

PRISM International

getting employees onboard

How to keep your company's diversity initiative from becoming the company's best-kept secret.

"DIVERSITY is the best-kept secret in my organization," a frustrated corporate diversity manager recently said. "When we rolled out our corporate diversity initiative," he continued, "we had high expectations that our employees would be supportive of the process. But now, months later, most of our employees just aren't on board." Other organizations share similar stories. Diversity stakeholders launch their diversity initiatives and later discover that employees retain little knowledge of the business case for diversity. Nor do they understand their personal role in the process of transforming their organization to strategically leverage diversity. Even though launched with great fanfare, the company's diversity initiative may well become the company's best-kept secret.



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

Failing to Communicate

Research conducted at the recent Summit on Leading Diversity Conference revealed that many organizations are not effectively communicating their diversity initiative—starting with the business case. The diversity communication (message) or the manner in which it was communicated (medium) was not compelling enough to personally connect employees to the diversity initiative. The success of a diversity initiative is highly dependent upon employees clearly understanding how diversity impacts their personal role, their professional success, and, ultimately, the company's organizational success. Additionally, the diversity business case must be communicated in a compelling and engaging way so as to involve all employees.

An Effective Diversity Communication and Learning Model

PRISM utilizes a 4-Point Diversity Communication and Learning Model that assists organizations to create more effective diversity communication, learning and buy-in.

The PRISM 4-Point Diversity Communication & Learning Model is designed to:

1. Create and present a compelling fact-based business case for diversity
2. Present the organization's diversity strategy in an intense, comprehensive and meaningful way
3. Involve participants in understanding the diversity strategy through an engaging intervention
4. Measure immediate understanding, buy-in and support

Research indicates the optimal learning environment promoting change is one in which participants are immersed in a learning experience that's relevant to their own situation. Such an environment needs to contain a process where they can explore, collaborate and share views using a dialogue-based methodology. This is the learning environment that PRISM created using Knowledge Map™ technology.

An Effective Communication and Learning Experience

Knowledge Maps™ create a learning environment in which the experience *is* the communication. CIGNA HealthCare, Duke Energy and Nestlé are some of the many organizations using Knowledge Maps™ successfully. Their employees are engaged in a learning process that enables them to understand the critical factors driving their business.

The Knowledge Map™ experience provides individuals with the opportunity to collaborate with peers to draw their own conclusions by exploring new marketplace information. As people shed old assumptions and draw new conclusions, they identify new roles and responsibilities and provide an impetus to act on them.



PRISM's *On Board With Diversity Knowledge Maps™* create a learning environment in which the experience is the communication. The Knowledge Map™ experience provides individuals with the opportunity to collaborate with peers to draw their own conclusions by exploring new marketplace information.

A series of conversation questions and data cards promotes dialogue. The conversation questions ask participants to interpret information and draw conclusions regarding what that information means to them. The conversation questions also ensure a common experience is had by all participants (in various other Diversity

Map sessions) and can be shared after the session. The data cards are used to provide real



context to what participants are being asked to discuss and act upon. They also bring interactivity to the session.

Participant handbooks are provided so participants can take notes, record their thoughts and access key information explored during the Diversity Map session. The participant handbooks also serve to improve retention and act as a reference after the session.

The Diversity Map utilizes a fact-based learning method. This enables participants to challenge their assumptions. Rather than telling participants what to think, they draw their own conclusions that can lead to changes in thinking and behaviors.

The Learning is the Change

After a two-hour *On Board With Diversity Knowledge Map™* experience, employees understand the big picture of diversity. They have a shared mental picture of the strategy and are able to communicate it using a common language. Phil Reed, Diversity Manager for the Siemens Corporation in Chicago, remarks: "The Diversity Map brings in everyday situations and shows how they impact us. It's a more creative way of learning, of getting people to understand what diversity is all about—it's a great tool." 

The experience is the learning. In less than two hours, individuals participate in an accelerated learning process that is immediate-measurable and transferable to the job.

Creating an Effective Diversity Communication and Learning Experience

PRISM combined their 4-Point Diversity Communication & Learning Model, key learning elements from their diversity training programs and the Knowledge Map™ technology into a new turn-key diversity communication and training tool called the *On Board With Diversity Knowledge Map™* (or the *Diversity Map*).

The Diversity Map provides:

- an engaging and interactive experience
- consistent learning outcomes
- accelerated learning
- group size flexibility
- easy, turn-key implementation
- learning that compels change.



Participants in a Diversity Map experience learn and discuss:

- the impact of today's business realities on the workforce, workplace and marketplace
- the diversity process for organizations
- each person's role and responsibility
- the advantages of a diversity process and strategy
- barriers to fully leveraging diversity.

The Diversity Knowledge Map™ Process: How It Works

An engaging and differentiated learning tool, the Diversity Map is a 3' by 6' colorful picture that displays a diversity metaphor that creates a common "mental model" for the group to explore. The Diversity Map draws participants into the process, but, more importantly, since many of us are visual learners, it improves learning and retention. "The Diversity Map immediately draws you in. The visual helps to explain the process and results in very high acceptance," comments Nathan Forde, Vice President of Human Resource Development for Florida Hospital in Orlando, Florida.



Small groups of eight to ten gather around the Diversity Map. This enables participants to share their knowledge and opinions. This is a key aspect of adult learning. The Diversity Map requires participation. The small group ensures no one can "check-out" of the learning process. Nancy Breen, Director, Organizational Effectiveness and Human Resources at Siemens Power Generation Group in Orlando, Florida, states: "The Diversity Map process is powerful and beneficial ... it allows for so much conversation."