

1.6.13: Putting It Together- Social Diversity in the Workplace

Communication is invention: through our language, our imagery, our operating policies and practices, we construct reality. As is true of every other period of history, the standards of society and our nation are changing. The key question is what we want those standards to be and how we should arrive at a shared construct of that reality.

Let's return to Nike for an example of prioritizing diversity—in word and deed. Nike considers diversity a key to maintaining creativity and innovation. Its stated mission: unleash human potential; it's position: diversity unleashes innovation. To quote from their website: "Diversity is about acknowledging and valuing our differences and appreciating that everyone brings unique experiences, perspectives and ideas to the team. We want everyone who joins our team to realize their full potential."^[1]

To put that belief into practice, the company surveyed employees world-wide. Using that input, Nike identified 4 core themes^[2]:

1. Diversity drives recruitment of the most dynamic people.
2. Diversity enriches the creativity and innovation that shapes the brand.
3. Diversity grows our competitive advantage
4. Diversity heightens the stature and belief in the brand within our culturally diverse customer base.

Nike has also assumed an advocacy role in terms of diversity and inclusion in society. In 2017, Nike launched an Equality campaign in an effort to inspire athletes—and fans—to take the fairness and respect they see on the court, pitch, playing field and other sporting venues to translate them off the field.^[3]

Despite the odds, Nike is "winning" in its quest for equality. In fiscal year 2014–2015, minorities became the majority of US staff.^[4] The employee gender split is essentially even, with women comprising 48 percent of Nike's global workforce. Additionally, women's representation in management is currently at 41 percent.

But if we learned anything in this module, it's that diversity—linguistics aside—is a verb; that is, action is required. While progress is exciting and encouraging, it's important to keep in mind that diversity is still a struggle in our society. And, to this point, Nike (as well as Google and others) will remain a work in progress. CNBC recently reported on the exit of Nike's Vice President of Diversity & Inclusion "amid efforts to reform workplace culture" and an internal memo written by Nike's Chief Human Resources Office stating that the company "failed to gain traction" in hiring and promoting more women and minorities to senior-level positions.^[5]

? Learn More

For additional perspective on creating a functional workplace, read the [First Round article](#).

1. Nike. [Our Approach to Diversity and Inclusion](#). Web. 26 June 2018.
2. Miller, Makayla. [Nike's Diversity Program](#). 03 Feb 2014. Web. 26 June 2018.
3. O'Brien, Kyle. "Nike's 'Equality' campaign takes a stance on diversity and opportunity." Business Insider, 13 Feb 2017. Web. 26 June 2018.
4. Kell, John. "Majority of Nike's U.S. Employees Are Minorities For the First Time." *Fortune*, 12 May 2016. Web. 26 June 2018.
5. Zhao, Helen. "Nike's VP of diversity leaves amid efforts to reform workplace culture." *CNBC*, 16 Apr 2018. Web. 26 June 2018.

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