



Managing Diversity

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“If we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.” (John F. Kennedy)

Diversity – a word that is getting more and more important in today’s life. Diversity has always been on earth because people can differ in many ways: gender, age, culture, sexuality or disability and many more.

There is no explicit definition about what diversity is. But it is about differences and similarities. About visible and invisible differences. It encompasses acceptance and respect that each individual is unique. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive and nurturing environment. It is about moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual. Diversity is not about removing prejudices, but about recognizing that they exist (Aretz & Hansen, 2002, p. 15).

Since issues like alteration, climate change, urbanization and globalization are changing the world every day the world now faces the topic diversity more than ever. The importance of diversity has grown since companies have recognized that diversity can bring a benefit to the company. However, how to manage this diversity became a new problem in today’s business life.

“It is not enough to get people from different cultures with different ages and genders together it is essential how these people get along with each other and with others, like employees and customers.” (Daniel Goeudevert, 20021)

Goeudevert’s quote shows that managing diversity is more than just mixing diverse people together. The key point is to manage this diversity in the right way to get a benefit out of it.

„The basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of people. The diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences which will include factors such as sex, age, background, race, disability, personality and work style. It is founded on the premiss that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilized and in which organizational goals are met.” (Kandola & Fullerton, 1998, p. 8)

Apart from Kandola and Fullerton there were a lot of definitions of Managing Diversity produced in the last decades. These definitions differ in some ways, but the key point is the same:

All authors see a great potential for business in diversity.

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