

## PRISM International

**P**assionate, well-intending diversity managers are struggling to engage leadership, gain commitment, drive change and measure results. They know that leveraging diversity is about positioning their organizations for success in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex workplace and marketplace. Accomplishing this goal requires them to move forward strategically and tactically with creating, valuing, managing and leveraging diversity by linking and leading a large scale, inclusive, all encompassing change effort. That's quite an order!

But what if a diversity manager could mobilize their organization's managers, thereby extending the diversity reach and making a greater impact? While this would require recruiting and engaging employees who understand and support diversity and inclusion as a leadership competency and as an organizational business improvement tool, mobilizing an army of diversity change agents would provide tremendous payoffs.

Diversity champions and change agents can be found at all levels of the organization. The key is to recruit, equip, engage and hold accountable the

leaders who can produce the results. Most often they do not possess the knowledge, skills and tools to initiate, communicate and incorporate the diversity message, strategies and tactics into their departments and teams.

Do you remember your first day of work? Were you provided with an overview of the organization's traditions, policies, practices and cultures? Do you remember those first few weeks on your new job? Was your manager busy, task-driven and racing to meet deadlines? Did you find yourself being quickly assimilated and aligned with your new department and team? Were you expected to immediately contribute and produce? Over the course of your employment, you may have noted many ways that inclusion and diversity opportunities could have enhanced staff involvement, commitment, idea generation, quality and customer service—some that would have led directly to cost containment and profit. However, in the process of driving for the daily results, diversity was not being leveraged to achieve them.

Think about your current diversity plan. Ideally, executives have set the direction and provided the commitment. Diversity is a strategic priority incorporated into the overall strategic plan of the business. You and the diversity council have scoped out the tactics and are working on them. A communication plan is in place and is being implemented. You might have even conducted some form of diversity education and training. One could wonder ... with diversity and an inclusion strategy, a commitment, and a plan in place ... what's not working? Perhaps the plan failed to include the people that can make or break the success of a leveraging diversity process. Diversity managers and executives cannot drive the real change process alone. It's directors, supervisors, coaches and leads—the managers, who are ultimately responsible for meeting departmental and business unit goals. They have the most to gain and lose. It's the managers who determine which behaviors are

supported, reinforced or stopped. Ultimately, they shape, create and sustain the culture. They decide how organizational values and vision around diversity are actually integrated into the daily activities and decisions. It's the managers who know the business and behavior challenges their teams are facing; and, it is the managers who are responsible and accountable for both.

Inclusion and diversity efforts cannot be fully successful without managers who are equipped to incorporate diversity concepts and tools into the jobs that they and their staff perform each day. Yet, given the time constraints of managers, they must find a quick way to incorporate diversity and inclusion into their schedules. Some organizations use PRISM's Diversity Discussion Starters™ tool to incorporate business-relevant, bite-sized diversity concepts into their staff and team meetings. The PRISM Diversity Discussion Starters™ consist of fourteen 45-minute scripted, activity-driven, business-related, decision-focused diversity conversations that managers include in their staff and team meetings. The real power of the tool is in the design of each meeting's script—it enables the team to identify and make decisions within their team about leveraging diversity and inclusion to bring about bottom-line business changes. Nutritional products company Mead Johnson observes, "The power of the PRISM Diversity Discussion Starters™ lies in the decisions that we made as a result of the conversations that we held." Let's examine two examples:

- If diversity has been discussed as a "business issue" for the business, have managers had the conversation with team members about diversity as a business issue for them?...in their own department?
- If stereotypes were discussed in the organization's overall diversity training program,

continued page 58



**Linda Stokes**

President

PRISM International

First Sanford Tower

312 W. First Street, Suite 301

Sanford, FL 32713

Tel: 407.324.5290

FAX: 407.324.0148

[linda@prism-international.com](mailto:linda@prism-international.com)

**Driving Diversity Changes with Manager-Led Discussions**

create  
**compelling  
conversation**

# accountability

Continued from page 30 **Deloitte & Touche**

Her efforts, and those of countless other employees worldwide, too many to name, speak not only to the importance of individual efforts but also to the need to create the right environment for people to thrive at work and within the larger community to which we all belong.

Past experiences and success with another important initiative also encourage us in implementation of our diversity strategy. Almost ten years ago, our firm realized that we were losing a host of talented women who, for one reason or another, decided that Deloitte & Touche did not offer them the opportunities or provide the support necessary for them to reach both their personal and professional goals. After careful study, the firm put in place a rigorous program to attract, retain and promote talented women who could enhance the depth of our firm's skill sets and bring new perspectives to our clients and our people. Our ongoing Women's Initiative has also served to sharpen our focus on the broader area of human resources and has bolstered our determination to find new ways to improve the work environment. As a result of this initiative, the firm continues to attract the best women professionals and offers them opportunities to rise through the ranks of our firm to become, in increasing numbers, partners and top leaders in the firm. We now lead the profession in terms of the percentage of women partners.

Our success with our Women's Initiative along with our heightened awareness and attention to employee issues have progressively sharpened our determination to become the employer of choice. Five years ago, when it was first announced, our firm submitted an application for *Fortune* magazine's list of "100 Top Companies to Work for in America." We made the list on our first try and have made the list ever since. We are the only professional services firm to appear for five consecutive years on the list and one of twenty-five companies to have appeared every year. And of those twenty-five, only four other companies have ranked higher than us.

Going forward, we intend to make good on our commitment to diversity with the same determination with which we address all our professional and business issues. That kind of commitment is intrinsic to our culture and to our success.

PDJ

# conversation **PRISM International**

Continued from page 31

have managers talked with employees about stereotypical comments that might be occurring in their own department? Has the impact to their productivity, customer relations, quality and profit been discussed? Most importantly ... what have they decided to do? How will they act differently as individuals and as a team? And how will they hold each other accountable?

These types of conversations enable managers to enlist the support of and partner with their employees to create and sustain change. Using the PRISM Diversity Discussion Starters™ in regularly scheduled staff meetings extends the diversity message and drives the diversity commitment, vision and mission by providing manager-led discussions that result in team decisions and

real change.

When diversity becomes aligned with the daily departmental business realities it can be leveraged to achieve greater overall organizational business results. The strategic direction, the commitment, the advertising, the promises and the tactics become real for employees, customers and all stakeholders. Everyday words, behaviors and decisions begin to reflect the organization's commitment, vision and mission. With the departments aligned, the organization is positioned to leverage diversity for results in both the workplace and marketplace.

PDJ

## Manager-Led Diversity Discussions resulting in team decisions and real changes



**... PRISM DIVERSITY DISCUSSION STARTERS™**

**ORGANIZATIONS NOW HAVE A TOOL THAT ENABLES THEIR MANAGERS TO INCORPORATE BITE-SIZED DIVERSITY CONCEPTS INTO THEIR STAFF AND TEAM MEETINGS.**

The **PRISM Diversity Discussion Starters™** consist of fourteen, 45-minute scripted, activity-driven, business-related, decision-focused, diversity conversations that managers include in their staff and team meetings.

The real power of the tool is in the design of each meeting's script - it enables the team to identify and make decisions within their team about leveraging diversity and inclusion to bring about bottom-line business changes.

Using the PRISM Diversity Discussion Starters™ in regularly scheduled staff meetings extends the diversity message and drives the diversity commitment, vision and mission through the organization in a way that creates real change.

For more information, call 1.888.997.7476 or visit us online at [www.prism-international.com](http://www.prism-international.com)

**PRISM international**  
connecting diversity for results

**“ The power of the PRISM Diversity Discussion Starters™ lie in the decisions that we made as a result of the conversations that we held. ”**  
Mead Johnson, Evansville, IN

**“ We've done diversity awareness training but it wasn't until we utilized the PRISM Diversity Discussion Starters™ in our staff meetings that our organization fully understood and connected diversity to our business case. ”**  
Honeywell Space Sys., Clearwater, FL

