



# CONNECTIONS

*Communicating in Culturally Diverse Environments*



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## Getting Results From Your Diversity Program

According to a study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Fortune Magazine (*The Study of Workplace Diversity Initiatives, 2001*), over 75% of surveyed organizations have engaged in diversity activities of some fashion. In a follow-up study four months after the events of 9/11, SHRM and Fortune Magazine (*Survey on the Changing Face of Diversity, 2002*) reported that over 97% of responding organizations said their investment in diversity programs would either stay the same or increase. Whether it is training, recruitment, career development or community

outreach, it is clear that more and more organizations are implementing diversity programs and will continue to do so. Unfortunately, it is equally clear that many of these programs fail. Whether you have a program in place or are considering implementation of a diversity initiative, there are four steps you must take to ensure success.

1. **Define the benefits you hope to achieve.** Put another way, what do you have to gain by implementing this diversity program? It doesn't make sense to proceed with any type of initiative if you have not clearly defined the benefits you

hope to gain and the value it will provide for your organization. Generally speaking, the benefits accrued from diversity programs can be divided into three main categories which include **improved individual and organizational performance** (e.g., improved quality of the workforce, increased ability to attract and retain the best human resources), **enhanced customer service** (e.g., greater ability to connect with and satisfy an increasingly diverse customer base), and **improved organizational bottom line** (e.g., increased organizational value/profitability, increased revenues, reduced turnover).

## Getting Results From Your Diversity Program

2. **Identify your goals and describe how they connect to organizational objectives.** A goal is a statement of a desired end state. It specifies where you want to be at a given point in the diversity initiative, and provides you with a means to evaluate progress. Effective

diversity goals should be written using the SMART goal method:

**Specific** - The goal is concise and stated in performance terms.

**Measurable** - It is easy to determine if the goal has been met.

**Achievable** - The goal is realistic and attainable.

**Relevant** - The goal is tied to organizational performance needs and objectives.

**Time-Bound** - The goal has an identifiable time-frame for completion.

COMMUNICATING IN CULTURALLY  
DIVERSE ENVIRONMENTS

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## Getting Results From Your Diversity Program (continued)

You can use the following model to write a diversity SMART goal, "By the end of \_\_\_\_\_, we will \_\_\_\_\_, as demonstrated by \_\_\_\_\_". This ensures that the goal is time-bound, is measurable, is concise and is stated in performance terms. For example, "By the end of the first quarter of 2005, we will identify specific measures and metrics that will be used to assess managerial diversity performance, as demonstrated by the inclusion of those metrics in the company's formal performance appraisal system."

3. **Determine how your goals will be achieved.** Your next step is to specify how each SMART goal will be achieved. This includes the key actions needed for successful completion, the identification of the key players needed for carrying out these actions, and a completion date for each activity. These action plans do not need to be overly detailed or particularly long. In fact, they work best when they are brief and include just the information needed to clarify the requisite activities. Keep in mind that it is during this stage that your primary interventions and activities are implemented. Such activities can include training and development programs, mentoring and coaching programs, targeted recruitment activities, marketing of products and services to diverse clients, community outreach, development of diversity-friendly policies and proce-

## Getting Results From Your Diversity Program (continued)

dures, creation of job aids, and celebration of cultural events.

4. **Determine how you will evaluate success.** You will need to clarify how the diversity initiative will be evaluated. This is particularly important these days since the value of some diversity activities has been called into question. The good news is that once you have effectively addressed the first three steps, the final step is relatively easy. That's because well constructed SMART goals have a built-in evaluation component. It's easy to tell if the goal has been achieved. For example, if your goal is to increase the diversity of employee candidate pools by 10%, at the designated point in time you simply measure to see if candidate pool diversity has increased by 10%. If not, you know you will have to modify your diversity program.

## Dr. Holmes' Upcoming Presentations and Publications

**Evaluating Skills-Based Diversity Training** - A general session at the International Society for Performance Improvement's annual Instructional Systems Development conference in Chicago, IL from September 30 - October 2, 2004. Please visit the ISPI website for more information at [www.ispi.org](http://www.ispi.org).

**Designing and Facilitating Performance-Based Diversity Training** - An article published in the Performance Improvement journal of the International Society for Performance Improvement, May/June 2004 issue. Please contact us for free reprints.

