

February 12, 2014

Journey Towards Cultural Competence



Maribel Bird



Laura
Pettersen



Stephanie
Swartz

Our first Lunch and Learn event of 2014 had three guest speakers from the La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium. They presented on the Consortium's efforts to develop cultural competency which is applicable to a wide variety of workplaces. The Consortium's website provides a wealth of resources, as well as practical steps which can be used by individuals and/or institutions to embark on their journeys towards cultural competency, and is available to everybody free of charge.

April 2, 2014

The Effects of Bias In the Workplace - An Overview



Violeta Iguchi

The presentation offered an overview on how conscious and unconscious bias affect our workplace decisions, from hiring new staff to promotions, from giving job assignments to performance reviews. Unconscious bias creates hundreds of seemingly irrational circumstances in which people's decisions affect their organization's communications, staff relationships, diverse staff retention, reputation, productivity, and ultimately, the bottom line. It is important to recognize that the concept of unconscious bias applies to all of us. The presentation helped participants become more aware of their own biases, as well as understanding the important role of micro-affirmations in combating widely-spread biases.

June 4, 2014

Strategies for recruitment and retention of minority employees

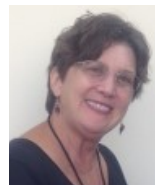
For our June Lunch and Learn event, we invited Kay Hocker, the Executive Director of the Diversity Council in Rochester to talk about successful recruitment strategies as well as ways in which organizations can help retain minority employees after they are hired. Organizations are well aware that while recruiting efforts are crucial for increasing the participation of women and minorities in the workforce, it is equally important that we retain those already employed in our organizations. Kay shared with our audience some of her personal experiences and offered examples of strategies employed by organizations in the Rochester area.



Kay Hocker

October 1, 2014

Meeting the Needs of Employees with Disabilities: Tips for Employers



Marilyn De
Jarlais



Amy Studden

Marilyn (Mari) De Jarlais and Amy Studden from the DVR were our guests for our October 2014 Lunch and Learn. Our speakers had a wealth of knowledge on reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. They spoke with passion and gave concrete examples of small changes that can make big differences for people with disabilities. Their presentation also touched upon interviewing techniques to conduct effective job interviews. Our presenters also talked about the 'unseen disabilities' and ways in which they can affect our workforce, but more importantly, ways in which employers can support and retain such employees. A great emphasis was placed on the role of DVR as a practical resource for employers in the area.

November 14, 2014

Expanding opportunities in the workplace and educational environments

Our 2014 Conference was a great success and attended by over eighty participants. The conference was split into three sessions followed by a working lunch.



Dr. Jodi Vandenberg-Daves

Dr. Jodi Vandenberg-Daves spoke with passion about women's issues in the workplace, such as the pay gap, the lack of promotion of women in leadership roles, and ways in which organizations can attract and promote women. Dr. Vandenberg-Daves suggested developing flexible organization structures, as opposed to hierarchical structures, to allow women to work and lead by using their strengths. Our presenter also talked about the qualities that women bring to the workplace and the possibilities open to organizations when hiring women in leadership positions.



Dr. Scott Dickmeyer

Dr. Scott Dickmeyer presented on techniques he developed and uses within the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, for interviewing and attracting minority applicants and future employees. Dr. Dickmeyer challenged the old approach of interviewing candidates by submitting them to a battery of questions which does not highlight individual strengths or unique abilities. Dr. Dickmeyer suggested adopting a collaborative approach with applicants, in which honesty about the community and difficulties of the job plays an important role. Our presenter offered examples from industry leaders and their approaches to recruitment. He emphasized that in order to put an end to the practice of hiring 'people like us' we need to be able to appreciate candidates for their uniqueness and not judge them by their ability 'to fit or not to fit' in our organizations.



Dr. Quincey Daniels

Our last presenter of the day, Dr. Quincey Daniels, spoke extensively about his personal experiences as a person of color in various contexts. He challenged participants to think of their own biases and identify how those biases were formed. From an organizational perspective, Dr. Daniels, suggested that by creating policies which embrace diversity, as well as by setting clear and measurable diversity goals, organizations can truly improve their diversity and inclusion efforts. Our presenter offered 10 Best Practices which organizations can use to develop, promote, support and assess diversity initiatives.



Our working lunch was facilitated by Dr. Daniels and included a story telling exercise as a way of bringing together the participants and promote an understanding of each other as individual people, with unique paths and challenges in life. The exercise was greatly appreciated by our participants who mentioned in their evaluations that it left them thinking about how much you learn about people by listening to their stories.