



WORLD CLASS IVERSITY MANAGEMENT



A STRATEGIC APPROACH



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A Strategic Approach***

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PREFACE

This book has evolved from four streams of my diversity work over the past twenty-five years and comes together at their intersection.

The first stream is my focus on understanding the field. Over the years, I have been thinking and speaking about the Four Quadrants in one form or another as a way to organize the various approaches in the arena of diversity. I have not sought so much to determine what is right, wrong, or useful, but rather simply to understand what exists and their interrelationships. My thinking at this point is that all diversity approaches can be lumped into at least one of four strategic categories: (1) Managing Workforce Representation, (2) Managing Workforce Relationships, (3) Managing Diverse Talent, and (4) Managing All Strategic Diversity Mixtures.

The second contributing stream has been an expanding personal exploration into what constitutes (or would constitute) world class in diversity and diversity management. By “world class,” I mean “best in class,” according to worldwide standards.

When a consulting colleague suggested that we strive to help clients become “world class” in diversity management, I initially responded, “How can we talk about being ‘world class’ when we can’t agree on what diversity means?” Flashing through my mind were the many discussions I had experienced with practitioners about professionalizing and making sense of the field. All had ended in frustration.

Later, as I was preparing for a speaking commitment, the same colleague suggested that I present on world-class diversity management. He subsequently recommended that we author an article on the topic, as well. In less than a year, I moved from saying the notion was unrealistic to thinking seriously about how to make it a reality. I knew that the world-class manufacturing movement had succeeded. Why couldn’t world-class diversity management do so, too? I began the project in earnest.

The third stream of contributing activities has been my work with chief executive officers (CEOs) and other senior-level executives. From the beginning of my involvement in the diversity field, I have encountered senior leaders who have been thoughtful and engaging around the topic of diversity.

Some will find this statement surprising, since many hold a stereotypical view of action-oriented executives preoccupied with obtaining the five “to-do’s” and having little patience for exploring concepts and frameworks. The skeptics believe that those leaders subscribe to the philosophy of “Fire, ready, and aim” rather than “Aim, ready, and fire.”

I have experienced my fair share of such people; however, I also have interacted with a substantial number of executives who desire to engage in thoughtful dialogue on diversity. Consider two examples below:

- Upon first entering the field as a consultant, I presented a proposal to the staff of the human resources (HR) department of a company that pioneered in the diversity arena. They concluded

that my proposal calling for a multiyear process of cultural change was so different that I needed to speak to the CEO and the chief diversity officer (CDO). I agreed to do so and was given “exactly” fifteen minutes to make my point. I prepared accordingly. As matters turned out, the two senior executives engaged me in a lively discussion that lasted an hour and fifteen minutes.

- In another setting, I again presented to an HR department responsible for screening potential consultants. I made it past the initial hurdle and received a meeting with the CEO. He responded favorably. I subsequently had approximately twelve three-hour sessions with senior executives, and the CEO attended each one—not just to show his support but as an engaged learner. Because he was willing to be a “learner” and to probe, he provided a contagious model that made the sessions very productive.

I have benefited enormously from exchanges with leaders like these. They have helped me over the years to refine and extend my thinking as they engaged me with questions and affirmations. Collectively, these open-minded and inquisitive executives provided the model for this book’s composite case study of Jeff Kilt, a composite leader of a corporate team seeking to be “world class.”

Fourth, my twenty-five years of observations of the field (internal and external practitioners) have contributed to the conceptualization of this book. Among the most significant observations have been the following:

- While enthusiasm and energy about achieving social justice and human rights gains persist, practitioners appear less certain that diversity and diversity management are the most promising routes for making progress. When speaking to people active in the field, I often sense weariness, hopelessness, or a sense of

surrender. Some are even unclear or confused about what would constitute success. Many admit to “diversity fatigue.”

- Many—if not most—internal practitioners and their general managers see diversity as a problem to be solved and pushed aside. I have heard internal diversity professionals say, “My goal is to work myself out of a job.” CEOs often share that view. They may, for example, see the “problem” as not having an environment that welcomes minorities and women. With that diagnosis, they set out to create such an environment with the expectation that once that is accomplished, it will be behind them. Their priority is to demonstrate that their organization embraces diversity.
- Despite the perceived declining morale of practitioners, an enormous number of activities remain in place after being institutionalized as part of an organization’s fabric. Once institutionalized, diversity activities in many settings are seen as an ongoing given—part and parcel of the business routine. Conviction, energy, and fire are often missing, however. Change, in particular, frequently does not appear to be a goal or expectation.
- No silver bullet is in sight. When I talk with practitioners who have attended a professional gathering designed to advance the field, they report such things as, “I heard little that was new. We keep reworking previous approaches.”
- CEOs and other senior general managers rarely play a leadership role in the diversity arena. When the field was new, little of significance could happen without senior-level endorsement *and* operational involvement. Now, as a result of institutionalization, many enterprises have appointed chief diversity officers and delegated major operational responsibilities to them. While CDOs typically are talented, accomplished men and women, an unintended consequence may have been a perceived—if not actual—drop in CEO push. The establishment of institutional-

ized diversity departments may have made it less clear who is really driving diversity. Indeed, inherent in the concept of institutionalization is the notion that advocacy is no longer needed. This sentiment may have been premature for the diversity field.

In sum, I sense that that the field is at a turning point. It can move into decline, stagnate, or grow into a bigger, disciplined purpose.

In the absence of certainties, I am comfortable arguing that what we are seeing today are the field's growing pains, and that the discipline will overcome them and become an established, respected, and valued vehicle for addressing *all* kinds of diversity. The proverbial glass for diversity is half full, not half empty.

What will be required to overcome these growth challenges? For starters, a framework for organizing the field's various thrusts and their interrelationships would be immensely helpful. Such a structure would assist senior executives and other practitioners in designing effective diversity management strategies and action plans, and also aid academicians in further advancing the field's development as a discipline.

This book offers the Four Quadrants as a candidate for that organizing task. Also, what we are describing as world-class diversity management capability would provide an enormous boost toward overcoming the growth pains.

It will also provide a foundation that can be used to advance the field beyond its growing pains and toward realization of its potential as a managerial tool for managers in general and for CEOs and other senior executives in particular. If, as I hope, the book successfully targets the field's critical needs, it should greatly benefit the field and its development as a discipline and a managerial tool. Without world-class diversity management, or something akin to it, the practice of diversity management will languish.

Seven premises or themes have driven my conceptualization of the book and, indeed, the book itself. All flow from the four streams

of activities that I have pursued over the past twenty-five years. These premises follow:

1. The field of diversity can be conceptualized as a “world-class” ideal that can be a source of inspiration and energy.
2. The development of world-class diversity management can parallel the developmental dynamics of world-class manufacturing.
3. The field’s primary emphasis should be on building capability for generating solutions to problems, rather than on solving *the* “diversity problem.” Manufacturing professionals, for example, don’t envision solving *the* manufacturing problem and moving on, but rather aspire to develop a capability that will allow effective ongoing problem solving in the manufacturing arena.
4. All diversity approaches can be categorized into at least one of the Four Quadrants. Individuals might differ in their judgments as to which quadrant or quadrants, but the categorization is possible. Further, each of the quadrants is supported by an undergirding diversity paradigm. Accordingly, managing quadrant-paradigm dynamics becomes a prerequisite for effective management of diversity.
5. Diversity generates tensions and complexities, and these by-products must be accepted and worked through in the process of managing diversity.
6. CEOs and other general managers must be operationally re-engaged in the pursuit of excellence in diversity management. Any significant push for excellence with diversity most often will require the visible, operational engagement of senior leaders.
7. While a desire for simplicity has dictated that most of the examples in the book focus on diversity management as it applies to race and gender, the author’s Four Quadrants Model applies equally to a multitude of additional diversity dimensions. It applies, for example, to people dimensions beyond the traditional ones of race, gender, and ethnicity to those such as time within

an organization, experience level, member of an acquiring or acquired organization, etc. It applies equally as well to all of the non-people diversity dimensions—function, product, process, etc. As such, the book benefits readers seeking a framework for maximizing the benefits of all of the various types of diversity that can exist while also minimizing the tensions they inevitably create.

As the book has evolved from these mega themes, the idea of building a world-class diversity management capability has emerged as its core. Interestingly, while I focus primarily on organizations, I believe that my insights and prescriptions also hold for individuals, the whole diversity field, and, indeed, society. This for me has been one of the most exciting aspects of the book.

I anticipate that what I say in the following chapters about world-class diversity management capability will not be the definitive word. Rather, I hope it will be the definitive beginning of an engaging evolution toward making the concept a concrete and meaningful aspiration for advancing the work of individual practitioners and the collective reality known as the field. I further believe that a significant part of this evolution will be moving the ongoing dialogue beyond diversity demographics and toward diversity management. Only then will the world-class diversity management concept reach its full potential to provide maximum benefit.

INTRODUCTION

As I begin this introduction, I have been reflecting on previous situations where I have seen accelerated learning and growth through quality dialogue. The situations have been varied, but they have shared one characteristic: Before the discussion began, time was taken to establish a context for the discussion. Often that time was used to establish agreed-upon definitions.

Given the wide variety of perspectives on “diversity” and my experience in working with senior organizational leaders, I propose that we seek some common ground around definitions—if only for the purpose of discussion. Toward this end, I offer a set of definitions for the diversity-related terms that I have used throughout the book.

BASIC DEFINITIONS

Below are definitions that will make the reading of the book more enjoyable and profitable:

Diversity—the differences and similarities, and related tensions and complexities, that can characterize mixtures of *any* kind. When you speak of diversity, you are describing a *characteristic* of a collection or mixture of some kind, such as employees, customers, vendors, functions, organizational participants in an acquisition or merger, citizens, family members, or congregants in a religious setting.

This means that when you talk of a group's diversity, you have to specify the dimension. In the United States, when someone says a group is "diverse," he typically means with respect to race, gender, or ethnicity. In reality, the dimension possibilities are enormous, thus the need to specify.

In addition, with diversity (differences and similarities) come tensions and complexities. The greater the diversity, the greater the likelihood of tension and complexity.

Diversity tension—the stress and strain that come from the interaction and clashing of differences and similarities.

Complexity—that which makes something difficult to explain.

Diversity management—the ability to make quality decisions in the midst of any set of differences and similarities and related tensions and complexities.

Complexity management—the ability to make quality decisions in the midst of factors that make something difficult to explain.

Capability—the wherewithal to think through diversity issues of any kind in pursuit of quality decisions that support an entity's overarching objectives. A critical assumption is that the individual or organization (represented by its leaders and managers) can be the actor.

Achieving this wherewithal requires understanding and operationalizing concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms; developing

and mastering skills and competencies; and sustaining a high level of craftsmanship through continuous learning and introspection.

WORLD-CLASS DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Defined

Practicing World-Class Diversity Management means operating at a level that is the best in the world with respect to diversity management. At a minimum, it suggests the use of state-of-the-art strategies and approaches for addressing any diversity issue in *any* setting in *any* geographical location.

Achieving this status doesn't require an enterprise to operate beyond its country's borders. It might practice diversity management at a world-class level within its community, state, regional, or national boundaries. The determining factor would be that the quality of its practices cannot be beaten anywhere in the world.

Consider the realm of baseball. The "World Champion" New York Yankees may never play a team from outside the United States; yet, because of their understanding—rightly or not—that United States baseball is the best in the world, they can claim that winning the World Series entitles them to say, "We are world champions." As the quality of professional baseball outside the United States grows in perceived excellence, World Series winners will not be able to claim "We are the best in the world" without engaging in some competition to prove that point.

With respect to diversity management, we still have to define the game and then determine what it means to play at a world-class level. To date, practitioners and managers have expressed relatively little interest in establishing and pursuing the standards that would allow us to do that.

Writing on the meaning of World-Class Diversity Management has brought to mind my first encounter with World-Class Manufacturing and Total Quality Management (TQM) in the mid-eighties, when the emphasis was on achieving world-class status in manufacturing. One of our first diversity clients placed great stock in being world class. The company viewed world class as the gold standard against which any self-respecting manufacturing organization must measure itself. As this company expanded its global manufacturing operations, its managers found that being competitive required familiarity with the best philosophies and practices of TQM and other manufacturing philosophies and tools. This was true for other corporations with global operations and for some with domestic sites only.

This reality led our client to send groups of its managers to attend seminars on different manufacturing approaches, to visit the sites of enterprises that advocated innovative strategies, to invite leading practitioners to tour and assess their facilities, and to devour books on various methodologies—TQM and others. Our clients and other corporations did make significant progress toward world-class status and touted that progress widely internally and externally.

As we began our diversity management work with the organization, its representatives told us that they wanted to be world class in diversity as well as in manufacturing. Given the embryonic nature of diversity at that time, we could not guarantee that our offer was world class. We were comfortable, however, in saying that our approach had the *potential* to become world class. We also gained credibility by relating our diversity approach to the company's World-Class Manufacturing practices and philosophies.

My point here is that being world class had become a way of life for our clients wherever they operated a manufacturing facility in the world. As these manufacturing managers interacted with global functions, they often cited manufacturing philosophies and principles. The notion of world class had become ingrained in them.

The diversity field has not progressed to this point. We in the field have neither established what world class is nor specified how it might be achieved. Further, we lack agreement on our most fundamental philosophies, principles, and concepts, as well as consensus as to what best practices are. Indeed, it is not clear that we want to be world class. Some feeling exists that because the field is diversity, practitioners should be diverse (fragmented) in their thinking.

Requirements

Several elements must be in place if we are to establish and achieve world-class status in the diversity arena. These include the following:

Universal philosophies. We must have sets of universal theories, principles, concepts, and frameworks that can be applied to any type of diversity mixture at any geographic location. Aspirants to world-class stature need universal tools as a basis for world capability and applicability. Such tools are not currently readily available in the diversity arena. This book is intended to be a step toward filling that gap.

An approach that fosters ease of comparison, discussion, and analysis across the globe. This data gathering capability will be key to establishing the meaning of World-Class Diversity Management. Diversity means different things to people in different countries. This can be a major barrier to efforts to identify and understand different diversity management philosophies, unless there are a framework and process that fosters global dialogue and affirms and enhances world perspectives.

An approach that fosters awareness and understanding of the field of diversity and not just its individual dimensions. If practitioners

are to understand and address the diverse dimension (race, ethnicity, gender, etc.) priorities around the world, they must possess familiarity and competency with diversity per se. That is, they must have access to both individual *and* collective perspectives. Without that access, they must develop an expertise for each possible dimension. While doable, this can become onerous. A framework with universal and transferable concepts and principles that apply to all dimensions provides a head start with any given issue, by eliminating the need to begin from ground zero in each instance. Most efforts designated as diversity focus on the workforce. That limits the capability to deal with *any* type of diversity issue.

An approach grounded in a universal process for addressing any diversity issue. Given the multiplicity of approaches to diversity around the globe, world-class status requires a process that can be adapted to any approach and used with any mixture.

Infrastructures to foster the establishment and pursuit of world-class standards. For example, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards program fosters excellence in TQM, while within organizations, entire departments and task forces often are dedicated to the achievement of World-Class Manufacturing.

Obstacles

My initial personal reaction to the notion of world class reflects some of the obstacles. Four in particular merit mention:

1. **Lack of professionalization and rationalization.** This lack impedes the development of universal frameworks and significant consensus among practitioners. Organizations, practitioners, managers, and individual contributors are struggling to make sense of diversity. Some are so confused that they want to discard the notion. Others have

institutionalized diversity into increasingly meaningless rituals. Many organizations are seeking ways to relaunch, reboot, or otherwise rejuvenate their diversity efforts.

While some want to dismiss the idea of diversity, most organizations and communities still struggle explicitly or implicitly with the notion. So there are practical reasons to sort through the ambiguity.

As part of the effort to make sense of diversity, internal and external practitioners are searching for new frameworks. For some, this is a desperate search that leads them to embrace any semantic change that *might* reflect a substantive modification in approach. Their search would be aided by a rationalized perspective of the diversity field, which would provide a context for assessing the fit between organizational needs and a particular framework—and therefore for assessing its likelihood of success. This would also set the stage for establishing world-class standards.

2. Inability to focus on the big picture—to see the forest as well as the trees. The individual dimensions—race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, thought, globalism, political, functional, or generational—consume the attention and time of many organizations, which emphasize them one at a time and seek practitioners and consultants with expertise in the priority of the moment. *Rarely do organizations or community leaders focus on learning about diversity as a field. Instead, they continue to reinvent the wheel as they move from dimension to dimension.* This mindset and corresponding behaviors hamper the establishment of a world-class standard.

3. Lack of discipline. Inattention to sets of widely accepted, well-defined philosophies, theories, and practices that apply to the whole field of diversity has hampered discussion among those in the field. Developing the field as a discipline will require focusing on the forest *and* the trees.

4. Lack of face validity. With World-Class Manufacturing, face validity as a legitimate discipline and organizational function has not been an issue. Lack of face validity for diversity, however, has been most apparent in today's recessionary economic times. People frequently ask me, "Are companies still engaged with diversity?" Among those people are some who never believed corporations were serious about diversity and therefore never had expectations that diversity training would endure. Some observers note how well they are getting along now and express surprise that diversity is still needed. Others suggest that since the United States has elected an African American as president, the country no longer needs diversity work. And still others declare, "Given that we have been 'doing diversity' for so many years, surely we can relax now and move on to something else." The common theme is that diversity lacks face validity and, therefore, has a tentative status and will soon disappear—if it has not already done so.

5. Seeing diversity as a problem to be solved and then removing it from the "to do" list. This perspective contributes to a lack of face validity for diversity and also to the view that an intervention with a beginning and an end is needed—as opposed to the need to build and maintain a *capability* to cope with issues around differences and similarities on an ongoing basis.

6. Leaders confusing their personal beliefs and behaviors with those of their organizations. This confusion can make it difficult to realize and address collective realities regarding their enterprises.

Potential Benefits

In light of so many obstacles, why is now a good time to pursue World-Class Diversity Management?

One major benefit would be the enhancement of global competitiveness. As globalization increases, few enterprises anywhere in the world—regional, national, or international—will be immune to global competition. To return to the earlier baseball analogy, the more teams around the world play the game, the more U.S. teams must become competitive within national *and* international boundaries. Enterprises must expand their focus if they aspire to become world class.

A second benefit would be greater organizational consistency across the nation and the globe. Globalization demands that we make sense of diversity and think in terms of *world* philosophies and practices. Yet there is little consistency with respect to diversity across national boundaries. For example, U.S.-based global corporations are finding that other countries resist American-style diversity activities—rightly or wrongly—on the grounds that they do not have the same issues as those related to America’s history of slavery and race relations. These companies do understand the need for consistency between global and domestic diversity thrusts, however, if they are to demonstrate commitment to diversity and also achieve efficiency and effectiveness with their efforts. A rationalized world perspective of the field would facilitate such consistency.

Without understanding the forest (the whole) of diversity, organizational diversity leaders treat their domestic and international arenas as two unrelated trees (dimensions). Chief diversity officers sometimes say with pride, “We are doing global diversity now.” An implication is that “global” is better and represents a move to the next level, that the domestic issues have been mastered. A rationalized perspective would encourage integration of the two arenas within the context of the diversity forest.

A further benefit of developing a World-Class Diversity Management concept is that it would free organizations and individuals from their current imprisonment by domestic diversity paradigms (mindsets). The resulting independence of thought would help organizations to move toward the next level with their diversity management efforts.

For some time, I have known about the impact of paradigms on the behavior of individuals and organizations and their ability to greatly inhibit change. However, a recent personal experience heightened my understanding of this phenomenon.

I found myself in the new Jacksonville, Florida, airport. As I prepared to wash my hands and exit the men's room, I noticed there were no wash basins; instead, a marble slab under faucets with a drain at the back of the flat surface served the function of the bowls. As you wash your hands, water runs down on the marble slab and flows backward to the drain.

At first, it took me a minute to be clear that I had not walked by the wash basins—to realize that what I saw was a new approach to hand washing. Several questions flashed through my mind: “What is this?” “Why did they do this?” “Is it more sanitary?” “Is this more cost effective?” “More green?” “Why?!” “What was wrong with the way it was?”

For that moment, I was in paradigm shock. My paradigm for airport washrooms collided with the reality of the new arrangement in the Jacksonville airport, and for a moment the collision immobilized me. If I had had the option of a traditional arrangement, I have no doubt that I would have chosen it.

Individuals and organizations can be imprisoned by their domestic diversity paradigms in much the same way. For example, U.S.-based corporations tend to focus on workforce diversity from the perspective of the civil rights movement. Going global has forced many to rethink their diversity paradigm and to broaden their perspective. Outside the United States, enterprises tend to be adamant that they do not share the United States' issues.

Not long ago, I made a presentation in England. The client requested that I arrive early so that I might be oriented. Our orientation meeting began with me talking about my approach to diversity with respect to acquisitions, nationalities, products, and functions. When I had finished, I asked what I needed to know for my presentation. “You're fine,” the client's representatives replied. They simply

had wanted to be sure I had not come with a way of thinking about diversity that was at odds with their thinking; in particular, they did not want me to bring a race and gender perspective that they considered to be peculiar to the United States. My model and its assumption of a global application to any diversity issue appeared attractive to them.

As United States managers bump into other diversity paradigms in pursuit of world-class standards, the result hopefully will be an increase in innovation and movement toward the next level.

A related benefit to being freed from paradigm imprisonment would be a greater readiness for addressing the forest of diversity. Some individuals are so constrained by their dominant paradigm that they can only see their pet dimension and fear that any focus on the forest would diminish attention for their favorite diversity issue. Others are not even aware of the forest. Clearly, for these individuals, any release from their dominant paradigm would greatly enhance their capability to be productive with other dimensions in the forest.

The development of World-Class Diversity Management would facilitate talent management. In a real sense, we are circling back to where we were years ago—talking about the need to get the most from diverse human resources in organizations and communities. About twenty-five years ago, in the wake of the Hudson Institute's *Workforce 2000* report,¹ pioneers in the diversity arena advocated the importance of preparing to manage an increasingly diverse workforce. Now, incredibly, it's possible to engage in discussions and read books about talent management with barely a mention of diversity. Against this backdrop, proponents of world-class diversity can enhance understanding of the importance of taking diversity into account when tapping the potential of a diverse pool of talent, and simultaneously secure a platform for furthering their rationalization agenda. While this reminder might seem unnecessary, apparently, it is. The reality of global talent pools calls for thinking in terms of worldwide best practices in diversity management.

The pursuit of World-Class Diversity Management at this time would take advantage of a growing implicit and explicit awareness of diversity beyond race, gender, and ethnicity in the workforce. President Barack Obama's selection of members for his National Economic Council provided an example of implicit awareness of diversity. The president wanted representation of different schools of thought on the council, in hopes that the variety would better generate solutions for the country's complex economic challenges. Most agreed with him but worried that a group of competent, confident, and assertive people with various views might degenerate into dysfunctional chaos. The implicit concern was that the group might not be able to manage their thought diversity.²

With its emphasis on the diversity forest, World-Class Diversity Management would enhance the ability of individuals, organizations and communities to deal with dimensions other than race, gender and ethnicity. Achieving World-Class status would be especially helpful in situations involving diversity of thought.

Finally, taking action now would permit the leveraging of a growing desire for more professionalization and rationalization. For some, this desire is fueled by a perceived decline in the field's status. For others, it comes from a feeling of "being stuck." For still others, the persistence of ongoing diversity challenges creates an urgency to move on to the next level. Whatever the specific reason, the reality is clear. We must move forward as a rationalized professional field.

THIS BOOK

Overall Purpose

In spite of the diversity field's many problems and the belief by many that it is premature to discuss World-Class Diversity Manage-

ment, the overall purpose of this book is to demonstrate that it is possible to establish and pursue world-class standards. I believe that the Strategic Diversity Management Process (SDMP) and the Four Quadrants Model that form the core of this book meet the requirements for achieving world-class status:

- a framework that can be applied universally
- an approach that allows for ease of comparison, discussion, and analysis across the globe
- an approach that fosters awareness and understanding of the field of diversity and not just its individual dimensions
- an approach grounded in a universal process for addressing any diversity issue

The SDMP provides a set of universal definitions and a decision-making process that can be used with any approach, while the four quadrants collectively offer core diversity management strategies that can be used with any diversity mixture. Together, they provide the wherewithal for establishing and pursuing global standards in diversity.

Content and Organization

Figure I-1 captures the book's content. "World-Class Diversity Management" is positioned at the top of the figure because that is the focus of the book and where this introduction began. The vertical arrows represent the four quadrants, or *core diversity management strategies*, presented in part I, chapters 1–4. They are the paths to world-class status. The strategies are as follows:

1. Managing workforce representation. The focus is on attaining the desired numerical workforce profile with respect to race, gender, ethnicity, and other selected demographic dimensions.

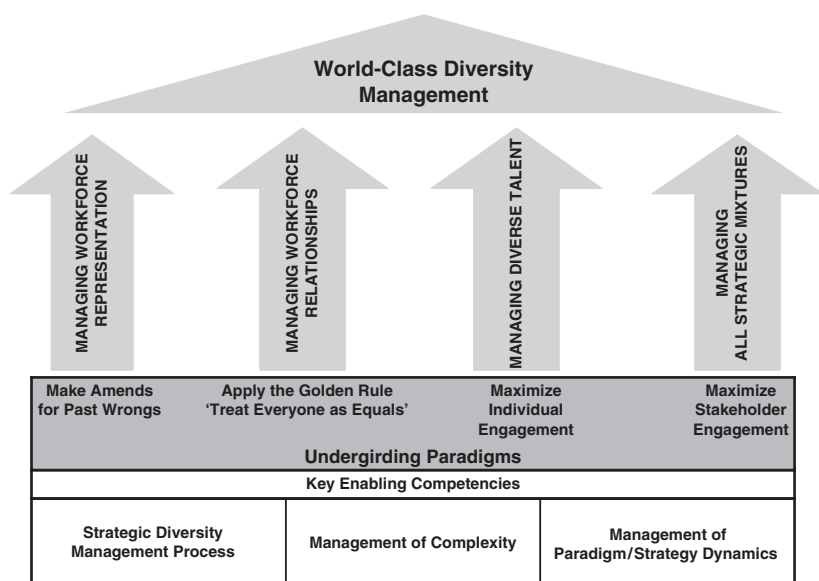


FIGURE I-1. Building World-Class Diversity Management Capability

2. Managing workforce demographic relationships. The focus is on achieving and maintaining harmonious relationships.

3. Managing diverse talent. The focus is on creating an environment that enables leaders and managers to access talent however it comes packaged in terms of race, gender, and ethnicity.

4. Managing all strategic diversity mixtures. The focus is on developing a capability to make quality decisions in the midst of any type of strategic diversity mixture.

These four strategies serve the organization's overarching mission, vision, and strategy, which determine its diversity management aspirations. The words "A Strategic Approach" in the title of this book sug-

gest that the way an organization applies its world-class capability will be a function of its overall strategy.

The horizontal bar beneath the arrows in figure I-1 reflects the paradigms that undergird the strategies. Each diversity paradigm predisposes individuals and organizations to one of the core diversity management strategies. The four paradigms are as follows:

1. Make amends for past wrongs. The focus is on compensating oppressed or disadvantaged groups for past injustices against them. Proponents of this paradigm are predisposed to Managing Workforce Representation.

2. Apply the Golden Rule. The focus is on pursuing harmony and achieving peaceful coexistence among groups. Proponents of this paradigm are predisposed to managing workforce demographic relationships.

3. Maximize individual engagement. The focus is on integrating the talent in the organization and maximizing the engagement of participants in an entity. Proponents of this paradigm are predisposed to Managing Diverse Talent.

4. Maximize stakeholder engagement. The focus is on engaging stakeholders by making quality decisions in the midst of all kinds of diversity. Proponents of this paradigm are predisposed to managing strategic diversity mixtures.

Next figure I-1 reflects the content of part II, chapters 5–7. These chapters discuss the *key enabling competencies* that must be mastered to make possible the implementation (actualization) of the core diversity management strategies: the Strategic Diversity Management Process, the management of complexity, and the management of strategy and paradigm dynamics.

Part III of the book, chapters 8–9, focuses on the application of the various components in the interest of building World-Class Diversity Management capability and taking diversity management to the next level in a corporation. Included here is the composite case study of Jeff Kilt.

My hope is that figure I-1, when combined with an understanding of two other aspects of the book's organization, will allow the reader to easily navigate the discussions that follow, even though that may require negotiating some unfamiliar territory. The two other aspects of the book's organization are:

1. Discussion of the diversity management strategies from an evolutionary perspective. I take this approach in hopes of highlighting how the dynamics of diversity and diversity management have developed over the years.

2. A focus on the United States. I use this focus in an effort to keep the scope of the book manageable, not to minimize diversity work and its evolution in other countries. I also have selected this focus because of my belief that in the United States, diversity and diversity management practices flow from a peculiar legacy of slavery, oppression, civil rights, and social justice. Hopefully, observers familiar with diversity work in other geographical locations will provide an accounting that can be compared to what I report for the United States.

World-Class Diversity Management in Action

As readers move through the book, the principal attributes of World-Class Diversity Management in action will become clearer. At this junction, I offer a glimpse of what might be involved.

As figure I-1 denotes, organizational participants with World-Class Diversity Management capability would be using the four quadrants

and would be capable of addressing workforce diversity and *all* other strategic diversity mixtures. Similarly, individuals would be capable of managing *all* diversity mixtures critical to their personal well-being—whether at work, at home, or in the community.

To be able to use the Four Quadrants Model, people individually and collectively would have accomplished the following:

- Developed skill and competency in applying the SDMP in all four quadrants. This is absolutely essential for effective decision making in each area.
- Developed skill and competency in managing complexity. Since diversity generates complexity, working through related complexities becomes a prerequisite for diversity management.
- Developed skill and competency in managing core strategy and paradigm dynamics. To use each core strategy to the appropriate degree, individuals and organizations will need sufficient paradigm flexibility to move among the quadrants. Inflexibility will mean rigid adherence to a core strategy even when using it is dysfunctional.

Overarching this activity would be an ongoing effort to build and maintain sustainable capability. Diversity management would be seen as a tool to be accessed as needed, not as a problem to be solved and pushed aside. Continuous learning and improvement would be paramount considerations.

Audiences

My hope is that this book will engage a number of diverse audiences. Its *primary* intended audience is CEOs, CDOs, and other senior-level general managers who want to know how diversity management can help in ratcheting up their efforts to achieve workforce diversity.

Leaders seeking guidance as to how diversity management can be applied to other managerial issues—such as customer relations, acquisitions and mergers, headquarters and field relations, functional synergy, and innovations—will also find this book useful. In particular, the notions of craft and capability should be of interest. Overall, the book should enhance leaders' ability to develop and implement diversity strategies for their organizations.

Why senior-level leaders? Writing primarily for senior-level leaders highlights that for me diversity management is not an end in and of itself, but, ultimately, a means of achieving the *overall* mission and objectives of an enterprise, responsibilities that fall under the direct purview of senior executives. Also, some of my most productive experiences as a consultant have been working with senior executives who understood diversity management and took care to be operationally involved. As a result, I am convinced that senior management engagement is essential to optimal results.

The book's *secondary* intended audience is diversity professionals, HR leaders, academicians, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officials, and policy makers:

Diversity professionals. This book can serve as a primer for individuals new to the field. It can serve as a context for experienced professionals deciding how to “move to the next level” and for rationalizing diversity efforts across dimensions and locations.

HR leaders. The benefits for diversity professionals apply for HR practitioners, as well. Additionally, the book can foster an enhanced understanding of the differences between diversity management and human resources and provide clarity about how the two fields can complement each other. For example, the book might serve as a reminder of how diversity management can support talent management and help to clarify that diversity management is not an “HR function.”

Academicians. Professors who offer an overview of the diversity field should find the book invaluable. In addition, academicians focused on the study and research of diversity in organizations and communities will find that the book provides a framework for mapping new lines of inquiry to advance the field.

EEO officials. The book should foster understanding of how the efforts of EEO officials can coexist or even mesh with diversity efforts. In a very real sense, as the book differentiates among the trees in the forest of diversity, it should affirm the legitimacy of the EEO function.

Policy makers. As political leaders move to diminish dysfunctional divisiveness within the country, policy makers will become more aware of the importance of managing diversity. This, in turn, should increase their desire to learn more about the field. Even experienced policy makers should find the book a useful primer to inform their thinking and deliberations about diversity-related options.

The intended audiences constitute a diverse set of groups. Some have said that this audience diversity presents a significant writing challenge, as the various groups are likely to have different criteria for judging a book as useful. I agree. The intended audiences do have different perspectives, requirements, and preferences, and the writing has been a challenge. Still, individuals within each group share a commonality: a desire to engage in thoughtful dialogue about diversity. It is for these people that the book has been written.

TIPS FOR THE READER

Six tips will help to make reading this book more enjoyable and profitable:

1. Read the book from the perspective of a craftsperson sharpening his capabilities. Read not for solutions, but rather for frameworks and processes that might be used to generate solutions.

2. Think of the book as presenting the “big picture,” as a “survey exploration” on diversity. As any good exploration does, the book will provide a useful way to organize the field. Readers may leave the book wishing more had been said about a given topic, or more had been drawn from certain fields or academic research. In addition, the book’s focus on the forest (or whole) of diversity means that individuals’ pet dimensions may be covered only to a limited extent—if at all. Similarly, “hot” diversity topics of the day may not be included. My expectation is that greater awareness of the diversity forest and its dynamics will enhance the reader’s ability to deal with the trees (dimensions) of their choice.

3. Read the book with an eye toward determining what is useful, not what is “right or wrong.” My intent is to provide frameworks that can be used for understanding, organizing, and generating solutions and action planning with respect to diversity management, rather than presenting evaluative critiques of different strategies and approaches.

4. Keep in mind the evolutionary perspective of the book with respect to the core diversity management strategies. This calls for a discussion of historical context. These discussions are presented not for the sake of history, but for the sake of context. Some of these historical discussions will revolve around issues of civil rights, social justice, and human rights, territory with which many readers are familiar. You will take more from the book by reading for *context* with respect to each diversity management strategy rather than presuming the material is typical of such discussion.

5. Remember that the book is not a review of the academic literature on diversity, but rather one person's reasoning as to what would constitute world class in the field and how that status might be achieved. Although there is substantial and significant diversity academic literature, a review of that literature is beyond the scope of this book. At some point, it would be beneficial to see if a review of the academic literature might lead to similar or different reasoning and projections about World-Class Diversity Management.

6. Although the book is not about “global diversity” as usually discussed, its “universal” projections apply globally. Because I begin my survey with the evolution of diversity in the United States, it might seem as if my universals apply only to the United States. But I don't think that's true. I believe that if another writer were to conduct a survey beginning with the early diversity practices of a different country or set of countries, her universals would be congruent with those coming from this book. I base my belief on the reasoning that unfolds in this book and on my personal exposure to diversity work in other countries. (That is another project that might be beneficial at some point.)

In summary, my intent is that the book will promote the development of a diversity management capability that can be applied to diversity forests anywhere in the world. My hope is that realization of this intent will advance the field's credibility as a global influence.

Discussion

Interestingly, as the book has evolved, I have found myself projecting paths to world-class status not only for individuals and organizations, but for the field of diversity, as well. This, for me, has been an exciting undertaking.

My hope is that the reader will relate some of the many insights I gleaned in writing this book to his own experience and, like me, become more optimistic—indeed, inspired—about the field's future and possibilities. Neither my own nor the reader's optimism will prevent false starts and challenges. Still, the opportunities for contribution are great. I hope that in a small, but significant way this book will encourage the craftsmanship and capability that will be required.

this material has been excerpted from

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A Strategic Approach***

by R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr.

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