

1.6.16: Factors of Diversity

Learning Objectives

- Identify factors that define a diverse group of employees

What do we mean by diversity? Despite the fact that it's in the top one percent of words searched on Merriam-Webster, the concept isn't as well understood as you might think. And, indeed, [Wikipedia's entry on diversity](#) is an alphabet soup of related terms that will have you retreating to the simplicity of the old standard. Even Merriam-Webster's definition feels a little loose and ill-defined:

the condition of having or being composed of differing elements : VARIETY especially : the inclusion of different types of people (such as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization ^[1]

In practice, diversity can be understood as a range of human characteristics that differ from our own or from those of the groups we belong to.

Points of difference can include a range of demographic and psychographic factors, both of which are traditionally used by marketers, researchers, and influencers to target segments of a larger population. Demographic factors describe the “who,” including traits such as age, education, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, income and profession, and marital or family status. Psychographic factors are considered the “why” (how we're wired) and reflect our behavior, beliefs, lifestyles, and values. Other important aspects of diversity include disabilities, sexual orientation and cognitive styles. A key point to note is that there are many more possible points of difference than there are categories legally protected from discrimination.

In practice, diversity is not about meeting the letter of the law. That is to say, managing to the minimum requirements of legislation or minimizing legal exposure and the associated liability for claims of discrimination based on sex or color or some other factor is not enough. Businesses pursuing a true diversity strategy define diversity broadly and seek to leverage the possibilities of diversity across categories.

Key Takeaways

For perspective on the composition of our labor force, see the Bureau of Labor Statistics Demographics page, a merger of employee statistics and demographic data from the Current Population Survey.

1. "Diversity." Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 7 May 2018.

Contributors and Attributions

CC licensed content, Original

- Factors of Diversity. **Authored by:** Nina Burokas. **Provided by:** Lumen Learning. **License:** CC BY: Attribution

1.6.16: Factors of Diversity is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **13.16: Factors of Diversity** by Nina Burokas is licensed CC BY 4.0. Original source: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-businesscommunicationmgrs>.