



Your HRTrain Connection

Welcome to October's HRTrain Connection newsletter. The world seems a little more chaotic than usual this fall, so we wanted to share some thoughts on a different way to conceptualize diversity in your workplace to promote tranquility and productivity.

Reframing Diversity: Thoughts on Diversity of Experiences

Diversity Beyond the Dictionary Definition

We talk about a lot of different types of diversity and discrimination at HRTrain, but this month we would like to highlight a different type of diversity – diversity of experiences. In many ways, diversity of experiences and the generally recognized categories of diversity are intertwined: our varying backgrounds and identities inform the ways we view and experience the world around us and how we are perceived by others. Starting with childhood, our experiences can either reinforce or deconstruct our existing viewpoints and opinions. In this era of unprecedented and accelerating change, taking a moment to reflect on and appreciate diversity of experiences is meaningful for workplace success.

This fall, we all face uncertainty: heading back to in-person work and school, confronting a global pandemic, advocating for equality and racial justice, and participating in an upcoming election. All of these events unfold with both progress and setbacks along the way. Across the country, school and business reopenings are punctuated by temporary reclosures due to shifting pandemic hotspots. While each individual's experiences will vary, the persistent state of change also means that each of us is navigating the day-to-day world differently from how we did before the pandemic and during the first several months of stay-at-home orders.

Slow Down to Speed Up

How can we balance continuing business operations productively while allowing space for diversity of experiences, especially in an environment where patterns have been broken and continue to evolve? At HRTrain, we like to say "slow down to speed up." That means taking a pause and thinking in terms of weeks, months, and years instead of hours and days. Slowing down means including empathy and patience for diversity of experiences, ultimately creating a more enriching workplace, promoting future productivity and growth.

Consider a high-performing employee whose child's school has temporarily shut down for a several day COVID disinfecting while they are working from home on a big project. Pressing upon the need to get the project done at all costs may be an initial gut reaction. However, if we slow down to empathize with this employee, we can appreciate that they already know how important this project is, and are now facing the added stress of overseeing a child learning from home. Providing the employee with compassion and offering resources, for example, an additional team member who can complete parts of the project, will alleviate some of their stress. While the project may be slightly delayed, the benefits of recognizing this diversity of experiences will pay dividends over the coming months and years – a less stressed employee will ultimately be more productive, and the organization will build loyalty and goodwill from showing appreciation and understanding during a turbulent period.

Recognizing Individual Experiences in the Workplace

As the season progresses, we will all face challenges, both predictable and unpredictable, and each individual's experiences will be unique. Everyone within your organization will face potential disruptions to their lives in and out of the workplace, the increased possibility of serious illness within the family, and the potential for heightened emotions from conversations about racial justice, and/or the upcoming elections. Thus, the need to appreciate diversity of experiences is reaching new highs. Under these circumstances, separating work and personal life is more difficult, and recognizing diversity of experiences helps bridge this divide.

While HRTrain doesn't currently offer a course on diversity of experiences, the underlying concepts and strategies are included in many of our existing courses on diversity, conflict resolution, and bias. Please reach out if you would like more information on any of our offerings.

[Miss our last newsletter? Click here to read it.](#)

Happening Now in Human Resources

Working Mothers are Most Impacted by the Pandemic

It's not surprising that the changes brought about by the pandemic have had an outsized influence on working mothers. [SHRM's feature takes a deep dive.](#)

Political Speech in the Workplace

As election season continues, organizations are adopting a wide range of policies for moderating political speech in the workplace. Regardless of how your policy reads, extra fervor this election season and unprecedented polarization in the electorate means it may not be possible to avert all confrontations in the office. [This article outlines several ways to diffuse controversies in the workplace.](#)

Renewed Focus on Dress Codes

Additional scrutiny is being given to dress codes, and the role of political messaging in attire, after several highly publicized incidents. This year an additional article of clothing – masks – provides prominent space for messages of all kinds. [Consistency is key, according to this column.](#)

**Know someone who might benefit from this information?
Feel free to forward it!**

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