InTouch newsletter

keeping you informed, interested and interesting

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COMPANIES TAKE DIVERSITY MORE SERIOUSLY! True or false?

by Feroza Sader

t is true that some companies are taking Diversity seriously while others are still stuck in the belief that "birds of a feather must flock together"!

Best way to fight ignorance is with knowledge.

There is a huge drive – not only in South Africa but all over the world – to include people of diverse backgrounds in the workplace. Well I can't say much though for some like Google or the South African Police for that matter!! Yes they are "trying" but let's hope they "achieve" soon enough.



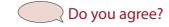
The challenges we are facing in our organisations have become more complex and more difficult but having a diverse workforce has great benefits in bringing in many perspectives. Creating a pool of inputs that are generated by men and women, young employees and senior ones, and by perspectives from emanating from different cultures can only be of great value to an organization.



What are your experiences at your workplace?

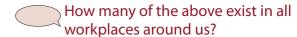
Here are 5 key benefits to having diversity in teams:

- 1. More innovative results
- 2. More productive
- 3. Takes people out of their comfort zones
- 4. Diverse teams outperform homogenous groups because they work harder cognitively
- 5. Better decisions are made.



However, we do not live or work in utopia, so we need to be aware of some essentials that need to be in place. For example:

- Respect in the Workplace where acceptance of individual differences exists.
- Conflict-resolution where prejudice, racism, discrimination and a lack of respect is handled justly and firmly.
- Co-existence of ethnic and cultural differences the workforce is trained on understanding unfair prejudices against others of different colour, culture, ethnicity or religion. Harbouring prejudices can be a reality.
- Gender equality women are not viewed as objects (where harassment can take place) or as inferior in competence.
- No age-discrimination motivating a culture where multiple generations of workers can work together.
- Disabilities are respected there is a fair and comfortable work environment for disabled employees.



Addressing communication hindrances - hiring immigrants who speak little or no English can sometimes reduce productivity due to poor ability to communicate.

We all come from different cultures and backgrounds. If we are going to "judge' each other then it should be based on our actions and character, and not on outward appearances.



Do you agree that prejudices should not be tolerated in the workplace?

Our focus should be on looking for the good and not on building barriers! We can with a little effort learn to work together for a common goal – which is the success of our organisations where we make a living!



Isn't that a good enough reason?

Feroza Sader is Executive PA to the MD of AAAS a Division of Imperial Group Limited.

She is a member of PAFSA's Academy of Excellence having reached the status of Finalist in the Office Professional of South Africa 2010.

She was awarded the Crystal Award by PAFSA in 2016.

Currently, she is Chair of the InTouch Newsletter committee.

Feroza lives by this saying:

'There are only two days in the year that nothing can be done. Yesterday and tomorrow'. So today is the right day to love, do and live.

