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Diversity Beyond Affirmative Action, delivered on October 31, 1990

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DIVERSITY BEYOND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

I. The Numbers Game

A. Present Minority Population

1. One of four Americans is a minority, Black, Hispanic Asian - by year 2,000, one of three

2. California - K-12, 51.3% minority population, 31.4% Hispanic, 8.9% Black, 11% Asian

3. New York - 40% K-12 in public schools are ethnic minority - By the year 2,000 50% will be minority

4. 1985 - 25% of public school enrollment composed of ethnic minorities. By 2,000 40% will be minorities.

5. Higher Education - 1987 both UCLA and Cal Berkeley had a majority of non Anglos in their freshman classes.

6. California population today - 58% white

7. By 2056 whites will be a minority in USA. In 30 years the minority population will double while white population remains the same.
B. Immigration - increased diversity

1. More people immigrated to USA in 1980’s than at anytime since the first decade of this century - 7.2 million legal and illegal immigrants - 8.8 million 1900-10

2. Pro-immigration bill passed allowing increased numbers into the U.S.

II. Reasons for Affirmative Action

A. Demographic Necessity

1. Facilitates upward mobility for those who deserve it.

2. Best chance for businesses to have the qualified work force they need.

3. Keep the American vision of revolution alive so we don’t have a more violent one.

B. Moral Imperative

1. Mike Woods and Bart Merkle presentation - Multi Cultural policy formulated by sense of what is right as well as necessity.
2. Necessity and moral imperative give a good balance to one another. Takes the superiority and patronizing out of the moral imperative.

III. Affirmative Action at Work

A. Grand Valley State University

1. Students
   a) More black youths in prison than in college-requires universities to act.
   b) Mistake of the 1960's and early 70's - shotgun approach

2. Minority Business Education Program - Seidman
   a) Idea - Pickard
   b) Identification - mentor program
   c) Numbers - 12, 22, 25, 27, 38
   d) Nurture - schedule planning, weekly meeting, dress code, luncheons, recognition, alumni return.
   e) Retention - equal to university as a whole
   f) Graduation - 11 of first 12
g) Criticism - rifle approach - it works for the students and the university; better opportunity than some kind of students had previously

h) Funding - Scholarships

Personnel - 5 people - $486,200

Supplies & Travel - $250,000

i) Results

3. Faculty

a) Detroit Free Press report a few years ago highest percentage of minority faculty

b) Task Forces - periodic - dual - the curriculum (nature of work), the quality of life (attitude and behavior), women at MSU

c) Multi Cultural sensitivity sessions for all departments in the university, including food service and maintenance - attitude and hiring

d) Budget incentives - hold money for three positions - find minority and justify work load

4. Conditions necessary to make affirmative action work -

Six conditions:
a) Empowered minority managers
b) High trust level between manager and managed, between managers and the university clientele, between minority and white managers
c) Psychological preparation of minority students and white students for integrated college life. To a lesser degree the same for faculty. Energy getting white’s respect - finding way in new environment not necessarily racial.
d) Positive attitude of cultural institutions toward the university - churches
e) Rifle approach rather than shotgun approach.
f) Appoint people of good will in the first place of all races.

B. Other Organizations

1. Procter & Gamble:

Because they promote from within, P & G actively recruits THE best entry-level employees among minorities. Recruits on campuses 12 months a year.

2. Corning:

Talented blacks and women were joining Corning only to plateau or leave; few reached upper management level. In 1983 new CEO James Houghton saw higher attrition of minorities and women a waste of investment in training and development. Second, he thought Corning’s work force should reflect Corning’s customer base.

The result was mandatory awareness training for 7,000 salaried employees: 1.5 days for gender awareness; 2.5 days for racial awareness. Corning uses in-house newspapers to publicize employee success stories that emphasized diversity. They set up career planning for all employees. They began offering college scholarships worth $5,000 a year in exchange for a summer of paid work at a Corning installation. Most minority scholarship recipients came to work for Corning after college and are still there four years after the scholarship program started. Corning also made recruiting contacts with campus groups like Society of Women Engineers and the National Black MBA Association.

Houghton’s assessment is that managing diversity is not only a
social and moral issue, but "It simply makes good business sense."

3. Digital:

Digital set up Core Groups of 8-10 people who meet with company-trained facilitators to discuss prejudices. Digital also runs a two-day seminar on "Understanding the Dynamics of Diversity" that thousands of Digital's employees have taken voluntarily.

Digital has also organized several Valuing Differences Boards of Directors to promote openness to individual differences, to encourage younger managers' commitment to diversity, and to sponsor celebrations such as Hispanic Heritage Week and Black History Month.

4. Xerox

Xerox set up a Balanced Work Force Strategy that set goals for the number of minorities and women in each division and at every level. For example, the goal is to have 35% of the top 300 executives women by 1995 compared to 15% now.

Xerox focuses on pivotal jobs--those positions that successful managers held at lower levels--and sets goals for putting minorities and women into those step-ladder jobs.

Xerox concentrates more on managing people than managing
diversity in its training because the company found out those managers who didn’t manage diversity well didn’t manage people in general very well.

5. Avon:

Avon sends racially and ethnically diverse groups of 25 managers at a time for three weeks of training at Morehouse College in Atlanta where they confront differences and learn to hear viewpoints they once disagreed with.

Avon helped three minority groups--blacks, Hispanics, and Asians--form their own networks that crisscrossed the corporation in all 50 states. Each group elects its own leaders and has an adviser from senior management.

IV. After Affirmative Action

A. Limitations of Affirmative Action

1. R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr., Ex Director of the American Institute for Managing Diversity Inc. at Morehouse College - Quote from Harvard Business Review article:

"Affirmative action is an artificial, transitional intervention intended to give managers a chance to correct an imbalance, an injustice, a
mistake. Once the numbers mistake has been corrected, I don’t think affirmative action alone can cope with the remaining long-term task of creating a work setting geared to the upward mobility of all kinds of people, including white males. It is difficult for affirmative action to influence upward mobility even in the short run, primarily because it is perceived to conflict with the meritocracy we favor. For this reason, affirmative action is a red flag to every individual who feels unfairly passed over and a stigma for those who appear to be its beneficiaries."

Business Week calls affirmative action "a competitive necessity" -- a fact of life.

An example of the success/need for affirmative action in the marketplace is the collaboration between Ford Motor and PUSH (Jesse Jackson’s group) to promote minority business. In 1988 Ford spent $240 million with black suppliers. There are now 246 black Ford dealers in this country, more than any other auto company.

Roosevelt Thomas’s thesis is that American business must not repudiate affirmative action, but move beyond it. Today’s emphasis on non-hierarchial, flexible, collaborative management requires a significant increase in tolerance for individuality. The old melting pot is being replaced
by unassimilated diversity--a heterogeneous culture, not a homogeneous white-male one.

A diverse work force is not what your company "ought" to have; it’s what your company does have or soon will have. Therefore learning to manage it will make businesses more competitive. Programs to manage diversity must be seen as for "us" and not for "them." Roosevelt Thomas says this requires a whole new mind set.

If schools have been the first place this country has gone to have all its social ills cured, businesses have come in a close second. Over the past decade, businesses have had to go into the business of drug testing, alcohol-abuse counseling, literacy training, child care, dependent care, and now sensitivity training for cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity.