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## DIVERSITY IN AN ORGANISATION'S WORKFORCE OFFERS NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Diversity management is a term that can be heard in more and more companies. While some perceive it as merely a strategy to ensure 'political correctness', diversity in the workforce is a very important part of an organisation's culture involving tangible benefits. Moreover, skilful diversity management is the key to gaining market advantage.

### What about this diversity?

Diversity (in companies) often depends on the country and organisational culture of a company. Some companies emphasise ethnic minorities, others age diversity. Globally, diversity strategies focus particularly on three groups: women, people over 50 and people with disabilities. Compared to the general population, these groups are still underrepresented in the workforce. This is particularly evident in the structures of senior management and corporate bodies.

### Searching for potential

To ensure a diverse workforce within a company, it is not enough to take into account a person's previous experience and achievements when hiring. These are quite significant criteria, but they do not condition how an employee will perform in the future. By focusing on an employee's past successes, we may overlook valuable candidates who simply haven't had the opportunity to develop their full potential yet. It is also worth remembering that it is very difficult to see this potential in candidates who are very different from us.

There are many benefits to employing people on the basis of diversity. Above all, it is possible to get to know different groups of people and thus reach a wider audience. Moreover, it also has the effect of reducing stereotypical perceptions of professional minorities.



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### In line with values

It is very important to remember that it is not possible to promote diversity without a proper and skilful 'inclusion policy'. It is based on complete openness towards other ways of thinking and unknown solutions, as well as an inner readiness to revise one's own beliefs.

Another thing is respecting the differences between generations. Positive relations between employees of different age groups and positions encourage the exchange of knowledge, experience and the search for unconventional solutions. It is important that the flow of information should not be one-sided and in an older-younger direction. It is also worth listening to the youngest employees, as their way of thinking can bring surprising conclusions. The practice of „reverse mentoring” is not yet so popular in Poland, although it may slowly gain followers.

### The leader's perspective

Here are some helpful questions for leaders who want to promote diversity:

- What does diversity look like in your team?
- What do you find challenging about building diversity in your organisation / team? How do you cope with it?
- How do you as a leader practice / promote / support diversity?
- What do your colleagues think about diversity? How do they practice it?
- Do you observe any behaviour that leads to the exclusion of others? How do you counteract?

### Summary

Companies that do not nurture a diversity policy or only declare it tend to be afraid to take risks. Experts agree that it is **the willingness to take risks that is an opportunity for an organisation to gain an advantage in a competitive market**. Organisations that focus on as little team diversity as possible can fall into conformity and stagnation over time. In turn, employees stimulated by their diversity and openness can come up with **many innovative and beneficial solutions for the company**.



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