

For Diversity



Against Discrimination

**DIVERSITY**

in small and medium-sized enterprises

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE 2006

# Putting Diversity into Practice

## Business in the Community

**Denise Cranston**  
**Diversity Director**  
**United Kingdom**



An initiative of the European Union

[www.stop-discrimination.info](http://www.stop-discrimination.info)



## Diversity in Small & Medium Enterprises

- Small businesses depend on employees with competences in multiple disciplines and the ability to multi-task.
- Diversity in small business is about understanding the various competences of employees and creating a culture in which they feel motivated and able to give their best.
- To be able to effectively harness the advantages from diversity, small businesses need to be able to understand how their organisation accommodates and responds to it. More than that, they need assistance to identify how to improve in a manner that is easily integrated into existing business practice.





## Business in the Community Diversity Tools

- Diversity Audit tools for large and small organisations
- Gender Diversity Benchmarking
- Diversity Awareness Programme
- Line Manager Diversity research
- Workplace Diversity Awards
- Code of Practice on employing Migrant Workers
- Best Practice Case-studies





## **Diversity Audit for SME's Guiding Principles**

- Diversity is not static; people have different and developing relationships within their culture
- The best people to assess the extent of diversity in an organisation are its employees.
- Diversity affects everyone in an organisation.
- It is not enough to add new ways of working if you do not remove old systems that reinforce exclusionary practices
- Recommendations must be acted upon for the audit to be valuable





# Diversity Audit

## Diversity Dimensions

- Sourcing employees
- Valuing employees
- Valuing Customer Relationships
- Monitoring the Bottom Line





# Sourcing Employees

## Recruitment, Selection & Promotion

- Review job descriptions
- Welcoming statement used in job advertisements to encourage under-represented groups to apply
- Make efforts to advertise posts so that they come to the attention of under-represented groups
- If using recruitment firms, ensure they are committed to diversity
- All involved in interviewing are trained
- Provide training and induction for all staff





# Valuing Employees

## Discrimination and harassment

- Make it easy for individuals to report a problem
- Train managers to identify prejudice and cases of indirect discrimination
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner
- Monitor complaints and review the policy on a regular basis
- Provide Diversity Awareness training for staff





# Valuing Employees

## Reasonable accommodation of diversity

- Understand the needs of all employees through regular surveys/focus groups/meetings
- Consult with local NGOs and organisations representing diverse groups
- Support all employees to achieve a work-life balance in line with business needs
- Within reason, facilitate religious requirements, dress code, dietary requirements, prayer facilities etc.
- Provide any necessary translation and interpretation
- Provide practical support for newly arrived migrant workers i.e. transport, open bank accounts, register with GP





# Valuing Employees Promoting respect for Diversity

- Promote visible statements/images that demonstrate commitment to diversity
- Ensure that social events and other structures reflect the diversity of the organisation and broader society
- Provide regular awareness training to all staff





## Valuing Customer Relationships

- Appropriate and relevant information and knowledge **about** the customer base is used in service planning and delivery.
- Up-to-date information **from** customers is used to develop and improve service standards, service planning and service provision.
- The organisation actively encourages and promotes use of their services/products to people under-represented in the customer base.
- Customer needs and expectations are coordinated and communicated across the organisation.





## Monitoring the bottom line

- Monitor applications for recruitment and promotion by gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion etc
- Conduct employee surveys to assess attitudes and levels of satisfaction
- Monitor complaints
- Monitor appraisal outcomes and exit interviews
- Sickness and absenteeism records
- Monitor trainee progress and development
- Actively seek suggestions for improvement from all staff on an ongoing basis





# Why diversity policies often don't work

It is seen as an accommodation to minority groups, and not a business issue

There is management resistance

Hostile systems eg long hours culture, no flexibility, autocratic management style

Unclear purpose





## What are the indicators of success?

**You will know that your diversity strategy is working when it is seen that, amongst other things:**

- Individuals' viewpoints are sought and listened to, on merit.
- Roles and careers allow for experiment, growth and adaptation.
- Rules and procedures are changed after review and discussion.
- Your workforce is more diverse – **at all levels**
- Staff at all levels, are supported in balancing work and personal life.
- There are no barriers to full participation for all staff, customers, stakeholders and partners.
- Everyone understands the benefit to be gained from workplace Diversity.





## And finally ...

- Diversity is not an initiative, but a core component of good business practice
- Managed effectively, it can bring out the best qualities in an employee base and subsequently enhance service delivery and employee attitude
- But having a diverse workforce does not automatically translate into positive benefits. Diversity must be effectively managed to reap the diversity "dividend".

