The Workforce 2000 Hudson Institute Study estimated that by the year 2000, 85 percent of the new entrants into the workforce will be women, people of color, and immigrants. This brings significant challenges to any organization.

Teams that capitalize on their diverse strengths are more efficient, effective, and innovative. Such teams thrive in an environment that demands new and creative approaches to business problems.

Therefore, organizations that intend to build high performance teams must capitalize on the diversity of their employees and foster differences within their teams.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this session, you will be able to:

1. Build diversity awareness within your team
2. Develop individual and team diversity skills that positively impact business results
3. Embrace diversity and sustain its support to your team’s competitive advantage

Agenda

- Capitalizing On Diversity
- Building High Performance Diverse Teams
- Embracing A Diverse Workplace
- Formalizing Norms And Establishing Ground Rules
Embracing diversity begins with understanding. An understanding of others begins with an understanding of yourself.

This three-part exercise will help you more clearly understand your own biases and assumptions—as well as recognize how these perceptions may affect your work behavior.

Part 1 is a Values, Perceptions, And Expectations Assessment that will help you understand areas of diversity that are not often discussed in the workplace yet have tremendous influence on a work environment. (For future use, a copy can be found in the appendix of the guidebook, Team Building For Diverse Work Groups.)

Part 2 is A Quick Appraisal Of Team Diversity. It will help you look at diversity issues in relationship to your specific team.

Part 3 is an Exercise Debrief. After completing the first two parts of the Exercise, you will work with others in a small discussion group to compare and contrast answers and to discuss the impact of team diversity.

Part 1—Values, Perceptions, And Expectations Assessment

In this assessment, you will position yourself on a spectrum (from left to right) for each of the listed topics. The rating scale numbers do not equate to a value—just a position of placement.

For each topic, place an X on the line to indicate your position with respect to that topic.

Values

The Work Ethic

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Work is a major part of who I am and I dedicate myself to it first and foremost.

My personal and family life defines who I am and take priority over work.
One of the tools that organizations can use to help capitalize on diversity is the Organizational Diversity Success Model™. It can help organizations realize the benefits that well-managed diversity provides.

Let’s take a closer look at how your organization has begun to follow this model.
Building Diversity Awareness is the first step in the High Performance Diverse Team Model. It helps you use your understanding of values, perceptions, and expectations to explore how these factors can affect job success.

The teams found in the guidebook, Measuring Team Performance, face a variety of diversity issues. This exercise looks at several scenarios of diversity in the workplace.

Work with a partner and determine the value, perception, or expectation underlying each situation.

**Trina’s Outpatient Department Team …**

… was very ethnically diverse. Of the seven members of the team, two were born in the United States—Trina, a receptionist, and Mary, a nurse. The three medical assistants had been born in Vietnam, the Philippines, and Jamaica. The other receptionist and the data entry clerk were Hispanic, and English was their second language.

When the team decided to note all written and verbal messages and use a communication logbook daily, there were several miscommunications. These miscommunications added to the already tension-laden atmosphere of the team. Some of the patients had difficulty in understanding the receptionist. A medical assistant misunderstood a request from the nurse, and a patient was left in the waiting area for forty-five minutes. The team was spending more time on placing blame on one another than on solving the problems created by their diversity.

What value(s), perception(s), or expectation(s) are creating problems for Trina’s team?
This Four-Step Communication Process can assist you in overcoming some of the barriers to effective communication. It can be found in the guidebook, *Communicating In A Diverse Workplace*, pages 19 through 21. Open to those pages, particularly pages 20 and 21, as you look closer at this Four-Step Communication Process. The *Diversity Communication Planner* is a helpful tool, useful for planning and preparing (critical for success) for effective communication within a diverse workgroup.

**A Four-Step Communication Process**

1. **Recognize and understand the differences**

2. **Create the appropriate message to communicate**

3. **Deliver the message**

4. **Obtain the feedback**
FORMALIZING NORMS AND ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES

Step 4 of the High Performance Diverse Team Model encourages reinforcement of team norms.

Let’s consider some of the behaviors that you might want to control (or encourage) in order to have an inclusive work environment. To read more about it, refer to the guidebook, *Capitalizing On Workplace Diversity*.

- Become aware of biases.
- Become aware of stereotyping.
- Seek divergent opinions.
- Consider including people on your team with differing communication and work styles.
- Become aware of assumptions.
- Refer to similarities rather than differences.
- Develop norms for resolving diversity conflict.

Possible norms might be:

- Members believe in working cooperatively and supporting each other.
- All team members are involved in setting goals and making team decisions.
- Everyone’s roles and responsibilities are acknowledged.
- Off-color and demeaning jokes are not acceptable.
- Constructive team practices are understood and accepted.

Develop and reinforce norms that address the issues for your specific team. The diversity issues prevalent on your team will determine what norms to prioritize.

As indicated earlier, personality and work style are often cause for concern. Use the Team Diversity Matrix as you take a closer look at the diversity on your team in preparation for developing norms.
CAPITALIZING ON WORKPLACE DIVERSITY
SUSTAIN ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY

Personal Action Plan

Key learnings:
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

I need to contact and involve the following:

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The specific action steps I will carry out on the job include:

1.  ______________________________________________________________  ______________
2.  ______________________________________________________________  ______________
3.  ______________________________________________________________  ______________

Additional issues/concerns I need to address:
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________