



Employee Representations

Measures for your Diversity Management

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIONS

Diversity is a broad field. If you are familiar with your organisation's objectives, resources, local and industry- and company-specific conditions, it will be easier to find the appropriate combination of actions! For some companies, however, comprehensive diversity management is just too cumbersome as a point of departure. You're looking for simple, selective actions to be able to react to an urgent need for action – for instance, when recruiting young employees or specialists? So we'll show you activities that have a relatively quick impact, even when deploying less resources. Often, by the way, actions already exist that can be realigned and linked under the diversity "umbrella". In the event that you would like to achieve more, we present you here with actions that have more of a mid-term or long-term perspective. They do necessitate more resources, but their effect is generally greater.

Zeitraum \ Aufwand	Short-term < 6 Monate < 12 Monate	Mid-term 6-12 Monate < 12 Monate	Long-term > 12 Monate
Low	1 2	3	
Medium	4 5 6	7 8 9 10	11 12
High		13 14	15 16 17 18

The catalogue of actions was drawn up on the basis of two criteria: How quickly can businesses implement an action? And how complex is the implementation? The assessment serves as an orientation – the timeframe and complexity can differ from this estimate in your specific company reality.

Short-term actions

1 Diversity-oriented job advertisements

Job advertisements may not exclude anyone. That's what the law has required since 2006. You should word job advertisements as neutrally as possible. Go a step further and aim at target groups that have been underrepresented thus far, for instance by writing that applications from people with a migration background are particularly encouraged. Or even more comprehensively: "We welcome applications regardless of gender and gender identity, nationality, ethnic and social origin, religion and world view, disability, age, and sexual orientation or identity." You can set down these principles in the rules on job advertisements, or in a jointly developed "diversity and equal opportunity" employer brand.

2 Make use of alternative recruiting methods

Many organisations are preoccupied with the growing need for skilled workers. To successfully meet this need, you should review your recruiting, and, if necessary, expand upon it. Search more broadly and address new target groups, using, for instance, multi-lingual and national job advertisements, career networks like LinkedIn or XING and specific online job portals like EURES. Here you will reach younger persons in a targeted fashion or young talents and specialists with a migration background. Many employee representations have good networks and access to associations and organisations that represent the interests of various communities. Migrants' organisations, LGBTIQ* associations or inclusion networks can, for instance, support working together. You can also develop diversity-oriented "employees recruit employees" campaigns together with the management or the HR department.

4 Survey the workforce

What does the workforce expect from your diversity management? What knowledge do they bring along? From the employees' perspective, how does the company communicate? In such a way that everyone feels spoken to and represented? What changes do employees want? Surveys among the workforce provide insights about the employees' wishes and objectives. In this way you can select the appropriate combination of actions, ensuring the backing of the workforce.

5 Internal communication – simple German

It's your goal to involve all employees in all their diversity in the operational discussion process? Then you should make an effort to communicate in a language that is so simple and inclusive that everyone understands it. Especially for brochures, notices, company newspapers, internet sites or speeches, the rule is: simple is better! There are a few easy rules with which you'll succeed in doing this. Write, for instance, in short sentences, use short words, use active wording and avoid the subjunctive.

6 Embed diversity communication

The success factors for good diversity management? Include all important persons, convey the advantages, quantify the costs and most of all: communicate clearly what you would like to achieve with which actions. As the employee representation, you should be involved in the diversity communication from the start. At works meetings, on the intranet, in email services and employee magazines you will find a range of possibilities to be actively involved in aligning diversity management.

Mid-term actions

3 Ensure employees' participation

Change needs people who support the transformation and fill it with life. As the employee representation you should ensure that you involve employee groups and relevant players in the diversity actions as early as possible. In that way you can take all needs and interests into account. You can get involved accordingly when putting together focus groups or horizontal working groups to accompany the diversity process.

7 Mentoring

Many would like to share their experience at an equal level. With mentoring, a person with a lot of job experience supports another person with less experience. Many companies organise such a mentoring process for various aspects of diversity – often at the initiative of or supported by the employee representation. Examples of this include the DGB “Mento” project for people with heightened basic educational needs, or occupational mentors specifically for women, refugees, workers' children and many others. Employees should always consider the mentoring mutual: “What can we learn from each other?” The key to success? Accompany, train and support your co-workers.

8 Fair application processes in terms of diversity

As the employee representation you are quite automatically involved in application processes – in job advertisements, for instance. Ensure in addition that skills that are important for the position from a diversity perspective are also listed. These include, for example, soft factors such as diversity skills, strong communication skills, sensitivity or international experience. Shape tests, interviews or assessment centers just as sensitively and without biases.

9 Quotas

With their high level of commitment, self-imposed quotas help break down under-representations and open up the personnel structure. They are negotiated between the management and the employee representation. Your objective can be, for instance, to increase the share of trainees or managers with a migration background. In so doing, organisations should always pay heed to the guiding principle of “qualification before attribute” in order to avoid stereotyping (such as a “token woman” or a “token migrant”). Employee representations should thus question general objectives like the structural increase of the proportion of women at all levels, and contribute proposed measures. Or from the start undertake to name specific figures and timeframes, for example, the objective to increase the share of managers with a migration background from 4.7 percent to 10 percent in the next three years.

10 Diversity skills as a decision criterion (see chart on p. 19)

Everyone in the organisation should acquire diversity skills – from the management level, to the HR managers, to employee representations, to the employees. Only in this way can you achieve the objective of an open and unbiased organisational culture and sustainably implement diversity actions. Make diversity a criterion in job descriptions, job profiles, in apprenticeships and in career advancement and further training. Sustainable, positive cultural change can arise from this.

13 “Equality and diversity” office

The in-house complaints body attends to all of the company’s employees – even former employees. For this reason, employee representations should ensure that all employee groups can trust it. If there are several persons in the complaints body, it should be put together just as diversely. Involve the management in setting up the complaints body. With an “equality and diversity” office you show internally and externally that you are a fair and attractive place to work. The office’s work should be checked by the employee representation to ensure it is transparent. In addition, you should request activity reports or case statistics at regular intervals.

14 Diversity analysis

Analyse diversity in your company, for instance by means of a company report on equality or diversity. In consultation with the management or the HR department, include data on diversity characteristics or the results of a voluntary, anonymous survey. In this way, for instance, you can document how many migrants work in the company, how many women are in management positions or how many people are taking part in vocational training as unskilled and semi-skilled labour. You can also use the report as a basis for quotas or monitoring.

Long-term actions

11 Record employees’ diversity potential more broadly

Skills and qualifications lie dormant in every workforce. Either they were not noted when the employee started work, have been forgotten after a long employment or they simply haven’t played any role thus far. An example: if someone speaks a foreign language, he or she can serve as a contact person for new team members or business relationships from these language areas. To make better use of such resources, you can survey your employees on a voluntary basis on, for instance, skills such as multi-lingualism, intercultural communication or gender sensitivity, country-specific knowledge or knowledge of specific requirements. Once structured and edited, this knowledge can be used in a targeted way for new projects, networks, products and services.

12 Diverse teams of employee representations

Shaping diversity in the company succeeds best with a diverse committee. To increase diversity, everyone needs to become active: when setting up the lists, you should actively campaign for people who reflect the workforce. It is important, for instance, to communicate actively that you can run for office even if you do not hold German citizenship, or that you do not need much prior knowledge and you will be given further training to be able to carry out the task. Usually, despite all efforts, it is not possible to have all relevant diversity characteristics represented on the committee. The elected representatives should then endeavour to include those directly involved, when, for instance, shaping working times that are family-friendly, reaching out to mothers and fathers, or involving migrants for intercultural issues. This can be done with thematic works meetings, working groups or direct conversations.

15 Skills analysis

To know exactly what the employees can do is the base for a true vocational training culture. But how do you find that out? There are various ways to do so. What is important is that you systematically analyse the status quo, meaning with all employees and with systematic guidance for questions and for evaluation. On the other hand, it is important that, besides the skills that are directly important for the job informal skills and even skills that are remote from the job are also queried. The objective in doing so should be to jointly discover potential and plan further training for all employees in a structured way. Examples for skills analyses are the AIKompass (www.aikompass.de) for metal-working occupations or Project Greta (www.die-bonn.de/institut/forschung/professionalitaet/greta.aspx) for education professions, both free of charge and readily available.

16 Diversity-oriented work organisation

Employee representations are particularly close to the needs and desires of different employee groups. For this reason, it makes sense to involve them in designing a diversity-oriented work organisation. This includes, for instance: analysing and assessing restructuring plans, launching new forms of work, shaping work stations and rules on breaks for severely disabled or older employees, structuring working times in accordance with family responsibilities, taking heed of religious needs when allocating shifts, or applying the leave arrangements defined in collective bargaining agreements also for same-sex partnerships.

17 Company-wide agreements and service agreements

A sustainable and reliable diversity process includes clear rules and agreements. Many companies use company-wide agreements and service agreements. These are on, for instance, “partnership-based conduct”, “further training”, “gender equality” or “diversity”. An important aid for developing them are sample company-wide agreements from other companies. You will find a compilation, for instance, on the Hans Böckler Foundation website under the heading “Managing Diversity” and in the brochure “Managing Diversity. Betriebs- und Dienstvereinbarungen – Analyse und Handlungsempfehlungen“ by Michaela Dälken, also published by the Hans Böckler Foundation. Existing agreements can also be checked from a diversity perspective.

18 Company-specific diversity monitoring

Do the diversity actions selected fit the objectives previously defined? Do they show the desired effects? To find that out, you need comprehensive diversity monitoring. For this purpose, specify the success criteria, timeframes and target values in a key indicator system before implementing the actions. Connect them with factors like fluctuation rates, participation in further training, sick days / absenteeism or internal advancement. In this way, you will learn where you can report successes with your diversity management – and, inversely, where there are still barriers for certain employee groups. You then adapt your catalogue of actions in order to move step by step towards your objective of a diverse organisational culture.