

## EMEA DIVERSITY NEWS 44 EDITORIAL

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### TIME TO OPTIMISE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

While the foundation for D&I seems to be robust, current challenges seem to relate to the effective implementation of D&I. With a breadth and depth that was unimaginable 10 years ago, Diversity Management has become a multi-option framework where almost anything appears to be possible. For many, making the right choices is more difficult – and important – than it ever was. Focus on prominent topics such as gender or culture, or pursuing an umbrella approach for inclusive leadership? Running effective programmes or orchestrating a holistic change process? Providing clear-cut implementation models or internal consulting for individual in-business solutions?

Identifying the best fitting combination of content, approach, tools, organisation and process can be done in many ways. Surprisingly, one factor that is known well by Diversity experts gets in the way of doing this professionally: Unconscious bias. As often in private and professional life, human tendencies and patterns strongly influence the way a project or task is approached. But are we aware of the personal preferences that subtly affect where we look for information, how we evaluate (or judge), how we take decisions and, finally, how we manage our projects? And even more: Are we aware of the impact this has on our success in role modelling and leading D&I?

Optimising D&I requires a rigorous review and reflection of past approaches. This provides a great opportunity to practice what we preach: rethink established frameworks, seek out different perspectives, challenge underlying assumptions, apply new methodologies and similar ways to think and act outside the box. In trying to summarise our experience in working with leading multinationals in re-aligning or re-positioning their D&I work, I am confident to say that in the vast majority of cases, there is no lack of information or tools. The most successful – and critical – factors in optimising D&I currently are

- Re-packaging many existing and a few new items to make the D&I proposition more comprehensive (and more powerful)
- Re-calibrating the communication and its channels to reach key audiences more effectively (and more concretely)

In these processes we sometimes don't see the wood for the trees and then, this may help: Lean back, relax, go back to basics and do your maths. The time is right, and the time is now.

Europeanly yours,



## EMEA DIVERSITY NEWS 44 GENERAL EDITION

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## **DIVERSITY DIMENSIONS**

### **Male leaders are judged more harshly than their female counterparts for their errors**

It is a widespread – and disputed – assumption that men and women have different leadership styles, but when it comes to judge leadership behaviour, the traditional paradigm ‘Think Manager – Think Male’ comes to mind. At least until the executive makes a mistake. In that case, male leaders are seen as less competent, effective and desirable to work for than female managers in the same situation, a new study from the Pennsylvania State University has just found.

The researchers made about 280 students read fictional emails describing the behaviours of a male and a female leader, and then asked them to rate the leaders’ competences, their effectiveness as well as the students’ desire to work for these leaders. Not surprisingly, the mistakes of the leaders described in the emails damaged the image of the person in question and made them appear less competent and effective. But in the scenario where a leader made a mistake in a male dominated industry like construction, he was judged more harshly than his female counterpart. This finding does not seem to be in line with the anecdotal experience that women are under more rigorous observation, especially when their job does not comply with stereotypical role expectations, and hence more often criticised. The researchers explain their results with the possibility that women might be considered less competent in a male dominated environment in the first place and therefore expected to fail more likely. They support their explanation with the finding that male and female leaders were evaluated equally when working as head nurses.

In any case, the study emphasises the significance of (role) expectations and the impact of assumption, and how this can easily result in bias. Discussing the human evaluation process is consequently a key element of D&I education and training.

### **Language courses for older employees: Audiovisual Concepts most Suitable**

The ageing of many Western society and the partly related skill shortages have resulted in renewed attention on age diversity, and on older employees more specifically. In this context, lifelong learning for employees of all ages has become a household concept for talent management and personnel development. The potentially different learning styles or learning preferences of different generations have, however, gotten less attention. In some cases, this has even led to the biased perception of older employees being less willing or able to learn.

A new study has taken another close look at the effectiveness of learning methodologies across age groups. In the context of globalisation, international business contacts, mergers and acquisitions, and multilingual teams, the researchers focused on the question of learning or improving foreign

language skills. They found out that, despite a decline in memory, the learning aptitude of older people is not necessarily limited. The only precondition is that the learning methods have to be adjusted to the needs of older learners. Suitable methods for instance include concrete, pictorial, and clearly conditioned information. Abstract contents or ex-cathedra teaching on the other hand are less suitable. Learning a new language therefore can easily be facilitated through the insertion of audiovisual concepts.

The results of the study tell lifelong learning concepts to offer their content in different forms because other studies found that social and action learning is also becoming more important – especially for the younger generation.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

### Optimising Generational Diversity at Novartis Spain

Novartis, the second largest pharmaceutical manufacturer worldwide, has put a special focus on the importance of generational diversity. As part of a broader strategic D&I framework, Novartis Spain developed a strategic model and carried out an analysis to assess the impact of generational diversity on their organisation. The so-called GeneDiversity Project included research of the situation in Spain and an EU-wide comparison. Interviews with senior management and other key professionals in the company and stakeholders complemented the analysis on the base of which a number of key initiatives were planned to address and optimise generational demographics. The objectives include to create a nurturing environment for Generation Y and future generations at Novartis and to seamlessly integrate them with previous generations. The initiatives, some in place and some planned, emphasise mutual growth of and learning from employees of different ages.

As a result of the GeneDiversity analysis and in order to prepare Novartis' leaders to maximise inclusion of different generations, Novartis Spain prepared a GeneDiversity workshop with key managers and students from leading business schools to discuss their strategic action plan to leverage age differences. The result included a shared vision and action items for each leader. Their plans cover, through different interpretations, three areas: attracting diverse talent, managing diverse talent, and running the business. By considering these three pillars they are going to reinvent their approach in areas such as work / life integration, flexible compensation, or customer orientation.

The reverse mentoring program (Athena Program) is another initiative under the GeneDiversity Project that allows for cross-generational collaboration. Generation Y mentors are assigned to senior managers to help them achieve specific development targets of the shared vision developed in the GeneDiversity Workshop. The program encourages Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y employees to actively tackle generational diversity, also by using innovative tools, taking fresh perspectives and

considering out-of-the-box ideas. The project also provides everyday opportunities for direct communication between Gen Y and senior management that otherwise wouldn't necessarily appear.

Generational diversity is also one of the guiding principles of Novartis Spain's D&I Council, that is now being created. The core members will represent diversity from across the company and will meet periodically to develop new ideas to manage Diversity and Inclusion and follow up on the current initiatives.

Many internal and external environmental changes have made it necessary to embrace generational diversity within the strategy of Novartis Spain. HR and senior management acknowledged the need to prepare the organisation for the significant future employment of Gen Y in critical positions. Hence, envisioning their organisation in 2020 reflected a need to implement GeneDiversity. External trends also showed the need to integrate new skills and roles, develop an inclusive culture for different generations and promote different approaches and ways of communication through technology, to achieve an all-generation integration across the organisation.

## **The Founding Social Project of GDF SUEZ**

GDF SUEZ profiles itself as a company of solidarity, citizenship, innovation in training and as a company which respects the many local contexts it operates in. The global giant with French / Belgian roots provides essential day-to-day services and places social responsibility at the core of its public service mission. Consequently, GDF SUEZ's approach to Diversity is embedded in its international Founding Social Project, which covers both that national French and the global levels. It includes the key dimensions gender (male/female equality), disability, and age (people over 55 years of age, employment of young people, and inter-generational initiatives).

The objective in the area of gender equality is to achieve, by 2015, that one out of three executives be female, 35% of high potentials, 25% of managers, and 30% of new recruits (worldwide coverage). In order to reach these objectives, GDF SUEZ is, among other activities, training managers, HR teams and social partners, and constructing a common culture based on the Group's equality policies. The company aims at guaranteeing the consistency of messages at the Corporate level (e.g. through New Management Responsibilities) and at developing its co-operation with FACE (Foundation for Actions Countering Exclusion) in order to organise the decentralised implementation of integrating equality processes into the management system, both regionally and at the European level. Communication tools help to raise awareness for equality practices throughout the Group as a whole.

The commitment made by GDF SUEZ regarding disabled people fits fully within their policy promoting of equal opportunities for all groups in order to strengthen diversity. The Group not only facilitates access to employment but also puts an emphasis on developing the professional career paths of disabled employees. The company improves the monitoring of employment through a roadmap of the age pyramid of workers with a disability and includes the employment of people

with a disability in managers' objectives. Again, communication and events help creating awareness, as well as the work of the Group Disability Network.

Regarding the employment of young people, the goals for France, Germany and Belgium are to increase the numbers of work-based learning contracts (the so-called 'sandwich-training'), and for the rest of Europe to increase the number of mentors. To achieve this goal, an emphasis is being put on outlining existing forms of exclusion and their causes. Partnerships with grass-root projects from the field, e. g. FACE (sourcing, training, recruitment, coaching, mentoring, etc.), and the implementation of innovative initiatives such as 'Un But pour l'Emploi' ('A goal for employment') in France ensure the outreach of GDF SUEZ's strategy.

With the Founding Social Project, a truly global company of remarkable scope (218,900 employees) has managed to combine an international policy with a consistent global framework and local relevance. While the CSR context of the approach is less common in the field, the formalised reporting, localisation of programmes and integration in business reviews and managerial bodies is in line with leading global D&I practices. GDF SUEZ delivers on its international slogan: By people for people.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### Strengthening the rights of migrants in the Mediterranean region

The Interior Ministry of Spain has set an example against the indiscriminate stopping of 'foreign-looking people'. The ministry sent an internal appeal to law enforcement bodies stating that random people who seem to have foreign origins should not be suspected of being illegal immigrants. In the past, several NGOs have accused the police of illegally stopping 'foreign-looking' people at bus stops or Metro stations. According to these complaints, officers had checked people simply because of their clothing and/or the colour of their skin or other aspects of their physical appearance. Despite those accusations the Ministry does not cite those allegations in their current communication but simply reinforces their position telling police officers 'to avoid any practice that entails unjust restrictions and liberties of migrants'. Ministry officials have so far denied the allegations of biased police checks. The memorandum, however, aims at clearing up ambiguities concerning those practices through two main objectives. First, to ask police officers to not force migrants to follow them to a police station in case they do not have their identification papers with them. Secondly, to prevent police raids in certain areas where migrants usually gather. To summarise, the general idea of the communication is 'to avoid misinterpretations of the law'.

In the meantime, the Council of migrants in Morocco has put up the fight for the rights of undocumented migrants. The association has launched a campaign that pursues the regularisation of undocumented migrants. The campaign was started during May 1st celebrations in Rabat, where

more than 160 undocumented migrants demonstrated peacefully for their rights. Their claims are similar to those of the Moroccan workers represented by the Democratic Trade union, who ask for respect and fair working conditions for themselves. The Council of Migrants itself was founded in 2005 and consists of people from many nationalities, but mainly migrants of Sub-Saharan African origin. Another intention of their campaign is to attract the public attention to human rights abuses and violence especially against undocumented migrants.

## EU urges Turkey to secure gender equality and women's rights

Due to the ongoing violation of human rights, Turkey's potential accession to the EU continues to be controversially discussed across Europe. In the meantime, the European Parliament has therefore recently urged the country to continue its efforts in securing gender equality and women's rights.

The report 'A 2020 Perspective for Women in Turkey' underpins the importance of improving the Turkish legislation to ensure equal opportunities for men and women and gender mainstreaming while considering regional disparities. Although the government appointed a Minister of Family and Social Policies, significant violence against women is still existing and includes honour killings as well as early and forced marriages. At the same time, the progress in recognising the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people publicly is still very low.

It is furthermore stressed that education is a crucial factor in the empowerment of women so that the existing gender gap in secondary education can be closed in the future, and that sexist language as well as gender stereotyping pictures and expressions in educational material have to be eliminated. To increase the female participation on the labour force, the Turkish government is called to establish a national plan of action for this issue, as well as to combat all forms of discrimination in the workplace. Due to the low political participation of women, the report additionally calls for the establishment of a quota system, ensuring a fair presentation of women on electoral lists, and the adoption of comprehensive gender equality strategies.

## BUSINESS CASE

### Does a Different View Create Something New?

Researchers found that gender diversity leads to a higher likelihood of introducing innovations at the workplace. Furthermore, a positive relationship between an open culture towards diversity and innovative performance is found. „This provides empirical evidence to the model of the Propelling Potential Principle which links differences, open-mindedness and inclusion to create value added,“ Diversity expert Michael Stuber comments. A study of 1,648 Danish firms shows that there is a positive relation between the employee diversity based on the characteristics of all employees and the firms' likelihood to innovate. It thus appears that not only diversity in terms of technologies or

top management team composition, but also on the level of employees matters for a firm's innovation performance. The results for the gender sub group indicate that very low levels and very high levels of diversity are not significantly different from each other. Nevertheless a moderate degree of diversity, i. e. a degree of diversity where the minority group has a critical mass to contribute to the innovation process, appears to have higher likelihood of introducing an innovation. The analysis shows that gender diversity is one of the variables that has the strongest impact in this respect.

The quantitative analysis was based on innovation survey data from the DISKO41 questionnaire survey on organisations, employees and research and development strategies in Danish firms. The survey population included all firms that had participated in the previous DISKO survey, all firms with more than 100 fulltime employees in the selected industries and a sample of firms with less than 50 employees and 50–99 employees to make the sample representative to the population of Danish firms. The questionnaire was sent to the management of 4,136 companies, 1,775 answers were received, which delivered a response rate of 42.9%.

This summary is one of the 135 study portrays included in 'International Business Case Report (IBCR) 2012-XL' that has recently been published by European Diversity Research & Consulting. Further information can be found online:

<http://www.european-diversity.com/resources/surveys/ibcr/>

## **Talent Management in Saudi Arabia**

While companies like Saudi Aramco use international assignments and a multicultural workforce to ensure an effective talent management, the country itself moves backwards by prohibiting shop owners to employ men and women in the same place.

Despite the high unemployment rate of 30% among women, a court in Riyadh has recently abolished a former decision that allowed men and women to work in the same place. Purportedly, the ministry of labour had misinterpreted a decree from 2011 by King Abdullah which limited work in lingerie shops exclusively to women. The lawyer declared that the purpose of this decree was not to allow men and women to work in the same shop but to prevent women from embarrassment when buying underwear. Therefore the decision that should allow shop owners to employ men and women simultaneously needed to be rescinded. Not only Diversity practitioners will assess this development as a huge step backwards in the empowerment of women rights and gender equality. Such moves unfortunately also ignore the creative potential of gender mixed teams in the workplace and is also a move backwards in the talent management of the country as a whole.

At the same time, the energy company Saudi Aramco shows effective approaches how talent management in a country like Saudi Arabia can work despite a conservative legislation. The company employs people from 66 countries to ensure an effective reaction to global changes. Saudi

employees are encouraged to gain international work experience through international company assignments, providing them with professional experience under different administrative and work conditions in leading international companies. At the same time, Saudi Aramco recruits international applicants to work in Saudi Arabia. This multicultural workforce is certainly one of the reasons why Saudi Aramco is one of the world leading integrated petroleum enterprises. The company also reports ‘massive investment in training and development, including sponsoring more than 2,000 young men and women in university studies in Saudi Arabia and around the world.’ No indication is given about the regional gender split of this number.

The General Manager for Training and Development, Huda Al-Ghpson, is a woman. The company’s Corporate Citizenship Report 2010 carries the title ‘Make a Difference’. It mentions a new Women in Business program that has attracted 50 women to participate in a motivation and skills workshop designed to help them excel in the Saudi Aramco workplace. The company has some 55,000 employees, of which 48,000 are Saudi. It is considered to be the world leader in the production of petroleum-based energy.

## **MEDIA & BITS**

### **No female directors at the Cannes film festival: just a coincidence?**

Why is there only one woman who won the Palme d’Or in the entire history of the Cannes film festival? Is it because men are simply ‘better’ in making movies? Probably not. So what could be the reason? Due to an open letter written by a group of French female filmmakers commenting the fact that there was no woman among the 22 nominees for this year’s award, this question is now being discussed in public. In their letter, the filmmakers condemn the sexual stereotyping of women in the movie industry, stating that ‘Men love their women to have depth, but only when it comes to their cleavages’. But isn’t it too simple to blame the committee in Cannes for the – in fact fairly stereotyping – image of women in the film industry in general? After all, there was also only one woman who won the Academy Award and last year at least four women were nominated in Cannes. Besides, the jury of the Palme d’Or award is not at all a men-only-group. On the contrary, there is a good gender balance with four female judges. The letter itself therefore has stretched the topic quite to the limit, but the key statement, however, is certainly valid: The role and reputation of female directors could and probably should be increased. Just like in every other industry, calls for positive discrimination of women or quotas will not change the stereotypes in the heads of those people who decide on the success of the women.

## Disability Matters International Award for Serbian pioneer in integrating disabled employees

When the ‘Law on Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disability’ was adopted in Serbia in June 2012, the challenge of empowering disabled persons in the working field had not been a new topic for Delta Holding, a commercial conglomerate engaged in agriculture, food production and real estate. The Serbian company, founded in 1991 and emerging as one of the national market leaders, received this year’s ‘Disability Matters International Award’ for their successful achievements in the field of vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. Delta has been a pioneer in sustaining the position of employees with a disability, offering them positions in all branches of the operative business and installing their ‘Employment, Labour and Social Inclusion of persons with disability’ project in 2008 – several years before the adoption of the rehabilitation law.

Delta aims to get persons with disability out of marginalisation and give them a real chance in becoming a professionally and socially integrated member of staff. Delta's project is backed by strong support from several network organizations of persons with disability as well as media and non-governmental partners. As part of their program, Delta also focuses on their personnel without disabilities and helps them in working with disabled persons by providing information about and insight into different forms of disabilities. Another core instrument includes comprehensive emplacement activities in order to offer newly employed persons with disability a smooth start into their new everyday working life.

Another aim of the program is intended for workforce that is deemed ‘unemployable’ because of developmental disorders. Delta aims to offer those persons a first look at different job profiles and leaves space and time to head towards independence in their new working fields, which should culminate in a proper integration into the broader social and working environment.

## NEWS ABOUT US

### Three Current European D&I Research Projects of Blue Chip Companies

Given the increasing attention on Diversity & Inclusion due to political, economic and demographic trends, a significant growth in Diversity Management positions has become noticeable in the EMEA region. However, there is no information available on how D&I has been institutionalised, how the respective units or departments are organised, and how they manage their outreach to the wider organisation and beyond. At the same time, effective management structures have an impact on the success of D&I and thus of the organisations that strive to manage diversity and foster inclusion. Together with the AFMD, the French Association of Diversity Managers, European Diversity is currently analysing the existing D&I management structures in selected 180 International Companies to provide an insight into the existing situation in Europe.

Based on our research in 2008 and 2010, European Diversity has launched its third study of Stoxx50 companies and their integration of D&I in corporate communication. By analysing Corporate Annual and Corporate CSR reports, the researchers assess the breadth and depth of D&I communication toward investors and the general public. In the current edition, an employer branding element (labour market communication) will be added to the research framework.

A research project that is supported by European Diversity is called ‘Cultural Diversity as Competitive Advantage’. The idea of this study is to analyse the management blue chip companies with regard to their inter-cultural management profiles and diversity approaches. The study is based on the necessity for international companies to actively promote cultural diversity in order to be successful in a globalised business environment.

## IMPRINT

Published by **European Diversity Research & Consulting**, a pan-European service provider centred on adding value in the field of Diversity Management and Marketing. With 15 years of experience helping international companies in EMEA build effective, high-impact diversity and inclusion initiatives, we have quickly become the go-to, full-service source for research, communication and training in D&I.

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