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Diversity management: Successful business stories*

Despite some gaps in policies and outcomes of diversity management, it is not difficult to find examples of good diversity practice. Here are a few:

- ▶ UK supermarket giant Tesco does not impose an age limit on its employees. They say that 'It's attitude not age that creates customer satisfaction'. Tesco recruits people from all ages since they believe that customers love to have people from different age groups dealing with them. Tesco's employees also report that they prefer working in an age-diverse team (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2005).

- ▶ BC Tel, a telephone company in Canada, set up an Indo-Canadian phone line. This helped the company to provide Indian- and Chinese-language services and fostered its relationship with diverse customers (AMSAA, 2000).

- ▶ Ebco Industries, Ltd., a Canadian manufacturing company, has received several prestigious awards, for example the federal government's Excellence in Race Relations Award and the Boeing Company's Eagle Award for Outstanding Cost Reduction and Quality Performance. The company has 900 employees from 48 nationalities. Hugo Eppich, the founder of the company, says that their philosophy is to respect individuals and their uniqueness; he also says that they focus more on strengths rather than differences. Among the diversity practices of this company are multicultural food festivals for all employees and displaying flags of all nationalities in the reception area (AMSAA, 2000).

- ▶ Corporate Rabobank (based in The Netherlands) has an intranet site that is dedicated to diversity management. This site gives information about the bank's policies, improvements, and planned activities. The most interesting thing about this site that it has a page called 'intercultural management', which talks about the reasons behind Rabobank choosing to adopt a multicultural environment (Subeliani and Tsogas, 2005).

- ▶ The military of a country usually reflects its society. The social composition of the US Air Force has altered over years as a result of increasing diversity of the USA's population, with an explicit commitment to education and training on equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Several short courses are offered on sexual harassment, equal opportunities, and cultural diversity. Moreover, two-day courses are offered to senior management on areas such as racism and cross-cultural socialisation. (Moon, 1997).

* Professor Nicolina Kamenou-Aigbekaen (Heriot-Watt University) and Professor Jawad Syed (Lahore University of Management Sciences) wrote this mini case as a basis for class discussion rather than to serve as an endorsement, source of primary data, or illustration of effective or ineffective management. It has been adapted from: Kamenou-Aigbekaen, N., & Syed, J. (2017). Diversity management in a global context. In Syed, J., & Kramar, R. (eds.) *Human Resource Management: A global and critical perspective*, pp.67-86. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Class activity and questions:

Based on your personal knowledge or research, identify a successful story of diversity management in a local or international organisation.

1. What works well in that organisation?
2. Is there a room for improvement?