

“GETTING BUY IN FROM THE “C-SUITE”

From

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, TOLERANCE & DIVERSITY FOR WHITE GUYS ...AND OTHER HUMAN BEINGS

(Understanding the Neurology of Intolerance)

by

Scott Warrick, JD, MLHR, CEQC, SPHR
Scott Warrick Consulting & Employment Law Services
(614) 367-0842: Office ♣ (614) 738-8317: Cell

www.scottwarrick.com

If you ever want to see who values a certain topic the most, just look at the demographics of the speakers and who shows up at conferences. At most of the Diversity or Tolerance Conferences I attend, I am usually one of only a few white people speaking, if not the only white Anglo Saxon Protestant straight guy presenting. I am also usually a minority as an attendee. That should be a hint to you as to who values this topic the most, as well as who feels the most excluded.

Every year, I go to several “Diversity” and “Tolerance” seminars across the country. At many of these conferences, I am also one of the presenters. As I wait for my turn to present, I will go and visit other sessions and hear what the speaker has to say. Typical sessions I routinely hear include:

- “GETTING BUY-IN FROM WHITE MALES,”
- “WHY YOUR BUSINESS DEPENDS ON MINORITIES,”
- “UNDERSTANDING THE BUYING POWER OF MINORITIES,” and
- “SHOWING THE VALUE OF DIVERSITY,” to mention a few.

In most all of these types of sessions, I have basically heard the speakers discuss how the attendees must show the value of “diversity” to their CEOs. They must show upper management, which is now apparently referred to as the “C-Suite,” how they can increase their business by appealing to more minorities. These speakers go on to show the attendees how much spending power minorities have in a given year, which the attendees are then supposed to take back to their organizations and pass onto their superiors in order to get them to place a higher value on minorities.

In short, these sessions are intended to show your organizations how much they need the support of the minority community in order to survive. This logic is also intended to show organizations the business reasons for increasing the number of minority employees in their workplaces. Sometimes these sessions focus on the negative consequences the organization will suffer if they do not have more minorities in its workforce, such as civil rights lawsuits, lowered sales, bad public relations, and so on. Sometimes they focus on showing the attendees why hearing a different perspective from minorities is good for the organization.

In some cases, this approach works. The organization is maybe doing business internationally or maybe it has many different minorities working for it already. Maybe it has gotten “burned” in some way for not having a tolerant attitude towards others. Maybe the C-Suite just naturally understands this topic and so it is an easy sell for the on-site diversity person. Maybe.

However, most diversity people try so hard to convince upper management why the organization needs a diversity and tolerance program that they forget to look at the most obvious approach of all:

What does the “C-Suite” want?

To me, it just makes sense. Find out what upper management really wants ... **THEN GIVE IT TO THEM!**

Rather than *telling* upper management why *they* need a tolerance program, it is much better to see what strategic goals the organization has set for itself, which is a clear indicator of what is important to the CEO and the rest of the executive team. Diversity people should then cater *their* program to meet the *organization’s* strategic needs ... *not* the other way around.

Companies *do not* exist to support “diversity” and “tolerance” programs. They exist to achieve their strategic goals, and if a so-called diversity or tolerance expert cannot show the organization how it can use this program to attain these goals, **then why would any organization ever adopt one?**

For instance, I recently went into an organization where some truly disruptive employees were making everyone’s lives miserable. Of course, the “problem people” were all white, so no one recognized that the true issue they were dealing with here was one of tolerance and a diversity of ideas.

As I listened to the CEO and the COO describe the situation, I took a few notes and nodded in agreement. As they continued telling me more and more stories about these “problem people,” I could see their faces grow red and their frustration start to come out.

After several minutes of listening to them describe their dilemma, I finally said, “I understand. You are dealing with children.”

They smiled at each other and then said, “Yeah, I guess we are. They are acting just like little kids.”

“Well,” I said. “*That* is a diversity and a tolerance issue.”

The COO looked at the CEO and said, “I don’t really see the diversity issue here. Everyone we are talking about is white.”

“I understand that,” I said. “But you have incredibly intolerant people whose egos are way out of control. As a result, everything is now all about them. If anyone disagrees with them, they throw a little temper tantrum until they get their way. They cannot stand anyone who has an idea different from theirs. Has anyone ever talked to you about implementing an ‘Emotional Intelligence and Tolerance’ program?”

“Not really,” the CEO responded. “I’m not even really sure what that is.”

“Well, look at it this way,” I explained. “‘Diversity’ means you have different kinds of people working here with different backgrounds, different opinions and different ways of looking at things. You clearly have that or you wouldn’t have employees ready to kill each other right now. *That* is a ‘Diversity of Ideas’ issue. We have to stop thinking of ‘diversity’ as being only a race and religion issue. Instead, we need to think of ‘diversity’ as occurring whenever two people disagree or have a different perspective. *THAT* happens every day. That is why I refer to ‘diversity’ as ‘Diversity of Ideas.’ ‘Diversity of Ideas’ occurs whenever you have a ‘conflict’ or ‘disagreement’ in your organization. You certainly have that whenever you put people of different races and religions together, but you also have that between management and labor, between older people and younger people, men and women, doctors and nurses, partners and associates, and so on. The problem arises when we actually voice our different opinions because very few people take it well when someone tells them that they are wrong. That is why you are having these problems. You have diversity in your workplace every time anyone has a difference of opinion ... and that’s when their egos take over. In other words, ‘How dare anyone disagree with me!’”

“I see ...” the CEO said as he thought about what I was saying. “So ... we basically have a Diversity of Ideas going on here ... and it is causing these problems?”

“Right,” I agreed.

“But you are *always* going to have people who disagree and have different perspectives. It is unavoidable,” the CEO said in an exacerbated tone.

“Right, and that’s why the different ideas we get from our people will kill any program an organization tries to put into place if we don’t have Emotionally Intelligent people, which is ‘Tolerance.’ In other words, you can’t do *anything* with ‘Emotional Children.’ That is why so many of your programs are failing now.”

The CEO looked at me and said, “But that doesn’t sound like a Diversity Program. That is ‘Conflict Resolution.’”

“And what do you think causes the problems when we have different people working together? They disagree. They disagree with each other’s culture, their ideas, their ways of doing things. It is all the same problem ... and you cannot resolve any conflict with ‘Emotional Children.’” I explained.

The CEO looked a little confused, so I continued.

“‘Emotional Intelligence’ teaches everyone in your organization how they can better control their egos and emotions, which means they are better able to act like ‘big people.’ It means they are not allowed to persecute other people just because they disagree with them or because they are different. It teaches them to keep their egos and emotions under control so they can resolve differences like mature individuals. It applies to differences in race and religion, but it also applies whenever any two people disagree with one another.”

“That is why a good Emotional Intelligence/Tolerance Program forms the basis of every other program adopted by the organization,” I explained.

“For instance, a good Emotional Intelligence/Tolerance Program is an integral part of having a strong Union-Free Program. If managers and supervisors don’t act like ‘big people’ and treat others with respect, the organization will most likely get a union ... and rightfully so. Employees vote for a union because they are mad at management, or more specifically, their direct supervisor. When people are treated with a lack of respect, unions can easily emerge.

“Emotional Intelligence also forms the foundation for your ‘Team Building,’ ‘Customer Service,’ ‘Safety,’ and any other program you ever try to put into place. These are critical ‘life skills’ that everyone should use in both their private and professional lives. In other words, *nothing* works if you try to do it with emotional children.”

After that, they were sold. I *never* ... *ever* try to convince my clients to adopt a new Emotional Intelligence/Tolerance Program because having more minorities will help their business or anything like that. I find out what issues *THEY* are dealing with and show them how a proper Emotional Intelligence/Tolerance Program can help solve the “Diversity of Ideas” problems that *already exist* within their organizations.

Of course, once an organization has a culture of Emotional Intelligence and Tolerance, hiring people based upon their skills, regardless of race, religion, or any other minority status dominates the culture. Once we can control our EGOS and EMOTIONS, issues like race, religion, politics and others are all much easier to address and resolve because the people involved are much better able to control their EGOS and EMOTIONS. As a result, they are able to see someone else’s point of view. We don’t feel so threatened by someone who is different from us.

Emotionally intelligent people are much more willing to be tolerant of anyone who is different from them because they are in control of their EGOS and EMOTIONS.

Unfortunately, approaching “Diversity” and “Tolerance” issues in this manner is a rarity.



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(614) 367-0842 Office ♣ (614) 738-8317 Cell ♣ (614) 367-1044 FAX

www.scottwarrick.com

CEO Magazine's 2008 Human Resources "Superstar"

Nationally Certified Emotional Intelligence Counselor

2010, 2008, 2007, 2006 and 2003 SHRM National Diversity Conference Presenter

[Scott Trains Managers and Employees ON-SITE in over 40 topics](#)

Scott Warrick specializes in working with organizations to prevent employment law problems from happening while improving employee relations. Scott uses his unique background of **LAW** and **HUMAN RESOURCES** to help organizations get where they want to go.

Scott travels the country presenting his revolutionary ["Emotional Intelligence, Tolerance & Diversity for White Guys ... And Other Human Beings: Understanding the Neurology of Intolerance."](#) This one of a kind **SKILL-BASED** program is the only **SKILL-BASED Emotional Intelligence/Tolerance/Diversity Program** in the country approved by HRCI-SHRM for **STRATEGIC** SPHR Credit because it creates an atmosphere of open communication so we are better able to resolve all kinds of conflicts in our organizations.

Scott's academic background and awards include:

- Capital University College of Law (Class Valedictorian (1st out of 233))
- Master of Labor & Human Resources and B.A. in Organizational Communication: The Ohio State University
- The Human Resource Association of Central Ohio's Linda Kerns Award for Outstanding Creativity in the Field of Human Resource Management and the Ohio State Human Resource Council's David Prize for Creativity in Human Resource Management

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