



Tool #8 - Part A

How to be Successful in the Multicultural Workplace

Part A Includes:

Lesson

Quiz

Goal Setting

(Each tool is presented in a 2 part lesson format.
Part B will follow in two weeks)

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Employee Success Toolkit

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How to be Successful in the Multicultural Workplace

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The multicultural workplace is a fact of life.

What does this mean to you as an employee? In addition to the obvious plusses—introduction to new foods, arts and lifestyles, it also means you will have to adapt to working with individuals who may have a different approach to getting the job done. If you make an effort to develop cultural self-awareness you will be able to distinguish between destructive stereotypes and useful generalizations.

Look at the world around you. For example, one doctor's medical office staff included his office manager from Panama, his head nurse from South Africa, another nurse who was a Mexican American, a receptionist who was African-American – and four other employees that were what some people consider “*typical Americans*.” But, in reality, today there are no “*typical*” Americans.

Our founding fathers meant for our country to be a melting pot of people from other countries. The difference is that when our country was founded, most people came from Europe, and although they may have come from different cultures, they were all the same race so they all looked similar. Today's multicultural workforce consists of a multitude of races and ethnic groups. It's just more obvious that people are different.

When you think about it – there are many differences even among people of the same race and ethnic group. First of all, I think we can all agree that men and women come from two different planets (Mars and Venus). Then there's the generation gap between the younger employees and the more experienced workers, another difference. There are also the cultural differences of location - where the person grew up, for example: in the country, in the city, different parts of the country, etc. Finally, there are a multitude of religious beliefs, political beliefs, and lifestyles – all cultural differences.

So, how do you not only survive, but also thrive, when you find yourself working in a company that resembles a mini United Nations? You begin with an open mind.

Keep An Open Mind

This may be your biggest challenge. It's not always easy to change a mindset. Not only will you possibly have to adjust to working with someone who looks different than your previous co-workers, but these people may have a different way of getting the job done. Keep an open mind. In many cases, they can show you a new way, possibly even a better way, to accomplish the task. On the other hand, you will gain a feeling of satisfaction in showing them the way you produce results, and may teach them something new.

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Increase Your Cultural Awareness

The strength of your company depends on seeing many points of view. There can be no innovation or progress without new ideas, and in our fast paced society, your company won't thrive without innovation. A multicultural workplace will allow you to view situations from many different perspectives. Increased knowledge will help improve your skills for bridging cultural differences.

Develop Intercultural Communication Skills

What can you do to develop the skills to understand and accept diversity? It can be as simple as going to lunch with a co-worker and talking about each other's cultures. Ask about ways that would be helpful in communicating with each other. Invite someone from a different culture to have dinner at your home. Ask to be included in your co-workers' cultural celebrations.

Be Sensitive to Diverse Customs

Ask your co-workers what behaviors are considered offensive in their culture, and what would be considered polite. You do not want to offend people simply because you were not aware of multicultural behaviors. For example, the American "bye-bye" gesture means "come here" to some people from Southeast Asia. Some Koreans can interpret smiling during business transactions as frivolous behavior.

And conversation in Japan follows a very different format than American style conversation. In the US, we tend to get excited, perhaps raise our voice, use hand gestures and even interrupt if we are enthusiastic about something. In Japan, the conversation style is quite different. There, it is polite to wait until the other person has finished speaking entirely before responding. It would be considered extremely rude to interrupt.

Getting information on different cultures is as easy as accessing the Internet. Take the time to get to know about your new co-workers.

Celebrate Workplace Diversity

Volunteer to give a presentation to your fellow employees about your culture. Show pictures, explain customs, and share stories of your childhood experiences. Bring some snacks that are typical of your culture. Encourage your co-workers to give presentations about their cultures. This can turn into a monthly event that will help everyone begin to understand and appreciate each other's cultures.

It is easy and exciting to learn about different cultures. By expending just a little effort, you will find that your workplace becomes a less stressful environment. You will work more harmoniously with co-workers and will feel the satisfaction of making new friends as well as being more productive in your job.

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Tool #8 - Quiz

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Complete the quiz, and give the answers to your supervisor.

Name _____ Date _____

1. A multicultural workplace means you may have coworkers who have a different approach to _____.

2. A co-worker from another culture may show you _____ to accomplish a task.

3. In order to develop skills to understand diversity, you could:

4. Behaviors vary according to culture. For example, the American gesture of _____ means _____ to some people from Southeast Asia.

5. Name 3 ways in which you can celebrate diversity in the workplace.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Tool #8 - Your Goals for Being Successful in the Multicultural Workplace

Name _____ Date _____

What are your 3 main goals for this month to be successful in the multicultural workplace?
Make a copy of this to give to your supervisor, and keep one for yourself.
Post your goals in your workplace where you can easily see them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Signature _____

In two weeks you will receive Part B of this lesson. It will contain:

- The 7 key points from this lesson to refresh your memory, and
- A place for you to record your progress toward your goals.

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Additional Resources
All are available on The Confidence Center Web at
www.ConfidenceCenter.com

Free Resources

Email Newsletter:

Employee Morale and Confidence Tips

It has creative ideas you can use every week to keep up morale.

Sign up for Free at www.ConfidenceCenter.com

Assessments:

Are you happy at work? Take the [Employee Morale Assessment](#)

How confident are you? Take the [Confidence Quiz](#)

Articles and Past Newsletters

Calendar of Special Days:

Special days you can celebrate for every month of the year.

Fun Zone:

Jokes, cartoons, and more - when you just need a break.

Coaching:

Telephone coaching by our certified professional coach. To get one *free* coaching session.

Details at <http://www.confidencecenter.com/serv06.htm>

Low Cost Resources

Products:

Books, eBooks, videos, and other products to make you more successful at work.

Seminars:

We offer in-house seminars, customized for your company or organization.

Tele-seminars:

Telephone seminars on employee morale and employee performance. These will be announced in our newsletter and on our web.