

Diversity Management Time for A New Approach

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There are now more new faces and diversity among the workforce than ever before and this trend is expected to continue into the 21st century. Managers in public and private organizations are searching for and experimenting with various approaches to more effectively deal with increasing workforce diversity. This article briefly reviews the history of diversity management and calls for a new agenda that encourages more collaboration between scholars and administrators, increased researcher on-site observation of workplace reactions to diversity management initiatives, more informative and rigorous case studies, and more third-party evaluations of diversity management initiatives.

The concept of diversity management has become deeply rooted in the federal government and has received bipartisan support from both major political parties. Broadly defined, the term diversity management refers to the systematic and planned commitment by organizations to recruit, retain, reward, and promote a heterogeneous mix of employees. Theories and techniques of diversity management have been developed and enthusiastically supported by a growing number of chief executive officers, training specialists, diversity consultants, and academics. The 1998 summer issue of *Public Personnel Management* presented a diversity symposium that included theories, case studies, and examples of diversity management that supports the vision that if managed well, diversity can help improve organizational effectiveness.

A powerful federal support center for encouraging diversity management was the Department of Labor's Glass Ceiling Commission, which is now officially closed.¹ Despite the avalanche of government, corporate, and individual support of the value of managing diversity, there continues to be a clear failure to display rigorous systematic empirical support of its outcomes. There is also reluctance to address a number of dilemmas of diversity management, such as the backlash against a commitment to diversity, the disappointment and anger of women and minorities, and systematic resistance within organizations to value differences.² Too much of the available literature on diversity management uses anecdotes to support the power and potency of programs, techniques, or what is designated the "demographic imperative."

One result of attempting to convince, enforce, and promote diversity management on a foundation of anecdotes, moral protestations, or a limited number of research studies is the chilling of interest among researchers and administrators in the subject. This article first briefly highlights the concept of diversity management. Second, some of the hyperbole and a sample of the limited number of sound research findings surrounding diversity are presented. Finally, a new course of action to increase the study of diversity management initiatives scientifically is presented. We firmly believe that unless a new course of action is undertaken, diversity management will remain underresearched and underappreciated by the society in general and administrators specifically. This is especially problematic in an increasingly heterogeneous nation such as the United States.

Diversity Management: Narrow and Broad-Based Views and A Framework

There have been two countervailing points of view about the cultural integration of the diverse population of the United States. One view is referred to as the "melting pot" and proposes that people of different races and ethnicity should blend together and assimilate into a common national culture. The other view is designated as the "multicultural society" and suggests those of different ethnic groups should retain their cultural patterns and coexist with each other.

The view of the dominant or Caucasian race has generally been that the melting pot is what is best. However, throughout the history of the United States there has been a strong undercurrent of multiculturalism.³ The United States has never been a homogeneous and fully assimilated or equally integrated society. Many women and minorities have occupied low-wage jobs in an occupational segregated labor force.

In U.S. organizations, formal efforts to eliminate discrimination started to appear in the late 1960s in response to legislative mandate. It was assumed that if white women, African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, and other people gained access to jobs they would advance equally with white men. The hierarchical progression of a diverse mix of employees is still generally untrue.⁴

The publication of *Workplace 2000* by the Hudson Institute portrayed dramatic demographic shifts in the United States.⁵ Some advocates of diversity management base their case and call for corrective action upon demographic census projections or what is called the "demographic imperative."^{6,7,8} These advocates suggest that it is inevitable that the composition of the workforce will continue to change. Although the demographic forecasts have been questioned and some inaccuracies uncovered, the demographic imperative is cited as compelling evidence for embracing diversity management.

The demographic imperative argument has resulted in what is referred to as a narrow perspective of diversity management. The narrow concept of diversity management emphasizes race and gender. Thus, what is referred to as a narrow definition of diversity management *is the commitment on the part of organizations to recruit, retain, reward, and promote minority and female employees.* R. Roosevelt Thomas,

Jr. introduced the term "managing diversity." Thomas' 1991 book, *Beyond Race and Gender*, suggested that using a narrow view of gender and race diversity would result in an incomplete transformation of organizational culture.⁹

Thomas, in a *Harvard Business Review* (1990) article entitled "From Affirmative Action to Affirming Diversity," provoked thought about expanding the concept of diversity management.¹⁰ He disputed five of the original rationales for affirmative action in the following manner:

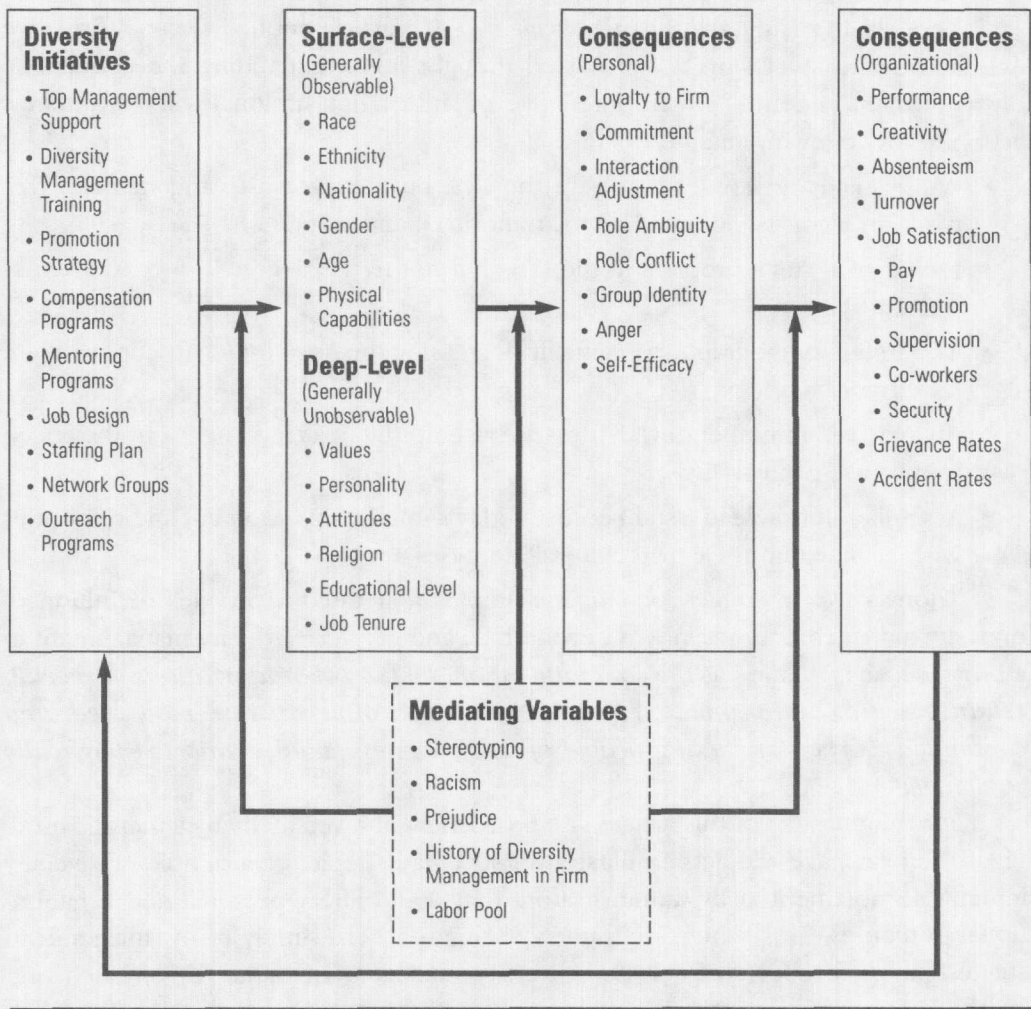
- White males no longer make up the U.S. business mainstream; half the U.S. workforce consists of immigrants, minorities, and women.
- Prejudice is still a problem in the U.S., but not to the degree it once was across the nation.
- The shift in demographics is actually decreasing the need for legal actions to hire minorities.
- An increasing number of U.S. firms are attempting to attract the talent they need to increase profitability.
- Assimilation is a dead issue because today's immigrants, women, and minorities wish to maintain their own cultural identities.

Thomas' work, suggestions, and examples generated a broader definition of diversity management that moves beyond race and gender. Diversity management in a broad sense is defined as *the commitment on the part of organizations to recruit, retain, reward, and promote a heterogeneous mix of productive, motivated, and committed workers including people of color, whites, females, and the physically challenged.*

For the purpose of this article, the broad view of diversity management is used. Figure 1 (next page) depicts an illustrative schematic depicting a sample of diversity initiatives implemented by administrators that could affect personal and organizational outcomes. This schematic framework is used here simply to organize and to suggest possible effects of selected diversity management initiatives on such outcomes as commitment, interaction adjustment, performance, and creativity. Two types of diversity variables referred to as surface-level and deep-level are presented. In addition, a number of mediating variables such as racism and the diversity management history of the firm are introduced.

Until better-designed and carefully crafted empirical studies are conducted, administrators will have to rely on intuition, consultant presentations, and the available literature to make judgements on how and where to proceed with diversity management initiatives.

Figure 1. Organizing Schematic of Types of Diversity, Mediating Variables, and Consequences



Diversity Management Hype and Rhetoric

A number of diversity management proponents, pundits, trainers, and consultants claim that the era of white male dominance at the administrative level is over. The assumption is that in its place will be an approach that fosters inclusion and the ferreting out and ending of institutionalized discrimination. A growing number of popular books on the value of inclusion, the demise of homogeneity in workgroups, and “how it should be done” prescriptive books have poured off the printing press.^{11,12,13,14,15} Most of these works have tended to be descriptive, are based on short case histories, are positive in tone, and are offered as validation of the demographic imperative. Like other popular themes such as reengineering, transformational leadership, team building, and total quality management, much is written on the topic of

diversity management, but only a limited amount of theoretical or empirically-anchored work is offered in the writings, claims, and pronouncements.

Cavanaugh asks for more than unreflective comments of diversity consultants in critiquing diversity management initiatives and outcomes. He cautions to step back and consider the fact that we live in a society that is a long way from vanquishing the past.¹⁶ He lists facts that suggest that diversity management, as viewed from the perch of advocates, is simply not going to happen without much more support from a host of different groups, including white males.

Cavanaugh (1997), in supporting his claim that diversity management initiatives are not just going to happen, points to such political and societal facts as California's Proposition 187, conservative campaigns against multiculturalism in teaching and research, a sitting U.S. president in 1990 using the "quota" card to defend his veto against the 1990 Civil Rights Act, senior officers of the U.S. Navy conspiring to cover up the Tailhook Affair in Las Vegas, and the lesson in gender relations presented by the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas episode. Is it accurate to portray diversity management as a panacea, the dawn of a new era, the beginning of a new "sunshine" world supported with scientific proof, or do we need to pause to rethink the rhetoric, the hype, and the dilemmas posed? Do we need to study with a more objective set of lenses the practice of diversity management?

Kevin Sullivan, vice president of Apple Computer, in a keynote speech at the annual national diversity conference in San Francisco, pointedly addressed some of the assumptions and upbeat claims of diversity management supporters.¹⁷ He stated that moralistic statements and race and gender militancy would not sell diversity management to CEOs. He predicted a Darwinian reception for unsupported claims. Global competition has raised pressures for cost cutting. He proposed that job growth and revenue increases will continue to be primarily offshore. This will mean that enterprises likely will increasingly sub-contract more low-level administrative work overseas or establish more temporary jobs. The quality of entry-level positions of the 1960s and 1970s will no longer be available to anyone. Thus, according to Sullivan, the implementation of diversity management initiatives must be sold as "business, not social work."

"Demography-is-destiny" speeches and statements by advocates must be replaced with bottom-line data and proof that diversity management adds value to the organization and its employees. Sound studies that clearly show the value added by diversity management initiatives need to replace simplistic claims and non-rigorous research in order to significantly increase managerial acceptance and action.

Surveys, Examples, and Research Support for Diversity Management

Towers-Perrin published *Workforce 2000 Today*, a survey of 200 human resource executives that illustrated accelerating support for diversity policies.¹⁸ Like the Hudson Institute's original *Workforce 2000*, the Towers-Perrin study was enthusiastically touted by diversity consultants that diversity management programs were a major trend and were effective. More than 92 percent thought that those holding administrative-level

positions believed that diversity management policies are directly connected to profitability. The executive search firm A.T. Kearney found that 72 percent of the top 50 U.S. corporations have diversity programs in place. Another 8 percent were developing such programs, and another 8 percent had more scattered programs operating.¹⁹

Xerox Corporation's founder, Joseph C. Wilson, was noted for his commitment to fairness and social responsibility.²⁰ Xerox's initial interest in diversity also arose out of a series of crises. Riots in Rochester in 1964 and 1967 were serious concerns of Xerox management. A class action discrimination suit against Xerox in 1971 was settled out of court when CEO David Kearns revised allegedly discriminatory practices and promoted a number of blacks into managerial positions. The practice of top management support for diversity management has contributed to the current make-up of Xerox's workforce, which is more diverse than the general population.

IBM's global workforce diversity theme is, "None of us is as strong as all of us." IBM has constituted a global workforce council to foster and promote diversity management. The council identified five issues that IBM must address: cultural awareness and acceptance; multilingualism; diversity of the management team; the advancement of women; and workplace flexibility and balance. In addition, eight task forces have been established to optimize satisfaction, productivity, and creativity. The task forces are women, Asian, African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Gay and Lesbian, White Male, and People with Disabilities. The three objectives for each group are to determine, 1) What is required for the group to feel welcome and valued at IBM, 2) What IBM and the group can do to maximize their productivity, and 3) What IBM can do to maximize the pursuit of marketshare from the constituency's community.²¹

Ann Morrison (1992), in her book the *New Leaders*, presents support for diversity management programs.²² She states that diversity management advocates need to present a clear picture of performance improvements rather than rely on the moral imperative of affirmative action. By use of survey questionnaires and interviews, Morrison and her colleagues studied the diversity programs of sixteen organizations (twelve private sector, two government agencies, and two educational institutions). She found top down management diversity initiatives and support for diversity results. Thirteen of the organizations emphasized the recruitment of minorities and women for managerial positions and then used such targets for managerial positions. Twelve of the respondents used diversity statistics as criteria for performance evaluation ratings (six linked diversity goal accomplishment to special bonuses or merit-based pay increases).

Morrison proposed that the diversity initiatives of the firms she studied increased productivity, competitiveness, and workplace harmony. Eleven of the twelve private sector firms in her study had been ranked by *Fortune* magazine among the "most admired corporations." Three of the firms had won the Malcolm Baldrige Award for total quality management.

Ellis and Sonnenfeld measured the impact of cultural diversity training in two organizations and found that this exposure increased employees' perceptions of managerial concern about the issue, decreased their perceptions that minorities received

too much attention, and confirmed that the company is concerned with their individual growth.²³

A follow-up study of diversity efforts of a large corporation using survey data and focus groups suggested positive outcomes. Improvement in the organization's culture and fairer treatment of people of color and women were cited as accomplishments. There were complaints that a corporate culture emphasizing conformity appeared to stifle individual creativity, individual initiative, and enthusiasm.²⁴

Tsui and Porter report on the effects of diversity management initiatives at fifty-five Orange County and California companies.²⁵ The findings suggest that diversity management resulted in increased understanding of diverse customers, increased creativity and commitment to the organization, and better retention and attendance.

A number of diversity management research findings are based on managerial or human resource manager perceptions.²⁶ The non-manager or worker views and attitudes are unfortunately rarely ascertained. The International Survey Research Corporation found that Hispanic, African-American, and Asian workers were more positive about career advancement programs—and their organizations in general—than their white coworkers. Minorities did report more supervisory and pay bias than whites, but they felt more positive about their promotion prospects, the performance appraisal system, and the competitive position of the company than white colleagues.²⁷

Cox, Lobel, and McLeod proposed that people of different ethnic backgrounds possess different attitudes, values, and norms that reflect their cultural heritages.²⁸ These researchers expected ethnic groups to differ vis-à-vis cooperation and competition. In a study of white, Asian, African-American, and Hispanic students the participants were assigned to ethnically diverse or all white groups. The researchers hypothesized that the non-white participants would display a more collectivist and cooperative attitude to the group task than whites. The hypothesized orientations were confirmed by the results. The researchers propose that this study, involving only a single work session, have implications for managers to consider. They suggest that since the non-white ethnic groups studied are the three largest such groups in the U.S., and since the work force will increasingly be composed of members of these groups in the future, the behavior differences found "may have a significant impact on how work is done in organizations." Furthermore, the findings suggest that one effect of the presence of Asians, Hispanics, and African-Americans in organizations may be to influence managers in organizations to use a more cooperative approach than have been previously used.

Wright, Ferris, Hiller, and Kroll proposed that firms could lower their costs and enhance their stock return through effective diversity management.²⁹ One result of effective diversity management is to have a competitive advantage compared to less effectively managed firms. The research examined the actual daily rates of return on a firm's stock price adjusted for expected rates of return, which was estimated through the use of the Capital Asset Pricing Model.³⁰ A total of 34 firms who had won awards for being considered high equity affirmative action organizations were reviewed over a six year period using Center for Research In Securities Price (CRSP)

data tapes. Included were such firms as Pfferer, Marriott Corporation, United States West, Texas Instruments, General Mills, Tenneco, and Raytheon.

Wright et al. also examined the literature to identify a second sample of 35 firms, which had been found to be guilty of discrimination. The researchers were interested in exploring whether guilty firms were associated with significant, negative stock price changes in the six-year study period. It was assumed that investors revise their expectations about a firm's prospects, and hence the stock prices, when they receive economically relevant information such as settling a discrimination lawsuit.³⁰

The results indicate that the stock prices of award winning firms are random fluctuation, driven by chance rather than random factors. On the other hand, those firms agreeing to damage settlements in discrimination cases showed significant negative stock price changes after public announcements were made. The researchers concluded that diversity management could contribute to sustaining competitive advantage by enabling a firm to recruit, develop, and retain talented employees.

In a study of human resources management (HRM) structures Konrad and Linnehan examined the impact of equal employment opportunities on specific goals.³¹ Those firms with a stronger commitment and practice of EEO-goals showed improved employment status of women and minorities. The goals examined included recruitment of protected groups, minority and general hiring goals, promotion and termination ratios for protected groups, and rates of grievances. The findings illustrated that identity conscious human resource structures were associated with positive outcomes of the employment status of women and minorities. Identity-conscious HRM structures imply that in addition to individual merit, those making human resource decisions take demographic group identity into consideration. The researchers suggest that identity conscious structures should be used to, 1) remedy current discrimination, 2) to readdress past injustices, and 3) to achieve fair and visible representation of women and minorities in leadership positions.

Cox and Nkomo examined the race-based research literature and concluded that the amount of published research is small relative to the importance of the topic.³² They found only a total of 201 articles focusing on race or minority group effects in a 25-year period, 1964-1989. A total of 11,804 articles were published in the journals they reviewed covering the 25-year period. Some of the reasons for such a skimpy set of research being conducted in this area are offered by Cox and Nkomo: 1) few researchers are working in the area; 2) research in this area has been relatively poor quality; 3) reviewers and editors of the sample journals do not consider the topic important or employ biases, which work against publication of papers on race; 4) researchers interested in this area are disproportionately at institutions offering low levels of research support; 5) doctoral students may not be encouraged to explore race as a relevant topic area or variable. All of these reasons may have some validity. However one other reason that may be relevant involves the difficulty of gaining entree into organizations to conduct research on diversity management issues. The national conversation from a number of diversity management advocates has been sermonistic, guilt-oriented, and threatening in many cases. Why would an organiza-

tional-entrée gatekeeper want to open his or her firm to being associated with such language, perception, atmosphere, and the potential legal ramifications?

Harrison, Price, and Bell examined the impact of surface-level (demographic) and deep level (attitudinal) diversity on group social integration.³³ They suggest that the most commonly studied forms of diversity have been differences in age, sex, and race. They suggest that an emphasis among researchers to study these variables may be due to the ease with which researchers can measure them and group members can observe them, and also the belief that they are reasonable proxies for underlying psychological characteristics. The researchers collected data from a sample of private-hospital employees and employees in grocery stores. It was determined that over an extended period of time the effects of surface-level diversity weakened, while the effects of deep level (job satisfaction and organizational commitment) diversity strengthened. Apparently, over time more information was conveyed through interactions. The contact among members of dissimilar backgrounds increased over time resulting in less stereotypical exchanges as group members learn about one another.

Thirty-four years have now passed since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As Cox and Nkomo pointed out eight-years ago, quite clearly, there is a significant need to pay more attention to the implementation and study of diversity management initiatives. Despite a number of research studies and some interesting case presentations on diversity management initiative there is a need to develop new theoretical and practical approaches that are incorporated in public and private organizations. Until more research is conducted, diversity in the work setting will not adequately be addressed.

A Call for More Diversity Management Research

A careful review of the popular press and research-based literature suggests that United States organizations have made only some progress toward promoting friendly, productive working relationships across differences given the changing demographic of the workforce. The lack of dramatic progress indicates that more theoretical, research, and practical work must be accomplished.³³

To those who are optimistic, the path toward better understanding and knowledge about the impact of diversity management initiatives is clear. It points to the need for rigorous research with better designs, theoretical frameworks, expanding the composition of research samples beyond African-American and white groups, studying diversity management programs over a period of time, and using more sophisticated statistical analysis.^{34, 35}

As has been stated for years, the study of organizations and people is a much more complex process than the study of most physical and biological phenomena. People working in a government office or on a factory floor to earn a living do not become subjects in the same sense as experimental animals, neutrons, and chemical substances become subjects.³⁶ They are an active part of the research process. A diverse sample of study subjects in a firm will influence the research process by simply possessing emotions and cognitive thinking processes. This makes research more

difficult, but the possible consequences of a sound, researched, and adopted diversity management initiative make the hard work worth the effort.

Perhaps the most publicized area of diversity management research is the study of diversity training effectiveness.³⁷ Advocates, trainers, and consultants offer diversity training seminars, workshops, and programs. We have not found a single reported program that conducts a rigorous evaluation of diversity training effectiveness. A sound evaluation should allow for the identification of important criteria targeted by the program, which criteria have changed, whether these changes are the result of diversity management training, whether the same changes will occur in future replications of the program in the same firm with different training participants, and whether the changes will occur in the same training program in a different organization.³⁸

The literature fails to reveal a single diversity management training program that is preceded by a thorough analysis of the tasks, the organization, and the individuals. It appears that like other forms of training, diversity management training programs are typically implemented on the basis of a testimonial, a convincing sales presentation, or a decision made by a person in authority. There is no evidence that an analysis of how the diversity management training program should be developed or how it should be evaluated for effectiveness is ever conducted.

Diversity management training in the 1990s has taken a course similar to sensitivity training programs in the 1960s. Despite the lack of evidence that sensitivity training benefited the organization economically or in terms of job performance improvement, a large number of firms sent their employees off to become more sensitive and to improve their productivity upon return.

Kraiger, Ford, and Salas provide diversity management training researchers and advocates with a model that requests that cognitive, skill-based, or affective outcomes be assessed.³⁹ This model, which highlights outcomes, could provide a starting framework for enabling an evaluation of what a diversity training program is attempting to achieve. In addition, the model emphasizes that the economic benefits of diversity training need to be measured and monitored over time using utility estimation procedures.⁴⁰

In order for diversity management to be properly and rigorously evaluated researchers must gain entrée into public and private organizations to conduct meaningful and informative research.⁴¹ The rigorous field experiment may be inappropriate for evaluating diversity management. Executing tightly controlled field experiments to study the impact of diversity management strategies, techniques, or training may be asking for too much. What then, are some alternatives to the field experiment?

Instead of asking for even quasi-field experiments, we suggest four alternatives to what is now being offered as diversity management research: 1) researcher-administrator partnerships, 2) researcher observation within organizations, 3) detailed case histories and analysis, and 4) third-party evaluations of diversity management initiatives.

Researcher-Administrator Partnerships

The building of researcher-administrator partnerships to study (as a collaborative team) the impact of diversity management is long overdue. The researchers in the partnership would bring scientific expertise, measurement skills, and outside creativity to study the particular diversity management approach. The administrator would bring organizational expertise, understanding, and vision regarding the unit's history, plans, constraints, and opportunities.

By collaborating, researchers and administrators will be able to design the research project to fit the organization. Instead of relying solely on a researcher's preference or an administrator's need for a particular design, the research will be tailored to fit both constituents. This type of collaborative approach is demanding and will require a commitment on both sides to learn from each other. Researchers will have to learn and work within a framework that is not dictated by research principles. Administrators will have to learn about the value of using a sound research methodology to study diversity management.

Researchers' Ongoing Observation

In reality, in most cases academic researchers do not understand how practitioners think or use research, or have little appreciation for the daily realities practitioners deal with while performing their tasks.⁴² Research on the utilization of research findings has revealed three types of use: instrumental, conceptual, and symbolic. Instrumental research use means that the results are applied directly to performing job tasks. Conceptual use refers to using research results to generally improve knowledge or understanding. Symbolic use involves using research to legitimize and sustain a predetermined position. It is reasonable to imply that too much of the popularity of diversity management training is symbolic in order to convey a message of top managerial support. Certainly, top administrative support is important, but sustaining diversity management initiatives must evolve from below the top management level. That is, symbolism can only penetrate so deep before reality takes over and operating employees must practice what others initiate or preach.

Research published in outlets such as *Public Personnel Management*, *Academy of Management Journal*, and *Administrative Science Quarterly*, indicates that the use of archival data, mailed surveys, and secondary data base analyses are the most frequent methods of data collection. In these forms of research the researcher is outside the organizational flow of activities collecting data. Researchers do not spend much time at all in organizations observing people, events, and interactions. Administrators do not get to know the researchers and vice versa. This lack of personal contact results in having to make broad assumptions about the workplace and what transpires at work. The complexities of organizational life are usually not well captured using data tapes, historical records, or completed surveys. Spending more on-site time observing, listening, and working with administrators and non-administrators can improve the researcher's insight on the fabric and activities of orga-

nizational life. In addition, increased researcher-administrator familiarity could result in the development of stronger collaborative partnerships to conduct research.

Case Histories of Diversity Management

Conducting and reporting narrative case histories of diversity management could be enlightening. For the most part, the available case histories on the subject are single snapshots that use no noticeable methodology in collecting, recording, and reporting information on diversity management. Blumberg and Pringle provide a well-presented case analysis that illustrates many of the features of an appropriate case study design.⁴³ These scholars clearly and forcefully describe what happened when a "good" experimental design was used to study the outcomes of a quality-of-work/life program in a coal mine. What is presented is done so in an unbiased, logical, and informative way. A balance of positive and negative events in the case is fairly presented with no predetermined advocacy showing through in the case write-up. In too many case studies, the scholar's bias is too obvious, which results in having to attempt to edit out biases. Perhaps scholars and practitioners can join up to write the cases using different perspectives to present a better portrayal of the diversity management initiative and its impact.

Well-designed case studies monitoring a diversity management technique or intervention would be invaluable in learning about and describing the impact and reaction of the workforce. A case study researcher who examines a single unit, group, or organization by use of observation and other means in a natural setting could develop important insights, propositions, or hypotheses. The case study allows for flexibility in data collection, as the researcher is free to collect data from interviews, observations, company literature, files, etc.

The detailed case study conducted over a one-year or longer time period could uncover rare, remarkable, or atypical insights; confirm logically formed theories of how diversity management effectiveness evolves in a natural setting; and establish a pool of knowledge to be used for some future course of practitioner action. Unfortunately, what are typically presented as case histories of diversity management are one-time snapshot pictures inside a unit or team of workers.⁴⁴ The majority of the available case studies are preaching and slanted. Those who are promoting diversity management are offered as heroes and those subjects who are confused, resistant, or strongly opposed are presented as dolts, angry, hostile, oppressive, morally corrupt, or some combination of negative characteristics.

Third-Party Evaluations

In the 1990s a growing trend among an increasing number of firms has been to hire diversity consultants to improve the "diversity profile of the firm."⁴⁵ The concept of "valuing differences" is the cornerstone of diversity management and translates questions of competence into questions of culture. Although diversity management is an important area, little research evaluating the effectiveness of programs is pre-

sented or conducted by third parties. There would be less skepticism and cynicism about diversity management if more third-party evaluation studies and analysis were available. We are defining third parties as a single person or a team of researcher(s) who are not conducting or consulting on diversity management programs. The politics of diversity management have become so heavy and strident that there is increasing skepticism about research findings. Being a diversity management trainer or consultant is fine and can be very beneficial, but it should be a red flag indicator to be especially cautious in reviewing the results of the research offered by these supporters.

Third-party researchers should consider the following:

- Are the intended diversity management initiatives, expected outcomes, and anticipated impacts sufficiently defined and measurable?
- Is the study being done over a sufficient length of time to examine a complete picture of the initiatives, outcomes, and impacts? For example, the impact of diversity management training may be slow and unfold over an extended period of time. To date there are no available studies that examine how long after a diversity management initiative individuals are impacted.
- Does the study sufficiently test assumptions linking costs and benefits with short and long-term outcomes?
- Can the practitioners use the results of the study to improve their understanding and practice of diversity management?
- Have the ethical issues of conducting diversity management research been carefully evaluated? Any participation in a study requires the consent of the participant and should be voluntary.
- It is important to specify at the outset what a “significant” change in cognition, emotion, or practice will be. Are the statistically significant results of any practical significance to the organization, individuals, or practitioner?

Corroboration of positive results, unintended outcomes, and counter-intuitive results by a third party will carry more influence with administrators than will the reports, analysis, and suggestions of diversity management initiatives provided by trainers and consultants.

A New Agenda for Diversity Management

Diversity management has been separated into eight possible options for organizations: 1) exclusion; 2) denial or mitigation of differences — “we are all the same”; 3) assimilation — minorities conform to majority standards; 4) suppression of differences; 5) solution or compartmentalization of differences – a firm that permits the clustering of minorities in certain jobs or units; 6) tolerance – a “live and let live” atmosphere promoting superficial interaction; 7) building relationships, which may encourage dialogue about differences; and 8) mutual adaptation, that is everyone accommodates changes.⁴⁶ We propose that top administrators should require that the

adoption of any of these eight options meet the tests of fairness, ethical standards, and added value in terms of the organization and legal requirements. In considering the use of any one of these options administrators should be held accountable by their superiors.

A gameplan to introduce diversity thinking, discussion, and analysis requires patience, full participation, and carefully conducted research. First, expanding the discussion beyond race, ethnicity, and gender is needed. Diversity is observable with regard to these factors. However, diversity is less visible with regard to personality, education, religion, area of specialty, background, and values. Observable types of diversity often evoke responses that are due primarily to biases, prejudices, or stereotypes.⁴⁷

Second, moving beyond African-American and white comparisons in research is needed. Focusing solely on African-American and white comparisons is simplistic and limiting. Multiracial research including more than these partitions could reveal insights that can help administrators practice more effective diversity management with an array of workers. In an increasingly diverse society, knowledge about individuals, groups, and programs should not exclude any segment.^{48,49}

Third, it is recommended that administrators develop strategies, intervention approaches, and improved understanding of diversity management through theoretical formulation and empirically based research of interaction adjustment. Interaction adjustment refers to an employee's (e.g., white, African-American, Asian, Hispanic) ability to successfully interact with other members of the organization or workgroup. Some of the factors that can influence interaction adjustment include race, gender, country of origin, religion, age, physically challenged circumstances, education level, and personality.⁵⁰ For example, the way an employee chooses to interact with other similar and different races, gender, and age members of an organization can affect his or her interaction adjustment.

More research is needed to examine the dynamics of employees' interaction in workforce samples of varying degrees of diversity. How would a white male interact in a predominately African-American group, unit, office, or agency? How would a Hispanic male interact in a moderately heterogeneous work unit led by an Asian female? Does an employee's country of origin affect his or her interaction adjustment during growth-oriented economic periods or during reduction in size or cut back periods? Does the employees ability to make friends at work affect his or her job performance in a highly heterogeneous workforce, or vice versa? Which reward system is the most effective in a diverse workforce? These types of questions need to be studied as diversity continues to naturally occur within organizations.^{51,52}

Finally, it is time to finally agree that diversity management is not affirmative action or quota systems.^{53,54,55} Diversity management is a corporate or managerially initiated strategy. It can be proactive and is based on operational reality to optimize the use and contributions of an increasingly diverse national workforce. Affirmative action is reactive and based on government law and moral imperatives. The improper or underutilization of a diverse workforce is not a legal issue, but it is a manageri-

al and leadership issue. Table 1 points out some of the major and specific differences between diversity management and affirmative action.

Table 1. Comparing Differences In Diversity Management and Affirmative Action

Affirmative Action	Diversity Management
Linked to the strategic use of human resource plan.	Not tied to strategic human resource plan. Proactive
Reactive and based on law and moral imperatives.	Focuses on building diverse teams.
Not linked in any formal manner to team building.	Inclusive – race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, physical limitations considered.
Focuses primarily on women and people of color.	Considers diversity of external constituency, more diversity in employees and recruitment pool, and a more diverse stakeholder pool.
Emphasis is primarily with employees and not external constituents.	Celebrates and respects differences in values, customs, and norms.
Works at making individuals conform to organizational customs, norms, and values.	Addresses the bias of people toward others who are different.
Uses the law to enforce discrimination against alleged and actual violators.	

There is enough work available for researchers and administrators to take us well into the 21st century. Diversity management and its consequences are so important that a new agenda with an emphasis on civility, respect, compassion, theory building, research study, and practical application is necessary. The elevation of diversity management strategies can occur because it is important to organizations and society. We now face the choice of continuing to not study, doing the same thing that has been done for years, or improving our efforts to bring together researchers and administrators to discuss, theorize, and research diversity management initiatives. Our vote is to adopt the latter choice.

Notes

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