



Public Works

Kaleidoscope

A REFLECTION OF DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC WORKS

SPRING 2017

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Leveraging Technology to Promote Diversity

By Casey Boatman, PWAir

According to University of California, Berkeley, much of today's generation of workers connect, share, discover and work using some aspect of technology. They expect the technology tools they have embraced in completing work tasks and in their personal lives to play a more integrated role in the workplace. Technology is a factor of the built environment that is directly and indirectly related to worker outcomes. Integrating technology into the workplace will ultimately improve the work experience and outcomes, such as job satisfaction and productivity.

Research and various studies have showed that using multimedia in classrooms increases creativity, innovation problem solving and improves communications between people. While technology effectively shrinks the classroom world by sharing knowledge and experiences among students, how can the use of technology help with diversity in the workplace?

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Public Works Diversity Committee

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Diversity in Public Works



Training

Technology can assist employers with training. According to the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM), rapid advances in technology have transformed the workplace and changed the way we learn by impacting the interpersonal communication and collaboration. Many agencies have started implementing different technologies into their learning and development programs, using these tools to cut training costs, reduce carbon footprint, and increase continual learning outside the classroom.

Communication

Communication, specifically the internet and internal intranets enhance communication among employees. Organizations can have a diversity page on intranet sites that highlight differences. These easily accessed pages can help promote diversity in the workplace by having a place for employees to easily learn about each other, individual cultures and customs.

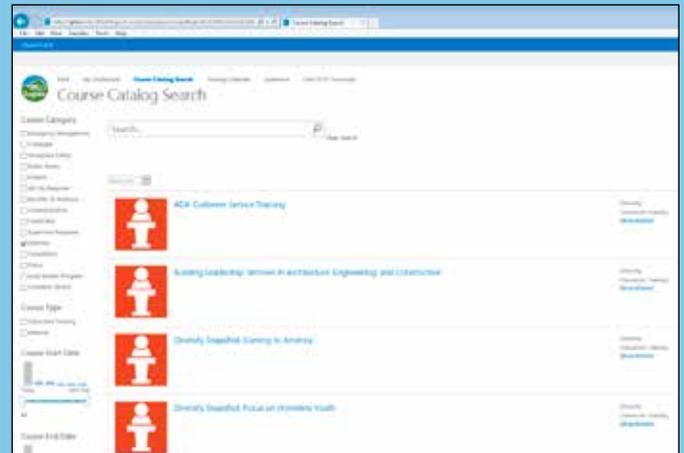
Accessibility

According to the Partnership on Employment and Accessible Technology (PEAT), accessible technology improves productivity, helps retain talent, and reduces costs. Having an accessible and usable technology infrastructure allows all employees, including employees with disabilities, to succeed on the job. You don't have to have a disability to benefit from accessible technology. Some accessibility features actually help all users to be more productive.

Employers have a legal responsibility to provide an accessible workplace. Providing accessible workplace technology may help ensure compliance with various employment laws and regulations and reduce risk associated with lawsuits. But beyond mandates, providing ICT that all employees and customers can access is a basic issue of fairness and workplace equality, helping to promote positive employee relationships and good public relations.

Language

Our planet has over 7 billion people who speak between 6,000 and 7,000 different languages, according to the European Day of Languages website. Technology and software can enable communicators in the workplace to better understand coworkers and customers, creating loyalty among customers and inclusion among employees.



Integrating technology into the workplace will ultimately improve the work experience and outcomes, such as job satisfaction and productivity.



Global Workforce

Creating a culture of shared values in a domestic environment is difficult; maintaining an ethical and cohesive culture across country boundaries presents more challenges for today's employers. Leveraging technology helps bring multi-national workforces together. This is accomplished through the use of internet meeting applications like Skype, telecommuting, desk sharing, agile workplaces, open office concepts, flexible work schedules, wellness programs and Cloud-based storage, accessible from anywhere with an internet connection.



Recruiting

Companies must pull applicants from a diverse pool using the best techniques. Many of these techniques are leveraged through the use of technology for recruiting tools. Strong diversity management can provide organizations with a competitive advantage in the marketplace. As global and regional demographics change, the continued growth of an organization may depend on attracting and retaining qualified employees who offer different perspectives and are better able to understand the diverse backgrounds of the customers, clients and communities they serve. In order to attract and retain these highly desired employees, organizations need to work diligently to incorporate an effective diversity program into the workplace.

Technology can assist employers with recruiting a diverse workforce. Google, Twitter, Facebook and Yahoo report that three to four percent of their workforce is black or Hispanic, and men outnumber women by more than two to one. Tech companies,

according to a report on PBS NEWSHOUR, are investing hundreds of millions of dollars to address the racial and gender imbalance. Officials at Google have shown that one of the number one characteristics of a high performing team is that the team members feel comfortable and safe, and they're able to trust the people around them. Competition for talent is fierce in today's global economy, so companies need to have plans in place to recruit, develop and retain a diverse workforce.

Retention

According to the Human Rights Council of Canada, employees who are engaged are more productive, content and more likely to be loyal to an organization. When organizations leverage technology, they are more likely to discover that employees feel satisfied, safe and will work to their full potential and they are more likely to stay put.

Conclusion

Workforce diversity and inclusion promotes employee productivity, retention, team collaboration and commitment, all of which add value to the services provided to customers and the livelihood of an organization's employees.

A successful diversity program can give organizations an edge if the program is managed correctly, supported by leadership and employees at all levels, and aligns with the business strategies of the organization. Companies and organizations that leverage technology in their diversity initiatives are often more profitable and have happier employees and customers.

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER!

If you have an experience, event or perspective that you feel would provide insight into our diverse world that you'd like to share with others, please send it to

pwdiversity@ci.eugene.or.us.

Article ideas are also encouraged.

Thanks!

Diversity Snapshot: Focus on Social Impact Tourism

by Patrick Cox, PWE

Social Impact Tourism—if that sounds like three unrelated words to you, then you'd better attend the June Diversity Snapshot: Focus on Social Impact Tourism. Emily Farthing, the City of Eugene's Sunday Streets Coordinator, will be presenting this topic. Emily recently returned from working for a social impact tourism company in a favela of Rio De Janeiro.

One purpose of social impact tourism is to break down the stereotypes that keep people from visiting some places, like the favela, and even Rio de Janeiro itself. Emily will be showing pictures from her trip and talking about the urban designers she met while in Brazil. To learn more about this fascinating topic, join us in Building 2 at the Roosevelt Yard on Thursday, June 29, 2:00 to 3:00 PM.



One purpose social impact tourism is to break down the stereotypes that keep people from visiting some places...

PWDC MISSION STATEMENT

The City of Eugene Public Works Department is committed to fostering understanding, communication and respect among all members in the department.

We believe in a department that is accepting of everyone so that we capitalize on the strengths emanating from our differences.

By drawing on our individual strengths, we believe we can create an optimum and respectful workplace, one that can attract and retain a diverse workforce, allowing us to serve the community from which we come more effectively.

We believe that an inclusive diversity program is pivotal to reaching our professional potential, both individually and collectively.

GOAL

The goal of the PW Diversity Committee is to promote a workplace free of harassment and discrimination. We recognize and respect diverse viewpoints, cultures, and life experiences.

The Hidden Sexism in Workplace Language

by Vanessa Jordan, WW

Mark Peters wrote an article for BBC Capital on a derogatory and discriminatory form of communication that many do not realize they express, often multiple times a day. He writes about the use of feminized terms that are not just outdated but also not allowed in the work place. In addition, Peters talks about their subtle counterparts, numerous of which are used subconsciously. We no longer use the terms lady cook, lady nurse, cousiness, or authoress, but waitress, hostess and stewardess are still around. Despite looking back and seeing how far we have come from the early years of gender discrimination, Peters states “there’s mounting evidence, anecdotal and scientific, that gender-propelled language and attitudes are still common.” He gives the example of performance reviews, stating that “women tend to receive feedback that’s vague... such as a disproportionate amount of comments on communication style.” While in comparison “men get clearer feedback about specific skills related to actual job performance.”

Language is a funny thing, it is dynamic and ever changing to fit the people who speak it.

The author talks about the lingering stereotypes that can be found imbedded in our language, from “man on man” and “middle man” to “poster boy,” but their



feminized counterparts tend to hold a negative tone. “Debbie Downer, Prima Dona, and drama queen” all invoke the image of a spoilsport, a party pooper, someone no one would want around to ruin their fun. A wing man on the other hand, will be there for you and give you a helping hand. Peters notes that an executive from Facebook, Deb Lou, has been documenting a list of these objectifying terms to become better aware of their use in the workplace.

The other form of language he finds is the use of agentic and communal terms or phrases that target gender specific stereotypes:

“Communal language is mainly applied to women, and it invokes stereotypical female traits like being supportive, showing warmth, and helping the team. Agentic language is mainly applied to men and is more about getting the job done, taking charge, and being independent.”

Peters reminds readers that many people, both men and women, do not fit either of these terms but also participate in both. JoAnne Wehner from the Clayman Institute for Gender Research explains how the agentic mode can be described as “the language of I” and the communal mode “the language of we”. Mark Peters says this can create a box around people, forcing them to concede to the norms. In addition, “man centric” terms often used in work place lingo can “reinforce the idea that the workplace is (or should be) a man cave with water coolers.”

Language is a funny thing, it is dynamic and ever changing to fit the people who speak it. Peters includes in his article about how certain words, such as “guys” can have multiple meanings. Guy can mean just one man or person, but guys can include a group of people, some men and some women, therefore the term is subject to interpretation. But he questions what is acceptable in the work place, would folks be more appropriate? The author concludes with an examination of past terms and looks ahead to what, in the future, may be deemed unacceptable that we, today, use without hesitation.

Read the article by Mark Peters
BBC Capital, March 30, 2017
<http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20170329-the-hidden-sexism-in-workplace-language>

Co-Worker's Corner — It's About Us!

An Introduction to the Public Works Diversity Committee



Kent enjoying the outdoors

Kent Anderson

Utility Coordinator/Inspector
Maintenance Division

Hometown: Spokane Washington

College: Eastern Washington University

Major: Undergrad – Industrial Technology;
Masters – Urban Regional Planning

My biggest adventure: When I was 16 I spent a year in South America

This always brings a smile to my face: Waterfalls and Sunsets

Game love to play: Soccer

Something very few people know about me: I'm a runner.

"Getaway" place: The beach!

Athlete or Team I enjoy watching: Galen Rupp

My dream job is: Teaching Urban Planning in Thailand

My most prized possession: 2 Megalodon Teeth – Fossil Shark Teeth

Activity like to do in or around Oregon: Go to all the Parks

Hobbies: Kayaking and hiking

My teammates describe me as: Quiet

Co-Worker's Corner — It's About Us!

An Introduction to the Public Works Diversity Committee



Richard and a friend

Richard Perry

Fleet Radio Communications Manager
Maintenance Division

Hometown: Lakewood California

College: Oregon State University

Major: Engineering

Professional Ambitions: Positive change for humanity

My biggest adventure: Raising 4 kids by myself

This always brings a smile to my face: Bugs bunny cartoons

Game love to play: Football

Something very few people know about me: Rode my bike from Eugene to Yachats: 101 miles over Forest Service roads

"Getaway" place: Riviera Maya

Person I would like to have dinner: Jimmy Carter

Athlete or Team I enjoy watching: Daughter's high school basketball team

My dream job is: Retirement ☺

My most prized possession: My dad's guitar, a 1946 Martin D48

Activity like to do in or around Oregon: Wine tasting

Hobbies: Play guitar

Musical Artist or group: Eddie Van Halen

My teammates describe me as: Dependable

Public Works Day 2017

It was a beautiful spring day, full of smiling faces and orange vests. More than 2700 visitors flocked to the Roosevelt Yard to learn how Public Works makes lives better through the services we provide each day.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this annual event a success. From planning and setup, to staffing and cleanup, as well as keeping the rest of the city running smoothly while the little ones laughed and learned, thank you for your contribution!



Trailer Rides More Welcoming to All

by Rob Brooks, PWM

With the purchase of new trailers to haul equipment for everyday Public Works operations, an opportunity presented itself to revamp our “trailer rides” for Public Works Day. The Surface and Subsurface Operations teams purchased identical trailers that are 6 inches taller than the old trailers providing an excellent opportunity to also solve the challenge of safely loading and unloading people with the need for wheelchairs. In the past, accessibility meant that riders either used a set of stairs, staff would lift wheelchair-bound people aboard the trailers in their chairs, or used a folding ramp that lacked stability. The new 16 foot Roll-A-Ramp product was our best solution to be inclusive to all and get our citizens safely aboard the trailers. The ramp came with all the incline supports needed and has handrails along the length of the ramp to add stability and ease of ingress and egress onto the ride. A local fabrication shop built the safety fencing, which uses the stake pockets of the trailers for a more streamlined system. We estimated that around 15 people were able to safely board and disembark the trailers while using wheelchairs. Based on the positive comments and seeing the smiles the ramp was a huge success!

