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Suggestions for Using “Identifying Organizational Barriers to Diversity and Inclusion”

Objectives:

- Identify obstacles that participants think prevent the organization from dealing with the issue of diversity and inclusion
- Compare perceptions of various participants
- Determine consensus on barriers and future courses of action

Intended Audience:

- An executive staff willing to work on removing obstacles that inhibit becoming a more open organization
- Top management of a division willing to do the same
- A change agent who works with top management to identify barriers to diversity and inclusion
- Any team willing to wrestle with the barriers it sees

Processing the Activity:

- Ask all participants to rank the obstacles from 1 to 8. Number 1 is the biggest obstacle; number 8 is least important. Again, as with other tools, this can be done virtually by mailing ahead of time, collecting data, and then having a teleconference meeting about what the data suggests.
- Have participants discuss their responses in small groups. Have the group reach consensus on what the biggest obstacles are and determine a starting point for change.

Questions for Discussion:

- Are there any barriers you would like to add that were not on the list?
- What is the impact to the organization of not dealing with each of these barriers?
- Based on answers to the last question, which three obstacles are most significant or costly?
- What do you see happening to morale and productivity if you (we) do nothing?
- What needs to happen in order to tear down some of these barriers?
- Where is a good place to begin?

Caveats, Considerations, and Variations:

- Make certain that all participants have their say. Everyone needs to contribute to the discussion.
 - Keep asking questions that help participants see the high cost of exclusion.
 - This can also be used as an exercise to teach consensus. Each person ranks his/her responses from 1 to 8 and then the group or the team in groups of seven to nine people are charged with achieving consensus on the ranking. It can teach a decision making strategy while also providing great discussion content. The same questions for discussion are viable, and all that needs to be added are comments about how the group handled the process of reaching consensus.
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