

Progress Noted in Diversity in the Workplace Survey, but Gaps Remain

Challenging Aspects Include Time, Benchmarking, and Resistance to Change

NEW PROVIDENCE, NJ (Feb. 24, 2016) – New research by XpertHR offers a lens into the drivers, limitations and tactics of workplace diversity and inclusion. Survey findings indicate that companies of all sizes demonstrate progress, yet continue to face challenges with the diversity of their workforces, according to Peggy Carter-Ward, author of XpertHR's Workplace Diversity Survey.

Based on the survey of more than 600 companies, Carter-Ward pointed to strong progress in the last five years, with marked increase reported in the diversity of workforces. In particular, workplace diversity efforts since 2010 have focused on permitting employees to take unpaid leave to observe religious, cultural and ethnic holidays; and increasing efforts to recruit and hire a diverse workforce," she said.

However, some workplaces struggle with diversity more than others, largely due to the geographic location and ability to recruit a more diverse workforce. Carter-Ward said respondents indicated that the most challenging aspects of moving diversity and inclusion forward are the time/commitment, benchmarking of diversity and inclusion efforts, and resistance to change of the employee community and culture.

Among the survey's key findings:

- More than half of workplaces report that diversity has increased over the past five years.
- Ethnic and racial diversity are the traits most aggressively recruited, followed closely by veterans.
- Geography has played a role in the diversity of two thirds of workplaces, with one fifth reporting being hurt and more than 4 in 10 being helped by their geographic locale. Furthermore, global employers are far more likely to have diversity initiatives than their U.S.-only counterparts.
- The three diversity initiatives prioritized for the next five years are formation of affinity groups; instituting mentoring programs and/or career development programs for diverse employees; and a focus on supplier diversity.

Carter-Ward pointed to unintended biases that often hamper diversity efforts, such as the phenomenon of "like hiring like" and potentially erroneous assumptions about details of the job requirements or an applicant's intrinsic capabilities.

"Yet," she said, "the benefits of a well-rounded and diverse workforce are well documented," noting that a workplace isn't optimized for talent if diversity isn't embraced and institutionalized.

The survey results show evidence of targeted recruiting to achieve a more diverse workforce, Carter-Ward said. The top three diversity traits being actively recruited by respondents are 1) racial diversity, 2) ethnic diversity and 3) veterans. Respondents said

the three traits least actively recruited are: 1) those under 21, 2) the disabled and 3) sexual orientation.

Carter-Ward said the survey results are rich in written responses, along with content and graphics that illustrate diversity and inclusion drivers such as increasing the ability to serve customers and customer relations; better reflecting customer demographics and market; and promoting a positive and healthy work environment.

To read the full survey report, visit [Diversity in the Workplace: A Survey of the American Business Landscape](#).

About the survey:

The XpertHR survey on workplace diversity trends was conducted Nov. 9 through 16, 2015. There were 604 respondents from all 50 states. Nearly half of respondents were from workplaces with fewer than 250 employees, and nearly one-third of respondents operate globally. Survey participants represented a full range of businesses and industries.

About XpertHR:

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