

INSPIRED INNOVATIONS, L.L.C.

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Diversity Leads to Better Products

Diversity in the workplace has become a high-profile political mantra. Numerous government rules, regulations and human resource accounting requirements have been established to insure fairness and to eliminate discrimination.

Of course, most of these do not apply to small businesses and usually none of them apply to the offices of Congress that imposed them. The goal is correct while the methods are often hotly debated.

It is unfortunate that violations of the commonsense rule of, “treat other people as you would have them treat you”, have led to burdensome regulations that waste valuable resources.

I find it very interesting that most of the debate over this issue seems to ignore what I consider to be one of the most important facts. **Diversity builds better companies because it leads to better products and services.**

In my recent book, “Inspired Innovations – A Guide to Highly Efficient New Product Development”, I discuss the team methods that I have found to be most successful. These methods have produced numerous commercially successful and award-winning new products and manufacturing processes.

Diversity of the development team is a critical aspect of the success of this proven technique. Using my approach leads to products, processes and business methods with more sustainable competitive advantages.

In fact, when a company is too small to have sufficiently diverse internal resources, I describe a method to tap into local colleges and universities to supplement your team.

We all know that men and women often perceive things very differently. Whether you attribute this to right-brain vs. left-brain thinking or you believe the Mars vs. Venus metaphor, we are different. Our approach to solving problems; our appreciation of form and function; our needs, wants and desires; even the criteria that we use to select among available alternatives: all of these can be very different.

Similarly, people from different racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds will have these types of differences and others based upon their own experiences.

When I select development teams, I want to get people with a variety of technical backgrounds and work experiences. I also want to take advantage of biological and environmental diversity that is available.

As I explain in the book, we want to look at problems in as many different ways as possible. We will then come up with greater numbers of potential solutions to evaluate when we begin to rate the relative merits of different concepts. The greater the number of ideas and the more input we get during the assessment stage the better the result.

We are more likely to come up with a solution that has a broader market appeal and yields an even more sustainable competitive advantage. In the area of consumer products the diversity of the development team may clearly identify various optional versions of a product that can drastically increase the number of potential buyers.

Diversity does lead to better products, processes and business methods. The result is sustained competitive advantages.

Dr. Phillip S. Wilson