WORK GROUP DYNAMICS AND DIVERSITY

STUDY UNIT 6

Diversity Paradigms and Diversity Surveys

DIVERSITY PARADIGMS

There are 8 different diversity paradigms:

1) Include/Exclude

2) Deny

3) Assimilate

4) Suppress

5) Isolate

6) Tolerate

7) Build relationships

8) Foster mutual adaptation

DIVERSITY PARADIGMS

1) Include/Exclude:

- ➢ Forms the basis of AA efforts
- ➢ Goal is to increase the number of designated groups or
- ➢ Minimise diversity by keeping diverse elements out (exclude)
- ➢ Example: companies trying to minimise stockholder participation in decision making (exclusion)

DIVERSITY PARADIGMS

2) Deny:

- ➢ Denial of differences

- ➢ Managers limit their understanding of diversity to work force issues

- ➢ Example: people of different races are told that the organisation is colour blind

- ➢ Example: the manager who looks at options for change says "nothing new here; were already doing those things"

DIVERSITY PARADIGMS

3) Assimilate:

➢ All elements which are different (in the minority) will learn to become like the dominant element

➢ Minority employees must learn to fit in

➢ Example: new products are manufactured using the same processes as older products

➢ Example: overseas operations are structured just like the home office

➢ Problem: discounts the contributions of people from other functions

DIVERSITY PARADIGMS

4) Suppress:

➤ Entities with differences are encouraged to keep a lid on them

➤ Differences are recognised & acknowledged, but is discouraged to explore them

➤ Belief that the organisation is greater than any one individual or component

➤ Example: A senior executive (white male) says in frustration "Why cant people today sacrifice like we did? All you hear is 'I' or 'me'. What about the greater good?"

DIVERSITY PARADIGMS

5) Isolate:

➢ Allows the inclusion of people that are different from the dominant system but isolate the different entity on one side

➢ Example: managers group similar tasks into functions, creating isolated entities called "silos"

➢ Example: managers who isolate new ideas, calling them "pilot projects". If the manager like the idea, he pilots it to a corner where it can grow. If he is not excited, he isolates it in a corner where it will eventually die.

DIVERSITY PARADIGMS

6) Tolerate:

➢ Include entities with differences but do not value these entities or accept their differences

➢ Tolerance is made easier to the extent to which direct interaction can be avoided

➢ Diverse entities can co-exist without understanding or engaging with each other effectively

➢ Toleration does not limit but simply never connects emotionally

➢ Example: "As long as they make money for us, we don't bother them"

DIVERSITY PARADIGMS

7) Build relationships:

➤ Involves deliberate efforts to foster relationships between various entities

➤ Good relationships can overcome differences

➤ By focusing on similarities challenges associated with differences can be avoided

➤ Team-building sessions & sensitivity training can be used to build relationships and help participants get in touch with their prejudices

DIVERSITY PARADIGMS

8) Foster mutual adaptation:

➢ Parties accept & understand differences & diversity

➢ Mutual adaptation permits the greatest accommodation of diversity

➢ It enhances the ability to deal with overwhelming complexity

Only option 8 (foster mutual adaptation) clearly endorses diversity.

Option 1 – 7 seek to minimise or eliminate diversity

DIVERSITY ASSESSMENT

- Theories of change:
  - Systems theory: changes at any level of a complex system will influence & be influenced by other levels of the system
  - All 3 levels (individual, group & organisation) must be analysed

- Theory applied to measurement:
  - Most instruments have a multicultural approach to measure diversity
  - This approach fails to acknowledge that there is a norm (that being white & male) that is unstated

DIVERSITY ASSESSMENT

- Theory applied to measurement:
  - Survey dimensions tend to lack coherence
  - Difficult for the client to use & interpret

- Advantages of multilevel analysis:
  - Provides a concrete basis for the development of more appropriate change-oriented actions
  - Analysis provides the methodology for measurement of progress
  - Surveys can also show how policies may provide advantages for white men & disadvantages for designated groups and women

DIVERSITY SURVEYS

- Dimensions of Cross's diversity survey measures:
  - Individual behaviours
  - Individual beliefs, attitudes & feelings
  - Supervisory behaviours
  - Management attitudes
  - Group behaviours
  - Group beliefs, attitudes & values
  - Organisation behaviour
  - Managing diversity
  - Organisation culture

DIVERSITY SURVEYS

- Implications & benefits of the use of a survey:
  - Helps break up the complex topic of diversity into manageable chunks
  - Identify areas in need of attention
  - Take action & monitor progress
  - Survey provides objective data
  - From the data concrete goals can be set