

Professional Excellence Through Diversity

Half-Day Attorney Professional Development Program Example

Facilitated by Tulin DiversiTeam Associates

(Customized in Collaboration with Each Client & Adaptable with or for Support Staff)

This session for Firm attorneys (adaptable for or with support staff) will identify, (through business case examples, interactive colleague and client scenarios, law firm best practices, and business research on the bottom-line link between diverse work team skills and professional individual and team performance), the most effective strategies to help advance the Firm goals of eliminating diversity barriers and better leveraging the potential bottom-line business benefits of the current and future diversity of the Firm's people, talent, and perspectives, to become both the "Employer of Choice" and the "Provider of Legal Services of Choice" to our increasingly diverse internal and external client base. Emphasis will be placed on identifying the ethical principles & practices, professional skills and organizational steps necessary to most effectively leverage Diversity to advance a professional culture of respect, inclusion, fairness, innovation, teamwork, client service, integrity and high performance, consistent with the Firm's core values and its key professional and strategic business goals. At the session's conclusion, participants will identify and build upon the Firm's identified diversity strengths and areas in need of improvement, recommend organizational improvement strategies, and make individual leadership commitments that can measurably improve the Firm's ability to attract, retain and utilize the "best and brightest" men and women from all backgrounds to successfully build their careers, serve our clients, grow the Firm, and advance our strategic professional and business goals.

- 1. Introductions, Program Goals, and "Perspective" Activity from Astronaut Training.**
- 2. Separating Personal Intent from Professional Behavior & Its Organizational Impact:**
Moving beyond blame to focus on expanding professional skills to more effectively work with colleagues, direct reports and clients from the "more obvious" diversity categories, (i.e., race, gender, national origin,) and the "less obvious" diversity categories, (i.e., education, job level, job function, work-family balance, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, work style), to better advance cross-cultural and cross-functional individual and team collaboration, high performance, and excellence in building and maintaining responsive, strong, ethical and trusting client relationships.
- 3. Diversity Skills As A Professional Business Quality Issue: "What's In It For Us?"** The bottom-line, value-added diversity benefits for all Firm colleagues in advancing cost savings, client service excellence, loyalty, integrity, business performance, innovation, & the recruitment, retention, development & utilization of the "Best & the Brightest" talent of all backgrounds.

**Leveraging Diversity to Advance
Individual and Organizational Excellence**

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4. **Micro-Messages Multicultural Communication Exercise:** *“Its not what you say, it’s the way that you say it”* -- with partners, associates, administrators, staff and clients.

The **4 Key Micro-Message elements** are presented and demonstrated:

1. **Verbal**, (What is Said);
2. **Para-Verbal**, (How it’s said);
3. **Non-Verbal**, (How it appears); and
4. **Contextual**, (Who else is there; Previous trust; Culture; e-Mail; telephone; etc.)

5. **Value-Creation Through Cross-Functional, Diverse Work Teams:** Through recent Wharton Business School research on value creation through diverse teams, participants will experience how the diversity of work-team members' backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, functions and values can either undermine or strengthen **three key team success factors -- Job Performance, Creativity and Productivity.**

Participants will analyze, practice and recommend skills and action steps to strengthen both their own and the Firm’s ability to effectively leverage diversity to advance its core values and strategic business goals.

6. **4-Step Business Thought Process -- Moving From Subjective to Objective Decision-Making:** A model to identify “business-relevant” & to screen out “business-irrelevant” diversity characteristics so that the merits of the “message”, not the “messenger”, determine how talent, performance, and professional opportunities are evaluated and leveraged.
8. **Understanding & Leveraging Emotional Intelligence Diversity Skills:** *“The Ability To Make Quality Decisions While Experiencing Feelings,”* and *“The ability bring people into harmony with our positive intentions.”*
9. **Diversity of “Comfort Zones” & its Role In Team-Collegial Effectiveness:** Identifying participants’ own work-style “comfort zones”, and providing hands-on skills to increase their versatility and flexibility in stretching their own comfort zones to more effectively: motivate others; resolve conflicts; build trust; evaluate others; avoid diversity blunders and “hot buttons”; and increase their ability to communicate respect and understanding of obvious and less obvious differences between and among colleagues and clients from diverse backgrounds.
10. **Humor at Work:** The professional and workplace stress reduction & teamwork benefits of *appropriate* humor, and the individual team and firm costs of *inappropriate* colleague & client humor, plus the skills to know the difference

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11. **Courage vs. Collusion:** Strategies for all colleagues, particularly white men, to resist the condoning of artificial or unprofessional “comfort zone” conduct that is inappropriate or disrespectful to internal or external clients, in order to model leadership in intervening, educating mentoring and “Walking the Talk.”
12. **Where are we, and where do we still need to be -- Next Step Diversity Excellence Through Mutualism Improvements** that:
 - a. Participants commit themselves to implement after the session, and
 - b. The Firm should consider to better advance these Professional Diversity Principles, Skills and Best Practices
13. **Ten Factors of Change, & How To “Walk The Talk”:** How to hold ourselves and others accountable for being more diversity competent professional leaders and change agents back at work with Firm colleagues, direct reports and clients of all backgrounds, levels and functions, in order to strengthen both our own and others’ ability to leverage diversity to advance the Firm’s values and strategic professional and business goals.
15. **Highlights, Individual Commitments, Follow-up, and Program Evaluations.**

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