



Reporter: Chris Rusekeza, EDHEC Business School

Conference 6A

Diversity measurements.

Why should business care about diversity and how should we manage it?

Three guest speakers from France, the UK, and Canada offered their different perspectives:

Speakers:

- Christine Goeury, Executive Board Member and Resources Director, Caisse d'épargne Nord France Europe, France.
- Fiona Daniel, Diversity & Inclusion HSBC, Bank, UK.
- Serge Fortin, Société de Transport de Montréal, Canada.

Moderated by: Sandra Kerr, National Campaign Director of Race for Opportunity, Business & Society (UK)

Sandra Kerr emphasized that companies should care about having a clear and demonstrable dedication to diversity to benefit all their stakeholders. Diversity helps companies look at more perspectives and prevent problems.

BPCE (Banque Populaire Caisse d'Epargne) is a French financial services group employing nearly 55 000 people. Mrs. Goeury emphasized the breadth of client base: diversity in the clientele forces the company to pursue diversity within the organization in order to ensure representativeness. Caisse d'Epargne actively taught and trained managers on the long-term, to fight generally spread-out misconceptions. The program for disabled people had tangible results, the handicapped now accounting for 5% (220 employees) of the total workforce in the company as initially planned. Concerning gender balance, a network has been set up to take in and mentor women in higher managerial positions through setting up quotas, including the policy in specifications, informing the employees, and improving work/ life balance. Note that in France, measurements of diversity in terms of ethnicity or age cannot be legally carried out which restrains the development of measures.

But this is not the case in Québec, Canada. Over there, due to the ageing population, it is highly competitive to attract the "young" workforce. Women and ethnic minorities (ethnic identity *can* be quantitatively measured in companies) are a priority for STM, a large Quebec transportation company employing 10 000 people. To reach diversified talents, STM relied on surveys and panels of discussion where employees could share their experience. It worked. Now, 26% of the bus drivers are women. With 1 000 new staff each year, 10% of the faces are always new, thereby changing the overall feature and culture of the company as a whole. Trying to limit turnover, STM uses objectives rather than quotas and merit is

emphasized. Young people, women and other visible minorities are well integrated and provided with support along their careers.

HSBC is a large multinational financial services company headquartered in the UK with activities spanning 4 continents, 6 000 offices, 60 million customers and more than 300 000 workforce. As Ms Daniel emphasized, the right definition for HSBC is GLOBAL. She is working since 2009 to make diversity a priority, aligning its integration policy on a global scale and not just a continental one. As such, the organization has to make sure all entities are on board with the same strategic line which is a challenge given the cultural differences. By using the balance scorecard – through a well thought-out program of workshops and trainings for the whole company, HSBC managed to improve the communication effectively and create one global model that operates the same way.

In the end, three different approaches and perspectives, three distinct achievements, but a similar aim regarding diversity balance. Truth is there is no magic measure: companies should rather look at the gaps, see what improvement can be made and act accordingly. Why care about this unified vision? As Fiona DANIEL said it so well, *“We care because it’s the right thing to do”*.

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