

Chapter 10

I.N.F.L.U.E.N.C.E.

Enjoy and Respect Diversity: Developing Cultural Intelligence

“As Americans, we live in an increasingly diverse population. At the most basic level, respecting diversity means recognizing the demographic reality that every leader is operating in an increasingly diverse and global marketplace where top talent comes in every gender, race, and nationality imaginable. At a deeper level, leadership is about empowering people within your organization to work toward a collective goal. In short, engaging diversity leads to organizational strength.” –Kerry Ann Rockquemore, executive director for the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (www.FacultyDiversity.org)

How diverse is your organization? Do you have employees from different age groups? Different cultural backgrounds? What other differences exist between your employees?

Learn to Leverage Diversity

Appreciating the value in diversity is an important attribute in building the strongest of relationships. Know that your organization is made up of its own patchwork of multiple cultures, behaviors, and thinking patterns, creating its own vibrant rainbow, and learn how to leverage that culture. This is what makes an already successful Renegade Leader not only just more successful, but truly great.

How Does the Cultural Intelligence of Your Company Rate?

Defined as an individual's capacity to function, interact, and manage effectively in diverse settings and backgrounds, cultural intelligence is about understanding that a person's cultural identity has a great influence on how he or she thinks, makes decisions, behaves, defines situations, and determines success.

Why you should NOT ignore the role of cultural differences:

- Leads to miscommunications
- Conflicts
- Turnover due to frustration
- Financial losses
- Missed opportunities

The Value of Mentoring

Formal mentoring programs are available; there is a visible expectation that collaborative relationships are a normal part of how the organization operates and an

accessible point of entry. How can you create a formal mentoring program in your organization?

When you respect diversity you:

- Cultivate trust in the organization
- Inspire loyalty
- Create a better experience for everyone
- Builds appreciation for everyone

FORWARD ACTIONS

Encouraging respect and diversity in your organization

1. **Gain awareness of and accept your own cultural programming, which impacts your thinking and behaviors, and consider this programming when engaging with others.**
2. **Develop flexibility with people who are culturally different, get to know their world views, and understand how their views influence them in the workplace.**
3. **Take a stand against stereotyping.**
 - As I learned in my multicultural training, if you are not taking a stand, you are part of the problem.
 - Have the courage to speak out against mean comments, stereotypes, bias, and demeaning or hurtful statements. They have no place in your organization because these are the attitudes and behaviors that prevent inclusion and teamwork.
4. **Get to know the landscape of your organization.**
 - What is your cultural makeup?

- Do you have a roadmap for its navigation?

- Learn more about the culture that exists within your organization. For example, read *Coaching Across Cultures* by Phillip Rosinski, which groups cultural orientations into categories that are of importance to leaders.
- If you really want to unleash the fullest potential in your people, as well as within your organization, it's key to understand the cultural differences of your employees. Besides the obvious, these differences can relate to a sense of power and responsibility, time management approaches, definition of identity and purpose, boundary specifications, modes of thinking, or communication patterns.

5. Make inclusion part of your organizational plan.

- What are you currently doing to encourage respect for others' ideas?

- Are you inviting ideas from everyone?

- What professional development might you or your teams need in order to understand diversity?

6. Encourage talent diversity in your organization.

- Most of the time, when people think of respect and diversity, there is a significant emphasis on race, sex, and skin color. Few people consider talent diversity in an organization.
- Urge people to respect one another's diverse talents. Start by giving recognition to the people who perform tasks that would otherwise go unnoticed.
- If possible, have some of your more influential team members spend time observing other departments or working alongside people who perform tasks different from theirs. After all, nothing cultivates mutual respect and understanding like walking in another person's shoes. You'll find that the more you encourage people to respect diversity of talent, the more encouraged they'll be to respect diversity of all kinds.

7. Continue to look for, recognize, and value diversity. It makes your journey far more scenic, and it enriches your experience and the experience of others.