  
***Attract, Retain and Motivate: A Toolkit for Diversity Management***

## Step four: Select candidates

### The purpose

- To ensure team diversity
- To select the ideal mix
- To challenge typical team formation
- To maximise skill sets and expertise

### The process

- Assess diversity skills of candidates
- Consider mix and balance of group throughout selection process

### *Assessing diversity skills of candidates*

Working effectively in diverse teams calls for additional skills and competencies. Assessment of the existing, and future, diversity skill needs before the establishment of the team is an important step in structuring a new team.

Key questions to ask in considering candidates for membership include:

- Do potential members have the requisite technical skills or expertise to carry out the task?
- Does the organisation keep central information from the skill audit to confirm skills or expertise?
- Does the potential member have the necessary diversity skills? Have they undertaken diversity training? Have they worked in diverse teams in the past?
- Does the organisation need to provide diversity skills to potential applicants?

## ***Considering mix and balance of group throughout selection process***

At various stages of the selection process, managers should consider the mix and balance of team membership to ensure the requisite skill and competency mix is achieved.

Preparing tables identifying the required skills and competencies and potential members allows managers to pinpoint gaps throughout the team selection process.

Important questions to address throughout the process include:

- Is there representation from across the relevant areas of the organisation?
- Have members had diversity training?
- Does the team leader have conflict negotiation skills to assist members without diversity training?
- Is there obvious under-representation from particular groups in the organisation measured on various grounds e.g. gender, tenure, function, and hierarchical position?
- Is there a high propensity for *groupthink*?

Particular attention should be given to challenging traditional team formations, and how alternative forms can be beneficial.

**Key steps for issues surrounding selection can be found in**

***Attract, Retain and Motivate: A Toolkit for Diversity Management***

## Step five: Inform teams of diversity rationale

### The purpose

- To encourage an understanding of the desired team dynamic
- To harness diverse team dividend
- To reduce potential animosity and suspicion

### The process

- Present business case
- Answer questions
- Encourage discussion

An important first step in gaining employee buy in on the importance of team diversity is to inform members of the rationale behind the explicit assembling of diverse teams.

### *Presenting business case*

Setting out the business case for diversity management is important to generate support for increasing diversity in team membership. It is critical that increasing diversity is not seen as tokenism, but rather that it is valued.

Tailoring the business case to the strategic objectives of the organisation, division, and team is critical to engaging members.

A presentation to the team on the value of diversity in teams should cover:

- The organisation's strategic goals and how the team's goals fit with these goals
- How diversity in team membership and effective management of that diversity can help the team to reach these goals

- Research that has shown how well-managed, diverse teams outperform homogenous teams
- A recognition or statement that diversity is an asset for the team to draw on
- Information on how different ways of thinking are valuable for the team, the organisation, and the individuals within the team
- Recognition that diversity presents challenges for the team that they will be assisted to address
- Evidence of how harnessing diversity in teams leads to superior performance and provides valuable learning opportunities for members
- The value to the individual team members of developing diversity capabilities
- The organisation's diversity management strategies, policies and procedures that reflect its commitment to valuing diversity.

**Extensive information on the business case for diversity management can be found in**

***Managing Diverse Teams: A Business Model for Diversity Management***

**And**

***The Business Case for Diversity Management***

### ***Answering questions***

Careful examination of the business case for effective diversity management, the evidence of how diversity management enhances performance, and the organisation's diversity data will equip team leaders and managers to competently answer member questions.

Addressing team member concerns is important, particularly where teams may be traditionally be relatively homogenous.

Critical to engendering support, is the recognition that diversity not only offers opportunities for superior performance, but that it can pose considerable challenges to team processes, particularly interpersonal communication and relationships.

Addressing concerns and answering questions honestly is important also in building trust between members, validating concerns or issues that members may have, and encouraging an understanding that team dynamics may be different.

It is important also to emphasise that the value lies in the diversity of *all* team members, i.e. in the different perspectives and mental models that everyone brings, rather than just the presence and views of certain individuals from non-traditional backgrounds.

### ***Encouraging discussion***

Team leaders should encourage discussion around the business case and questions raised. This is particularly important in the first meeting to demonstrate that diversity issues are open for discussion, within important guidelines (See *Step fourteen: Clarify a team vision*)

Discussion on process issues should occupy a regular position on team meeting agendas. It is important, however, to ensure that these discussions are not *personalised*. Team leaders, accordingly, should be selected because of their existing diversity competencies and conflict negotiation skills, or trained appropriately.

## Introduction To The Working With Existing Diverse Teams Action Area

It is likely there are already diverse teams operating in the organisation. Not all work teams are selected from scratch. Nor is there always a longer list of candidates than positions.

Best practice diversity management is about getting it right with these teams. A good starting point is examining the current team processes. It is important to identify any problems arising from social categorisation, similarity and attraction and information problems.

## Step six: Assess diversity

### The purpose

- To establish status of existing team
- To link diversity to team goals

### The process

- Measure diversity
- Identify and articulate desired work outcomes

### *Measuring diversity*

Gauging the diversity within existing teams is an important step. Undertaking a diversity audit, or using existing audit data will assist in building a diversity profile of the team.

Team leaders or managers should:

- Identify the existing diversity profile of the team
- Identify any patterns of under-representation

Organisations who currently do not collect diversity data will find detailed information on *how* to conduct a diversity audit in *Using Diversity Climate Surveys: A Toolkit for Diversity Management*.

**Key steps for undertaking a diversity audit can be found in**  
***Using Diversity Climate Surveys: A Toolkit for Diversity Management***

### *Identifying and articulating desired work outcomes*

Clear identification and articulation of team performance goals is important to team success. Team leaders and members should work

together in the existing team to identify and articulate the team's goals. Further, these must be linked to the organisation's strategic goals.

It is important that the four measure of team effectiveness are included in the team's goals:

- Performance
- Member satisfaction
- Team learning
- Outsider satisfaction

(See *Step 2: Identifying and articulating desired work outcomes*).

## Step seven: Assess team processes

### The purpose

- To understand the impact of diversity
- To better understand team performance
- To initiate better performance

### The process

- Assess the diversity climate
- Evaluate direct impact of diversity on outcomes
- Identify scope/strategies for improvement
- Highlight positives

### *Assessing the diversity climate*

For existing teams, an audit of the diversity climate will be valuable in identifying any problems and measuring affective outcomes. The diversity climate audit measures and assesses diversity management environment and performance, providing a useful means through which team climates can be assessed.

A detailed toolkit on diversity climate surveys is available (See *Using Diversity Climate Surveys: A Toolkit for Diversity Management*) to assist organisations in undertaking an assessment of the diversity climate.

Team leaders can use data from existing diversity climate surveys as a basis for team audits and to benchmark.

**Key steps for issues surrounding selection can be found in**  
***Using Diversity Climate Surveys: A Toolkit for Diversity Management***

## ***Evaluating direct impact of diversity on outcomes***

Establishing the link between the diversity in team membership and team performance is important. Managed well, there is clear evidence that diversity in team composition enhances performance.

Demonstrating that the team's diversity has, or can, have a positive impact on outcomes through careful analysis of performance can provide strong incentives for improvements in team processes.

Including measures in team assessment that gauge the impact of diversity on team performance is important in building the case for effective diversity management and ensuring ongoing support.

- For example, the organisation may wish to measure innovations, new product design, or the quality of solutions or decisions as part of the evaluation process

Gathering evidence that also shows the potential negative impact of dysfunctional team processes on performance can also provide strong incentives for diverse teams to work productively. This process also provides opportunities to identify scope for improvement.

## ***Identifying scope/strategies for improvement***

The diversity climate audit allows team leaders and managers to identify performance improvement strategies. Measuring the climate can provide indications that training is required for members to see the value in diversity for team performance. It can also identify competency gaps for team leaders and managers in their ability to effectively manage diversity (see *Case Study: Diversity Training at Hewlett Packard*).

Team Leaders may also find it useful to undertake shorter team assessments at regular intervals, such as a Team Assessment Survey (See *Briefing Note: Team Assessment Survey*).

## Case Study

### *Diversity Training at Hewlett-Packard*

Hewlett-Packard's aim is to be an Employer of Choice in the marketplace. In 1996 a People Plan for HP Australia and New Zealand was developed around three pillars to support their Employer of Choice strategy – Diversity, Work/Life Balance, and Development.

The Diversity program was kicked off with all members of the HP Australia and New Zealand Senior Management Team attending an Introduction to Diversity course. They then took this training on through their organisations, and it was mandatory that every employee attended a half-day diversity course. The course put diversity on the map at HP.

"The word diversity became a part of our vocabulary", recalls Alan Colvin Director, Human Resources Hewlett-Packard.

"Employees had a better and deeper understanding of the breadth and depth of the different diversity dimensions, which was billed as much more than gender. Employees were able to see their importance in providing a safe and productive work environment, and in building a world-class workforce."

Since 1996, HP has run a two-day diversity course at least four times a year. It is an open enrolment course, with any employee encouraged to go along. The focus has been around gender and culture, with particular focus on the US culture, Asian culture and the Australian culture, ("Being an Australian company, working in the Asia-Pacific region for an American Company").

HP has found the course to be effective, particularly because it supports their edict of not forcing anti-harassment and discrimination on employees. Rather, HP believes it is more effective to educate their employees on the benefits of embracing diversity, and allowing them to discover how effectively it fits into the workplace culture, and how it sits comfortably with HP's values of trust and respect for individuals.

## Briefing notes

### Team Assessment Surveys

Team assessment surveys can assist Team Leaders and team members in measuring where they are currently in terms of team effectiveness, and areas for improvement. The following survey asks respondents to rank their response to the question from: 1 - to a very small extent; 3 – to some extent; 5 – to a very great extent. In consultation with the team, the survey can be tailored to their needs.

Questions	1	2	3	4	5
1: Team members understand the range of backgrounds, skills, preferences, and perspectives in the team					
2: Team member differences and similarities have been effectively harnessed toward achieving team goals					
3: The team cannot integrate diverse viewpoints					
4: Members view themselves as a team					
5: Team members have articulated a clear set of goals					
6: The team's goals are not motivating to members					
7: Team members agree on what goals and objectives are most important					
8: The team has an effective work structure					
9: It is not clear what each person in the team is supposed to do					
10: Team members have devised effective timetables and deadlines					
11: Team members have a clear set of norms that cover most aspects of how to function					
12: Team members often disagree about ideas					
13: Team members often disagree about procedures and priorities					
14: Members take arguments personally and get angry with one another					
15: A few members do most of the work					
16: A few people shirk responsibility or hold the team back					
17: Team members are imaginative in thinking about new or better ways to perform our tasks					
18: All team members participate in decision making					
19: Team members have the resources, information, and support they need from people outside team boundaries					
20: The team has a clear leader					
21: Team members take turns performing leadership roles					
22: Team meetings are well organised					
23: Team meetings are not productive					
24: Coordination among members is a problem					
25: Members express their feelings freely in the team					
26: Team members support each other					
27: Team members are not effective at making decisions					
28: The quality of our work is superior					
29: The quantity of our work is superior					
30: All in all, I am satisfied with being a member of this team					
31: This tea keeps getting more effective all the time					
32: A lot of learning goes on in this team					
33: Team members brainstorm creatively					
34: We have met the needs of our 'clients'					

Source: D. Ancona et al (1998). *Organizational Behavior and Processes*. South-Western College Publishing, Cincinnati, USA.

### *Highlighting positives*

The diversity climate assessment may also provide team leaders and managers with the opportunity to highlight positive feelings regarding the team environment.

In particular, team benchmarking against the organisations results, or against its own results over time can indicate where improvements have been made, which will reinforce positive behaviours and norms in the team.

Reinforcing positives and improvements in team processes is important in generating support in the team for diversity initiatives, and also in building trust between members.

## Introduction To The Resourcing Teams Action Area

The key to improving the performance of diverse work teams is providing the team members with the necessary skills to function efficiently. Adequate resources must be provided to guide diverse teams through early-stage process hurdles. Training of team leaders and members is critical to the performance of diverse teams.

It is crucial that teams understand the likelihood of conflict and of communicative dissonance. There needs to be recognition that some forms of conflict can be very constructive. Likewise, the value in different views and means of expression should be emphasised.

Many of the issues around isolation of under-represented groups can be tackled by acting to build a stronger team identity that embraces the differences as a positive.

Finally, it is critical that diverse work teams be given time to develop these skills.

## Step eight: Assess needs

### The purpose

- To take stock of existing competencies
- To prioritise resourcing

### The process

- Audit existing skills
- Identify shortfalls
- Prioritise strategies

### *Auditing existing skills*

Skill audits aim to identify the existing stock of skills in the team. The skill audit should include recognition of the importance of diversity-related skills (e.g. conflict resolution training, diversity awareness training, cross-cultural skills) and also technical skills.

Team leaders or managers should:

- Gather information from the human resource information system
- Source additional skill information from team members through interview or survey-style instruments

### *Identifying shortfalls*

Identifying existing competencies and comparing these with the desired skills and competencies will highlight gaps or shortfalls.

Team leaders or managers should:

- Map existing competencies
- Map required skills and competencies

- Identify gaps that need to be addressed
- Seek clarification from team members as to whether these skills are missing from the team i.e. do members have the skills but the organisation is not aware of these skills?

### *Prioritising strategies*

Following identification of skill and competency shortfalls, the team leader or manager should develop strategies for addressing these gaps, and prioritise these strategies. This is often done best in conjunction with the team members, as there may well be conflicting priorities for members.

Team leaders or managers should:

- Consult with team members on strategies to address competency gaps
- Articulate clearly the alternate strategies to address the gaps
- Work with team members to prioritise these strategies. For example, is it more important to address a technical skill gap, or a diversity competency gap? Is diversity awareness training needed before basic financial training for team members?

## Briefing notes

### *Creative Abrasion*

The notion of conflict is essential to the innovation process. In a 1997 **Harvard Business Review** article, Leonard and Straus popularised the term *creative abrasion*. Innovation, the authors argue, breeds in a space where “different ideas, perceptions, and ways of processing and judging information collide”. The value of this diversity is the way in which these ideas, perceptions and ways of processing and judging information grate against each other to produce new ways of thinking and doing, and therefore, innovation.

As Leonard and Strauss say,

“the manager successful at fostering innovation figures out how to get different approaches to grate against each other in a productive process we call *creative abrasion*.”

To be creative and foster an environment for innovation, managers need to ensure individuals interact with those who support their way of thinking, and also those who challenge their way of thinking, their ideas, and perceptions. Creating an environment where individuals can engage in constructive conflict propels the creative and innovative process. The value of the team as a whole is in the diversity of talent, backgrounds, perspectives, expertise and so on.

Problems can occur when people don't understand or recognise the value of thinking differently and conflict becomes personal and the creative process stalls. But providing training and information on the value of difference can spark the process, as people become aware of the power of difference working together. Teaching people that constructive conflict fuels innovation, and personal conflict destroys it helps teams to reach and exceed their goals. Reframing what members mean by *conflict* can help teams to work more productively.

**See further:** Dorothy Leonard and Susaan Straus, 'Putting Your Company's Whole Brain to Work', published in *Harvard Business Review* July-August 1997, pp. 111-121.

## Step nine: Provide communication training

### The purpose

- To reduce communicative dissonance
- To improve communication
- To harness benefits of diverse mental models

### The process

- Discuss communication techniques
- Identify alternatives and preferences
- Experiment
- Revisit lessons
- Link to conflict management training

### *Discussing communication techniques*

Diversity in team composition will mean diversity in communication techniques. An important part of improving team processes is to discuss alternate communication styles and techniques and the value attached to these. If team leaders are not experienced in this area, then professional trainers should be engaged for communication training.

Team leaders, managers, or trainers should:

- Organise a session for the team to discuss *general* alternative communication techniques and styles i.e. not necessarily those currently utilised in the team
- Set out for members the different ways in which people can communicate ideas, put forward their suggestions and offer criticism
- Discuss the value in recognising and respecting alternate communication techniques and styles
- Explain that differences in communication techniques and styles does NOT necessarily render teams ineffective

### ***Identifying alternatives and preferences***

Following the discussion on alternate communication techniques, the team leader, manager or trainer should facilitate a discussion identifying the different communication techniques and styles currently used by the team members.

Team members should be given the opportunity to discuss their preferred communication techniques and styles. Working together, the members, team leader and, where appropriate, a professional trainer should construct a typology of alternative communication techniques, and focus on the advantages and disadvantages of each for members.

### ***Experimenting***

Experimentation with different communication techniques and styles can assist team members to understand the value of diversity in communication styles. Professional trainers, or in-house staff skilled in experiential workshops should be engaged to carry out this process.

The use of case studies and role play exercises can be valuable in allowing members to experience different techniques, with the aim to get members to value difference and be aware of alternatives in the team environment.

### ***Revisiting lessons***

It is important that this examination of communication techniques and styles is not undertaken once and then forgotten. It may take several discussions and re-examinations of the issues to establish the necessary communication techniques and styles.

Situations when communication has broken down should be examined within the context of these original sessions.

### ***Linking to conflict management training***

Different communication techniques or styles may create conflict. It is important to link training on communication styles to conflict

management training (See *Step ten: Provide conflict management training*).

## Step ten: Provide conflict management training

### The purpose

- To reduce unproductive conflict
- To enhance constructive conflict
- To improve team environment
- To improve overall team performance

### The process

- Discuss conflict
- Seek conflict management not just resolution

### *Discussing conflict*

An important part of team interaction, and a driver for innovation and superior performance, is productive task-based conflict. Team processes within diverse teams are highly valued because of the clash of ideas, ways of thinking, education, skills, experience and so on.

It is important that conflict is discussable within the team. Critical to managing conflict is the provision of conflict and negotiation training for the team leader and team members. Conflict training should focus on:

- Positive forms of conflict i.e. task-based conflict
- Unproductive forms of conflict i.e. interpersonal conflict
- Debating the differences between unproductive and productive conflict
- Strategies for working together harmoniously through minimising interpersonal conflict, and maximising task-based conflict
- The establishment of ground rules for team interaction

## *Seeking conflict management not just resolution*

Conflict within the team should be managed. Resolution does not always reflect that a positive outcome, or a superior decision or solution has been reached. In some cases it can reflect the dominance of some members of the team, and their ability to reach resolution through imposing their will on other members. Resolution can also reflect *groupthink*.

Conflict *management*, rather than resolution, should be the goal. Team leaders or managers should focus on:

- Providing the team with tools for channelling productive conflict effectively
- Strategies for managing unproductive conflict
- Methods for ensuring that resolution does not reflect dominance or *groupthink*
- Timely feedback mechanisms on conflict management strategies

## Step eleven: Encourage the valuing of difference

### The purpose

- To create a more inclusive team environment
- To encourage greater understanding of diversity principles

### The process

- Re-emphasise business case
- Celebrate difference

#### *Re-emphasising the business case*

The business case for team diversity will need to be revisited at particular stages of team development. It may be appropriate to schedule regular slots in team meetings to revisit parts of the business case.

Team Leaders or managers should:

- Re-emphasise the value of diversity when the team starts a new project or task
- Revisit the business case when new members join
- Emphasise the importance of the business case for diversity when the team successfully completes crucial tasks
- Ensure regular links are made to the team's tasks, organisational strategies and the importance of diversity to the fulfilment of these aims
- Encourage team members to familiarise themselves with research in the area. For examples see *Briefing Note: Research on Diversity*.

#### *Celebrating difference*

Encouraging the valuing of diversity by team members is important. Behavioural and attitudinal change often reflects the incentives put in

place by the organisation and managers. Celebration of difference, and the value it contributes to the team and its success at key times can facilitate long-term cultural change.

Team members should relish the dynamics of their interaction and their tendency to disagree on approaches and collectively arrive at solutions should be viewed as an important and valuable aspect of their relationships.

It is important to recognise that as organisational members move between different teams over time, commitment to celebrating diversity and valuing difference can spread throughout the organisation.

## Briefing notes

### *Research on Diversity*

#### ***Where Do I Start?***

K. Y. Williams and C. A. O'Reilly, III (1998), 'Demography and Diversity in Organizations: A Review of 40 Years of Research', *Research in Organizational Behavior*, Volume 20

A useful starting point for people interested in diversity-related research is an overview article of the last 40 years of research on demography and diversity in organisations. The article covers: the meaning of diversity and performance; the theoretical underpinning of diversity research; the effects of demographic diversity on group process and performance; an overview of *what we know* about the effect of diversity in organisations and what we still need to find out. The article also provides a useful table summary of diversity-related studies that have been carried out.

#### ***How About Team and Performance Related Research?***

A selection of informative articles that include team-related research and strategies for more effective diversity management include:

D. Ancona and D. Caldwell (1992), 'Demography and Design: Predictors of New Product Team Performance', *Organization Science*, Volume 3

K. Bantel and S. Jackson (1989), 'Top Management and Innovations in Banking: Does the Composition of the Team Make a Difference?', *Strategic Management Journal*, Volume 10

S. E. Jackson (1992), 'Team Composition in Organizational Settings: Issues in Managing an Increasingly Diverse Work Force', in S. Worchel, W. Woods and J.A. Simpson, *Group Process and Productivity*, Sage, California.

S. E. Jackson, Karen E. May and Kristina Whitney (1995), 'Understanding the Dynamics of Diversity in Decision-Making Teams', in R.A. Guzzo and E. Salas, *Team Effectiveness and Decision-Making in Organizations*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.

P. McLeod and S. Lobel (1992), *The Effects of Ethnic Diversity on Idea Generation in Small Groups*, Paper presented at the Annual Academy of Management Meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada.

G. Robinson Hickman and A. Creighton-Zollar (1998), 'Diverse Self-Directed Work Teams: Developing Strategic Initiatives for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Organizations', *Public Personnel Management*, Volume 27, No. 2

**For an extensive discussion of diversity-related research see: *The Theory of Diversity and Group Performance* and *The Business Case for Diversity Management*.**

## Step twelve: Develop team identity

### The purpose

- To establish common goals
- To reduce the tendency toward in-group, out-group behaviour

### The process

- Workshop team goals
- Encourage group social activities
- Highlight and discuss cliques

### *Workshopping team goals*

Working together to develop team goals gives members ownership of those goals. Providing time to workshop competing goals and prioritise these aims as a team, increases the likelihood that commitment to the goals will be high.

Team leaders and managers should:

- Set aside time at the start of the project to workshop goals
- Ensure that all members contribute to the development of goals
- Include identification of individual goals and team goals
- Ensure that the four measures of team effectiveness are incorporated in the development of goals – performance, member satisfaction, team learning and outsider satisfaction
- Revisit goals at regular intervals of the team's life

### *Encouraging group social activities*

The development of team identity, trust and interdependence can be assisted via encouraging group social activities. Improved performance relies on both collaborative work time, and positive group social

interaction. The formation of friendships can underpin collaborative group processes and lay the foundation for strong collegial bonds and team identity. These bonds can focus identity at the team level.

Organisations and managers should:

- Allocate funds for team social time
- Provide respite from work time for social events
- Schedule social events for team members
- Schedule functions that consider members' non-work commitments
- Encourage members involvement in team member social outings
- Ensure that activities chosen suit all members
- Avoid activities that may exclude team members.
- Encourage team members to take turns choosing the social activities

### ***Highlighting and discussing cliques***

A major contributor to group process problems is the formation of in-groups and out-groups or *cliques* that affect the functioning of the team as a whole. Open discussions about these social categorisation processes and strategies to address these tendencies should be undertaken in the team environment.

**Detailed information on social categorisation and similarity/attraction tendencies and the effects on group functioning can be found in:**

***The Theory of Group Diversity and Performance***

**and**

***The Business Case for Diversity Management (HRM Section)***

## Step thirteen: Give the team time

### The purpose

- To recognise life cycle of team
- To allow appropriate team culture time to develop
- To accept potential teething problems

### The process

- Set realistic timeframes and goals
- Articulate timeframes and goals to team and other parties
- Learn from other teams

### *Setting realistic timeframes and goals*

Diverse teams require additional time to develop trust and member interdependence. Trust and interdependence develop over time and through increased interaction, communication and contribution and contribute to enhanced performance. (See [Briefing Note: Diverse Teams Outperform Given Time](#)). Over time, however, diverse teams have been consistently shown to outperform homogenous teams. Innovation and creativity potential is enhanced where there is low level time pressure (See [Case Study – Increasing Team Autonomy at Ford](#))

Team leaders or managers of diverse work teams should:

- Allocate additional time prior to performance measurement
- Provide flexible short-term deadlines for reaching team process-related goals
- Reward teams for their improved functioning in the short-term, rather than longer-term outputs

## Case Study

### Increasing Team Autonomy at Ford

The impetus for **Natural Work Groups** at Ford was a need to increase competitiveness in a changing environment, in particular to respond to declining tariff protection in the car industry. Creating Natural Work Groups and allowing them autonomy, responsibility and accountability for their own area was seen as a means of continuously improving performance and enhancing employee satisfaction at the plant floor level.

Natural Work Groups (NWGs) are natural groups of operators based on process, geography, size, reporting relationships etc, who work together to make continuous improvements to enhance the competitiveness of Ford. In 2002, Ford's Broadmeadows plant in Victoria had 147 NWGs covering the full gamut of car production, and included 65 nationalities reflecting the multicultural workforce at the plant. As part of their responsibilities, NWGs are required to analyse jobs and make decisions that **value diversity** and make a commitment to respecting the dignity of every individual.

#### The NWG Vision



Ford's NWGs have responsibility for a number of important tasks including:

- Setting their own objectives that support plant objectives
- Using Ford measurables to track progress
- Demonstrate objectives are being achieved
- Demonstrate improvements in business results
- Identifying and eliminating waste
- Taking on increased ownership, responsibility and accountability for the operations of their area

## Case Study

### Increasing Team Autonomy at Ford (continued)

The NWGs are responsible for the day-to-day operations of their functional work area and they are involved in decision-making and problem solving focused on safety, quality, cost, launch, productivity, occupational health and safety, people, communication, skills development through job rotation. Ford has developed a sophisticated structure to support the continued development of NWGs which includes:

**Group Leaders** who act on behalf of the NWG, encourage and guide group processes, and support the use of tools and measurables.

**Group Helpers** who are responsible for providing assistant to NWGs through functions such as working in partnership with union representatives, shop stewards and NWG Coordinators to implement processes that support the development of NWGs, provide information and feedback for NWGs and participate in training.

**Area NWG Coordinators** who assist in preparing and distributing materials for weekly NWG meetings, ensure information is communicated to NWGs, report, monitor and evaluate NWG activities, liase with management, and run weekly NWG Helper meetings.

**Area NWG Steering Committee** which includes the Area Manager, Superintendent, HR representative, Area NWG coordinator and Union representatives.

**Plant NWG Steering Committee** which includes Plant Manager, Area Managers, HR Manager and Senior Shop Stewards.

Since the introduction of NWGs at Ford, there has been an increased use of tools and measurables by the groups, effectiveness has improved, there is evidence of enhanced NWG satisfaction, and improved business results. One of the keys to success has been giving the NWGs time to develop, and future goals include further empowerment of the groups so they can take greater responsibility and accountability, the expansion of the coaching programmes to foster further development and effectiveness, and increased focus on Ford's measurables.

## Briefing notes

### *Diverse Teams Outperform Given Time*

Diverse teams have been shown to repeatedly outperform homogenous teams. And, whilst diverse teams often encounter early-stage communication and conflict barriers, given time they produce higher quality solutions, better decision, and innovative ideas.

Considerable research has examined whether diversity in team or group composition improves performance, generally finding that when groups overcome the early-stage hurdles, information, ideas, and perspectives are shared more freely generating higher quality solutions and innovation.

A study by Ancona (1990) demonstrated that diversity in team composition might slow down progress in the short-term due to conflict and communication problems, but that diversity fostered speed and innovation over the whole development cycle. Cox and Blake's 1991 study of culturally heterogenous groups provided evidence that diversity outperforms homogeneity. Kirchmeyer and Cohen (1992) identified the importance of *constructive conflict* that is nurtured in well-managed diverse teams. Engaging in constructive conflict meant that the validity and significance of decisions was enhanced, and those from minority ethnic groups participated more freely in discussions.

The value in diversity argument rests on the idea that the bringing together of different perspectives, ideas, and knowledge bases improves performance. Hoffman (1959) and Hoffman and Maier (1961) found that diverse groups produced higher quality solutions than homogenous groups because diversity leads to greater conflict of ideas, forcing heterogenous teams to consider more alternatives. McLeod and Lobel (1992) and Watson, Kumar *et al* (1993) showed that ethnically diverse groups do not necessarily produce more responses to problems, but they generate more creative and higher quality solutions. The Watson *et al* study also demonstrated that time is an important factor in the success of diverse teams, finding that, at first, diverse teams encountered difficulty in developing appropriate routines. Over time, however, they outperformed homogenous teams.

McGrath's 1984 study also showed that diversity (informational) led to alternative decision-making perspectives, resulting in higher performance, where early stage conflict and communication problems were resolved. This idea found support in a study by O'Reilly, William *et al* in 1997, who found higher quality solutions took time to emerge due to early stage difficulties in communication and the development of team routines, demonstrating the importance of appropriate, early-stage, team training and coaching.

## Briefing notes

### *Diverse Teams Outperform Given Time (continued)*

Diverse teams need time to develop interdependence and trust which provide a strong foundation for communication, constructive conflict, risk-taking and creativity. It is important that appropriate time and training is provided for diverse teams to overcome early-stage problems, thereby allowing firms to harness the diversity dividend.

#### **References:**

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Kirchmeyer, C. and A. Cohen (1992), 'Multicultural groups: their performance and reactions with constructive conflict', *Group and Organization Management*, Vol. 17

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### *Articulating timeframes and goals to team and other parties*

Briefing the team on the benefits of allowing time to improve team processes and functioning is important. It is also important that those outside the team are informed that the team will be provided with increased time to allow improved functioning to develop.

Team functioning goals should be set in conjunction with the members and clearly articulated to both the team, and important outsiders.

The team leader or managers should:

- Work with the team to set team functioning goals
- Clearly articulate short-term team process goals
- Reinforce process goals regularly to the team
- Ensure that important parties outside the team are aware of goals and timeframes

### *Learning from other teams*

Across-team learning can provide teams, team leaders and managers with important information and knowledge on critical challenges and benefits associated with diverse teams. Providing opportunities to learn can assist in the development of established and new teams. For example, organisations may find it useful to bring together team leaders to discuss the lessons, challenges and potential opportunities of diverse teams.

Team leaders and managers should:

- Organise for information sharing sessions or forums for team leaders and team members
- Recognise that teams go through well-documented phases that present opportunities and challenges and articulate these to members
- Set up important feedback and sharing mechanisms for inter-team learning and improvement

## Introduction To The Measuring Team Performance Action Area

The team needs to have goals or targets that reflect the desired tasks at hand and which are linked to the strategic goals of the organisation. Such goals should reflect the value placed on new and innovative outcomes and the skills required to work in a diverse team.

The goals should act to further strengthen the team's sense of identity. Likewise it is important that rewards happen at a team level to encourage greater involvement of team members and avoid the pursuit of sub-optimal goals.

## Step fourteen: Clarify a team vision

### The purpose

- To establish clear and common goals
- To recognise challenges and opportunities of diversity

### The process

- Develop clear understanding of team goals
- Establish guidelines for team operation

### *Developing clear understanding of team goals*

Working together to develop clear goals increases the potential that those goals will be reached. It is important in developing goals that the four main measurements of team effectiveness are incorporated:

- Performance
- Member satisfaction
- Team learning
- Outsider satisfaction

(See *Step two: Consider desired work outcomes* for more information).

Emphasising and communicating to team members that team effectiveness and performance may not be measured by simple output goals, but rather by more complex methods is important to focus attention on improving group functioning.

The inclusion of diversity goals linked to other measures of effectiveness and to the organisations strategic goals and vision is important.

## *Establishing guidelines for team operation*

Given the acknowledged potential for conflict and communication difficulties in diverse groups, it is important that strong ground rules are established and upheld.

Team leaders or managers should:

- Work with members to ensure ground rules are clear, concise and understood by all
- Start each project outlining and developing the teams ground rules
- Remind team members of the rules at appropriate intervals e.g. at the start of a weekly meeting
- Ensure conflict does not become personal
- Ensure conflict remains task-focussed
- Reinforce at appropriate times, the value of difference to team performance
- Draw on lessons from the conflict and communication training

Useful ground rules may include:

- A statement that difference and disagreement can be constructive, providing members justify and explain the basis for disagreement in a constructive manner
- An understanding that every member has the right to object to the statements of others and all members have the obligation to hear them out before stating their own agreement or disagreement
- Every member has the right to speak and have his or her ideas treated with respect

## Step fifteen: Set goals that encourage diversity management skills

### The purpose

- To incorporate diversity competencies into team processes and outcomes
- To develop on-going skills within organisation

### The process

- Identify diversity competencies
- Link competencies to goals
- Draw up individual and team plans to achieve goals

#### *Identify diversity competencies*

As part of the process of appointing team leaders or managers, organisations should work to identify existing diversity competencies. This can be done in consultation with managers and potential team leaders, and through the performance appraisal system. The competencies of members should also be identified through appraisal processes.

Important questions to ask may include:

- Have members undertaken diversity training?
- Have members worked in diverse environments previously?
- Have members had experience in culturally complex environments?
- Have members had overseas assignments?
- Do members have language skills?
- Have members diversity competencies and skills been assessed?

### ***Link competencies to goals***

To highlight the importance of diversity to the goals of the team and the organisation, team leaders and managers should work together with the members to link these competencies to the goals.

This process can help members, team leaders, managers, and outsiders to identify the importance of diversity competencies.

### ***Draw up team individual and team plans to achieve goals***

Working with the entire team, the team leader or manager should develop plans to guide the team as a whole in achieving its goals.

The plan should include:

- Skills that will be utilised
- Competencies that are important
- Processes for achieving goals
- Important actions that are required
- Timeframes for reaching goals
- The importance of team goals for organisational strategy

Working with individual team members, the team leader or manager should draw up team plans that recognise the value of diversity skills and competencies, and demonstrate how these can be operationalised to contribute to team performance. This process allows individuals the opportunity to highlight the specific diversity related competencies they may have.

## Step sixteen: Reward at a team level

### The purpose

- To consolidate team identification
- To match goals to rewards

### The process

- Examine reward practices
- Include diversity goals
- Link rewards to goals

#### *Examining reward practices*

It is important to examine current reward practices and consider what types of incentives the existing system provides. Where team-level goals are considered salient and where team functioning is important to the achievement of strategic goals, it is important to consider whether alternative reward practices may be appropriate.

Managers should:

- Examine existing reward practices and consider how rewards are distributed
- Consider the goals of the team
- Consider what behaviours they wish to encourage in the team

#### *Including diversity goals*

Diversity goals should be included in the team's plan and appraisal system. These goals should be linked to the organisations strategic goals and team aims. Establishment of team-based diversity goals should be developed in conjunction with members.

Managers should consider what behaviour they wish to encourage in the team to reinforce the value of diversity. These behaviours should be reinforced to contribute to a culture that values difference.

### *Link rewards to goals*

Rewards should be linked to the achievement of goals. Given that the measurement of team effectiveness should cover four factors (performance, member satisfaction, team learning and outsider satisfaction) the achievement of set goals should be linked with appropriate team based rewards. In some cases, it may be appropriate to reward diverse team differently. For example, short-term rewards may focus on the achievement of process-related goals.

## Checklist Of Key Steps

### *Selecting And Structuring Teams Action Area*

- Step One: Use Existing Diversity Data ?
- Step Two: Consider Desired Work Outcomes ?
- Step Three: Shortlist Candidates ?
- Step Four: Select Candidates ?
- Step Five: Inform Teams Of Diversity Rationale ?

### *Working With Existing Diverse Teams Action Area*

- Step Six: Assess Diversity ?
- Step Seven: Assess Team Processes ?

### *Resourcing Teams Action Area*

- Step Eight: Assess Needs ?
- Step Nine: Provide Communication Training ?
- Step Ten: Provide Conflict Resolution Training ?
- Step Eleven: Encourage The Valuing Of Difference ?
- Step Twelve: Develop Team Identity ?
- Step Thirteen: Give The Team Time ?

### *Measuring Team Performance Action Area*

- Step Fourteen: Clarify a team vision ?
- Step Fifteen: Set goals that encourage diversity management skills ?