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Leveraging Difference™ as a Talent Management Strategy: How HR Leaders Can Do Diversity Differently

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Challenges for HR Leaders When it Comes to Diversity

- Often falls squarely under your area of responsibility
- Frequently do not have complete support from your leaders
- Line management partners are often resistant to executing diversity initiatives
- As HR leaders, you can't always know the answer to every diversity question

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Leveraging Difference

Taking action that reveals how using difference helps achieve:

- Organizational goals (e.g., profits, people development, growth, innovation)
- Organizational effectiveness over time

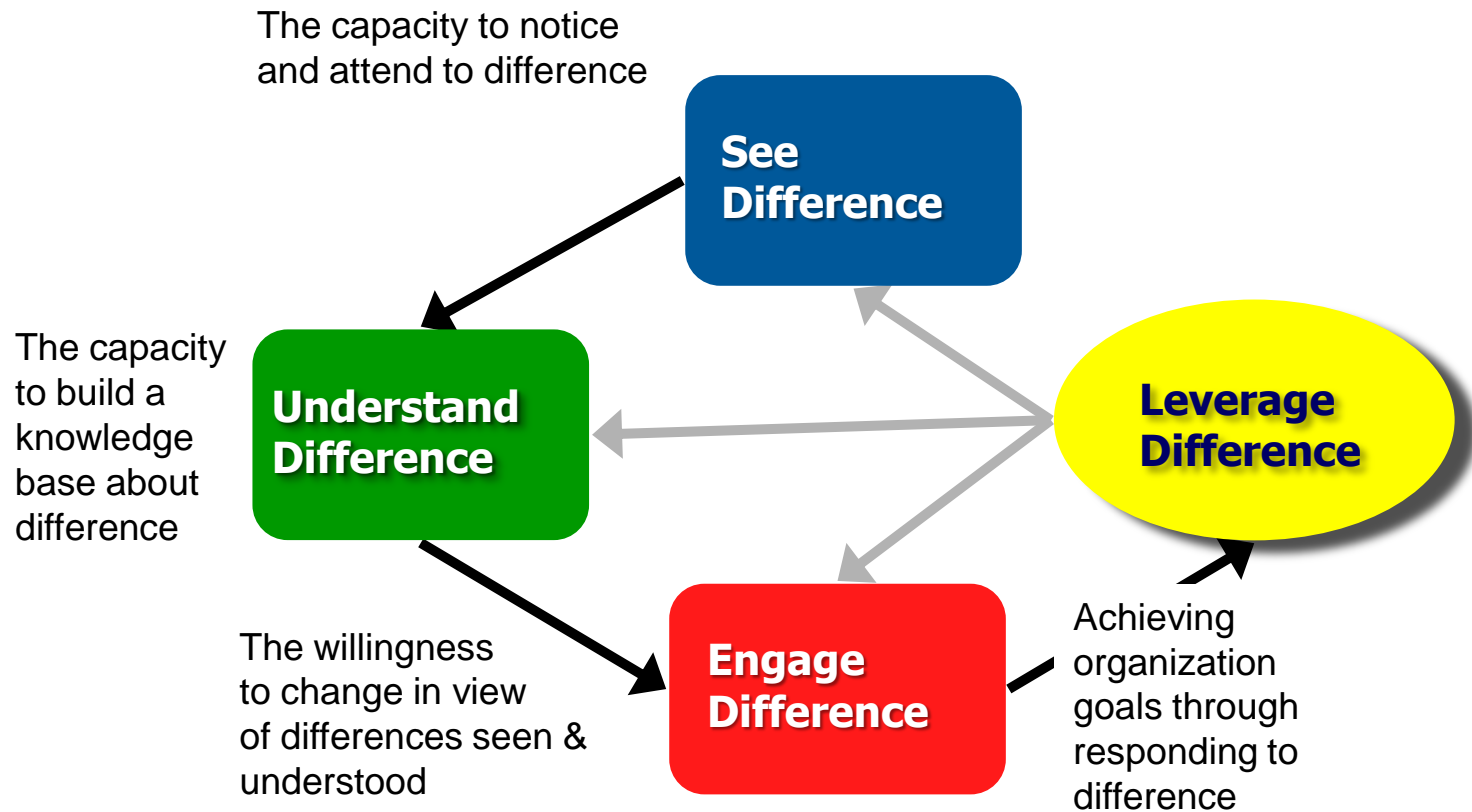
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Distinguishing Between Managing Diversity and Leveraging Difference

	<i>Managing Diversity</i>	<i>Leveraging Difference</i>
<i>Leadership Perspective</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity is a problem to be solved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference is an opportunity to be capitalized upon
<i>Strategic Focus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR/People focused only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business strategy focused
<i>Scope of Difference Engaged</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only seven or so kinds of differences count 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All relevant differences count
<i>Impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-lived increase in numbers of minorities, & women • Pushback builds among those who don't have a clear stake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained increases in numbers of minorities & women • Lower levels of pushback; more people see their stake • Learn tactics for dealing with new kinds of differences

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The Leveraging Difference Cycle



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Building a Leveraging Difference Competency: Performance Management

- How a Leveraging Difference approach can enhance a critical competency in talent management: **performance management communication**




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The Eight Key Skills in Having a Critical Conversation Across Difference

1. Assume a learning stance
2. Listen effectively
3. Self-disclose: Be transparent about your intentions and goals for the conversation
4. Inquire about the other's perspective on the situation
5. Take an alliance attitude (as opposed to adversarial attitude) toward subordinates
 - Wanting the subordinate to be successful.
 - Willingness to foster a strong working relationship with the subordinate
6. Be proactive in surfacing issues of diversity
 - Being willing to risk being seen as unskilled or even offensive
7. Ask for and receiving relevant feedback
8. Problem-solve together

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The G-A-PS Model of Managing Performance Conversations

Approach by Manager	Impact on Subordinate	
<p>Problem Solving</p> <p>Manager focuses on problem behaviors; avoids discussion of identity difference.</p>	<p>Diverse subordinates see the manager as unsupportive, untrustworthy, and clueless about diversity</p>	  
<p>Acknowledging Difference</p> <p>Take a learning stance and initiate discussion of how difference might matter</p>	<p>Some subordinates see the manager as more supportive</p> <p>Some subordinates may see the manager as offensive</p>	
<p>Groundwork (Prior to the conversation)</p> <p>Behaviors that signal openness to differences</p>	<p>Subordinates size up the manager from a distance. The manager stands out as a potential ally.</p>	

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Be a Leader who gets Results by Leveraging Difference

- Encourage change by personally modeling alternatives
- Pay attention to your own stance toward difference – be a learner
- Pro-actively seek out and recruit people who bring alternative approaches to business issues

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Be a Leader who gets Results by Leveraging Difference

- Build relationships inside and outside of work with people who are different – this is your practice
- Create norms for the freedom of expression – listen and hear people out
- Make tough calls that sustain and enhance valued differences: be courageous

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***"Take from the margin to re-think
the whole."***

- Lani Guinier