



Boost People! Boost Business!

Celebrate Diversity

[20 ways]

Expanding Minds! Enriching Lives!

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ART Activities

1. **Cultural Art Exhibition:** - Feature the work of artist of various cultures and backgrounds. Include signage that tells the story of the art, the artist, background and their unique perspectives. Invite the artists to join the opening and/ or one or more of the showings to share their perspectives.

Connection Activity: View the art at least with one other person so at the conclusion of the viewing you can talk about what your individual experiences were like.

2. **Watch Cross-Cultural Movies and Review:** - Have individuals of varying cultures see a popular mainstream movie(s) of different cultures as a group. Have them write their own personal reviews. Post reviews on staff notice boards, your company website, blog, Social Media, the local press, other diversity websites, and send us a copy to genius@geniuswithin.co.za

Connection Activity: Compare and contrast the viewpoints of individuals and explore how each person's culture influences their opinions and view of situations portrayed in the film. Encourage local press to write reviews which do the same and/ or write an article about your exploits. Send us a list of your favorite cultural movies. (e.g. - What's Cooking? (2000), a film that addresses Jewish, Latin, Asian, and Black families in the US living in the same neighborhood dealing with similar issues around the common American holiday of Thanksgiving.)

3. **Folk Dance** as a group activity: - Have a professional ethnic dancer come to your organization to demonstrate a particular type of folk dancing or take a class or check out a video/DVD from your library to learn dances such as Hawaiian hula, African healing, Russian folk, or others like belly dancing, flamenco, reels, clog dancing, 'pantsula', line-dancing, trance dance... the list is endless.

Connection Activity: Get a group of friends or co-workers to take a class together for added fun. Ask local dance experts, employees, or students to demonstrate folk dances during events at your organization. Encourage them to teach audience members basic movements or steps of a particular dance.

4. **Celebrate diversity logo contest:** - Sponsor a contest to design a logo for your organization to Celebrate Diversity. This logo could appear on buttons, t-shirts, stickers, or find other innovative ways to use it. Provide prizes or awards for the top winners.

Connection Activity: Encourage team thinking and submissions.

5. **Corporate Diversity Initiatives/ Interventions:** - Integrate Celebrate Diversity discussions and activities into training programs related to diversity.

Connection Activity: Encourage Diversity Councils to sponsor events regularly as part of corporate initiatives. Discuss stereotypes and discrimination, harassment, bullying and marginalizing issues not only for cultural and ethnic issues, but also other demographics like age, religion, sexual preference, gender, etc. Build in conversations of connection in formal programs including new employee orientations.

6. **Group Vision Statement:** - Create a group vision statement around diversity. Address honoring differences in your company's mission statements, core values, written policies, press releases, etc. Provide sticky notes, pens, and a blank wall for people to add their ideas, words, and phrases. At the end of the month, compile the ideas into one statement or a comprehensive list. Post or circulate.

Connection Activity: Get group input, feedback, and consensus in the creation of the statement. Have conversations about core values with others and hold people accountable for their words and actions and refrain from derogatory jokes about 'others'.

7. **International Business Etiquette:** - Use resources and books like - *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: How to do Business in 60 Countries* - to find out more about the cultural norms of how business is conducted in countries your organization has operations in, does business with, or that you have visited or might visit in the future. Remember that their norms may be similar or greatly different from the ones in your home country.

Connection Activity: Respectfully ask your international colleagues, as well as your local ethnic groups questions to learn more about their customs around punctuality, gift-giving, business cards, negotiating, greeting protocol, forms of address, etc. When in doubt, always ask for more information.

8. **Multicultural Job Fair:** - Organize a multi-level job fair in your community with an emphasis on diversity.

Connection Activity: Invite and talk to people of all ages, from grade-schoolers (to emphasize the importance of education), to college graduates (to explore opportunities), to older workers seeking to re-enter the job market (to help discover ways to become more employable), to other employers (to find ways to incorporate marginalized individuals into the workplace or ways they can participate productively in the economy).

9. **Support Minority Vendors and Minority-owned Businesses:** Utilize the services and products of local minority businesses.

Connection Activity: Ask employees for recommendations or ideas for resourcing more diverse vendor opportunities.

Connection Activities

10. **Cultural Values Conversations:** - Have a discussion with someone from another culture about their cultural values related to various cultural variables like time, gestures, appearance, and how they view the elderly. Use a resource book like *Gestures : The Do's and Taboos of Body Language Around the World* or *Bridging Cultural Conflicts - A New Approach for a Changing World* to inspire ideas.

Connection Activity: Think about a time when you have been frustrated, misread, or misunderstood something because of your own personal expectations around time, appearance, or gestures. Start your conversation with a non-judgmental Question like, "Does your culture tend to ...? or "How are elders in your culture viewed?"

11. **Diversity Lifeline Description:** Have individuals create a personal timeline on a piece of paper by drawing a long straight line and labeling the left end of the line birth day and the right end today. Ask them to think about events in their lives that taught them about diversity and to mark those events on the timeline they have drawn. Use questions to generate ideas like: When was the first time you met someone of a different race? Learned another language? Traveled far from home? Worked with someone of a different culture? Noticed a person who avoided you? Observed an incident you believe could have been related to bias or prejudice?

Connection Activity: Ask participants to pair off with someone of different generation or background to answer the following questions: What have you learned about each other after

hearing about these events? How do these different experiences impact how you personally view diversity (positively or negatively)?

12. **Diversity Round-table:** - Start a monthly "diversity roundtable" to discuss critical issues facing your community.

Connection Activity: Listen to learn about different perspectives and offer your own perspectives.

13. **Generational Perspectives:** - Have a group conversation about personal beliefs around age. Divide the group into two sections: 'older' and 'younger' (the composition of your larger group will determine those definitions). Give each group a question like the following (brainstorm more) to answer: What was your first car and how have the types of vehicles you have owned changed over time? How many jobs have you held? What songs do you remember from your childhood/ teenage years? How do you define 'dress for success'? What would 'dress for success' look like in your culture?

Connection Activity: Compare group responses. Ask if there were any surprises as a result of the conversation. Consider how the group's differing perspectives might impact how they work together.

14. **Hobby Fair:** - Organize an event in your cafeteria or other common areas for people to bring in representations, tools, or examples of their hobbies, such as fishing memorabilia, photos, ice skates, quilts, special event regalia, etc.

Connection Activity: Encourage participants to talk about their hobbies, including how long they have practiced, where, most unusual results, etc.

15. **Hold a Celebrate Diversity Block Party:** - Put up a Marquise tent in a yard, find a park, or use your company's parking lot to hold a party. Invite employees, vendors, colleagues, or neighbors to share music, food, displays and stories. This can be as big or small as you desire. It will amaze you how quickly this becomes an annual event.

Connection Activity: Schedule events, entertainment, and contests that promote conversations and learning.

16. **Honor Diverse Families:** - The definitions of 'family' has always been diverse. In contemporary society it can include traditional male-female couples, GLBT partners, singles, couples with pets, ESL, siblings or grandparents as caregivers, adoption, mixed race, cross-cultural, divorces, families of 'choice', multigenerational families, etc.

Connection Activity: Create a display wall for employees or students to show a photo and a brief description of their 'family'. Invite participants to share a fact or story about their families that make them unique. Ask them to share what some of the strengths they have and challenges they face as a family.

17. **Lunch Invitations:** - Vary your lunch partners. Seek out co-workers of different backgrounds, from different departments, and at different levels and lengths of tenure in the company.

Connection Activity: Ask one another respectful and open-ended questions that invite explanation and further conversation.

18. **Disabilities:** - Create a worksheet containing the accessibility symbols that people with disabilities rely on and that work to make workplaces and other areas more hospitable. Remember - not all disabilities or handicaps are visible.



Connection Activity: Ask individuals to look at the symbols and then offer guesses as to what each means, then share with them the real meaning of each sign. Add other disability signs to your collections. Ask why participants think these symbols are helpful to people with disabilities. What are some simple ways these symbols can be incorporated into your organization or community if they are not currently?

19. **Act as a Change Agent:** - Speak up when you hear inappropriate cultural, ethnic or sexist jokes or comments. Don't be an indirect supporter by remaining silent. Let people know that biased speech is always unacceptable.

Connection Activity: Talk about a time when you acted as a Change Agent and felt proud of doing it. Encourage others to act as Change Agents in person, by phone, or by email.

20. **Learn sign language:** - add the most common used signs on your notice board. Learn to say "hi" to people in sign language.

Go forth – Embrace Diversity!

You'll be so glad you did...

NOTE: There is much more where this came from.

Should you want more information on how to get Diversity Programs, Initiatives or Interventions started in you organization, or a quote, please contact me at sonja@geniuswithin.co.za