

diversity is working

SPARC BC's *Diversity is Working* project provides seventeen (17) case studies of Lower Mainland organizations that have taken steps to make their workplaces more welcoming and inclusive for employees with diverse backgrounds. The purpose of the case studies is to celebrate successes in workplace diversity by highlighting best practices.

The set of case studies includes examples from organizations with small Human Resources departments to larger organizations with large Human Resources departments and designated diversity managers. The case studies are also drawn from a range of different sectors including businesses, non-profit organizations and government institutions. Some of the organizations being profiled have been implementing diversity and employment equity initiatives for decades while others have started to look at diversity in recent years. Because of the diverse range of organizations being profiled, there are relevant best practices for any organization that is working to make their workplace more welcoming and inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds. Refer to the adjacent diagram for a list of participating organizations.

The following pieces of information are provided in each organization's case study:

- diversity business case or mandate for diversity;
- diversity initiatives and results; and
- advice for other organizations considering undertaking similar work.



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About SAP Canada

As a market leader in enterprise application software, SAP helps companies of all sizes and industries run better. SAP has been operating in Canada since 1989 and serves over 2,300 customers and employs over 2,200 staff. SAP has a significant research and development presence in Canada, with labs located in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. SAP Canada is also a diverse company. For example, in 2010 SAP Canada had the strongest results within the SAP global company for the number and proportion of women holding management roles.

SAP's Business Case for Diversity

At SAP Canada, diversity and welcoming and inclusive work environments are seen to help overall organizational performance in a number of key ways. In particular, diversity and inclusion can help:

- attract and retain the best talent;
- foster innovation and creativity in product development;
- improve employee engagement; and
- foster collaborative and efficient teamwork.

In addition, diversity helps to attract diverse customers wanting to do business with organizations that they relate to. As Tracey Arnish from SAP Canada states: "Our customers are very diverse, so if we do not have a diverse talent pool, they are going to be less likely to resonate with us, and therefore less likely to do business with us."



For SAP Canada, implementing diversity has become a mandate starting from the company's executive leadership and board of directors. SAP's Global Diversity Policy cites its diversity mandate as one that "goes beyond pure legal requirements" to consider the business imperative of respectful, efficient and effective cooperation and teamwork within the organization.¹

In addition, SAP is a global company with headquarters in Germany, and there has been a lot of discussion about gender diversity at the board level and the value that diversity brings to companies in the European Union. Because there is limited representation of women on corporate boards across Europe, the following countries have implemented gender quotas in recent years: France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. Moreover, there has been some discussion about introducing gender quotas within Germany as well as some discussions about the European Union passing legislation to require gender quotas throughout the European Union.²

In March 2009, SAP Global was one of five information and communication technology companies to sign the *Code of Best Practices for Women and ICT*. This code was developed by the European Commission in partnership with the ICT sector in response to growing concerns about labour shortages in the European Union and the underrepresentation of women in the sector. The code includes a set of initiatives adapted by the companies which are designed to increase representation of women, and sets targets for the recruitment and promotion of female ICT professionals.³ In May 2011, SAP committed to increasing the number of women in management positions from the current level to 25% by 2017.⁴

1 <http://www.sap.com/corporate-en/our-company/people/diversity/policy-networks-and-services/index.epx>

2 The Inquisitr. 2012. *EU Plans "Gender Quota" to Help Break Glass Ceiling*. Accessed on April 24th, 2012 at <http://www.inquisitr.com/201361/eu-plans-gender-quota-to-help-break-glass-ceiling>

3 http://store1.digitalcity.eu.com/store/clients/release/AAAAGNJH/doc/press-release-ip-09-344_en_2009.08.05-20.16.03.pdf

4 <http://www.sap.com/corporate-en/our-company/people/diversity/index.epx>

SAP Canada's Diversity Initiatives

SAP's Global Diversity Office and North American Diversity Council

In 2006, SAP established its Global Diversity Office headed by global diversity officers, primarily to expand, support, and manage diversity throughout the organization through its regional offices. In addition, a North American Diversity Council was developed in 2010 to develop diversity initiatives at the regional level. The intent is to make SAP's diversity initiatives an intentional company strategy and part of the overall company culture, as opposed to sporadic one-time diversity initiatives.

Manager Training and Staff Training

SAP Canada acknowledges that it is one thing to recruit diverse employees, and another thing to have management teams in place that can effectively leverage the organization's diversity. SAP's current focus is aimed on educating managers on the value that diversity brings to the workplace and organizational performance and on providing instruction on ways to leverage diverse talent and diverse teams.

Some examples of workshops that have been held with managers include:

- A workshop on men and women leading together, which discusses gender intelligence and how genders maximize the potential of diversity and working together;
- A workshop on cultural innovation, and how to innovate and support culturally diverse teams; and,
- A workshop on how to manage across different generations, including managing Gen Y and new graduates.

It is hoped that training opportunities such as these will help support managers when they are learning how to manage different groups of people, including men, women, different cultural groups, and different generations.

As part of this top-down diversity strategy, managers are also expected to play a key role in educating their staff on the value of diversity, and the benefit it provides for SAP Canada and organizational performance.



Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive Workplace

Some other steps that SAP Canada has taken to create a welcoming and inclusive work environment include:

- offering faith rooms in the office to support various religious needs;
- providing nursing rooms for mothers who have come back to work;
- providing flex time and flex place work environments that allow people to balance caregiving with work obligations;
- encouraging the creation of employee-led networks such as LGBT network, and the business women's network; and,
- supporting a series called *Women Running Better* which offered a set of events for women focused on branding and leadership development skills;
- creating an accessible work environment for people with disabilities.

Tracking Change

SAP Canada has further formalized its commitment to diversity, by recently developing key performance indicators to measure the success of their diversity and employee engagement strategies, such as tracking employee engagement scores, and the representation of women in management roles. These measures will be used over time to track progress and identify gaps that need to be addressed.

The Results

SAP Canada believes that through its recent initiatives, it has begun to rebrand itself as a diverse employer. In addition, SAP Canada has been tracking employee engagement scores as part of the company's annual employee survey; these scores have been consistently high which suggests that employees have a positive emotional attachment to their job, colleagues and organization. This indicator suggests that SAP Canada has been successful at fostering a good work environment for its staff. In addition, diversity programs have been widely embraced by staff. For instance, the organizers of *Women Running Better* were pleasantly surprised when the program was fully booked within thirty-six (36) hours of announcement; this suggests that there is a strong demand for these types of professional development opportunities within the organization.



SAP

Furthermore, SAP recently had its best corporate performance in the company's forty (40) year history. SAP Canada believes that investing in diversity yields a return on investment that is "tremendous" and is proud to have the most engaged workforce that the company has seen in years.

SAP's Advice for Other Organizations

- You pay attention to diversity because it's what's going to enable people and enable your business.
- It's really important to have buy-in from the top level. You really need to have the top and bottom together, and often times it's the grassroots that really affect the change locally that people can feel and they can see.
- You have to look at each scale of population and how you can do programs that really work for that level of population, and how that trickles down, and on a local level how that makes a difference.

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