

Question 1.

What does workplace diversity meant to you and what has been your experience in your workplace?

Customer/value/productivity	Definition	Staffing/unions	Experiences/action related
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers identify with employee in the same ethnic group or diversity • Customer service (improve with diversity) • Increase customer satisfaction • Diversity adds value • Business case • Increase productivity • Economic/efficiency implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative work force • Fairness • Access • Inclusive • Not treating everyone the same • Equality • Respecting and knowing differences • Cross culture • Barrier free (employment systems) • Holistic (from narrow to wider view on workplace) • Sense of common ground • Diversity of ideas • Diversity – forget single parents – children are a barrier for promotions, moving locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in retention • Single mother’s (parents) have barriers • Valuing/managing difference • Managing conflict (issues that come with changing populations) • Backlash • Positive experience (programs that have been created have been successful, so you want to hire people with same disability because Education/program has been implemented) • Self doubt (loneliness) “Token”/fear and pride • Different experience for each group and workplace • Seniority, unions, hiring practices can be a barrier (part-time) • Need champions in the workplace • Need to make collective agreements work for equity groups • Parental leave/men & women/easier sell to white male due to advantages – real/perceived • No actual designated jobs – qualifications narrow acceptable individuals (which may be an aboriginal person who speaks Cree and has knowledge of aboriginal culture & history) • Commonalties increase agreement – decrease disagreements • More “mixing” = more conflict = conflict resolution skills are needed to prior to the actual “mixing” • Changing dynamics – rules – policies • Managers/supervisors scared to deal with issues that concern diverse individuals (afraid to hire these minority individuals because of “backlash”) • Some employers would rather give unfit minority individuals a raise than deal with an issue not related to race (lateness, ability to complete job, etc.) • Education for potential employers about what is expected of them by the employer and then support those managers who have tried to increase the diversity of their team. • Accommodate individuals with cognitive disabilities – task sheet with corresponding times – public access – “right” supervisor • Union and management must born support and share positions/ individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity – education • Exploring new opportunities • Opportunity to educate employees, employers and customers (Ongoing Process) • Mentorship programs • Orientation for customers as well (i.e. deaf/visually impaired employees) • Different ethnic groups – working together – helps to dispel myths • Women in non-traditional roles ... more people have intimate contact with individuals who are of a minority – more willing to take a chance and hire a minority • First generation of aboriginal people in the workplace – transitional generation

Question 2.

What does your company do to support/promote workplace diversity?

Internal policies	External (recruitment)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversity training• Harassment policy• Accommodating physical needs• HR policy & review (job description review – qualifications)• Building commitment from the top and bottom (good support system)• Balancing between compliance – step beyond the “we have to” we want to”• Using positive language and terms• Top level management might agree, but if middle management doesn’t agree, it won’t work• Tolerance for racism• Easy to deal with internally• Hard to deal with customers/external individuals with those opinions (i.e. banned from golf course)• Diversity training• Set definitions• Zero tolerance• Must be integrated into how you do business• Everyday operations and issues• Sign language• Life skills• Conflict resolution• Time management• Representative workforce – introduced to new employees by introducing demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application that states equal opportunity employer• Posters with pictures representing different ethnic groups, also TV commercials• Work placements/student programs (world) internships• Mentorship programs for new people coming to Canada• Outreach recruitment• Working with community groups (deaf/blind to get an understanding/recruiting)• Include in work in the community and job fairs• Ads to diverse groups (SEARCHs, Open Door, Eagle Feather News)• Tolerance for racism• Easy to deal with internally• Hard to deal with customers/external individuals with those opinions (i.e. banned from golf course)• Hiring deaf employee – made effort to join deaf/hard of hearing community

Question 3.

How could/would you increase workplace diversity in your company?

Specific training within current establishment

- Orientation
- Diversity training
- No judging
- Show demographics so people know the ratio's of diversity
- Designated postings/hiring
- "this job is designated for equity groups, equity hire
- why don't employers identify all jobs as open to all individuals who have the qualifications (from equity group or not)
- consideration on an equitable basis – skills/abilities
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Global/putting into daily practice/attract increased diversity

- Work placements
- Goal setting/targets
- Mentor programs
- Networking/discussions
- Make Community Group connections
- Partnership programs (STC, METIS)
- Support our youth – retaining employees
- Upbringing = barrier, not disciplined, do not know what rules/guidelines are in the workplace/urbanization increases understanding
- Dispelling the myths – aboriginal people paying taxes
- Hire part-time and full-time
- Avoid blanket statements
- All companies/management is different
- All jobs are open and accessible – change perception of employers as well as job seekers that all can/should apply

Question 4.

What challenges have you come across while trying to increase diversity in your workplace culture?

Lack of knowledge/understanding/fear

- Different work ethic
- Communication skills with customers
- Employees don't understand why training and other programs in place
- Lack of commitment and accountability
- Lack of understanding of the business case
- Lack of understanding for physical/mental disabilities
- Less risk
- Language barriers with international language speaker, you may get into a problem without even knowing it
- Attitudinal barriers, negativity towards Equity/Diversity
- Perception (unfair advantage): it demeans my effort – Employment Equity is a Free Ride
- Changing stereotypes over a long period of time
- Diversity to become the norm
- Hard to see past differences (all inclusive is foremost rather than management style, personality, etc.)
- Privilege – see it as a right – this must be changed – not a right
- Reverse discrimination – discrimination is discrimination (look at government white male still in power) (white male unable to find a job)

Infrastructural barriers

- Retention
- Education from elsewhere isn't recognized (RPL)
- Lack of funds/resources (people)
- Collective agreements
- Legislation
- Geography – location of jobs – unable to attract individuals to these jobs
- Avoid human rights commission – feel they will be deemed as a “bad employer” would rather not hire at all than deal with human rights

Question 5.

What's the value of workplace diversity?

Social conscience

- Unity
- Helps change attitudes
- Social responsibility
- All companies (large or small) can work/to improve the lives of Canadians by contributing to workplace diversity
- Reducing stereotypes/myths about different cultures
- Enjoy the cultural interaction amongst diverse group
- Expands our horizons – food, music
- Inclusive – all people feel included
- Assist with youth seeing all cultures represented becomes the norm
- Learning about diverse cultures – find out commonalities
- Diversity will become the norm – concentrate on other things
- Not treating people all the same (as children – not all the same – different styles, disciplinary actions, etc.)

Workplace improvement

- If potential/new employees and customers see someone “like them” they feel more comfortable
- Language – can communicate with others that speak their language
- Communication
- Access expertise
- Productivity
- Customer service
- Lower costs (hire and retain staff)
- Recognition that you are open to diversity
- Improve corporate image
- Meeting and understanding all your customers will improve the bottom line
- Penetrate new markets and possibilities
- Workplace harmony
- Better problem solving – different thinking, experiences
- Customers feel more comfortable if the customer sees individuals were more like them (gender, race, etc.)
- Work side by side with diverse individuals begins to breakdown stereotypes, myths