

SHRP Diversity Committee Event

“A Future Look at Diversity”

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Initiative Overview

On Friday, January 26th, the Society of Human Resource Professionals (SHRP) Diversity Committee Inclusive Working Group hosted a focus group on the topic “A Future Look at Diversity.” In attendance were Diversity and HR Practitioners and HR Consultants who have responsibility for diversity and inclusive programs within their organizations. Leadership Commitment, Sustaining Momentum, Diversity Measurement, Future of Diversity Education, Business Strategy Integration and Globalization were among the topics discussed. Prior to the focus group participants were invited to complete an online survey assessing views on the current state of diversity initiatives.

SHRP Diversity Committee Survey Findings

Nineteen participants took part in the survey answering questions pertaining to current diversity initiatives. Primary topics included effectiveness of programs in place, employees’ awareness of diversity initiatives, executive commitment and importance of diversity for the future of the organization.

- ◆ 1/3 of respondents believe their organizations diversity efforts were at the “Exploration Stage” and another 1/3 believed them to be at the “Advanced Stage”. Remaining respondents believed diversity efforts were either at “Beginning” or “Stalled Stage”.
- ◆ Half of respondents considered their organization’s diversity efforts to be “somewhat effective.” The remaining were split between efforts either being effective or very effective.
- ◆ Approximately half of respondents believed employees were “somewhat aware” of diversity initiatives. Twenty-five percent thought employees were “very aware”, while fifteen percent believed them to be “unaware”.
- ◆ A majority of the respondents felt that the Executive Team was “committed” or “very committed” to organization diversity efforts. Less than fifteen percent believed Executive Commitment to be “somewhat committed” or not commitment at all.
- ◆ All respondents viewed diversity initiatives as key for the future success of the organization.

SHRP Diversity Committee Focus Group Findings

Future of Diversity

When asked about the future of diversity, the participants focused on the impact generation Y will have on the workplace, and how an organization will need to change to include this new breed of talent. The participants also recognized that diversity is continually being redefined as the workplace becomes more global and the workforce values and focus become less traditional. The need for just-in-time tools, resources, and exposure to best practices were ranked at the top of the list of what the group would like to see the SHRP Diversity Committee focus on in 2007.

Today’s Diversity Challenges

HR and Diversity professionals identified the following as the biggest challenges regarding diversity today:

- Understanding how to attract, hire, motivate, grow and retain emerging markets
- Recruiting diverse talent at all levels
- Addressing changing values in the workplace, family
- Becoming more proactive rather than reactive to diversity challenges

What Organizations Need to Consider for Successful Diversity Programs

HR and Diversity professionals believed that to successfully address diversity and create an inclusive environment organizations must look at the following:

Leadership Commitment

- Gaining buy-in from leadership; establishing the business case
- Providing education that is specific to leaders so that they feel included and in control of the process
- Allocating the necessary resources, time and money to support diversity for the long term

Assessment

- Assessing the current state of diversity to understand the underlying issues and challenges

Education

- Educating the workforce to effectively leverage diversity
- Ensuring that HR professionals have undergone intercultural training
- Defining what inclusive behaviors look like and not assuming that everyone shares the same perspective

Integrating Diversity

- Embedding diversity into all the HR processes
 - Including diversity on performance evaluations
 - Incorporating diversity into the onboarding process
 - Shaping culturally competent questions in the interviewing process
- Ensuring that diversity is not just managed by HR; should be integrated into all operations
- Bringing diversity to the departmental level by training managers
- Offering incentives to managers to implement diversity
- Identifying diversity champions who can help empower others
- Aligning HR and Marketing on the diversity efforts

Measurement

- Showing that diversity has clear measurable value
- Tying diversity to strategic goals

Support Needed to Address Diversity Effectively

HR and Diversity Professionals are seeking the following support to help them effectively address diversity:

Developing Own Cultural Competence

- Awareness of types of conflict HR professionals may encounter
- Experiences that help them become comfortable with discomfort
- Giving, seeking and receiving feedback across lines of difference
- Education on how to manage intercultural conflict

Organizational Implementation

- Plan/system with incremental goals
- Methods to evaluate culturally competent recruiting
- Toolkits/frameworks to help them have authentic and open discussions about diversity
- Training that focuses on shaping future leaders

SHRP's Next Steps

Desired Follow-up and SHRP's Role in Assisting Organizations in Their Diversity Efforts

HR and Diversity Professionals would like to see SHRP do the following as a next step:

Information and resources

- Offer more information about SHRP
- List of SHRP members
- Share information about what's happening with diversity in Chicago
- Industry data
- Recruiting resources
- Hands-on webinars

Guidelines and standards

- Benchmarking
- Toolkits
- Measurement scorecards
- Standards and competencies for diversity professionals
- Guidelines for diversity education tailored to audience, including a facilitator guide
- Education on how to seek out diverse talent
- Effective Diversity Councils
- Leveraging internal relationships of diversity peers

Opportunities to make contact and discuss experiences

- Hear firsthand stories of what organizations have done well and how problems have been addressed
- Networking
- Provide an opportunity to role play work situations
- More opportunities to explore individual challenges and hurdles

Please contact Lisba Romo-Martinez from our committee at 312-274-9027 or by e-mail at lromo@worldvue.com for more information about future events. To join SHRP, please click on Join Us.