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# "STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR MINORITY WORKERS"

Rose S. James B.S., MHR

*Project Coordinator, University of Nebraska Center for Environmental Toxicology, Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE*

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## **"STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR MINORITY WORKERS"**

**Rose S. James, B.S., MHR**

Project Coordinator

The University of Nebraska Center for Environmental Toxicology

Nebraska Medical Center

Omaha, NE

**"This presentation is an open discussion of what a business, corporation or institution can do to promote cultural acceptance and how to work with diverse cultural groups."**

Institutions, regardless of their mission or geographic locale, are aware of the importance of diversity in the workplace. However, the growing concern for many institutions is the recruitment and, most importantly, the retention of minority employees. Our society can legislate equal opportunity and fair hiring practices, however we cannot legislate morality and tolerance. Often times, the reason for poor retention of minority workers is a direct result of the corporate climate in which they work. The social stratum of the work place is a microcosm of the community in which its workers reside. Employees bring their attitudes and values to work with them. Cliques and informal groups are formed based on the similarities of co-workers. It is not unusual to enter a corporate cafeteria and see Latinos, African Americans, West Indian, Native American, and Caucasian workers sitting at tables within their own ethnic groups. This same phenomenon was witnessed during the early part of the twentieth century, only the groups at that time consisted of Italians, Irish, Germans, Slavs, etc.

The dominant group of the organization tends to exclude the minority group. The informal group setting in an organization consists of many levels of the organization. Supervisors, managers and workers are all part of the group. This is not a negative because it allows informal training and dissemination of information that assists group members in improving their work and making them more qualified for future promotions. The negative develops when certain groups, because of race, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual preference, are alienated from the dominant culture. Unfortunately, those alienated from the group do not receive this informal training or information exchange and therefore are not as prepared for future promotional opportunities.

Corporations are only as successful as the employees they hire. Employees are chosen for their ability not only to do their jobs, but also for their ability to contribute to the organization's culture through interaction and sharing of ideas. Corporations that allow alienation and intolerance are not only poorly utilizing their most valuable resource, their employees, but are also placing themselves in a position for litigation. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is inundated with charges of discrimination and harassment daily. Much of this could be avoided if the organization would continuously assess its corporate culture, promote policies against intolerance, and provide ongoing training in diversity and cultural acceptance. Additionally, it is importance that the

corporate hierarchy (practice what they preach). The role modeling of acceptable corporate behavior and culture must begin at the top. CEOs role model to managers, who role model to supervisors, who role model to foremen or office managers, who then role model to workers and front-line staff. It is not costly to promote diversity in the workplace and the reward of culturally harmonic organization is priceless in terms of production, sick time, vacation, sabotage and lawsuits.

This presentation is an open discussion of what a business, corporation or institution can do to promote cultural acceptance and how to work with diverse cultural groups. It will highlight the personality traits of different cultures and the stereotypes that abound in a corporate environment that can lead to conflict in the workplace. Registrants will learn the different tactics that can be used to promote harmony such as "Diversity Day" and culturally inclusive company and/or divisional newsletters. Registrants will also be introduced to different types of programs, such as diversity training, team building, and corporate wellness initiatives, which they can implement to assist in promoting a positive corporate culture.

**Presenter:**

**Rose S. James, B.S., MHR**

Bellevue University, Bellevue, NE. BS, 1996-1997. Human & Social Service Admin.  
University of Oklahoma, Offutt AFB, NE. MHR, 1998-1999. Human Relations.

**Professional Experience: (abbreviated)**

1996-1997: Administrator, Owens Educational Services, INC., Omaha, NE 1997-2000:  
Project Coordinator, Family and Community Together, Omaha, NE 2000-Present: Project  
Coordinator, UNMC, Eppley Cancer Institute, University of Nebraska Center for  
Environmental Toxicology

**Professional Affiliations (abbreviated)**

1997-Present: Chairperson, Mayor's Public Safety Advisory Commission, Omaha, NE  
1998-Present: Member of Human Resources Association of the Midlands, Omaha, NE  
Chapter  
1998-Present: Consultant to the South Omaha Community Care Council, Omaha, NE  
1999-Present: Executive Board member of the Lead Safe Omaha Coalition, Omaha, NE  
2000-Present: Appointed Member of the Omaha Police Department Steering Committee,  
Omaha, NE  
2000-Present: Evaluator with the United Way of the Midlands Planning, Allocations and  
Evaluation Committee

**Past Presentations:**

"Family and Community Together: Who are we?" Minority Health Conference, Lincoln,  
NE, October 1998.

"The Importance of Adopting a Multicultural Perspective in Society", Diversity  
Luncheon, St. Joseph's Hospital, Omaha, NE, July 1999.

"FACT and the Community: How to get involved", Minority Health Conference,  
Creighton University, Omaha, NE, October 1999.

"The Importance of Diversity in the Provision of Community Services", In Harmony with Children Conference, Lincoln, NE, May 4, 2000.