

Equal Employment Opportunity Newsletter

Equality is OK!



USAG FORT SILL

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Understanding Diversity



Our differences are something to be celebrated

Diversity is easy to understand – we share similarities and differences. Inclusion is the real challenge. The story goes this way. A tractor trailer driver stood outside his vehicle on a rural road wondering how he would get his vehicle and cargo under a low clearance bridge. He blasted himself for

not reading road signage that forewarned of the low clearance. While the truck cleared, his trailer was just a mere inch too high and unable to clear the bridge. Police and firemen responded to the traffic backup. Onlookers and the police offered the driver ideas from turning around to transferring the cargo to a shorter trailer. The driver, already inconvenienced and late on his delivery, entertained the idea of turning around for 25 miles to access another road. A mother driving her children home from school stopped to satisfy the children's curiosity. The mother guessed the issue and explained the situation to the children. The youngest child, a precocious 8 year old, lowers her window and comments to the crowd, "why don't you let air out of the tires to get the

trailer through?" Amazingly, her elders listened, took the suggestion, and the driver drove under the bridge unscathed, aired his tires on the far side, and continued on his way. Ponder and Consider. Ah! The power of diversified thought. More importantly, the power of inclusion to that youngster's thought. And, personal thought, or opinion, is but one characteristic of diversity.

Years ago, pre 9-11, when we enjoyed tremendous returns on our financial investments, the financial advisor's pitch was, "diversify your investment portfolio in order to maximize your investment dollars!" Diversification of your financial investments guaranteed returns even in lean/adverse times. Perhaps we did not understand 100% of the advisor's vocabulary of

A Return on Investment: Diversity Pays off

high growth companies, risk tolerance, return expectation, and market fluctuations, but we understood that a diversified portfolio of 25-30 stocks yielded on average higher gains and posed a lower risk than any individual investment found within the portfolio. Alas! The whole is greater than sum of its parts! I get it! Yes, synergy! If we under-

stand this, then we can understand that organizational diversity, comprised of individuals with different generational perspectives, personalities, working styles, experiences, cultural backgrounds, races, languages, disabilities, ages, gender, etc., and yes, opinions, will leverage every employee's unique concept of self to maximize returns.

We are more than a workforce comprised of Noah's Ark type understanding—meaning, inclusion of at least two of every kind. Here, again, we provide additional flavor to diversity so that we, as a workforce, may better understand, and work side by side with, those individuals distinctly different from, and similar to, us. ~Saucedo

Special points of interest:

- DIVERSITY AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT
- CONSIDER AN INVESTMENT
- EEO CASE MATTERS
- PERSEVERANCE

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Diversity Working Together (Inclusion)



Traditionalist

Martin Luther King, Jr.
January 15, 1929—
April 4, 1968

“The most important stuff for people to learn in organizations is not the explicit stuff of rules, procedures, and so on, but the messy stuff of tacit learning” (*Beyond Workplace 2000*, 1995). Do we understand that an introvert’s silence is his/her strength? That they are analytical types who work best alone? Do we know to be concise, be quick, and be gone when addressing a supervisor or coworker with a driver working style? Does the Baby Boomer pre-

fer the handshake to a text? We have been talking seriously about diversity for over a quarter century. For years experts touted four generations in the workforce, not because it was a novelty, but because of the rich, diverse abundance of experiences, ideas, beliefs, perspectives, etc. that each generation brought to the arena. It meant productivity in harmonious organizations. Then, in 2010, Ms. Jeanne C. Meister and Ms. Karie Willyerd

wrote *The 2020 Workplace* positing five generations in the workplace by 2020. If managing talent, expectations, differences, and similarities with four generations was an awesome task, consider how much more acute that task will be with a 5th generation anxiously impatient to make their workplace debut. We barely know the Millennials, yet they have already surpassed the Baby Boomers as the largest generation in the workforce.



Baby Boomer

Sonia Sotomayor
Associate Justice, U.S. Supreme Court
June 25, 1954—

Generation X held the lead only briefly. The Millennials, and to an extent, their parents, saw to that. As a society, we saw the arrival of the numerically superior Millennial generation and with it vast technological advances that now characterize the generation. We, their parents, are amazed at their growth and assimilation into society giving credence to that old proverb that “People resemble their times more than they resemble their parents.”

Howard J. Ross in *Reinventing Diversity* says that our conversations should be about how good people are rather than focus on the oppressive model mentality. Emphasis should be to get people to understand their own view of the world and to look outside their own view to see and understand others’ experiences and viewpoints. Eliminate the “bias equals badness” paradigm to better understand this perspective.

Finally, referencing *The Loudest Duck* by Laura Liswood, we have assembled Noah’s Ark, but we have more than two of everything in the organization. There are far more diversity categories that go well beyond the traditionally defined race, color, religion, sex, national origin and religion. We need to look at who is on the ark, recognize their dignity and know them from the inside out. ~Saucedo



Generation X

Marissa Mayer
President & CEO of Yahoo!
May 30, 1975—

A Millennial Tidbit

Demographers William Strauss and Neil Howe reference the *Harry Potter* series as an excellent illustration for the differences between Millennials and their predecessors (Builders, Baby Boomers, and GenX). Harry Potter and his friends are smart, over achieving, innovative, and self possessed, doing their

best to operate within the rules set forth for them, while practicing their calling of saving the world as need arises - they represent Millennials. The individualistic, judgmental, egotistical teachers at Hogwarts responsible for shaping the young wizards characterize the Baby Boomer generation. Characters like Hagrid, though not in

power but always around to help, epitomize Generation X - a group sandwiched between two powerful and dominant generations.”

Managing the Millennials: Discover the Core Competencies for Managing Today’s Workforce
By Chip Espinoza, Mick Ukleja, Craig Rusch

EEO-Did you Know About Good Faith?

In *Atkins v. Department of the Interior*, the agency may remove an employee from a position if his/her medical condition poses a direct threat to safety. However, the agency must first conduct an individualized assessment that allows the employee to present evidence of their ability to do the job. To act without this assessment puts the agency at risk for a complaint.

In another case, The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) announced

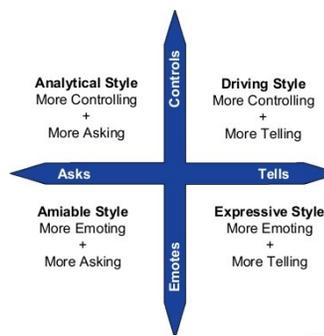
that a Texas construction company will “pay \$58,000 and provide substantial injunctive relief” to settle a failure to provide a reasonable accommodation claim. In its lawsuit, the EEOC alleged that Baker Concrete terminated payroll manager Maria Castillo in 2013 because of her disability, asthma, when the company refused to provide her with a reasonable accommodation of working at home for a period after she had a bad reaction to chemical dust in the workplace. After Castillo, a nine-

year employee of the company, was denied a reasonable accommodation, she was fired by two human resource officials, who told her that she was disabled, could no longer perform her job, and would just become ill again if they gave her permission to work at home for a period because the building was old and she would continue to have breathing problems upon her return.

*A better organization move: Ask the employee for a medical certification from her doc-

tor. If the certification supports that the employee has a disability, cannot perform her job at the office, and the only possible accommodation is telework, then assess whether working remotely comports with the essential functions of the job. Hopefully, this isn’t something you’re deciding for the first time on the spot. Rather, you have a written job description that accurately reflects the duties and responsibilities of the position. And then apply it to this situation.

But, even if you don’t have the job description, a court should not second-guess a well-reasoned evenly-applied business assessment that telecommuting will not allow the employee to perform the essential functions of the job. Either way, whatever you do, communicate with the employee and address the reasonable accommodation request in **good faith**.
<http://www.theemployerhandbook.com> by Eric B. Meyer



Working Styles



Millennial
David Karp
Founder and Creator of social media site *Tumblr*
July 6, 1986—

SMELL THE CHEESE OFTEN SO YOU KNOW WHEN IT IS GETTING OLD. & MOVEMENT IN A NEW DIRECTION HELPS YOU FIND NEW CHEESE. WHO MOVED MY CHEESE? BY SPENCER JOHNSON, M.D.

Harassment and a Hostile Work Environment

Harassment is a behavior that intends to disturb or upset someone. In legal sense, it is behavior found threatening or intimidating. It is unwelcome, repeated, offensive, humiliating behavior. Harassment becomes unlawful when enduring it becomes a condition of employment or the conduct is severe or perva-

sive enough that a reasonable person would find it hostile, intimidating, or abusive. Harassment is labeled sexual harassment when the unwelcome attention is sexual in nature.

Harassment may lead to a hostile work environment when unwelcome attention is

severe and pervasive enough to create a chilling effect on a person’s work environment. This adversely impacts an employee’s ability to do his/her job and can lead to stress and depression—disabilities under the ADA—and can impact productivity and increased absenteeism.

13% OF THE UNITED STATES POPULATION IS FOREIGN BORN. PEW RESEARCH CENTER HOW DO WE INCLUDE THEIR DIVERSE IDEAS AND PERSPECTIVES, CULTURAL RICHNESS, AND ENTHUSIASM?

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Have an EEO question? Access via EEO website.

<http://sill-www.army.mil/USAG/eoo/index.html>



Efrain Robles Molina



Jose F. Saucedo



Don Marquis, an author/journalist created a character named Archy, a cockroach who sneaks onto Marquis' typewriter at night to write poetry.

i was talking to a moth
the other evening
he was trying to break into
an electric light bulb
and fry himself on the wires

why do you fellows
pull this stunt i asked him
because it is the conventional
thing for moths or why
if that had been an uncovered
candle instead of an electric
light bulb you would
now be a small unsightly cinder
have you no sense

plenty of it he answered
but at times we get tired
of using it
we get bored with the routine

and crave beauty
and excitement
fire is beautiful
and we know that if we get
too close it will kill us
but what does that matter
it is better to be happy
for a moment
and be burned up with beauty
than to live a long time
and be bored all the while
so we wad all our life up
into one little roll
and then we shoot the roll
that is what life is for
it is better to be a part of beauty
for one instant and then cease to
exist than to exist forever
and never be a part of beauty
our attitude toward life

i come easy go easy
we are like human beings
used to be before they became
too civilized to enjoy themselves

and before i could argue him
out of his philosophy
he went and immolated himself
on a patent cigar lighter
i do not agree with him
myself i would rather have
half the happiness and twice
the longevity

but at the same time i wish
there was something i wanted
as badly as he wanted to fry
himself

archy

MISSION

Manage the civilian Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program, ensuring a workplace environment that is free of illegal discrimination and fosters equality and opportunity for everyone.

VISION STATEMENT

The installation leadership is committed to respect, fairness, and equality for all civilian employees by ensuring a professional work environment free from unlawful discrimination.

Equal Employment Opportunity is provided to all qualified persons. Discrimination based on an individual's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age (40 and above), mental and physical disabilities, reprisal for participating in a protected activity and genetic information is unlawful.

Hours of Operation Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m. — 4 p.m.

the lesson of the moth

-Don Marquis