

Thank you for all of your continued support and business. As a token of appreciation, we want to share our latest article on the challenges and opportunities of diversity. It is full of easy to follow tips. Please feel free to forward it to any of your colleagues, or to use it for a team discussion. To unsubscribe reply to this email and type "**unsubscribe**" in the subject line, or use this link: [unsubscribe](#).

Warm regards,  
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## The Challenges and Opportunities of Diversity

When kids are little, they don't question; they just absorb. Put three toddlers from different backgrounds together and they figure out how to play together, even if they speak different languages. But as we grow up, we forget how to be flexible with diversity. We are often more comfortable working with colleagues who are a lot like us. Our similarities make it easier for us to trust each other's judgment. Meanwhile, we are prone to judge different ideas negatively and could cheat our employers and ourselves out of diverse perspectives that contribute to sound decision-making. When the customers we serve are diverse, we risk being out of touch with them as well. This can make us ineffective.

Our differences come with different values, beliefs, and behaviors, which can be stimulating and challenging. As savvy leaders guide groups of diverse individuals in complex projects and tasks, they look for ways to maximize team members' resources and build on their strengths and diversity. Successful leaders respect diverse opinions and perspectives and are acutely aware of the value-added contribution diverse approaches provide.

Diversity covers a wide range of Equal Opportunity (EEOC) protected classes, including race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity and disability. By law, most employers, government agencies, and larger companies cannot discriminate against workers or customers because of

these diversity classes. However, wise leaders know there is value in learning from diversity, even beyond the law's requirements.

Sometimes it is easiest to look at diversity from a perspective that doesn't carry the baggage of EEOC regulations. Communication style is a perspective of diversity which offers different approaches to common work challenges based upon different beliefs and behaviors.

## **Communication Styles**

We get better results by appreciating and working with diverse styles. To get optimal performance from others, we can best motivate them according to their diverse needs, not just to ours. When a team has a predominant style, it is easy for "group think" take over, while a team with diverse perspectives tends to explore more options to choose the best alternatives. The more we know about styles, the more we can flex them.

There are assessments that measure communication styles. The Consulting Team offers a variety of assessments including the DiSC assessment. Some of you may have used DiSC in our trainings or teambuilding. If you have not reviewed your assessment lately, consider pulling it out to consider the diversity implications.

Maybe you have a strong **Dominance** element. If you do, you tend to value bottom line results and directness, and to face challenges head on. You may recognize your desire to be in the driver's seat, having control of situations.

Perhaps you have a strong **Influence** style. You may be a promoter, a visionary, optimistic, and social. You tend to be expressive and people-oriented.

Or you can have a strong **Steadiness** profile. You tend to be pragmatic, concrete, traditional, action-oriented, and have a high tendency to collaborate.

Or you may value **Conscientiousness**. You tend to value accuracy, are systematic, organized, and proper.

Do you recognize your dominant style or those on your team? How do you get along with others with different styles, who experience the world differently? If you and your team have never had a style assessment, try it. It offers a sound team development tool for understanding and valuing diversity.

Here are some quick style tips for using diverse styles to create a more productive team:

- Difference is just different, not wrong. Honor differences in your colleagues, and you will all be more productive.
- Treat people with different styles the way they want to be treated, not necessarily the way you would prefer. This increases their comfort, making communication more effective.

## **Leading Diverse Groups**

Successful leaders model the practice of valuing, encouraging, and rewarding diversity. From experience in organizational development work, the most productive and cohesive teams are composed of members representing the different styles. When any style is missing from a team, creativity and critical thinking can be limited. Self-awareness, knowing your style, your strengths, and your limitations leads to greater personal power.

## **Has your team gone through a tune-up lately?**

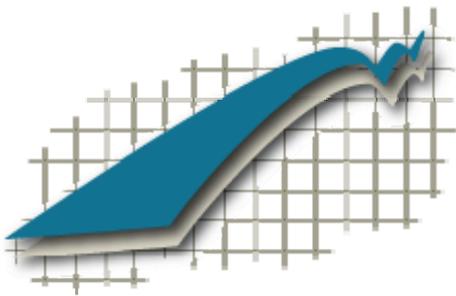
\*For an article about benefits of diversity in the workplace, go to Embrace Diversity to Build Effective Teams, at [www.theconsultingteam.com/Articles.html#diversity](http://www.theconsultingteam.com/Articles.html#diversity).

## Thriving in a Challenging Economy

The headlines have been filled with news about current economic conditions - the mortgage crisis, declining housing values, unemployment, and consumer behavior. Has this made your work more challenging?

- This financially challenging time can be the best time to provide training or coaching.
- Need to think differently now? Out of the box? Consider a facilitated meeting to brainstorm process or team improvements.
- Need to have pricing reductions for your existing training needs? Ask us about loyal customer discounts we're offering if you book by December 30, 2008.

## Meet Our Team



The Consulting Team, LLC



Marilyn Manning, Ph.D., CEO



Nan Andrews Amish



Elaine Schmitz



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The Consulting Team offers consultants and trainers who each bring over 15 years of experience and whose individual expertise adds breadth and depth to our services. Over the coming months, we will introduce you to the core members of the team: Nan Andrews Amish, Ken Braly, Elaine Schmitz, Victoria Smith-Raymond, and Lee Weimer.

Nan Andrews Amish, MBA, CLU, is a management consultant and facilitator with expertise in leadership development and strategy. She has created and managed corporate universities, developed a public-private leadership development initiative and has personally facilitated more than 1000 management development and strategy retreats. Nan has previously served in management roles of high tech and insurance firms, as well as on the faculty of the University of San Francisco and Boston University's accelerated MBA and MPA programs. She has also served as a management consultant for a leading consulting firm.

Nan believes that difference is just that ... difference. Effective management benefits from valuing differences between communication styles and personalities as well as functional differences, generational diversity, gender, ethnic and other protected differences. Nan is

certified in Myers Briggs Type Inventory and DiSC assessments and uses these with The Consulting Team clients to help them better understand their own management strengths and weaknesses and to improve their managerial effectiveness.

**94% of The Consulting Team's work is repeat business.**

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