



## Leveraging Differences to Drive Success: 5 Best Practices for Building a Diverse Workforce and an Inclusive Workplace

### STANDING DOWN— THEN STEPPING UP TO SUCCESS AT ORACLE

Oracle knows that veterans can serve as extraordinary assets to the enterprise. Making the most of these assets, however, requires adapting to *them*.

Here are just a few ways Oracle is doing so:

- **Recruiting, Networking, and Outreach.** Networking and job search help, plus hosted leadership and get-connected events.
- **Oracle University Workforce Development Program.** Affordable, flexible Oracle certification and training for veterans.
- **Injured Veteran Intern Program.** Paid work experience and mentoring for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.
- **Oracle Veterans Affinity Group.** Oracle employees who are also veterans (or family members) working together to support a variety of vet-related causes.

Organizations of all stripes have long realized that diversity means good business—that embracing a multiplicity of viewpoints and cultures drives innovation, improves decision-making, increases employee productivity and retention, and leads to better-served customers. Yet despite 77 percent of executives stating their strong support for diversity initiatives, only 40 percent of employees actually believe that their organizations are truly diverse and inclusive.<sup>1</sup>

### Closing the Gap Through Diversity and Inclusion Management Best Practices

So what accounts for this gap between executive and employee perception, and how can organizations begin to close it? The five best practices outlined here provide a good start. They allow enterprises to look beyond the visible differences of race, gender, and age to arrive at a definition of *diversity* that encompasses much more—from the cultural differences of an increasingly global workforce to variations in everything from sexual preference to work style. By adopting these best practices, your organization will be well on its way to building an inclusive workplace that draws on the strengths of *all* of its employees.

#### 1) Look Beyond Compliance

The first step in building a truly inclusive organization is understanding that diversity is about more than filling quotas and complying with affirmative action initiatives. Today, it's about building a workforce that's as diverse as your customer base and then using those differences to drive your business. Indeed, a recent study from professional services and consulting firm Deloitte confirms what smart executives already knew: namely, that by cultivating "diversity of thought," businesses can boost innovation, improve decision making, and use their workforce more effectively.<sup>2</sup>

Put even more simply: When you bring together people of varying backgrounds, cultures, and belief systems, you bring with them a range of work styles, thought processes, and perspectives. Take advantage of all of these, and you can spark creativity, improve efficiency, and get closer to your customers.

#### 2) Identify New Talent Pools

In a time of talent scarcity—when more trained workers are leaving the workforce than entering it—organizations need to think outside of the box to recruit new employees. Increasingly, this means looking beyond the traditional new-hire sources of university programs and industry organizations to identify and leverage new talent pools both internally and externally.

<sup>1</sup> CEB Corporate Leadership Council, Global Labor Market Survey, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> "Diversity's New Frontier," Deloitte University Press, July 2013; <http://dupress.com/articles/diversity-new-frontier/>.



## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Now comes the hard part—applying *our* best practices to *your* environment. While every organization is unique, here are some tips for upping the diversity and inclusion quotient in yours:

- Encourage reverse-mentoring—allowing younger employees to feel valued and more established workers to gain a fresh perspective
- Make diversity management a part of your global leadership program—providing managers with the skills to communicate across cultures
- Promote diversity from the top down *and* the bottom up—ensuring that a culture of inclusivity is encouraged at every level and in every corner of your company

Take, for example, veterans: With more than 1.5 million veterans set to draw down within the next five years, they represent an important addition to the skilled workforce. Yet it's not enough to just identify this new talent pool. To attract and retain veterans, you need to accommodate their differences—understanding that the command-and-control culture of the military is a far cry from most corporate environments, and providing the training and support they need to assimilate and be successful.

### 3) Address Diversity in Every Aspect of Talent Management

Diversity and inclusion management shouldn't begin and end with hiring. No matter how diverse your workforce is today, you'll have a hard time retaining—and benefiting from—that diversity tomorrow if you don't continue to address both individual and collective differences throughout the entire employee lifecycle. After all, how likely is an employee to consider a long career at a company if she doesn't see anyone like herself in management positions? And how successful will your global workforce be if managers are unable to provide feedback in a style that complies with workers' cultural norms?

For these reasons and more, diversity and inclusion are topics that need to extend beyond HR to the entire organization and be considered in every phase of talent management—from recruiting, and on-boarding to professional development, leadership training, performance management, feedback/measurement, workforce planning, and more.

### 4) Create Ways for Like People to Connect

While diversity may be all about celebrating and leveraging difference, no one wants to feel so unique that they're isolated from their peers and adrift in the workplace. Thus, it's your job to see that they don't. One way of doing so is by organizing employee resource and affinity groups—essentially communities within corporations that allow people with similar backgrounds and experiences to connect.

Providing a venue for networking, mentoring, and socializing, such groups increase employee engagement by demonstrating to individuals that people like themselves are not only finding success within the enterprise but are willing to help them succeed as well. With tools like these at their disposal, employees are far more likely to feel part of a diverse and inclusive workforce. And when that's the case, employee turnover diminishes by up to 20 percent and employee effort increases by as much as 12 percent, according to a recent global labor market survey conducted by CEB Corporate Leadership Council.

### 5) Make Diversity a Part of Your Brand

When it comes to diversity, it's not enough to simply walk the walk. You need to let the world know that your organization embraces difference and welcomes all, and the best way of doing so is by making diversity a part of your brand.

Show that your enterprise cares by promoting volunteerism among employees and providing corporate-sponsored initiatives to raise funds and awareness for different causes. Invest in diversity by offering internships and scholarships to people from underrepresented groups. And spread the word that your culture is diverse and inclusive by establishing a Facebook page or blog that spotlights your efforts—highlighting awards, detailing partnerships, and providing information that underscores your desire to provide the flexibility and tools required to guarantee success for all.

## CONTACT US

For more information on Oracle HCM, visit [oracle.com/hcm](http://oracle.com/hcm)

**Hardware and Software, Engineered to Work Together**

**ORACLE®**