**NAVIGATING DIVERSITY QUESTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE**

**What is diversity all about?**

Diversity is about all of the various differences and similarities each of us brings to the workplace. Talent doesn't discriminate among any ethnic category. People are valuable resources and if we don't tap into every ounce of potential that people have, we slight ourselves and the mission. Recognizing, acknowledging, and celebrating our individual differences opens our minds to a wealth of greater untapped knowledge and experiences and it contributes to personal growth.

Diversity is about the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. Diversity focuses on the differences and similarities of people and goes beyond those things that can be seen. It's easy to see the more observable attributes of diversity such as race, age, gender, and ethnic background. True diversity focuses on those less-observable attributes such as education, technical abilities, learning styles, personality, and many other unique characteristics that truly make a person who they are.

Let's face it, we all think, act, and perform differently based on our diverse backgrounds. Embrace the differences and similarities of those around you because in the end, diversity helps to build an inclusive culture and one strong workforce and community by encompassing the unique talents of all.

Managing diversity is the process by which we are educated about those differences and similarities in order to fully leverage the talents and skills of all employees. It is about creating an inclusive environment in which all employees feel valued and can contribute.

**Do Diversity Initiatives include White Men?**

Yes, absolutely.

White men are diverse; for example, they have varying levels of education, different religious beliefs, divergent thinking styles, etc. For diversity initiatives to be truly successful everyone in a company should be included. Successful diversity initiatives are based on inclusion, not exclusion.
Why do I need diversity training?

Diversity training is essential because each of us looks at the world through filters that are developed based on our own unique experiences. Diversity training helps us learn about those filters and how they impact business decisions, work styles, and personal relationships that ultimately affect the success of an organization. By learning how to work more effectively together within our teams and organizations, we can ensure success in the workplace.

Isn’t diversity just a current business fad, a politically correct thing to do??

No. Diversity is a business issue.
In the global marketplace, organizations compete for top talent as well as customers. Organizations with robust initiatives for managing diversity will be more effective at attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse workforce as well as developing and selling to a diverse customer base.

Isn’t diversity just a new look for Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)?

EEO and Affirmative Action (AA) are legally mandated requirements that address the representation and treatment of minorities and women in the workplace. Managing diversity focuses on maximizing opportunities for all employees to contribute in the workplace, thus enhancing organizational success.

Why do we need to change our work environment? It works fine for me.

Each of us is different.
It’s not enough for the workplace to be fine for one person. It is imperative that the work environment functions well for everyone. By managing diversity, a company can make sure that every employee feels included and respected and is able to fully contribute to the success of the organization.

What’s really in it for me?

By addressing diversity issues and personal biases, managers will improve their relationships with employees, thereby enhancing their success. For individual employees, participating in diversity initiatives improves their communication and teamwork skills, reduces conflict in the workplace, and improves their ability to work effectively in the workplace.