

10 TIPS TO SUPPORT EMPLOYERS EMBRACING DIVERSITY



- 1. Define diversity broadly.** When supporting diversity within the workplace, be as inclusive as possible – ultimately a productive and engaging workplace is one where all workers are respected and, to feel safe, don't have to hide or disguise key aspects of their identity (e.g., age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, race, culture, or abilities).
- 2. Begin with the end in mind.** Stephen Covey's principle for effective people holds true in supporting employers embracing diversity. Consider the outcome you're trying to achieve and develop a plan to get from where you are now to where you'd like to be; your strategy will be different according to your focus.
- 3. Speak the employer's language.** To effectively advocate for better employment opportunities for diverse workers, help employers understand how embracing diversity will support their strategic business initiatives and result in a good return on their investment.
- 4. Get buy-in from the leadership team.** Leaders will be instrumental in shaping diversity policy, allocating financial and human resources, and freeing up employee time to participate in training or events.
- 5. Shape the culture.** It's generally accepted that a diversity *event* (i.e., a workshop or intervention) isn't going to result in meaningful, long term change. Aim for an ongoing comprehensive program that enhances diversity awareness amongst all employees and creates a culture where diversity is appreciated, not simply tolerated.
- 6. Provide useful tools.** As an advocate, you likely can't support all employers in your network. Instead, introduce employers to tools that an in-house diversity champion could use with limited training or support. The SEED toolkit is freely available online at: www.embracingdiversity.ca. Also see www.diversityatwork.ca.
- 7. Introduce training opportunities.** One online course that uses the SEED toolkit as a resource is Managing Diversity at Work: <http://www.lifestrategies.ca/docs/Managing-Diversity-At-Work-Course.pdf>
- 8. Facilitate learning opportunities.** Many business and professional associations welcome offers from local speakers or trainers to present on topics of interest to their members. As part of your advocacy role, speak about diversity at local and regional events.
- 9. What's measured, counts!** Keep and share diversity-related statistics; get permission to share success stories from employers who've successfully embraced diversity. Numbers talk and employers may be more receptive to your diversity solutions if they have tangible evidence that a similar approach has worked somewhere else.
- 10. Keep learning yourself.** Understanding diversity is a lifelong endeavor. Within Life Strategies' Career Management Professional program are courses including Understanding Diverse Clients, The Immigrant Experience, Women at Work, Retirement Readiness, and International Global Careers, all pre-approved for Continuing Education Units. Find out more at: www.lifestrategies.ca/services/courses/career-management-professional-program-cmpp.cfm



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