

# Size—The Other Diversity

By *Veronica Cook-Euell, PHR, GCDF, MA Psychology Diversity*

**U**ntil a few years ago, I was determined that the primary focus of my diversity work would concentrate in traditional areas of social justice such as race, class and gender. Like other diversity practitioners, my initial belief was that I could make the greatest impact by advocating on behalf of traditionally underrepresented identity groups such as people of color, women and persons with disabilities. However, while certainly advocacy on behalf of the aforementioned is extremely important, I found myself compelled to join a select alliance of diversity professionals who were contributing to an important body of relatively new research and scholarship in the area of size and body image acceptance, particularly within the workplace.

Admittedly, intentional workplace conversations about body image can be extremely difficult. In fact, research has shown that most employers, male and female, believe that employee performance is directly related to appearance. That is, most operate around the premise that employees who meet traditional standards of beauty and grace are more qualified than those who do not meet such standards. In fact, recent research findings reflect that women of size or those considered overweight earn at least 12 percent less than their equally qualified more thin female counterparts. Thus, rather than intelligence, training and skills, traditional standards of attractiveness continue to be validated in the workplace. Interestingly, most women consider their own appearance and the appearance of other females as the most reliable measure of success. Unfortunately, it is workplace discrimination itself that is feeding this body image frenzy

and is leading to such behaviors as organized dieting and appearance-based hiring and firing practices. Although these ideals may seem petty to some, in her groundbreaking book, *Women Afraid to Eat: Breaking Free in Today's Weight Obsessed World*, Frances M. Berg states that "having the right figure is important for women in getting and keeping a good job in most of the business world" (Berg, 2000).

Where obesity in the workplace is concerned, there is overwhelming indication that society harbors a deep resentment of employees of size—

much of which can be directly linked to hiring, termination and promoting practices. The unfortunate result has been the marginalization of many extremely talented and competent individuals who, due solely to their appearance, are virtually overlooked for positions and roles that will give them opportunities to function as full participants within the organization.

Interestingly, 65 percent of the American population is considered either obese or overweight. Given these alarming statistics, one would expect that rather than stigmatize, alienate or make unfounded assumptions about the importance of including people of size in the workplace, it would be more realistic

to consider a full range of ideas, experiences, and identities, including a diversity of body images, as equally valuable. However, the truth of the matter is that, on a daily basis, people are affected by size discrimination in subtle and not so subtle ways.

While there is a well documented history of all forms of workplace discrimination, for many "fat" persons employed in a size hostile workplace the unfortunate choice is to be either employed or unemployed or comfortable or uncomfortable...no alternatives. The good news is that more and more employers are beginning to transform their work environments from size hostile to size friendly. Many are becoming keenly aware that the workplace is not a vacuum but rather reflects mainstream society. Therefore, employing, mentoring and advancing people of size are becoming standard and routine practice. For example, while it is certainly acceptable for companies to offer strategic initiatives to encourage employee health, rather than viewing health as simply weight loss and weight reduction, companies are now embracing plans



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# AARP AARP's New Careers Section Online Information

AARP's new Careers section—[aarp.org/careers](http://aarp.org/careers)—was recently launched to address the employment interests and needs of people 50 and over. Drawing upon AARP research and member correspondence, what this audience envisions and wants is "retirement" that includes some form of work

- Nearly 70 percent of pre-retirees plan to work at least part time in the so-called retirement years, or never retire.
- Almost half foresee working into their 70s or beyond.
- Needing money is the top reason for pre- and working retirees to work in retirement.
- More than two-thirds also want to work to stay active, be useful and have fun.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are many more career options open to people over 50 than there were earlier, whether it is starting a business, trying to learn new skills, or entering the work force for the first time. Everyone has a say as to what their employment future holds, and AARP is helping people take the next steps to a gratifying work life.

Information on [aarp.org/careers](http://aarp.org/careers) falls under six categories:

- Exploring Work Options.
- Job Loss Help.

- Flexible Work.
- Searching for a Job.
- Applying for a Job.
- Self-employment.

In each category, there are numerous articles about job hunting from start to finish, with links to examples and resources, both online and in print. One article warns the job hunter not to jump into the search too quickly (see below, "Before You Begin Your Job Search"). Other articles address different needs in the employment process, pausing to explore thought-provoking alternatives like "For Women: Consider Non-traditional Jobs"(carpet installers, pest control workers and shuttle car operators). The Careers section on "Self-employment," is an

exploration of the law, legal structures, and business licenses and taxes, all important considerations for starting your own business. This Web site has something for everyone, and the Self-employment information is just part of it.

## Before You Begin your Job Search

Although the new Careers section can be helpful to people of any age, many of the articles take into consideration barriers the mature workforce faces in seeking employment. "Begin Your Search" recommends that before a person actually looks for a specific job, or to find out what other jobs are out there, a job seeker should step

back and get more information, beginning with "know yourself."

- Know yourself.
- Search for the right job.
- Get support.

Those three bullets reflect the tone of the entire Careers section. It is no-nonsense and jargon free, with easy-to-read pages. Following the bullets is a step-by-step guide to achieving those three goals and resources for implementing the recommended action steps.

"Knowing your information-gathering preferences will let you explore jobs without driving yourself crazy," advises "Find New Job Possibilities Your Way." This advice should resonate with the mature worker. AARP asks: do you like to

## Salary & Benefits—True or False

1. Most new employees negotiate their salaries.
2. Asking for a higher salary is usually unpleasant.
3. It's tricky to know what salary to ask for, since finding salary information for jobs in your community is so hard.
4. Companies and organizations are often shocked when people who receive a job offer ask for more money.
5. Getting a slightly higher salary at the beginning doesn't matter that much in the long run.

All the statements are false. Here's why. Almost two-thirds of men negotiate their salary or benefits when they apply for a job. Fewer than 10 percent of women do. It is possible to negotiate politely for more money or better benefits. Harsh words or confrontation is not necessary.

For more on what to actually say in salary and benefit negotiations, go to [aarp.org/careers](http://aarp.org/careers)—"Negotiate for Salary and Benefits."

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## MOSAICS: SHRM Focuses on Workplace Diversity

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# Keys to Maximizing Creativity and Minimizing Conflict

By Lee Gardenswartz, Ph.D., and Anita Rowe, Ph.D.

**Question:** We always hear how much synergy and creativity diversity brings to a team. What advocates of diversity rarely mention is how irritating and frustrating the differences can be and how much they slow down a process. As HR professionals, what suggestions can we offer to help teams capture this creativity?

**Answer:** You are so right that diversity brings both creativity and synergy. It is also true that conflict is a natural part of any team's process. When we did research for our book on global diversity, we found data that suggests the following: Diversity on teams is an asset when it is intentionally used, managed, cultivated and leveraged. Conflict is the result of diversity on teams when differences are not seen as adding value, and when processes for utilizing and leveraging differences are not used proactively and continuously. This research also suggests that HR professionals can help managers by giving them a number of things to think about and strive for. As you read the following suggestions, think about having conversations with managers about the ones that seem most helpful and doable.

Suggestions for maximizing creativity and minimizing conflict on teams:

## 1. Advocate the "self-cleaning" oven philosophy of effective team building.

By this we mean teams need to pay attention not only to the content of their work, but also the process of how they do it. We always hear from team members that they are so busy doing the work...they are in fact overloaded...that there is no time to evaluate how they worked together. But we see time and time again that making the self-cleaning oven philosophy a priority saves time in the long run. We remember working with one team with the responsibility to create structures and ideas that would foster greater tolerance throughout the organization. In monthly meeting after monthly meeting, the group members responsible for creating tolerance had no tolerance for their fellow team members. They almost imploded. It was only when they took the time to step back, analyze their process and build in ways to resolve interpersonal issues that they moved forward and really took care of business.

## 2. Expect differentness.

Years ago, when working in the United Kingdom, we were talking to our client about the difference between British English and U.S. American English. At the time, amidst much downsizing in the United States, our client told us that downsizing is not a word in the United Kingdom. Instead, it was called *redundancy*. As diversity consultants, we remember thinking that the image of redundancy was a great metaphor for advocating the benefits of diversity. Having team members who are carbon copies of one another does not strengthen teams. Rather, differences, which sometimes annoy us, can also add so much value. When organizations we work with create task forces or diversity councils, for example, they want differences. They purposely put together people who bring differences of talent, viewpoint, priority, level in the organization and much more. We remember working with a task force of one

client from the defense industry. There were two distinctly different but important voices to hear when solving one problem. From a customer service standpoint, time was of the essence and meeting the client's deadlines was a top priority. But from a quality assurance standpoint, product quality was of greater urgency and if both needs could not be met, then from that perspective, meeting a deadline was less important than product quality. These were both important voices—definitely not redundant and a real benefit to the organization in the long run.

## 3. Make a commitment to use these differences.

Making a commitment to using the differences means that the parties find value in them. It also is saying that the endpoint will justify the confusion or discomfort it takes to get the results. Once the commitment to cultivating different voices is made, then team members need to construct a process for using and leveraging them. We know of a team at a major university that was going through the process of deciding their primary values as a first step in determining their priorities. This team had a lot of obvious diversity—gender, various languages, different nationalities and more. They were working well with these differences but midway in their process, they realized that the one person they did not have present was their administrative assistant who happened to be the oldest member in the group. Once they realized the incompleteness of the process without her and the value they received from her generational, job and individual perspective, they put machines on the answering service, got her involved and went forward from there. Her inclusion added a whole different vantage point, as they hoped, expected and knew it would.

## 4. Set ground rules.

Perhaps the best way to deal with differences and discuss how to leverage them is to have a conversation about how we want to operate and work together. Asking a question as basic as, "What team norms will get the most productive, constructive performance from all of us?" or "How do we want to work together, and particularly, how do we want to handle our differences?" is a good beginning process to help team members tease out and clearly identify the behaviors they want. From having done this hundreds of times with teams, we can predict some of the behaviors:

- Demonstrate respect to all team members.
- Don't ridicule any suggestions.
- Meet agreed upon deadlines.
- Give feedback tactfully but directly to the person involved.

Among these examples, you will have questions that need discussion and reconciliation. For example, we have never met a person who does not think respect is important on a team or in life. But how that respect is shown can be very different. For some people, respect is demonstrated by always showing up on time. That is one way to signal that all people's time is valuable, none more so than others. For someone else, respect is indicated by making allowances for the uniqueness in people's schedules, understanding that there are times and circumstances where

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# I Hate Board Games

By: Dr. Steve Long-Nguyen Robbins

There I was minding my own business at another family get-together, dinner nicely settling in my "tummy" giving me that glazed-over, sleepy feeling. Just on this side of REM sleep paradise, barely attending to another Detroit Lions loss on television, I hear the dreaded words, "Let's play board games!"

These are not your normal, everyday words. I can't bear to hear them. I fear my "Mr. Hyde" will show himself. "Stop!" I scream within the confines of my mind. But they continue to call out, "Anyone wants to play board games?"

I feign sleeping, wishing real sleep was upon me. Maybe they'll think I am sleeping. Maybe they'll have enough people. This time I want to be the poor kid who always gets picked last, who doesn't get picked at all.

I hear people getting up around me. I dare not peek at what's going on, but it sounds like the coast is clear. For some reason the old spiritual rings in my head, "Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty I'm free at last." But then I feel a tap on my arm. I do not react. Another tap. "Leave me alone!" I want to say. Still more taps accompanied by, "Wake up Uncle Steve, let's play Monopoly!"

## The gig is up. I surrender. The Monopoly board is prepared.

To make matters worse, I'm the Thimble. I can't be the Race Car or the Shoe; I have to be the Thimble. The game begins and I have a bad attitude. But something strange happens along the way. I begin to enjoy my once hostile surroundings. People are talking and laughing. My nephew tells a joke. It's a bad joke, but people laugh anyway. I catch myself laughing. Okay, this is not so bad. Heck, I'm taking people's money too!

By the end of the game, I am thoroughly enjoying myself. My attitude has completely changed about board games. Well, not completely, but I'm on my way to becoming a board games advocate. Just don't make me be the Thimble anymore.

Many times in our lives, we have bad attitudes about things we are asked to do. We don't want to do them, but as we find ourselves in the midst of the process, we often find that it's not bad at all. Sometimes, like me, we even find that we are enjoying ourselves, walking away with a "new" attitude.

I am often asked if I think diversity training should be required

or voluntary. My question in return is, "How important is inclusion to your organization?" Does it make sense to value ALL of your human resources? Does it make your organization better, more competitive when most embrace and value diversity and inclusion. In what other areas do you "require" training? If diversity and inclusion is a core value for your organization, the answer is pretty clear about what your organization should do concerning education and training.

Many organizations don't want to make diversity training required because they believe people have a bad attitude about that type of training, that it will just make things worse. So training becomes voluntary... and the "choir" becomes even more enlightened. It may be the case that many people have negative mindsets about diversity training. But the problem is not with the concept of training; it's the way the training takes place. It's the way the leadership prepares the organization for that type of training. Diversity training must be framed within the context of continuous organizational improvement. It must be "sold" as benefiting everyone. This starts with leadership and flows to every part of the organization.

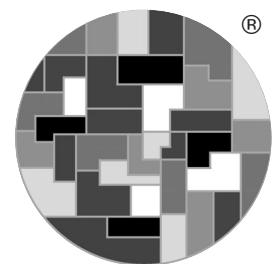
People's bad attitudes toward diversity training are likely to change when the training focuses on all the benefits to all people in all parts of the organization. People need to see it benefiting them and the organization. If that takes place, there's a good chance that those involved in diversity training will change the negative mental model they have about such training.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the direction of causality does not necessarily flow from attitude to behavior. It sometimes flows from behavior to attitude. That is, behavior can have a powerful impact on someone's attitude about that particular behavior. Negative attitudes around diversity activities can be changed if those activities are done

well. Who knows, maybe those who once viewed "diversity" as an unnecessary Thimble will find that Thimbles can make one's work a lot easier and less painful. 🌀

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Looking for information from your colleagues  
on a diversity-related issue? Post a question  
on the bulletin board...  
[www.shrm.org/diversity](http://www.shrm.org/diversity)





that reflect health at every size. In fact, the following simple questionnaire can illustrate how simple yet sensitive these important matters can be handled.

- Does your organization sponsor or support weight loss contests between departments?
- Are employee shirts or attire purchased in four primary sizes (s, m, l, or xl)?
- Do you require or encourage employees to wear pedometers?
- Do you have chairs with arms in all workstations, boardrooms, general meeting rooms, and guest seating areas?
- Are the majority of your employees that have high exposure to customers, of small stature and weight?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, perhaps it's time that your organization begins the process of learning more about size acceptance and health at every size. However, keep in mind that this mini-inventory is not intended to be a full evaluation of the experiences of the employees within your care. It is a good starting point where one can begin to generate new and healthier practices within an organization.

There is perhaps nothing more personally and professionally rewarding than knowing that others and I contribute to furthering equality within the workplace. There is still much work to do, but the exciting news is that clinical studies and very recent research has proven that it is not obesity itself that is negatively affecting profits and success within the workplace, but rather America's obsession with obesity that is the problem. Professor of law Paul Campos, nationally recognized expert on America's war on fat states in his recent book, *The Obesity Myth: Why America's Obsession with Weight is Hazardous to Your Health*, "...even so there is no reason why there shouldn't be tens of millions of healthy, happy people of more than average weight in America, as there no doubt would be in a culture that maintained a rational attitude toward the fact that people will always come in all shapes and sizes, whether they live healthy lives or not" (Campos, 2004).

### A Case Study on the Topic:

While awareness that size discrimination exists, this article in no way intends to encourage stereotypes or generalizations about all people of size. Like other forms of discrimination, there are always exceptions or those who do not identify with issues that pertain to an identity group to which they may belong. Before deciding to take a stroll around the workplace to find people of size to survey about their personal workplace experiences and opinions, please consider the following: Most people who suffer from negative body image and poor self-esteem are not necessarily visible to the naked eye. In fact, vast majorities of people, of all sizes, have to some degree negative body image issues. It is almost impossible to determine exactly who is likely to feel targeted. Society is increasingly becoming fat phobic so most people are either experiencing an ongoing battle with their weight or working overtime to maintain incredibly high and unrealistic standards of body image.

In today's world, it is not uncommon for a 125 pound, 5'9" woman, who by all appearances is physically fit, to feel just as inadequate and as self-conscious about her body as would a 325 pound, 5'9" woman. Interestingly, both can suffer from low self-esteem and low self-worth because media messages consistently convey to women that they are to aggressively pursue thinness at any cost. If not, they risk facing rejection

and alienation for their failure to remain or to become thin, worthy and "attractive". Unfortunately, the workplace offers no relief for these expectations and is therefore no exception. For many, body-bashing techniques are deeply internalized from childhood and carried into adulthood, including into the workplace. To further illustrate this point, please take a sneak peek into the life of \*Felice (not her real name):

*In order to get an early start on her day, Felice awakes at 5:00 a.m. She realizes that there won't be many people in the gym at that hour who will witness her working out, so she stumbles down to the apartment's weight room for an hour-long workout routine. Although in her view working out hasn't made much impact on her long-held goal to lose weight, she continues to hammer away because she is convinced that others are well aware that she is crippled by struggles with her weight. While showering, she uses cellulite rub and extra hot water in an attempt to melt away a few pounds, a weight-loss tip that she found in a weight-loss magazine.*

*Later, Felice sits down for a light breakfast. She's been thinking about breakfast all night—there are only a few choices because if she eats the "bad food" she'll beat herself up about it all day long. It takes Felice at least 20 minutes to decide that she really wants the bagel and cream cheese. However, she knows the brutal consequences of straying from her diet. She eventually decides to have one very small bowl of raisin bran and a banana. On her way out of the kitchen she notices day old, chocolate chip muffins on the counter. "Just one won't hurt," she thinks to herself so she eats the muffin while deciding what to wear to work. Afterwards, she murmurs to herself, "I feel fat" while searching through mountains of clothes to find something to wear that will appear slimming. She is scheduled to make a presentation to her sales team so she wants to come across as polished and professional.*

*Felice changes clothes at least eight times, creating mountain number three on the chair beside her bed. After all, it is Wednesday and her daily ritual of searching for clothes that cover is routine. She finally decides to wear black pants with a black jacket to cover her hips and a black blouse to create the desperately desired slimming effect—the choice was easy. Felice has purchased over 50 percent of her wardrobe in black specifically for that reason.*

*Off to work, Felice wants to be very early so that she doesn't have to walk past the crowd that often gathers at the coffee pot. To her astonishment, her morning walk through usually includes comments about her pretty face and how well dressed and poised she usually is. Felice sits at her desk and begins the day's work. She is considered an excellent employee and is hoping to be the selected candidate for the next promotion. Lunchtime is coming up shortly. Felice has been thinking about food all day because, although by lunchtime she is ravenous, she never wants anyone to see what she's eating for fear that they will comment on her selection. She knows the unspoken workplace rules though... if she simply chooses a salad with light dressing and bottled water, everyone will continue to admire her and she'll continue to be well liked.*

*However, the truth of the matter is that Felice hates salads. Although she eats them merely to soothe the nagging sense of self-consciousness, today she prefers to have stir-fry but determines that it contains too many calories. So, as per usual, she opts for the salad. Felice's stress level rises particularly at the noon hour because it marks what she knows is a strange pressure to adhere to workplace eating norms. However, once back from lunch, the anxiety almost disappears and is easily forgotten*

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until, of course, the next day when the eating ritual is mysteriously resurrected. At the end of the day she focuses her attention on finishing tasks, going home, having a private dinner, and relaxing.

Just before leaving work and during her last break, Felice and other women in the office, including her employer, gather for some friendly chatting. They excitedly discuss a new diet that promises 10 pounds of weight loss in the first week. The group decides to diet together and, after a few minutes of enthusiastic collaboration, they are organized and relentless. Internally though, Felice feels a bit overwhelmed. While a workplace weight-loss support group is somewhat appealing, she admits that she longs to be able to work in an environment where women are not so fixated on building relationships around appearance rather than on performing work-related tasks. Felice participates though because she knows that they will be checking so, like others, she succumbs to the seemingly harmless workplace "fat phobic" culture.

Later, Barbara, Felice's co-worker, pulls out a scale so that everyone can officially log his or her "kick off" weight. Felice dreads the weigh in so much that she creatively comes up with an urgent matter that needs to be resolved so that she can disappear before being weighed. Eventually, she arrives home and plops down on the couch and begins to contemplate dinner. However, Felice knows that, until she loses the weight, her colleagues and employers will always feel the right to invite her to compete for a more fit body rather than to compete for promotions, advancements and performance commendations. She is constantly preoccupied with the thought that her body image issues will never be fully resolved. Surely there are many who may identify with some or more of Felice's workplace experiences.

In 1996, Marilyn Loden, a leading authority on leveraging diversity in the workplace, introduced "the diversity wheel" that emphasized the varied dimensions of diversity such as age, race, ethnic heritage, gender,

mental and physical abilities/qualities, and sexual orientation. While Loden's excellent scholarship in this area is to be commended, I am willing to make a passionate argument that, without exception, size is an additional dimension that also must be included. In fact, size and body image affects every single element of the human existence including how we perceive others and ourselves. It is these perceptions, whether valid or invalid, that determines how we interact as human beings, including how we treat children and adults at every age. A sample of how this additional dimension might look is below:

I am certain that continued research and awareness in the area of size and body image will lead to a revolution in the overall human experience. Rather than our continued obsession with fat and fitness, perhaps new attitudes that reflect inclusion and acceptance will lead to our ability to further integrate the full diversity of human kind. Until that time though, we should continue to be aware that, no matter what size or shape, all employees desire to be treated respectfully, and will work and perform at a much higher level when the environment is one that affirms rather than ostracizes certain members.

Friends, we have a great responsibility to continue to seek all avenues towards social justice and equality. I personally invite you to join me and our colleagues, of all sizes around the nation, who are successfully finding dynamic and innovative ways to continue to crusades for social justice and political size acceptance. To learn more, feel free to visit the Size Matters Web site at [www.sizematterstoo.com](http://www.sizematterstoo.com). 🌟

Model 1. Size—The Other Diversity. Source: Euell Consulting Group LLC 2004

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get information through things you read, from suggestions of other people, or from following a skills inventory online—what AARP calls "sensing?" Or do you prefer the intuitive approach—collecting ideas, making notes from people's stories, and exploring possibilities? Resources at the end of the article include an online personality test (the Temperament Sorter); quick, free, and informative Web links; real workers' reports; and relevant books.

Another article covers effective questions to ask in your interview and tells you what the questions convey about you. Yet another article guides the midlife and older worker with lots of experience through the minefield of resumes to the safe ground of the combination resume. Again, there are lots of examples and resources.

## Find Out About Any Job

New jobs are created. Old jobs get new names. Job duties evolve into new occupations. How does a person get an instant education? The "Find Out About Any Job" article links you to the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, available in most libraries and online. The hard copy version is updated every two years and the online version is user-friendly. Information is presented in paragraphs, just like in ref-

erences books. The charts and boxes have been minimized and you don't have to click on other links.

A treasure trove of information and easy to access, [aarp.org/careers](http://aarp.org/careers) is an up-to-date, common sense guide to finding—and getting—a new job. 🌟

\*AARP's survey, *Staying Ahead of the Curve 2003: The AARP Working in Retirement Study*, was covered in *Mosaics*, September 2003.

people need to be late due to conflicting priorities, whether work related or personal. Teams need to have the discussion about what respect looks like. What behaviors violate respect? How do we as a team want to handle conflict? Part of the agreement might be that we expect to disagree but with tact and diplomacy as we keep the dialogue issue focused, not personal. Some of the conversation might have to do with establishing criteria for making decisions, and when there is disagreement, setting processes for negotiating these differences. There is no right or wrong way to handle these processes, but groups that function well together and maximize their diversity are groups that set aside time to think through and collectively determine how they want to work together in a climate that serves everyone.

#### 5. Invest time in team processes.

In 25 years of team building with literally hundreds of organizations, our most frequently repeated mantra to clients is, "Invest the time to evaluate not only what you've done, but how you worked together in the doing it." There is no substitute for the team continually looking at its process. It can learn so much about itself and if done regularly, it is a continuous improvement process that yields huge benefits. We see the results constantly—in functional teams, task forces, and diversity councils ... even in multiple day workshops designed specifically to help teams function better together. Simple open-ended statements like the following help build trust and awareness of team members.

- What made this process stressful for me was

\_\_\_\_\_

- What I really like about this process is

\_\_\_\_\_

- In conflict, I like to

\_\_\_\_\_

- I show support by

\_\_\_\_\_

There are many processes that enable team members to learn more about one another. This learning and sharing builds bonds, enhances communication, creates more ease when discussing differences and builds spirit into the team environment.

As we said earlier, the biggest push back we get from clients when we first suggest using processes like this on a regular basis is that they don't have time...they are overloaded already, individually and collectively. No one we know has spare time. It must be wisely used. Engaging in these processes is an upfront investment that will yield so many benefits beyond creating synergy and creativity. It will bring a whole different tone and climate to the work experience. The commitment to investing in a team's process will not happen on its own. Time must be set aside.

We started answering this *Mosaics* question by talking about intentionality and we will end it the same way. It is absolutely possible to build effective teams that utilize diversity well. The differences are like the air we breathe—always there. Effective teams look for and want these differences. High performing teams leverage diversity by expecting differences, learning to use them, setting ground rules, and engag-

ing in processes that keep them interpersonally whole and fully functioning. In this way, they really are like a self-cleaning oven that monitors itself and avoids the gunk that inhibits performance. 🌀

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## 10 Steps for Creating Tolerance in the Workplace

1. Hold a "brown bag lunch" series to talk about diverse cultural and social issues.
2. Create a display area where employees can post notices of events and activities happening in their communities.
3. Collaborate with local community organizations and encourage employees to volunteer.
4. Provide employees with opportunities to attend local cultural events and exhibits.
5. Incorporate diversity as a business goal and secure a high degree of commitment from all employees.
6. Avoid singling out employees of a particular race or ethnicity to handle diversity issues on behalf of everyone else.
7. Start a mentoring program that pairs employees of diverse backgrounds (e.g., different age groups, cultures or levels within the company).
8. Foster an open working environment.
9. Value the input of every employee and reward managers who do.
10. Establish an internal procedure for employees to report incidents of harassment or discrimination. Publicize the policy widely.  
([www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org))

### September 13–15, 2004, Rochester, N.Y.

#### Diversity 2004 Conference—Hear It! Feel It! Live It!

One of the nation's largest workforce diversity conferences.

- 2 1/2 days, 50 sessions and keynotes on a wide range of topics.
- 25 top diversity experts presenting.
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For managers, employees, CEOs and executives from companies and not-for-profit organizations.

See complete conference details at [www.rochesterdiversitycouncil.com](http://www.rochesterdiversitycouncil.com). Please contact: Barbara Cutrona at (585) 224-2727; Fax: (585) 224-2728

### September 17, 2004 & November 12, 2004

#### The Sixth Annual NW Diversity Learning Series: Shifting Performance Into High Gear: Accelerating Team Effectiveness with Personal Accountability for Diversity and Inclusion

Session topics, presenters and dates are as follows:

Turning into the Skid: Making the Most of Conflicts and Disagreements

September 17, North Potomac, Md.

Dr. Mitch Hammer, Hammer Consulting Group, Leading the Field: Unleashing Innovation and Creativity

Diane Hofner-Saphiere and Eun Young Kim, Nipporica

November 12, Leawood, Kan.

### October 25–27, Chicago, Ill.

#### SHRM's Diversity Conference & Exposition

Workplace Diversity Conference and Exposition promises to be an excellent learning and networking opportunity for all professionals who are responsible for diversity within small, medium and large organizations. SHRM has planned an extensive conference agenda for participants to:

- Enhance diversity initiatives within their organization;
- Update themselves on current compliance issues;
- Understand the strategies and practices for maximizing diversity in the workplace;
- Gain a clearer understanding of corporate diversity programs;
- Develop a start-up action plan for workplace application; and
- Build a business case for diversity.

Register today and take advantage of the early bird rates! Visit the Web site at [www.shrm.org/conferences](http://www.shrm.org/conferences).