EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research paper looks at diversity in America and how over the years it has been used more as a diversionary tactic than a unifying concept. Diversity has grown from an obscure, voluntary business function, into a necessary corporate strategy that most American corporations seem to outwardly acknowledge—to the tune of corporations collectively spending hundreds of millions of dollars to ensure its successful implementation.

But how seriously engaged are businesses in the area of diversity? Is it a true indication of their desired corporate culture, or are they simply looking to avoid any potential litigation? It’s easy to look at the advancements in diversity today and conclude that we have turned the corner. After all, President Barack Obama is in the White House, and there are currently more minorities in Congress than ever before. But while some may look at these public outliers as the rule and falsely conclude that America has morphed into a “post-racial” society, those with a thorough understanding of what’s really going on look at them as the exception. Celebratory and history making to be sure, but exceptions nonetheless.

For decades, specifically over the past 50 years, the fight for diversity and inclusion has waged on with wavering results. And as we mark the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it is important to explore the obstacles strewn in the path of its progress, both then and now. Even in more contemporary times, overt and covert opposition to civil rights and the inclusive society it promotes still persists. We will chronicle those in this document, as well as answer the questions: Are those who fight for diversity and full inclusion everyday waging a “War on Whites?” Is there such a thing as the paranoid myth of white victimhood?

Meanwhile, the shifting American populace requires businesses to re-adjust their generations-old way of thinking. A more tolerant corporate culture is now necessary, as the Black, Hispanic and Asian populations continue to grow. As a result, most corporations respond with mandating diversity training as a means of assisting their workforces with this metamorphosis. While important, how relevant and successful are these training sessions? Are they doing more harm than good?

These and other concepts are explored in the following pages.
INTRODUCTION

There’s a buzzword sweeping the American business landscape; one that triggers divergent opinions that span the entire spectrum: Diversity. Its meaning in the context of workplace multiplicity takes different shapes and forms, depending on one’s perspective. Whatever its meaning, diversity has become a central piece in the ongoing battle for economic parity in America.

As it relates to the American business lexicon, diversity broadly describes one’s adherence to and acceptance of a more progressive culture. Indeed, corporations’ adherence to and acceptance of diversity in decades past proved to be more wishful thinking than anything. Before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, companies could turn down qualified minority suppliers for contracts and other business dealings, while also rejecting job applicants because of their race, religion, gender or national origin. And it would all be legal.

The enactment of the Civil Rights Act was designed to put an end to those kinds of tactics. But even though we are 50 years removed from that historic legislation, racial equality is still not guaranteed. Why is that? In this supposed “post-racial America,” diversity is often a superficial element in everyday business dealings—even as corporations give its importance a fair amount of lip service. Affirmative action, likewise, has found itself in the crosshairs of the opposition. Its elimination in post-secondary education has triggered an alarming drop in minority enrollment, even as these schools attempt to project a diverse culture in their rhetoric and marketing collateral.

The challenge of attaining diversity is a difficult one. It requires modifying one’s thinking and complementing that changed mindset with the proper action. It requires management to create conducive workplace policies and a climate that fosters diversity. It requires management to weave diversity into the very fabric of the organization, not because it feels the need to construct a façade that may later help counter discrimination litigation, but because they look at diversity as a moral and ethical imperative.
NATIONAL REVIEW: “THE WHITE COMMUNITY...IS THE ADVANCED RACE”

More than five decades ago, in the midst of bloodshed and violence aimed at those battling for equality in the United States, an organized civil rights movement forced America to accept integration as a necessary social goal. Lawmakers pushed civil rights legislation through Congress in the early 1960s in response to the racism and discrimination sweeping the country, particularly in the South.

Several congressmen staunchly opposed the bill. Those most resolute in their opposition mounted a 534-hour Senate filibuster in an effort to prevent the bill from passing.¹ Eventually, the bill received the necessary two-thirds vote in Congress, and President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law on July 2, 1964.

Predictably, the opposition continued on with its crusade to rid the country of this historic legislation. Outlawing discrimination is one thing, these critics argued; mandating integration is another, amounting to an illegitimate incursion of government power into the private realm.² For as long as there have been civil rights laws, conservatives have been developing arguments and instruments to reverse it.³ The National Review, a conservative publication founded by William F. Buckley Jr. in 1955, opposed the civil rights movement from the start. Relatedly, the publication reacted to the 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education thusly:

_The central question that emerges is whether the white community in the South is entitled to take measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas where it does not predominate numerically. The sobering answer is yes—the white community is so entitled because...it is the advanced race._⁴

Other factions have expressed similar opposition toward initiatives that promote diversity. These groups aren’t just relegated to the crucible of the turbulent 1960s; some of these factions with extreme oppositional views of civil rights have taken root during modern times. Linda Chavez, for instance, founded in 1995 the Center for Equal Opportunity (CEO), a conservative think tank. Its goal is to counter the

---

¹ Branch, Taylor. "Lasting 534 hours, the 1964 filibuster filled 63,000 pages of Congressional Record, with an estimated ten million words." _Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-65._ Pg. 336. 1998.
³ Ibid. pg. 16.
⁴ "Why the South Must Prevail." _National Review._ 4 August 24, 1957. 149.

© 2014 Autry Media Group
divisive impact of race-conscious public policies.\(^5\) CEO claims civil rights regulations corrupt the economy,\(^6\) and that these regulations provide vast incentives for inefficiency and fraud.\(^7\) Chavez’s solution is to do away with government programs in exchange for what CEO calls “true equality.” CEO believes the time has come to abandon double standards and to promote true equality before the law,\(^8\) since it feels civil rights legislation is ill-equipped to do so.

To put Chavez’s viewpoint in perspective, she served as one of the leaders of the Reagan Administration’s crusade to reverse the government’s position on civil rights programs such as school integration, affirmative action, bilingual education and pay equity.\(^9\) Reagan also named Chavez staff director at the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in 1983 as part of a reorganization in which he replaced three liberal members with conservatives.\(^10\) Chavez led the charge to reverse the government’s civil rights program, taking positions against affirmative action, among other programs.\(^11\) Further, Chavez spearheaded an effort to help urge state governments to end so-called racial preferences and other forms of discrimination in their laws and programs.\(^12\)

**“THE ONLY LEGALIZED DISCRIMINATION IN THIS COUNTRY IS AGAINST WHITE MALES”**

The Center for Individual Rights (CIR) has been one of the most politically extreme groups challenging civil rights and racial equality in the United States since it began in 1989. The origins of CIR can be found in the incubators of the Reagan Justice Department and several of the key private right-wing legal advocacy groups,

---

\(^10\) Nelson, Dale W. “Another Ex-Democrat in the White House.” *Record*. April 28, 1985. The membership of the panel was later enlarged from six to eight by Congress, with conservatives retaining control.
in particular the Washington Legal Foundation (WLF) and the American Legal Foundation (ALF).\(^{13}\)

One of CIR’s founders, Michael Greve, has a rather peculiar view on race in America. Greve once said during an interview in the *National Journal* that “the only legalized discrimination in this country is against white males.”\(^ {14}\) He also once threatened universities that practice affirmative action with this message: “We’ll sue you for punitive damages. We will attack your integrity. We will nail you to the wall.”\(^ {15}\)

As if Greve’s unfiltered comments aren’t enough to accurately portray CIR’s points of view, the organization as a whole opposed the Violence Against Women Act, which it asserted is unconstitutional because it addresses conduct by private citizens, rather than official government conduct.\(^ {16}\) CIR also launched a national campaign in 1999 against affirmative action by urging students to sue their colleges for racial discrimination in admissions.\(^ {17}\)

Killing affirmative action is but one of CIR’s ultimate agenda items. According to its 1997-98 annual report, the organization’s long-term objective is the re-invigoration of meaningful constitutional constraints on government.\(^ {18}\) Government-enforced desegregation is a case in point. CIR’s principles have included the right to self-segregate.\(^ {19}\) CIR advocates a limited application of civil rights laws that would preserve private citizens’ rights to deal or not deal with other private citizens.\(^ {20}\)

**Diversity’s Transformation**

The organizations mentioned above represent a systemic and fundamental opposition to diversity. It is interesting to note, too, that these organizations and their leaders bring credence to the claim that the names of those who continually fight socially progressive ideologies aren’t always found on voting ballots. These


\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) This principle, “private citizens’ rights to deal or not deal with other private citizens” was articulated on the CIR website (Feb. 20, 1998) for some time, then subsequently rephrased to read “private citizens’ right to deal with other private citizens without government scrutiny.” (March 5, 1999).

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
factions are allowed to move about with stealth-like anonymity while wielding considerable influence and clout with those who have the power to amend social progress.

That is not to imply that those whose names we DO know aren’t engaging in the continued plot of altering the diversity landscape in America. And yes, the diversity landscape in America IS changing—and not in the sense of the continued expansion of the African American, Hispanic and Asian population. Rather, diversity is changing at its core and in a way that modifies the traditional ideals of the concept. Before we delve into how it has changed, let’s look into why it changed.

ROBINSON: “...THE PARANOID MYTH OF WHITE VICTIMHOOD” (The ‘Why’)

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ushered in an era when businesses—among other entities—could no longer discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin. It helped set the stage for improving employment and educational opportunities for African Americans and other minorities, while also addressing voter registration requirements, among numerous other areas.

Over the succeeding decades, the legal foundation established by the Civil Rights Act of 1964—and affirmative action to a lesser degree—positioned diversity as the central component in the ongoing battle for equal opportunity in America. But a strange thing happened on America’s journey toward a more diverse culture.

The efforts displayed by companies and post-secondary educational institutions to increase minority representation eventually triggered negative backlash from whites. Their complaints about America’s new form of inclusion varied, but it consistently came back to how often they feel unjustly snubbed in favor of a minority. Someone somewhere coined the deceptive phrase *Reverse Discrimination* as a descriptor of this phenomenon. That narrative is a fallacy of the highest order.

Civil rights legislation was enacted, in part, to counter America’s long-standing—and legal—practices that limited opportunities for African Americans and other minorities. Companies, upon the law’s enactment, were now prohibited from

*To tout “reverse discrimination” when minorities gain access over whites is akin to touting “reverse domestic violence” when a woman abuses a man. Discrimination is discrimination, regardless of who the perpetrator is or who the victim is. Period.*
discriminating on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin. It is this conscious effort of pursuing minority representation—at the expense of whites, some have contended—that has rankled the feelings of those who cling to the reverse discrimination claims. The most boisterous of this group, such as Alabama Congressman Mo Brooks, claim this illustrates a “war on whites.”21 Others have expressed similar notions about diversity.

Clint Bolick, author of The Affirmative Action Fraud and founder of the Institute for Justice, asserts the Civil Rights Act of 1964 sanctioned an unprecedented intrusion into individual autonomy.22

In his book Diversity: The Invention of A Concept, author Peter Wood said: Diversity represents an attempt to alter the root cultural assumptions on which American society is based; that the diversity movement has contributed significantly to falling educational performance and lower academic standards; that diversity is like an unruly guest in our house, and the time may have come to call a cab and send it home.23

Continuing the houseguest metaphor, Po Bronson of Time magazine once said of diversity: The idea of diversity seems to have worn out its welcome. It is now like a houseguest who has stayed too long.24 Bronson concludes by saying “we don’t want to lose what makes us ‘us.’”25

Eugene Robinson, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the Washington Post, called it the “paranoid myth of white victimhood.”26 This victimhood is gaining strength, Robinson writes. Perhaps the economic dislocation, rapid immigration from Latin America, (and the) changing demographics that will make this a majority-minority country before mid-century27 all play a role in this continuing mindset among whites.

But it is this ongoing narrative implying that whites are losing their grip on their generations-old dominance in America that has turned the tide on diversity. It is as if whites are on the outside looking in, their noses pressed against the window,

22 Bolick, Clint. The Affirmative Action Fraud. Pg. 42. 1996.
25 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
soliciting relief from this cold, cruel world. This chatter has increased in volume over the years, and now change is occurring.

**THE CHANGING SCOPE OF DIVERSITY (The ‘How’)**

There are countless benefits that emanated from the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, some of which aren’t always talked about. One of its most important, yet under-discussed components is how it served as the blueprint for subsequent legislation that sought equality for certain segments of society.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act are a few of the many that were modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Both collectively and on their own, these historic statutes have helped introduce tolerance where there was once intolerance; acceptance where there was once rejection; understanding where there was once ignorance. These kinds of large-scale responses to discrimination have led some to conclude that yes, discrimination in America is no longer. They claim laws are now on the books that prevent nefarious things from happening that may compromise equal opportunity.

There is a strong belief that diversity—specifically racial diversity—is now firmly entrenched in American society. Yet, there are some who think otherwise just as strongly, making it not so surprising that there are people who look at diversity as an annoying houseguest that won’t go away. *We’ve already attained a diverse culture*, they seem to say. *Why must we continue to dwell on it?* As a result, focus has steadily gone away from the traditional sense of diversity—race—to focus more on other aspects of a diverse culture—veterans, the disabled, women, LGBT, etc. How has diversity changed? *That’s how it’s changed.* More ingredients have been added to the “diversity pot.” Consequently, diversity’s meaning has swelled. More groups are now included in the diversity conversation, ushering in a much more expansive meaning of the concept. It is this broadening definition that leads to the neglect of certain groups. People of color appear to be the neglected bunch.

Most companies push back and say that’s not true. They proudly tout their record on diversity. They say they’ve put in the work and implemented all the strategies necessary to reach full equality. They share full-color diversity pamphlets that highlight minorities; this marketing collateral speaks glowingly about how the company’s values are aligned with diversity. They may even produce PowerPoint presentations that complement their message.
But when conversations about diversity go beyond the surface elements and key questions are raised, the story on diversity changes:

- How many people of color do you have on your company’s board of directors?
- How many people of color occupy the top 20 executive leadership positions?
- Do you utilize any minority investment banks in your stock buyback programs?
- Do any minority firms manage your pension fund assets?
- Do you have any black or minority advertising, law or accounting firms on your roster?
- What percent of business procurement do you do with minority businesses?

Invariably, the answers to the questions above are as follows, in order: zero; zero; no; no; no; zero. This example illustrates that diversity can be a diversion. We must go beyond diversity to what Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. calls “equanomics”—real equality and parity where inclusion of people of color on corporate boards, in senior leadership roles, advertising and professional services can be quantified and measured.

**The delusion of diversity training**

Companies, and America in general, package diversity into a nice bundle. They talk proudly of their accomplishments on the subject, the basis of which is usually found in the strategies they have in place to attain a diverse culture. Most often, that strategy is diversity training. But how effective is diversity training, and how truly engaged are companies in the process?

Indeed, the law is one reason employers favor diversity training. In the wake of a few recent settlements in race discrimination suits against large companies, including Texaco (which paid out $176 million in 1996), Coca-Cola ($192 million in 2000) and Merrill Lynch ($160 million in 2013), employers believe that having a program in place can proactively show a judge that they are sincerely fighting prejudice. But this is a myth, says Frank Dobbin, researcher from Harvard. “I don’t know of a single case where courts gave credit for diversity training,” he said.

Regardless, companies stand behind their diversity training initiatives and refer to them whenever their sincerity on the subject is challenged. In turn, those outside

---


the company who are without the requisite understanding may look at these efforts and applaud the company for its proactive steps. What goes unnoticed the entire time is the training could actually be doing more harm than good.

A comprehensive review of 31 years of data from 829 mid-size to large U.S. workplaces found that the kind of diversity training offered at most firms was followed by a 7.5 percent drop in the number of women in management. The number of black female managers fell by 10 percent, and the number of black men in top positions fell by 12 percent. Similar effects were seen for Hispanics and Asians.30

The study also found that programs work best when they are voluntary and focus on specific organizational skills, such as establishing mentoring relationships and giving minorities a chance to prove their worth in high-profile roles. Offering voluntary diversity training is followed by an increase in managerial diversity. Most employers, however, force their managers and workers to go through training, and this is the least effective option in terms of increasing diversity. Forcing people to go through training creates backlash against diversity.31

**IF DIVERSITY TRAINING FALLS SHORT, WHAT WORKS?**

While there are few silver bullet, foolproof methods of attaining diversity, research has found the following methods yield the best and most consistently positive results:

*Make Someone Responsible*

This is usually the diversity manager or chief diversity officer. Recently, firms have also put in taskforces, or diversity councils, comprising of managers from different departments and charged them with finding ways to increase diversity. Research shows this is a very effective method. Companies that establish taskforces typically see small decreases in the number of white men in management, and large increases for every other group. Firms that put in diversity managers see increases for all groups of women, and for black men.32
Develop a Mentorship Program

Mentoring has become a central part of many corporate diversity programs, particularly for black women. A recent study reveals mentoring helped increase their numbers in management 23.5 percent. The goal of mentoring is to pair talented, experienced employees to serve as mentors for promising, less experienced employees within an organization. Ideally, over time, the mentee gains skills, knowledge and a better understanding of the organization. Mentoring is about creating and nurturing a transformational relationship that changes both individuals.

CEO Buy-In

Diversity must be led from the top of an organization if it is to be successful. Former General Electric CEO Jack Welch initiated an aggressive diversity strategy that included employee networks, regular planning forums, formal mentoring and recruitment at HBCUs. Welch appointed a chief diversity officer, Deborah Elam, and in turn, women and minority representation in GE’s senior executive ranks increased from 29 percent in 2000 to 40 percent by 2005.

The effects of change

For those who argue against the need for continued diversity efforts, who say there is no longer a real need for government-backed measures promoting equality, one only needs to take a look at the effects of Michigan’s Proposal 2 ballot initiative. Proposal 2 passed in 2006 and effectively prohibited affirmative action by public institutions based on race, color, gender or religion.

34 http://www.management-mentors.com/Portals/41809/pdf/Mentoring's%20Role%20in%20Maximizing%20Diversity.pdf
Consequently, minority enrollment dropped at the University of Michigan after Proposal 2 was enacted. In 2006, the last full year in which race could be directly considered in admissions, blacks accounted for 6.4 percent of the freshman class. By 2012, that number dropped to 4.6 percent. In that same time period, Hispanic enrollment fell from 5.3 percent to 3.9 percent.\(^{36}\)

At Michigan State University in 2006, blacks represented 8.8 percent of the incoming class; 6.2 percent by 2012. The University of Michigan Law School enrolled 25 black students, or 6.8 percent of its first-year class, in 2006. That number dropped to 14 black students, or 3.9 percent, in 2008.\(^{37}\)

California’s Proposition 209, enacted in November 1996 and on which the Michigan initiative was based, has had a similar effect on minority student enrollment. At UC Berkeley, from 1995 to 1998, the number of admitted undergraduate California residents who are African American, Latino and American Indian dropped 58 percent; these students went from 27 percent of the admitted pool to 12 percent. At UCLA, underrepresented minority admissions dropped by 53 percent in that same period; they went from 28 percent to 13 percent of the pool.\(^{38}\)

Left to their own devices, and without the specter of being guided by legislation that requires adhering to diversity, it seems corporations, and especially public institutions, are content on allowing things to methodically go back to the way they used to be.


\(^{37}\) Ibid.

\(^{38}\) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/02/24/proposition-209_n_1300122.html
CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The assault on diversity and all its similarities has been a focal point of the establishment for decades. For years, there have been those in power and control that have had as their mission a vision of eradicating civil rights and equality from the root. Some of these figures and groups move about in relative secrecy, while their exclusionary policies are left out in the open for all to see.

A few companies, however, are very public about their issues with diversity. Google, for one, recently lowered the veil on its shortcomings with equality, candidly addressing issues concerning their lack of diversity on its blog. This, in part, was due to the sustained pressure put on by Rev. Jackson and others in getting the tech giant to release its diversity numbers. Google initially delayed releasing the figures, as the company was concerned about the image problems it would create. Asked during an interview why, Google executive Laszlo Bock said, “Quite frankly, we knew we would not look good. And we were worried about litigation. The right thing to do is to share this information, because we have an issue. Our industry has an issue.”39

Google’s concerns are valid. Men make up 70 percent of Google’s workforce, and only 3 percent of its total workforce is Hispanic; 2 percent are Black.40

Certainly, Google should be commended for its candor. But Google’s situation affirms a larger issue facing those fighting for diversity: managers continue to hire, promote and mentor people like themselves. Invariably, that means people that share their background and characteristics. Simply put, organizations work within a certain culture, and they work hard to find people that fit that culture. And perpetually, that tends NOT to be people of color.

But the battle continues. We understand full inclusion is not a destination. It is a journey. A process. An ongoing battle that requires a steadfast and dedicated mentality that forges a concrete opposition to forces that look to eradicate the gains made thus far. We will remain on that journey till the end.

---


© 2014 Autry Media Group