

DIVERSITY

What is Diversity?

Most people describe diversity in terms of gender and race. In recent years, diversity has taken on a more encompassing description. Today it's about creativity and getting better results and energy from those who work with us.

It's about:

- ✓ *Differences in lifestyles*
- ✓ *Differences in thinking*
- ✓ *Differences in education*
- ✓ *Differences in processing information*
- ✓ *Differences in how agreements are reached*

Diversity is also about individual contributions, personal growth, acceptance and appreciation, trust and respect and sharing information.

DLA has undertaken a massive program to increase employee awareness of diversity and to encourage employees to value differences and individual contributions. The diversity concept teaches that today's workforce

includes people from all types of backgrounds with all types of differences, and using those different perspectives and experiences can greatly enhance the way an agency does business.

"Diversity boils down to basic human interaction," Gary S. Thurber, director, Defense Energy Support Center, and Diversity Team Leader said. "It is the respect and value that you have for others this is the essence of diversity."

History of DLA Diversity

The concept of managing diversity got started at DLA in early 1994. DLA leadership was interested in knowing if they were doing all they could to promote a healthy work environment. From there evolved a diversity team made up of senior leaders from each of the business areas at DLA Headquarters. The team sought out the advice of Dr. Roosevelt Thomas, the author of "Beyond Race and Gender," to establish a process for managing diversity within DLA. The team also developed a vision statement which expresses DLA's concept of diversity.

Diversity Vision

Achieve organizational excellence through an environment where people and their individual differences and contributions are valued.

Navy Rear Adm. Bob Chamberlin, DLA deputy director, explains in the diversity briefing to HQ employees that it is the "...goal or vision that keeps us on the right track. The vision also becomes the measure against which we gauge achievement."

From this beginning, the team

developed the seven diversity principles.

DLA's Seven Diversity Principles

- ✓ *We value the differences in people.*
The word "value" is used because it means to hold in high esteem and to appreciate.
- ✓ *We foster an environment of mutual trust and respect.*
In such an environment, a person is not afraid to try innovative ideas that may enhance the organization. This entire initiative is built around the premise that I trust and respect you, and you trust and respect me. With this type of solid base, DLA can achieve organizational excellence.
- ✓ *We promote professional and personal growth.*
This principle becomes more important as the work-force reorganizes and the way we do business changes. Any organization needs to promote the professional and personal growth of all its employees in order to survive.
- ✓ *We create a supportive environment for each other.*
A supportive environment allows people to learn from one another and truly experience the team concept.



✓ *We recognize that sharing of information promotes the full participation of our work-force.*
 In the age of information, what we don't know and what the people we work with don't know, could become a liability. In order to effectively do our jobs, we need to have all the information needed to do that job. We also need to convey the same information to the people we are working with.

✓ *We are committed to creating a sense of community in DLA*
 The DLA director and Executive Team are committed to the diversity vision in order to promote a feeling of community within the DLA work-force

✓ *We respect and value individual contributions in meeting customer's needs.*
 The words "respect" and "value individual contributions" are crucial. Any employee, any person, needs to feel that they are respected and valued.

DLA Diversity Management Plan

The diversity team proposed a five phase management plan, which was accepted by the DLA director and the Executive Team. Basically, the plan was built around three elements: Diversity Principles, Education and Feedback.

✓ **Phase One**
Advocacy – Begins with stake holder buy in and broad-based Diversity awareness training. The DLA Director and Executive Team have committed time and resources toward developing this plan in order to promote and develop DLA's diversity vision.

✓ **Phase Two**
Diagnostic – Consists of a survey that will gauge the organizational culture and drivers of behavior. It will assess employees' opinions, attitudes and ideas regarding the

cultural climate within DLA.

✓ **Phase Three**
Design – The phase we are in today. Compare the future state of the agency with the present diversity awareness and identify the gaps between the two. Identifying the gaps will determine what type of efforts need to be expended (e.g., policy, education and training).

✓ **Phase Four**
Implementation – Solicit employees active participation in the day-to-day awareness of the benefits of work-force diversity, identifying needed skills-based training to develop a new agency culture.

✓ **Phase Five**
Internalization and Feedback – This is an ongoing phase. The phase requires individual assimilation of the benefits derived from the diversity in each other, monitoring cultural changes and continuous improvement.

Employee involvement

One of the factors the Diversity Team hopes to influence with the diversity awareness training is the way employees treat one another.

"We hope that at a minimum our awareness training will cause each individual to think about how they treat others," Thurber said. "It is so elementary I think we may lose sight of it now and then that everyone should be treated like they would want to be treated. If we keep that in mind, we should be sensitive to how we communicate and the effect to which the processes that we manage have upon other individuals."

DLA's Executive Team, including the Defense Logistics



Support Command and the Defense Contract Management Command commanders' strongly support the diversity concept and can cite the benefits in promoting the process.

In order for diversity to be successful at DLA, managers and supervisors must support diversity awareness. The team agrees that the best way to make this happen is by simple communication. Management must develop an atmosphere in the workplace that promotes the free flow of information in all directions. Such an environment provides the forum for educating management and the work-force in general on the values of a strong diversity process.

Thurber explained how. "We need to provide an environment that incorporates everyone's ideas from

throughout the organization—the kind of environment in which individual differences are not just tolerated, but valued. If we are doing it correctly, employees should feel free to contribute and realize their potential. By educating employees on the idea of diversity, DLA will become a



DLA's six-hour Diversity training module unique



DLA Headquarters employees participate in a Diversity Awareness training.

In July 1997, the Defense Logistics Agency launched its Diversity Awareness Training.

Based on the seven DLA diversity principles which exemplify the importance of how we

treat one another, and the diversity vision statement, a six hour training module was designed by the DLA Diversity Team with the assistance of the DLA Civilian Personnel Support Office.

The team wanted to ensure that the training focused on DLA's concept of diversity and did not want to use "off-the-shelf" generic training.

The primary level field activity commanders were asked to designate a principal trainer for each geographic location where there was a significant concentration of DLA employees. The trainers then attended a three day train-the-trainer session on how to conduct the training. The 30 trainers make up a cross section of the DLA work-force.

The team decided the most cost effective and efficient delivery scheme involved on-site delivery at the most heavily populated geographic locations first. Each trainer was assigned a geographic area that was comprised of DLA activities across all PLFA organizational lines. In many cases geographic areas included several states. The training is being presented to all employees in DLA, including overseas locations.

DLA's target completion date is December 1998, with the majority of the DLA work-force trained to date.

So far, the training has been met with positive comments. Gary S. Thurber, director, Defense Energy Support Center, and Diversity Team Leader, said "At this point everything has been positive. If employees feel positive about diversity, I think we have made a significant breakthrough. If the awareness training achieves nothing other than cause people to buy into the DLA concept of diversity, it is a success. People are paying attention to each other and supporting each other. You cannot have teams unless you

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better organization. We need to make our employees feel comfortable so they look forward to coming to work each day," he said. "Managers also need to ask themselves if they are doing enough to incorporate DLA's Diversity Principles into meeting mission objectives.

Carolyn Perry, DLA associate general counsel for ethics and personnel, said, "It makes sense to value diversity from an organizational standpoint. We spend a lot of time on things we can't control like downsizing and not enough time on creating an environment where employees can be productive. This is what it is really all about. When people come to work, they don't leave things at home. Home life is a

part of them that cannot be divorced when they come to work. Diversity should be part of the culture of the organization."

Famia Magana, staff director, Equal Employment Opportunity, stresses that in today's work environment, diversity is vital to how an organization operates. "In this era of downsizing we can't afford not to value diversity and utilize the talent that people have. It is a great opportunity to reach untapped resources. In an atmosphere where diversity is valued, the stress level will be down and there will be openness and trust, which will get you a long way."

Feedback

Initial feedback on the acceptance of the program from across DLA has

been positive.

"At this point, all the feedback I've received has far exceeded my expectations," Thurber said. "Everyone I have talked to who has attended a diversity workshop has been very supportive of diversity, and I might add, complimentary toward the training itself. Being very realistic about our situation, diversity awareness is merely the first step in fostering an environment where everyone embraces the diversity principles and places a high value on working in a diverse environment. What we know for sure is that the journey is underway. Many people are working hard at making the journey a success and I

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encourage diversity, and without teams you have compartmentalized thinking.”

In the training, trainers explain that diversity is good for an organization because it allows employees to focus on their personal strengths and innovative ideas without fear of not fitting in or of doing only what’s expected.

“Treating people specially is different from discrimination,” Carolyn Perry, DLA associate general counsel for ethics and personnel said. “It is capitalizing on different skills. Each one of us is different.

We have to treat people differently. It is not discrimination. People bring different talents to work.”

While understanding that everyone is different, other benefits can be gained by the agency as a whole. Some of those include:

- ✓ *Facilitating communication between management and employees*
- ✓ *Enhancing teamwork*
- ✓ *Improving productivity*
- ✓ *Slowing turnover*
- ✓ *Engaging everyone in projects*
- ✓ *Empowering and encouraging employees to be who they are*
- ✓ *Encouraging professional development*

“Diversity training is not a one-time event,” Cynthia Senn, DLA Diversity program manager said, “but a continuous process in which we look at how we treat people and how that treatment is expressed in action.”

Leslie Gregg, deputy of Defense Contract Management Command, Santa Ana, was pleased with the training she received. “Ms. Judy Chin, the instructor, did an excellent job. The training was fun, informative, and there was great interplay between managers and employees on the issue of diversity and how to improve the way they interrelate with each other. Maximizing the true potential of all our employees will create a truly premiere organization capable of achieving any goal. In exercising these seven principles, we will meet our vision of organizational excellence.”



Each of the trainers were assigned a geographic area to conduct the Diversity awareness training. The areas include DLA activities across all primary level field activity organizational lines. The map reflects the U.S. geographic areas by different shades of gray.

Another concept presented in the training involves creating a supportive environment. Some examples include picking up the slack for each other when a co-worker is overwhelmed or sick, encouraging professional growth among co-workers, like encouraging someone to go back to school, and recognizing that your way is not the only way to do a task. These and other behaviors will work toward creating and contributing to a sense of belonging and community in DLA.

Glynnis Spencer, a supply systems analyst in the Defense Supply Center Columbus Customer Advocacy Office said, “I believe the training I received can be applied to every situation by recognizing the best in individuals and remembering that everyone has a different opinion to offer in every situation.”



Diversity awareness trainers discuss feedback from the field on the progress of the diversity training initiative.

“We have an American problem. It can only be solved by all Americans working together... I want you to find strength in your diversity.”

—Army Gen. Colin Powell
Former chairman,
Joint Chiefs of Staff

“It is incumbent upon supervisors to help employees with special needs. Our work force comes to work each day wanting to be productive and happy. We need to create that kind of atmosphere. It is like a business where the employees are always cheerful and friendly. You go there as a customer because you like it. We want DLA’s customers to feel like that.”

—Jim Sanchez
Director, Defense Distribution
System Center

“We contribute more to the national defense when we make full use of each employee’s special talents.”

—Lt. Gen. Henry T. Glisson,
DLA director



diversity (n.) 1.a. The quality of being composed of many different elements. 1.b. A point or respect in which things differ. 2. Variety or multiformity.

“Diversity is really a misnomer. The word is really a hindrance. Our language makes us small. Diversity is really the dynamics of understanding human nature in the workplace. I accept the word diversity, but it is really an old fashioned, buzz word. It is really human behavior.”

—Juanita Smith
Retired, executive
director, Human
Resources

“Diverse people are this agency’s greatest resource and strength. By capitalizing on divergent attitudes and expertise, not only do we accomplish DLA’s mission, but we also enrich ourselves.”

— Navy Rear Adm. Bob Chamberlin,
DLA deputy director

“Diversity is nothing new. We were taught it by our mothers and in kindergarten. We ought to be doing it without encouragement. We seem to have forgotten about the basic things and how we treat each other.”

—Walter Thomas
counsel,
Defense Automated Printing
and Support Center

Feedback from field says diversity awareness training successful

The exchange of information could not have been better as 28 field representatives tasked with training DLA's 44,000 employees met with headquarters' top managers to talk about diversity throughout the organization. DLA's Diversity Program Manager, Cynthia Senn, of the DLA Civilian Personnel Support Office, hosted the two-day In-Process Review which was held May 20-21.

The IPR was the first opportunity for the DLA director's Diversity Team to hear direct feedback from the field since the concept of increasing diversity awareness was first discussed by DLA's leadership.

"This was a high-energy group that demonstrated a tremendous amount of dedication to diversity principles," pointed out the Diversity Team Leader, Gary Thurber, the director of the Defense Energy Support Center.

The IPR was not your typical session where only the program manager briefs on program status to the boss. Recognizing that valuable contributions come from everyone, trainers from each DLA location took center stage to offer their input.

After briefing on the status of the training, each trainer shared tips they developed while conducting the classes:

John Emanuel Figueroa from the Defense Contract Management District East, Boston, emphasized that seniority and grade are not related to solutions. "I make sure each class understands that solutions can come from a GS-1 or somebody who just started work at DLA," Figueroa pointed out.

"I use proverbs," noted Gene Maier from the Defense Distribution Center. "At every break I'll put a new proverb up like, You'll never get over



Famia Magana (*left*) and Gary Thurber discuss some of the feedback from the field on the Diversity training process at a May meeting.

the hurdle if you don't jump. The class really enjoys it and they bring me new ones. I have a whole stack now."

Jackie Rhodes, from the McClellan Depot, and Terry Moore from the Red River Depot, pass out candy to diversity class attendees after lunch. "I also thank them for returning," added Rhodes. Additionally, the McClellan and Red River Depot commanders introduced each session. "I call Lt.Col. (Morris) McCloskey my opening act. He is very supportive," recalled Rhodes.

Moore credits the great materials and curriculum she was given to use to facilitate the training.

Sarah Patton from the Oklahoma Depot and Jan Stagg from the San Diego Depot use a tape of Michael Jackson's "Man in the Mirror" as icebreakers. "The song is about how change starts with the person in the mirror," said Patton. "It also lightens things up."

Sarita Kimble explained that at

Defense Supply Center Philadelphia they have developed a diversity council to oversee diversity efforts and will soon be benchmarking with industry to share information.

In Richmond Diversity trainers award copies of "Beyond Race and Gender" by Dr. Roosevelt Thomas to class attendees. Dr. Thomas was the architect of the process for managing diversity. Trainers at Richmond are also considering developing a web page to spread the news about diversity.

At the Defense Distribution Depot Corpus Christi, Texas, employees and management frankly discussed ways to communicate better. After the training, many employees remarked how the work-force appeared "friendlier." Diana Lasko, the Corpus Christi Depot trainer, said that people seemed to be taking the initiative to reach out to others and say hello or good morning.

Lt. Col. Larry Stubblefield,

Corpus Christi Depot, said “Training is a continuous process and we have had several training successes. But I must say, by far, this was the most significant training event we have ever had.”

Tips also came in the form of things to avoid. “I used to have a sign-up sheet so I knew who skipped out after lunch,” recalled Linda Corbridge from the Hill Depot. “But I stopped because the class felt it was a lack of trust.”

The second day of the IPR was devoted to assessment of training materials, expectations of the DLA’s senior leadership and identification of strategic issues. Dr. Steven Patrick, leader of the DLA cultural audit process team, facilitated this session. The trainers and DLA Diversity Team members formed 11 teams to simultaneously develop an outline for future efforts. The key strategic areas the group decided to focus efforts on were prioritized in the following order:

- ✓ *Ensure continued senior leadership support*
- ✓ *Provide survey assessments to the work-force*
- ✓ *Plan future operational areas*
- ✓ *Obtain program funding*
- ✓ *Increase responsibility of local diversity teams*
- ✓ *Improve communication about Diversity*
- ✓ *Training*
- ✓ *Develop incentives to recognize diversity achievements*

When the second day concluded there was a mutual feeling of accomplishment, and momentum was established to carry diversity to the next level in creating an environment where people and their differences are valued. At the conclusion, the energy

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believe we are going to achieve the director’s diversity vision.”

The team agrees that it is too early to measure successes in DLA as a result of diversity awareness. One of the difficult challenges in managing diversity is that it is a long-term process and there are no easy or early solutions. The team feels it would be hard, if not impossible, to measure results in terms of dollars and cents or to put a productivity measure on diversity. They feel that managing diversity awareness is a fundamental requirement of the entire workforce and is a healthy and smart thing to do. It just makes good sense.

Jim Sanchez, director Defense Distribution Systems Center, sums up diversity at DLA and how it can

make DLA a better organization. “DLA is a good organization and our employees have a great attitude,” he said. “They will find new ways of doing their job better if you treat them right, take care of their needs and show that you trust them. By showing employees you sincerely care about them they give 110 percent, they buy into the organization and their attitude becomes infectious and overflows into your customer base.”

level was high as the DLA Diversity Team provided their reaction.

“Hearing you all talk about the process has energized me,” Carolyn Perry, DLA associate general counsel, told the group. “That sense of community we are trying to achieve is right here in this room. Coming from your diverse backgrounds, you are living proof that it can be done.”

Walter Thomas, associate general counsel for the Defense Automated Printing and Support Center, added, “The atmosphere is energized. Everyone is learning from each other. I see quite a bit of energy, creativity and success.”

“You have demonstrated that it is not just a job, but a way of life,” remarked former executive director of Human Resources at DLA, Juanita Smith about the dedication and commitment displayed by the trainers. “And you are putting a lot into it.”

“We need to include diversity right up front in our strategic plan,” recommended Jim Sanchez, Director of the Defense Distribution Systems Center.



Ida Claramo makes a point during the Diversity in-process review meeting.

Diversity assessment surveys get high response rate; nearly 70% turned in

And the survey says...

Since the spring, the Defense Logistics Agency Diversity Assessment Process Team has undertaken a massive effort to survey a large cross-section of DLA employees. The results of the survey will help DLA officials develop the best methods of overcoming diversity issues in the work-force.

Approximately 20,000 surveys were mailed out.

“The purpose of the diversity assessment is to identify strengths and areas for improvement in DLA’s work climate,” Dr. Steven Patrick, organizational development team and DAP team leader said. “It will assess employee opinions, attitudes and ideas regarding the diversity climate within DLA. The assessment will assist DLA’s leaders in targeting areas to improve the climate and in building upon the strengths of the work-force.”

One of DLA’s goals is to attract, retain and build a full spectrum of dedicated and diverse individuals at all levels of the agency, Patrick said. The diversity program will assist in creating an agency-wide climate that values the knowledge, skills and abilities of its diverse work force. The survey is an important step in achieving this goal.

“DLA’s Executive Team, including the DLSC and DCMC commanders, understand the benefits of managing diversity and are promoting its efforts,” Gary Thurber, director, Defense Energy Support Center, and Diversity team leader said. “By translating the semantics of diversity we have heightened the awareness process, demonstrated the benefits of diversity and have buy-in at all levels of command.”

The assessment tools used include employee surveys and executive focus groups. The information collected from the focus groups provided managerial perceptions on diversity. Senior managers were asked open-ended questions pertaining to the following four categories:

- ✓ Diversity awareness
- ✓ Benefits of a diverse organization
- ✓ Challenges of a diverse organization
- ✓ Actions to improve the organizational culture

For the employee survey, most employees were randomly selected (in some work groups the entire work-force was selected). Responses were kept anonymous. The survey consisted of six diversity categories:

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Supervisory characteristics
- ✓ Opportunities for success
- ✓ Trust and respect
- ✓ Diversity awareness/appreciation of diversity
- ✓ Job performance feedback

Those surveyed were asked to answer questions on a five point scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The questions related to specific diversity factors that were associated with the broader categories. For example, “Is information often withheld in your work group because it is treated as a source of power,” or “Does your organization allow all employees to participate in career advancement training.” Other questions such as “are you satisfied with your job and are your skills being fully utilized” were also asked.

Questions were also asked about employees’ supervisors, such as “does your supervisor listen to your ideas or does your supervisor encourage you to do a good job.”

The assessment had a 60-70 percent response rate. Upon receiving the surveys, the DAP team scanned them in using a Scantron scanner. From there, the data was imported into SPSS, a statistical software package, that allows the user to do data analysis.

The DAP team’s next step is to brief the director, deputy director, and the Executive Team on the results of the assessment. From there, they will provide briefings to the field commanders, senior leadership and the local diversity teams at the primary level field activities.

After the briefings, the DAP team will ask the PLFAs to identify two or three areas for improvement and to develop an action plan to address those concerns raised by the employees. Patrick said the DAP team wants to encourage the PLFA commanders to keep their employees informed as to the progress they are making in these areas.

The DLA DAP team is available to provide additional assistance to PLFAs on doing follow-ups on the survey results, team building, facilitating focus groups and doing related organizational development work.

Contact Patrick at (703) 767-7125 or DSN 427-7125 for more information.

***Approximately
20,000 surveys
were mailed out
to DLA
employees.***



DLA Director's Diversity Team and Trainers

3rd row (left to right) back row

Betty Durham, Bryant Pittman, Fred Chapman, Gene Maier, John Rayford III, Kathie McGuire, Mickey McCleskey, John Emanuel Figueroa, Charles Miller

2nd row (left to right)

Sarita Kimble, Ronnie Kubik, Pauline Bradley, Ruth Ann Lanter, Judy Chin, Charlene Lee, Kimberley El, Annie Stokes, Ida Claramo, Linda Corbridge, Diana Lasko, Terry Moore, Sarah Patton, Jan Stagg, Angela Curtis, Brenda McCormac

1st row (left to right)

Kate Potter, Cynthia Senn, Tina Chew, Walter Thomas, Joe Lopez, Carolyn Perry, Juanita Smith, Gary Thurber, James Sanchez, Famia Magana, Steve Sadler, Patsy Oburn, Jacki Rhodes, Larry Rish, Steven Patrick



The trainer were presented with the DLA Director's coin (*above*) at the Diversity In-Progress Review last May for their dedication to DLA's Diversity concept. The coin was mounted in a wooden box and presented by the DLA Diversity Team with the inscription "... to someone who is making a difference."

DLA Director's Diversity team

Gary Thurber (Team Leader) — Defense Energy Support Center

Thomas Brunk — Defense Contract Management Command

James Sanchez — Defense Distribution System Center

Frederick Baillie — Defense Logistics Support Command

Jose Lopez — Command Security

Carolyn Perry — General Counsel

Steve Sadler — Defense Logistics Support Command

Walter Thomas — Defense Automated Printing and Support Center

Dan McGinty — Congressional and Public Affairs

Regina Gray — Defense Energy Support Center

Air Force Lt. Col. Patricia Kersey — Human Resources

Famia Magana — Equal Employment Opportunity

Nancy Dibble — American Federation of Government Employees

DLA Diversity Principles

- ✓ **We value the differences in people**
- ✓ **We foster an environment of mutual trust and respect**
- ✓ **We promote professional and personal growth**
- ✓ **We create a supportive environment for each other**
- ✓ **We recognize that sharing of information promotes the full participation of our workforce**
- ✓ **We are committed to creating a sense of community in DLA**
- ✓ **We respect and value individual contributions in meeting customer's needs**