

FIRST STEPS

- ✓ The world of work is becoming increasingly diverse and learning how to work successfully in a multicultural environment is essential; education about this process through reading (as you are doing now!) and asking questions is one of the first things you can do to learn more.
- ✓ Reflecting on any diverse experiences you may have and the skills you are gaining from them can also help you to incorporate these into your job search preparation and materials.

WHAT CAN I DO TO BECOME MORE INCLUSIVE IN THE WORKPLACE?

“A lot of different flowers make a bouquet.” - Muslim Origin

In today's increasingly globalized world, being able to demonstrate your ability to have positive interactions with diverse groups of people is imperative to most successful applications and interviews. In fact, several recent studies showed that **diversity and inclusivity fostered a more creative and innovative workplace**. And the top companies are taking notice, with 85% of the US companies making over 500 million dollars a year agreeing that diversity and inclusivity are critical to a company's innovation. (Forbes, 2011) With the job market becoming more competitive than ever, having the ability to work effectively and compassionately with everyone you may encounter becomes nothing less than a necessity.

Did you know?

A study by Katherine Phillips of the Kellogg School of Management (2010) showed that “*The mere presence of diversity in a group creates awkwardness, and the need to diffuse this tension leads to better group problem solving.*” Think about the kinds of groups you're in: what kinds of diversity is represented within them? Have you noticed this effect? Is there anything you can do to encourage diversity – in all forms – in your groups to create better results?

“ homogenous groups
feel **more confident**
in their performance
and group interactions,

but

it is the **diverse groups**
that are **more successful**
in completing their tasks. ”

More Confident, Less Successful



Less Confident, More Successful



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DEVELOPING & DEMONSTRATING CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cultural competence is a skill that can help you with this process, and can be defined as “the ability and willingness to engage with others around you in a culturally sensitive and effective manner.” In a work setting, this means taking time to get to know the cultural and social intricacies of those you work with and behaving with respect and awareness in regard to those around you. While this may not seem like a big deal, employers take cultural competence very seriously because of the positive impact an employee with this ability can have on an office. Below are some ideas you can use to build your cultural competence:

- Serve with a community of people with whom you don't usually interact
- Read books or articles about different cultures and identities
- Watch world cinema and dialogue with others
- Make a point to connect with individuals at your workplace or in your classes with whom you wouldn't otherwise
- Travel to different cities, states, and countries
- Learn a different language
- Take classes that teach you about different cultures
- Study abroad
- Go to museums or cultural exhibits
- Join Peace Corps, Global Brigade or AmeriCorps
- Engage with our Gaines-Oldham Black Culture Center, the LGBTQ Resource Center, the Women's Center, the Disabilities Office or the International Center; go to events hosted by these centers and peruse their resources
- Join clubs or organizations that bring you into contact with diverse people or ways of thinking
- Go on a Mizzou Alternative Break
- Pursue jobs or internships that work with diverse populations
- Participate in service learning

How can I demonstrate cultural competence?

On your Résumé: Below are examples of how students who have diversity experience or multicultural background can showcase their experiences on a resume

Education:

University of Missouri
Bachelor of Science in Psychology
Minor: African-American Studies

Anticipated Graduation Date: May 20__
Columbia, Missouri
Multicultural Certificate

Doshisha University
Emphasis: Japanese and Japanese culture

Kyoto, Japan
March 2016-July 2016

Language skills:

Chinese Mandarin (native), English (fluent), Korean (fluent) and Japanese (elementary proficiency)

Experience:

Tutor, Central High School

- Guided five international exchange students in their high-need subjects, including English and math
- Explained and articulated unclear material in multiple ways so students could gain understanding
- Recognized and appreciated cultural differences by learning from students' experiences abroad

Volunteer Patient Translator, Middle Hospital

- Conducted Spanish translation to inform care providers of patient ailments and concerns
- Displayed awareness of patient confidentiality by completing and enacting HIPAA training
- Increased quality of patient interactions with doctors through enhanced communication

School Involvement:

Ambassador, University of Missouri LGBTQ Resource Center

- Acted as a resource and representative of the LGBTQ Resource Center for various events and presentations on campus
- Attended weekly staff meetings and worked with other staff members to plan engaging and educational programming for the year
- Completed various tasks and projects, including the design of various visual boards and announcement areas, as well as a new and welcoming front desk arrangement

In the Interview: Below are different types of questions commonly asked in interviews and thoughts on how you could incorporate diversity-related experiences in your responses:

Tell me about a time you worked effectively in a team.

- Focus on how you interacted with your team members, especially those different from yourself
- Bring up times you went out of your way to see an issue from the perspective of your team members, and how that helped your team perform better
- Talk about finding common ground with your team if there was a disagreement

What are your greatest strengths?

- Cultural awareness, developed from participation in...
- Understanding and celebration of differences, obtained from collaboration with...
- Listening skills, utilized in environments such as...
- Communication across differences, using active listening and development of mutual respect
- Empathy, having learned how to better see and understand things from someone else's shoes

For each of these, give specific examples of when you used these strengths! A simple thing to remember is: **Talent x Investment (time, education, skill building etc.) = Strength**. Think about why it was important to you to invest in gaining cultural competence and how you've turned this natural curiosity and understanding into strengths.

Give me an example of when you've been a leader.

- Explain how you dealt with conflicting ideas or views
- Demonstrate how you were culturally sensitive as leader
- Discuss how your emotional intelligence assisted you in establishing effective relationships
- Detail how you built trust among your team and motivated others to work across differences

What experiences do you have that prepare you for this position?

- Provide examples of you working effectively with people that are different than yourself
- Bring up transferable skills! Customer service, being a team player and having relationship-building skills are all attributes that can transfer from one job to another. Discuss how you used cultural competence to enhance these skills
- Talk about experiences where you were adaptable and accepting of different kinds of experiences, people and cultures

What questions do you have for us?

- Remember, an interview is as much about you deciding if the job is right for you as it is the employer evaluating you for the positions! This is a great time to ask questions about initiatives or programs the company offers to promote diversity and inclusivity.

- Having a discussion about the culture of the company is a great way to show your interest and investment in the company as well as demonstrate your priority in working in an inclusive and diverse environment.

On the Cover Letter: Below are examples of how students with diversity-related experiences or multicultural backgrounds can showcase their experiences on a cover letter:

- “I fully endorse your university's value statement that says, in part, "Diversity is integral to the growth and continued success of our campuses." I have strived throughout my college education to gain many experiences that have exposed me to different cultures, most noticeably through my experience studying abroad in Myanmar. There, I had the chance to immerse myself in a completely new culture, which I believe gives me valuable perspective when working with various populations within the United States.”
- “I received the Multicultural Certificate from the University of Missouri, which is awarded to students who seek out a minimum of 15 hours of coursework that focuses on learning about different cultures, identities and perspectives.”
- “Another asset that I bring to the work environment is my fluency in both Spanish and English. Given the changing demographics within the United States and the fact that many of your locations are in the southwest, being bilingual and thus able to communicate effectively with a large subset of potential customers becomes a valuable skill.”
- “I have also worked as a Residential Assistant (RA) at the University of Missouri for 2 years. One of the most valuable skills I learned as an RA was cultural competence. There were many international students on my floor as well as students from countless different backgrounds. Through team building exercises, individual , and intentionally pushing my students to engage with each other, I was not only able to get to know each of my students on a personal level, but also to build a genuinely caring community on my floor.”
- “As a member of the Marketing Team, I also covered many events hosted by the LGBTQ Resource Center and the Gaines-Oldham Black Culture Center. At these events, I always prioritized active and compassionate listening to hear the concerns and joys of the students, which allowed me to write rich and vibrant stories about these organizations and the students who engage with them. This ability to connect to people with a wide range of identities and backgrounds is how those journalistic relationships are formed; as this is a clear priority of your organization, I believe I would be an excellent fit and a valuable part of your team.”

References

Forbes (July 2011). Global diversity and inclusion: Fostering innovation through a diverse workplace.

Phillips, Katherine W., Katie A. Liljenquist and Margaret A. Neale. (2009). Is the pain worth the gain? The advantages and liabilities of agreeing with socially distinct newcomers. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 35: 336-350.

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Come to the MU Career Center to talk with someone about how to incorporate your diversity-related experience in your job search materials.
- ✓ Visit <https://career.missouri.edu> and click on the “Resources” Tab to visit [Mizzou Career Tools](#), where you can search our site for more handouts on this and other topics relevant to you!