

INNOVATION MINUTE

Diversity & Inclusion

CRASH! When Cultures Collide

You've been the CEO of your foundation for several years, and throughout that time, your team has been relatively small, with 5 employees who are largely homogeneous. All of you are from Minnesota, have worked for the foundation for over ten years, and have similar personal and professional interests. As a result of a recent merger, your organization just doubled its grantmaking portfolio, and your board approved three new grant-making focus areas and two new program focus areas. You're excited and overwhelmed!

After three months of strategic planning, concurrent with recruiting new staff for your new responsibilities you can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. You have now tripled your staff size to 15. And talk about diversity...your team is as diverse as you can imagine. You now have employees in their 20's, 30's and 50's, men and women, Americans and an Australian woman. You have employees

with extensive philanthropic experience, and others who are new to philanthropy but bring a wealth of experience in community mobilization and outreach. You just know that your new highly diverse teammates will make a great addition to your seasoned employees and you can't wait to see the results.

Because there is so much work to do to launch your new programs and grants (after all, the community heard about your new funds and they're anxious for you to start giving them away), you encourage your team members to hit the ground running.

Initially it seems like the team has good synergy. You see people having lunch together and hanging out after work. But, after a few weeks you start to sense a problem. Your original employees are expressing several concerns to you about the new hires. They feel that the new people need training to learn 'how we

do things around here.' They complain that the new people want to spend more time in the community than in the office and that they tend to work more independently than the team used to. They're worried that maybe you didn't take enough time to hire people who would 'fit' the organization.

Meanwhile, your new employees seem to be working well with each other, but haven't spent much time building relationships with your seasoned staff, or tapping into their knowledge and relationships, which could be quite helpful as they approach your new initiatives.

You believe it is truly important that all of your employees operate as one team to maximize expertise and resources for superior outcomes, but you're not sure why things have gone so wrong. You're starting to wonder if recruiting such a diverse team was a mistake.

Organizational Success Factors

Strategy

Intentionality

Commitment

Evaluation



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