

A Compelling Business Case for Diversity?

Extract from Personnel Today:

Diversity given low priority despite legislation, survey shows

UK employers are failing to address workplace diversity, despite the country's long standing equality legislation.

A survey conducted by online recruitment firm Monster, questioning 660 employers, found that six in 10 respondents did not have a diverse workforce or were unaware whether they did. Four in 10 said diversity is a "big priority", while 36% said it was not at all, with 15% unsure. One employer in 10 said they were starting to think about it, but was not yet a reality.

The Employment Equality Regulations are due to be updated later this year to ensure the Equal Treatment Directive is adequately implemented.

Rob Brouwer, chief executive of Monster UK and Ireland, said: "Employers may not be aware of the rewards a diverse workforce can reap for their business. People from different backgrounds provide the workforce with a broader skill set and cultural differences in practice and enables you to select from a bigger pool of candidates."

Comment from Ian Barr:

On the one hand, it is heartening to read that 40% of employers say that "diversity is a big priority", as even five years ago that would not have been the case. The business case for diversity is becoming a reality more and more for employers across all sectors – but what of the other 60%. What are they ignoring?

We would suggest that there are four key drivers for Diversity:

Employer of Choice

The changing demographics and the 'war for talent', combined with the different expectations and values of the next generations of recruits put diversity at the heart of being the 'employer of choice'.

Competitive Advantage

Building on what Rob Brouwer from Monster said, not only will people from different backgrounds provide a broader set of skills, but managing diversity effectively will provide greater appeal to new customers, help address new and emerging markets and foster innovation and creativity.

Corporate Reputation

Becoming a great company to do business with is an increasingly essential and challenging goal. Building and protecting brand reputation and value appeals to the ever increasingly demanding expectations of shareholders and other key stakeholders. The effective implementation of your diversity strategy is a core element in corporate reputation in the 21st Century.

Legislation

There is, of course, a downside in not complying with equality legislation in terms of Tribunal Claims and awards, lost management time and damage to reputation. But, increasingly, the public sector is looking to its supply chain to have established good practice in equality and diversity before finalising decisions on major tenders.

That should be compelling enough for the other 60%, perhaps?

Brightwave's comment:

At Brightwave, we are using a blend of media and technology to communicate the value of diversity that goes beyond the traditional "tick in the box" compliance approach. One of the benefits this brings is to improve the overall consistency and quality of these messages, while also being persistent – they are available to be re-used at any time to aid reinforcement and recall. A particularly powerful approach is the use of interactive video scenarios. If carefully scripted to represent the current and desired cultural behaviour of an organisation they can be highly effective in changing attitudes amongst staff at all levels.

Call us on 01273 827676 or email us at enquiries@brightwave.co.uk to find out how you can achieve an inclusive workplace with our online equality and diversity training.