

Managing Diversity with Multinational Staff: Challenges for Career Counselling

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Diversity all around!

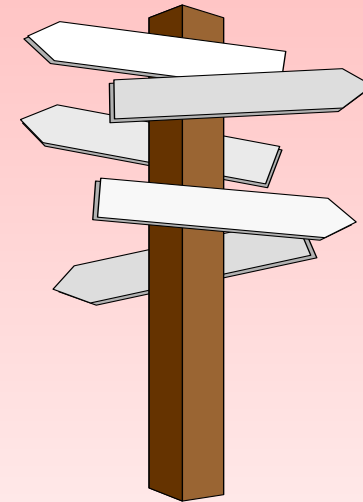
- diverse environment not only for big companies but also for SME
- impact of globalization
- increasing diverse workforce = outcome of demographical development, migration, lack of high-qualified staff and recruitment in other parts of the world

Highly segregated multi-ethnic workforce in Germany

Highly qualified multinational staff -
recruited by big companies, IT industry etc.

Less qualified immigrant workers
and their families (some of them
in 2nd and 3rd generation)

Particular groups (e.g. refugees) who
hardly get work permit
(more or less qualified)



How to deal with a diverse workforce



... in companies:

- expecting adaptation and enculturation without big problems = pattern of ignorance of cultural diversity
- special offers at taking up one's job (greencard etc.) = pattern of modified ignorance of cultural diversity
- efforts for integration = pattern of making people fit to majority culture
- managing diversity = pattern of making use of a diverse workforce

... in employment offices?

- expecting people to work or to go home = pattern of discrimination of minority groups
- viewing people in terms of lacks and barriers = normal employee-pattern
- special offers to people: language course, trainings to improve special skills = pattern of compensation / integration

... in career counseling?

- being aware of cultural differences in behavior, social relationships, motivation, perception of the self and others = pattern of awareness
- understanding the needs of clients with different cultural backgrounds = pattern of empathy
- viewing the capacities of the clients instead of barriers = pattern of making the difference

Managing Diversity means ...

- using features and characteristics of individuals and groups as a strategic resource for the company
- that individuals no longer have to adapt to a dominant culture in which “otherness” is regarded as a disadvantage
- recognizing differences and individuality
- reducing pressure to conform
- creating scope for individual development along the lines of corporate goals

Dominant and marginal cultures

**Marginal
culture:**

female

**Marginal
culture:**

over 55

**Dominant
Culture is e.g.:**
male
white
“national”
married
...

**Marginal
culture:**

foreigner

**Marginal
culture:**

homosexual

Diversity can be deliberately encouraged and managed by ...

- creating awareness of differences
- mixing genders, ethnic groups, people with different cultural backgrounds and generations
- accepting different working styles, knowledge and ways of thinking
- promoting intercultural sensibility
- facilitating learning processes at individual, group and organizational level

Benefits and advantages for companies

- marketing: quicker and better response to heterogeneous customer group needs
- advantage of recruiting human resources / higher staff loyalty / higher performance
- better conflict management due to diverse management styles
- flexibility in a rapidly changing environment by reducing pressure to conform
- managing diversity = image factor !

Career Counseling and Managing Diversity

- **knowledge about advantages of Managing Diversity**
- **identifying and assessing skills of diverse workforce**
- **contact to companies who deal successfully with multinational staff**
- **promoting trainings on the job for foreign workers to avoid unproductive „loops“**



Managing Diversity in Germany

- well-known concept in some major companies
- but hardly implemented in German locations of big international groups
- little research done on German companies, only some case studies (exception: prejudice and discrimination in the political sector)

Case 1: diversity standards at FORD in Germany

Aims

- developing the „world car“ which needs world staff and has to be thoroughly tested by various groups (sounding board); image factors

Strategies

- work-life balance
- mentoring programs for women´s career
- gay manager initiative
- 40 years Turkish workers at Ford

Case 2: small high-tech company with Russian-German management (LIMO)

Aims:

- development of micro-optics using a diverse workforce and aiming at international markets

Strategies

- internationalizing in sales and engineering
- integration of workers of many nations on the shop-floor

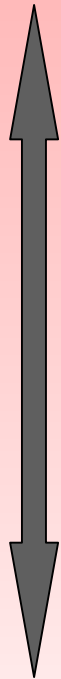
SMEs needs

Programs / measures / trainings for lower qualified employees:

- How to develop competencies under intercultural conditions (language and communication problems, different cultural understanding of work)?
- How to develop intercultural competencies of German lower qualified staff (e.g. shift leaders)?

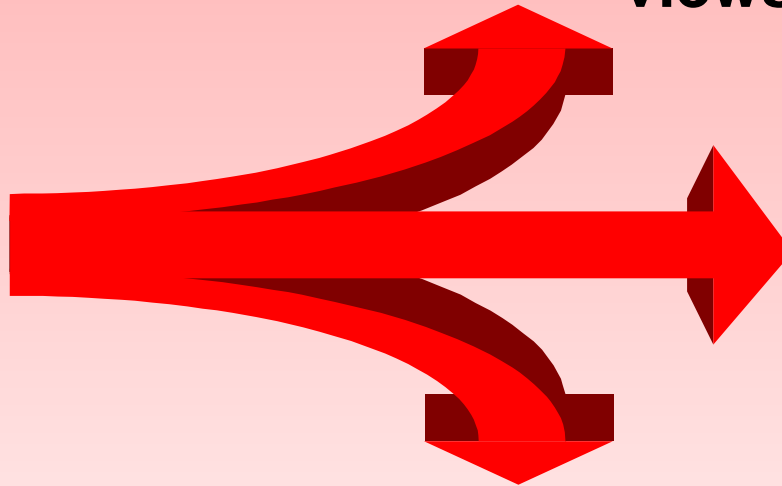
Learning within the process of managing diversity

Understanding



Instruction

Individual: changes internal views



Group: a place for practising new forms of behavior

Organization: using diversity as a resource, generating new rules