

SUSTAINABLE DIVERSITY: MANAGING RETENTION AND SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Tami Redd, University of Texas, Pan American, Edinburg, Texas 78541, 732-857-6657,
TCRedd@broncs.utpa.edu

ABSTRACT

The aim of this pilot study is to identify the steps taken in creating and maintaining a diverse workforce as well as to identify the role of middle management in the diversity creation process. Companies have implemented diversity training for employees at all different levels including at the middle management level, however the exact role of the middle manager in the diversity creation process has been slighted in the literature. Interviews with middle level management figures were conducted using companies that have high diversity rankings according to Diversity Inc. A historical context of managing diversity in terms of retention and succession planning of underrepresented groups in the workplace is provided followed by identification of current issues in diversity management. By framing the historical context of managing diversity through retention and succession planning, and by identifying current issues and challenges in managing a diverse workforce, we are better able to identify what makes firms become “stuck” playing the numbers game in creating and managing a diverse workforce.

The findings of this preliminary study show that gender discrimination issues are just as prominent as race discrimination issues in the workplace. Furthermore, unique to this study is the finding that some middle managers, specifically those who are minorities have different perceptions as to which individuals fit into a “minority” group. This research has important strategic implications for managers as they look to not only diversify the workforce, but also attempt to use that diversity as a source of maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage. For both scholars and practitioners alike, workforce diversity has remained an area of interest for years; however there still remains much work to be done in this area. Excerpts from manager interviews are presented to illustrate current issues in diversity management as well as implications for future research.