Workforce Diversity Plan

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**Background**

Workforce diversity is an important concept, which remains at the top of mind of both employee and employer. It is the understanding of individuality and distinctiveness based on gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status and beliefs. Having diversity in the workplace means that employees belong to different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Not only this, but it also includes employees of different age, gender, sexual orientation, and educational background and so on. Australian legislation covers anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity in the workplace diversity (c=AU;o=Australian Government;ou=Department of Industry, 2018). The Australian Human Rights Commission offers a fact sheet to guide the organisations making policies and laws to prevent discrimination based on diversity.

A diverse workforce brings creativity and productivity. In addition, it allows employees to work effectively and efficiently. A diverse workforce is more productive as an organisation can take benefit from different perspectives and creative ideas of different people (Kearney, 2009). New ideas coming from people of different min sets enhances the efficiency of an organisation. It also brings creativity in an organisation because unrelated groups are cross-fertilising each other. It brings variety to the company, and more solutions are available to choose from when an issue occurs. Language diversity allows the organisation to expand relationships with organisations from other cultures and languages.

**The diversity plan**

Diversity support programs are very important for an organisation to not only attract top talent but also to promote innovation and creativity in an organisation. Employees can be encouraged to support diversity inclusion and to align their everyday work activities with the diversity strategy. One of the programs is to communicate employees about the diversity vision of an organisation and how diversity influences one's role and how their role can contribute to the success of diversity in an organisation. Another way is to encourage employees to take part in engagement surveys. Employees can also be encouraged to take part in diversity effort and becoming culturally competent. Creating an environment, which establishes a sense of belonging for everyone, is a support activity to encourage everyone to takes part in diversity. Empathetic leadership is significant; diversity inclusion is not the effort of a single person. The empathetic leadership will enable diversity addition effectively. Everyone must be involved in the process of diversity encouragement and appreciation, and it must not be considered a top-down approach.

Diversity training and awareness is vital in diverse workforce settings. Every day diverse workforce teams encounter work issues due to the differences in culture and religions. Diversity training is an initiative taken by different companies to create awareness of diversity related issues and bring cohesiveness in teams. It initiated in 1960 as a response to the Civil Rights Movement. It will be of two types, skill based and awareness based training. Awareness based training will make the workforce aware of the importance of diversity as well as prejudice about others. Skill-based diversity deals with the handling of issues when they approach, and it takes trainee from awareness to the proficiency stage.

One training exercises that will be implemented, as part of diversity training is perspective raking. It is the process of walking in someone else shoes mentally. Research indicates that it is the most promising approach in changing the attitudes and behaviours towards the racial groups and minorities (Lindsey, King, Membere, & Cheung, 2017). Diversity goal setting is another successful approach, which will be employed. In this method, the trainee sets goals to appreciate and challenge inappropriate comments. Goal setting is an effective approach, which leads to pro-diversity behaviour. Both of these exercises are effective in diversity training and research.

**Communication plan**

Since diversity training is a sensitive topic, effective communication strategies must be used to make it more effective and work. The diversity communication and promotion must involve the keywords which everyone must understand genuinely. The actual meanings of the word must communicate such as equality is dealing with everyone according to their needs, not treating everyone the same identical way. Choice of language must be considered, some idioms or slangs may not be appropriate to use, and they should be avoided in diversity training. Communication is verbal and non-verbal, and both must be given equal importance in communicating during the diversity training. The rules of non-verbal communication must be understood before using them in a culturally diverse environment. Avoiding inappropriate or gratuitous references is also crucial in this regard (“Communicate effectively with culturally diverse persons - Communicate effectively with culturally diverse persons,” n.d.).

Other communication strategies that will be used in the diversity training will be the authenticity of the statements and language. The diversity training is an opportunity to connect with the workforce and for this purpose; the leader must speak from the heart. The communication will be centred on communicating the opportunities for development by the training. The training will ensure that the message moves from top to bottom of the organisation without ignoring the middle management and everyone must understand their role in diversity development and management. The communication strategies will be aimed at encouraging engagement from the diverse workforce and everyone. Two-way communication is highly encouraged, and listening will be emphasised more than speaking.

**Monitoring and review**

Monitoring and review are critical to ensure that diversity training objectives have been met or not. For this purpose, the Monitoring and review program will be initiated during the diversity training phases. The progress of diversity strategies can be obtained by doing a survey and obtaining information about the employee’s engagement in diversity programs. The survey or questionnaire can be a useful technique to assess the implementation of training and knowledge being delivered in the training sessions. The information must be obtained from the culturally diverse teams and workforce to gauge the level of acceptance.

The obtained information can be evaluated against the diversity training goals to get insight into the gaps in goals and actual results. If the gaps exist then the training can be modified to direct them towards the desired results. Training interventions can be made based on the results to remove the barriers in either communication or the other area of diversity training. Monitoring and review must be done after intervals as well to appraise the progress and get insight about future training needs.

**References**

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