

# Forbes

## Why Most Corporate Diversity Programs Are Wrong-headed

The goal of most corporate diversity programs is simple: to increase the percentages of certain minorities in the overall employee pool to mirror the country as a whole. It's a misguided approach, even when it comes with programs designed to help retain minorities that have been hired.

It's misguided because it comes with an assumption that the potential employee must change to fit into the current workplace culture. This attitude implies that the employee lacks something that he or she needs in order to succeed and thrive in that culture.

This attitude answers the wrong implicit question. Instead of asking, *how can we train diverse employees in order to succeed and thrive in our organizational culture?*, the company should be asking, *how do we need to change to make our workplace one that actually embraces diversity in approach, in culture, and in opportunity?* This is a fundamental problem that US companies have faced for years. I believe it's time that we learn from our international competitors who believe that diversity is a strategic versus a tactical initiative.

The shift in attitude is important for reasons larger than diversity itself. What's at stake is the survival of the corporation. Company after company is struggling to reinvent itself and survive today, post-2008, sensing that there is a new reality, a new "normal," without really being sure what that means. The old industrial, slow-moving, hierarchical, top-down approaches to strategy, budgeting, product development, and customer service desperately need an update. In reality, business cycles and marketplace shifts are happening so fast today that most large companies can't keep up.

Businesses need to vastly increase their ability to sense new opportunities, develop creative solutions, and move on them with much greater speed. The only way to accomplish these changes is through a revamped workplace culture that embraces diversity so that sensing, creativity, and speed are all vastly improved.

The following 6 values represent the new type of employee to ensure that companies survive and thrive by embracing innovation through diversity.

1) **Create a Cultural and Generational Mosaic (*Keep Your Immigrant Perspective*):** support an environment that embraces the power of multicultural talent and diversity in its people and that desires strong generational balance in its workforce.

2) **Embrace Risk as the New Normal (*Employ Your Circular Vision*):** lead change and proactively take calculated risks based on how the market is changing.

3) **Continuously See and Seize Opportunities (*Live with the Entrepreneurial Spirit*):** seek to continuously propel new types of innovations, embracing the entrepreneurial spirit.

4) **Make Room for the Individual (*Unleash Your Passion*):** inspire employees to be their own brand; allow them to perform with passion and contribute in areas that utilize their most natural strengths and capabilities.

5) **Do Well by Doing Good (*Work With Generous Purpose*):** desire to be successful while always positively transforming lives and leaving a legacy for others to follow.

6) **Create a Family (*Embrace Your Cultural Promise*):** build enduring relationships, engage and seek continuous improvement feedback from vendors, clients and consumers to become better across the entire supply chain.

It's time for America's corporations to reset their workplaces and allow for change in the ways employees think, act and innovate. Employees want to be more entrepreneurial. They desire a workplace that is more meaningful, purposeful, and responsive to changing realities. Today's new workplace requires a new enlightened form of leadership that seeks to make the business successful in order to make humanity significant. Embracing diversity is essential, not just because it's the right thing to do, but also because it will orient companies toward the future and toward success.

### **Bonus Reading and Information:**

To learn more about how these 6 characteristics that are founded on the [immigrant's perspective](#) - that will help propel better sensing, creativity, and speed in the future workplace, please [download](#) my new free eBook titled, ***Why Hispanic Leadership Will Save America's Corporations.***

This eBook describes the workplace of the future and how the immigrant perspective on business leadership (as presented through the Hispanic immigrant culture from which I come, but of course is not limited to either Hispanics or immigrants) represents the new type of employee that is most equipped to thrive in the new workplace.

Finally, if you are interested in learning more about the workplace of the future and the role of diversity and multicultural leadership – the Center for Hispanic Leadership will be launching its 10 City Hispanic Leadership Tour at Florida International University (FIU) on March 16<sup>th</sup>.

You can learn more at [www.HispanicLeadershipTour.com](http://www.HispanicLeadershipTour.com) and watch the videos from CNN and NBC at <http://blogs.forbes.com/glennllopis/2011/02/21/why-most-corporate-diversity-programs-are-wrong-headed/>.

