

Measurement as a Critical Component of your Organization's Diversity Process

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Leveraging diversity can be key to closing the diversity gap. Unfortunately, many organizations think about diversity as a human resource function, rather than a business strategy. Therefore their approach is more piecemeal than strategic and is rarely successful. For the diversity process to be integrated in the strategic goals of the business and be a fully utilized strategic lever that impacts the business, it must be measured. You would not launch any other business plan or strategy – marketing, patient relations management, risk management, cost containment, etc. – without instituting a measurement component. Why treat diversity any differently?

For organizations that are serious about leveraging diversity, a tool that tracks and measures both process and outcomes is critical.

What do you consider the top business priorities for your organization:

- Agility?
- Staying ahead of the technological curve?
- Innovation, creativity?
- Gross margins?
- Mergers and acquisitions?
- Information and knowledge management?
- Shifting demographics and expectations?
- Service to patients and employees?
- Strategy identification and deployment?

These are key issues that medical providers face in an increasingly complex, diverse and evolving workforce, workplace, and marketplace.

Each of these complexities is critical to the viability of the operation, but they do not exist in a vacuum or in isolation. They are entangled, intertwined, converging, and competing for time, attention, and resources – and a way must be found to maximize the opportunities and minimize the challenges to drive revenue.

The organization's leadership is held accountable for finding ways to manage these complexities and predict the success of the strategies selected. One answer – and a key strategy – is successfully managing and leveraging diversity, increasing employee and shareholder value, and gaining the competitive advantage.

Leveraging the skills, talents, and abilities of all employees is crucial for identifying and deploying solutions. Leveraging diversity – fully utilizing the perspectives, experiences, and knowledge of co-workers, employees, hospital staff, patients, and strategic and alliance partners – allows you to expand your thinking and your frames of reference to uncover answers.

To benefit fully from all employees, hospitals and health care facilities need a process to ensure their people are available, able, and willing to contribute

and apply their discretionary creative and innovative thinking to your tough issues.

A comprehensive, strategically driven, business-relevant approach carried out by empowered leaders who understand and are dedicated to making the process successful is essential.

There are several components to a strategic approach to leveraging diversity that may readily be visualized through a gap analysis. At the base of the gap, organizations must first discover their current state – the challenges and issues they are facing internally and externally. At the same time the leadership must confirm or establish their overall strategic vision, mission, and goals, and establish business motives and links for leveraging diversity. Once the gap between the goal state and the current state is identified, leaders should consider tactics to close the gap.

In order to produce an accurate measure of the process and outcomes, organizational leaders, steering committees, and diversity councils need to:

1. Identify the organization's strategic goals and key areas where diversity can assist in driving the business forward.
2. Assess the current level of success of tactics and agree on targets for progress over a given time period.
3. Ensure that measurement processes focus on the key success indicators, not everything that might be measured or only things that are easy to measure.
4. Assign importance to measurement criteria by creating and weighting indexes that may be looked at across business units.
5. Benchmark externally for best measurement practices – how other companies have approached the issues that arise once the data are analyzed.

PRISM's Diversity ScoreCard©, developed by Mickey R. Dansby, Ph.D., provides a way for organizations to obtain answers to these questions. It provides a more strategic view of leveraging diversity for business results, and a way to focus on next steps and accountability for improving workforce, workplace, and marketplace conditions to move the business forward. Otherwise organizations fall into simply "counting heads rather than making heads count."



Mickey R. Dansby, Ph.D., vice president of PRISM International, has spent much of his career developing a process and a product to determine what to measure, how to measure it, and how to analyze and track the results.



Linda H. Stokes, president and founder of PRISM International, has more than 30 years of experience in diversity and global consulting, with clients in the United States and the United Kingdom.

PRISM works with organizations to help close the gap that exists between an organization's current state and their desired objective, by providing proven resources that align the organization's diversity strategies and tactics with all of their organizational goals. For more information on PRISM's programs and products, call (407) 324-5290, or visit www.prism-international.com.