第4回　2018年度英語ライティングコンテスト

【2018 年度テーマ】

According to 2017 research published in Harvard Business Review,*1 diverse teams in the workplace solve problems faster and make decisions more quickly than teams of similar people.*2　Therefore, it is important for companies to employ people with diverse backgrounds. How can companies manage an increase in diversity in the workplace?

*1　Harvard Business Review Homepage　https://hbr.org/

*2　https://hbr.org/2017/03/teams-solve-problems-faster-when-theyre-more-cognitively-diverse

【2018 年度入賞者】

第一位	2 年	大　森　雄　高
第二位	2 年	リ　　シ　　キ
第三位	2 年	高　木　祥　嗣
第三位	3 年	佐　藤　　翼
第三位	4 年	阿　部　悠　輝

■入賞エッセイ

入賞者全 5 名のエッセイは、以下ページに公開しております。

Successful Diversity Training

"Strength lies in differences, not in similarities," said Stephen R. Covey. With the advent of globalization, the importance of diversity and diversity management have been increasing. This is primarily because it is now well established from a variety of studies and surveys that the diversity—differences such as race, gender, nationality, religious belief—enhances a productivity, fostering an innovation in a workplace. One of the most essential steps which companies can take towards the successful diversity management in their workplace is understanding diversity per se in the first place. Therefore, dozens of companies run various diversity training programs in order to create a stereotype-free workplace and manage a diverse team fruitfully. Some studies, however, have shown that participation in a diversity training program can be ineffective, and, to make matters worse, even be counter-productive. On the other hand, other studies demonstrate their effectiveness. Companies would get confused due to the catch-22 and consider why this happened. How can companies overcome the challenge? There is certainly a crucial factor required for successful diversity training.

To begin with, diversity training programs may create an adverse result. Although companies want to educate their employees so as to reduce their bias against those who are different from them, a certain kind of diversity training can be inefficacious. According to the study conducted by Duguid et al., informing people about the fact that stereotypes are prevailing resulted in undesired effect (2015). In this experiment, she sent a message to subjects which tells about the prevalence of stereotypes around them. Surprisingly enough, the examinees who received that massage are more likely to express their stereotypes than those who did not. This means noticing the existence of stereotypes can enhance the feeling of discrimination. So, taken into consideration, the result demonstrates the ineffectiveness and adverse effect of a diversity training program at which participants just learn and grasp the reality of spreading prejudices and stereotypes.

Indeed, the study mentioned above emphasizes a negative aspect of some diversity training programs, but a recent meta-analysis research has yielded positive effects of these kinds of programs on their participants. In fact, the purpose of the programs can influence whether they are effective or not. According to the meta-analysis of 260 independent cases that assessed the effects of diversity training, the results revealed that the purpose of training which had the largest effects on trainees is cognitive learning, which basically means the extent to which one acquire the knowledge about diversity (Bezrukova, K. et al. 2016). Also, smaller effects were produced at the program which focused on behavioral and attitudinal learning. In other words, the effectiveness of learning an optimal behavior in a certain situational scenario—so-called best practices—is limited. Furthermore, whereas the effects of diversity training based on the behavioral and attitudinal learning worn off as time passed, the effects of training programs focusing on cognitive learning remained stable and, in some cases, became strong. It is therefore important to run a program which allows participants to acquire a wide perspective on diversity through cognitive learning training, not on behavioral and attitudinal learning one.

Based upon the study conducted by Bezrukova et al., a training program was run by Alex Lindsey et al. in order to elucidate the link between cognitive learning-based trainings and their effects. The training exercise is perspective-taking, which means playing a role from other's perspective (2017). For instance, participants are asked to write a few sentences imagining as if

they were people of LGBT or racial minorities. As a result, it is showed that taking the perspective of these people can improve pro-diversity attitudes toward these groups. The effect lasted even eight months after training. Moreover, perspective-taking was proved to be capable of producing mutually beneficial effects. That is, in another experiment they performed, this perspective-taking exercise led to more positive attitudes and behaviors not only of those participants but also of people of LGBT and racial minorities. This successful outcome suggests that in order for diversity training programs to be effective, they need to put an emphasis on cognitive learning. To put it another way, just teaching best practices does not work when it comes to diversity training.

On balance, the key to successful diversity training provides the one that is based on the concept of cognitive learning. One of the feasible approaches is running a diversity training program which does not rely exclusively on teaching best practices but on cognitive learning methods such as perspective-taking. Diversity training programs can be either a blessing or a curse, yet as long as companies pay great and careful attention their contents, they actually work, helping myriad workers to collaborate with others all over the world. Hopefully, more companies can capitalize on the value of diverse workers, creating a better environment for various people.

(797 words)

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Managing diversity in the workplace

Nowadays, promoting diversity has become a hot topic in the business world.

Diverse teams are more productive, innovative, competitive. Obviously, compared with

teams that made up of the same types of people, companies with multicultural teams are

more likely to survive from increasingly serve market competitions along with the

globalization. However, how to manage diversity still remains a tricky problem for a

number of companies today. From my point of view, diversity among a company could

be achieved by several measures discussed below.

Firstly, companies should address unconscious bias in the recruitment. A cake will

not be made without flour, eggs, and sugar. Similarly, a diverse team could not be

formed without the workforce from a variety of backgrounds. Recruitment as the first

step of building up a diverse team plays an important role. If discrimination persists in

the hiring process, diversity will be nipped in the bud. In order to create a diverse

workplace, companies should deal with stereotypes existing in the recruitment. For

example, gender inequality. Now, discrimination against women is still a problem.

Some companies refuse to hire women because women may leave their jobs for

marriages, deliveries. However, Companies could engage more married women into

their workforce by implementing a quota system and reskilling programs positively.

Moreover, I strongly believe, for those small companies that only focus on the domestic

market, which are not appealing to foreigner workers, taking a step to employ more

female labors could boost their diversity. In short, to create an inclusive workplace, it is

essential for HR professionals to carry out recruiting policies that embrace differences

instead of saying no to them.

Secondly, companies need to flatten their structures. Having people from different

backgrounds does not diversify a company unless it cultivates an environment that

welcomes different opinions. In a hierarchical company, subordinates are always told

what to do and afraid of authority. However, in my opinion, that is not a friendly

environment for innovation since if employees of the company are worried about the

outcomes of being against authority and majority, they will not feel free to express their

own ideas. As a result, there will be no creativity from the minority. Since that, I think

that fewer layers within a company allow more rooms for diversity. Additionally, a

relatively equal workplace makes decision-making more quickly. According to the study

of Hofstedes's national cultural dimensions, subordinates in a low power distance

culture are given more rights to participant in making decisions. And they are more

flexible than those working for a company with less equality (Marie-Joelle Browaeys &

Roger Price). Because of that, I believe a flat structure within a company contributes to

meaning and effective communication. Importantly, it will create a workplace that

allows varieties of ideas.

Thirdly, to improve workplace diversity, companies ought to establish training

programs for their employees. Nobody was born to be open-minded or narrow-minded.

However, they could be changed through education. Besides flattening the structures of

the company, companies should try their best to change the way how their employees

think. Especially, providing training programs are important for those who behave

negatively while confronting with different ideas.

Last but not least, companies should never forget to integrate all the employees. Even diversity emphasizes the differences between individuals, it does not mean that employees should always prioritize themselves rather than the corporate cultures of the company. To maximize the influence of diversity within the company, a company should make sure that all staffs among the company are working for the same corporate purposes. Furthermore, even though diversity allows employees to have different ideas, basic rules and principles of the company should be always followed. If employees do everything based on their own wills and paces, diversity will not be helpful. Instead, it will be harmful to the company as a whole.

To sum up, managing diversity will be difficult. However, not only companies could boost diversity by eliminating discrimination in the recruitment, they can flatten their structures to embrace more different ideas. Furthermore, companies could encourage workplace diversity by educating their employees. Lastly, companies should never forget to integrate their employees and ensure them work for the same purposes.

(700 words)

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How To Manage Diversity In The Workplace

Wherever we live in, no one cannot face diversity in our lives. We have more opportunities to encounter foreign people when we go outside, for example, going to urban cities. Thanks to radical advances in air-line or shipment, we can go anywhere we want to go, which created the diversity world and enabled us to live in foreign countries, which allowed us to work in companies located in foreign countries. So, many companies have many employees who have different cultures from each other, which means many companies have gotten more diversity. In dealing with this diversity in workplaces, many companies face some problems, for example, how to communicate with employees who have different languages or how to work with, due to differences of cultures between employees. So, mangers must manage diversity in their workplaces well to keep all tasks going smoothly and prevent culture problems from happening. In the following paragraphs, I will show you three ideas for allowing diversity management in the workplace to work.

The first idea is to understand the differences of cultures between employees. To make it possible, I think managers should give employees opportunities to communicate with foreign people and each other as often as they can. Here is a communicative activity, which is referred from "huddle com", to let employees have talks with each other. The activity is called " Two Truths and a Lie". In this activity, employees write down two truths and a lie about themselves and tell those three each other. They should tell others their lies as if they were truths. The final goal of this activity is whether they can recognize lies by hearing what others say. The merit of this activity is that employees can talk to each other a lot of time. I think the more employees communicate with one another, the faster they can figure out different ideas or cultures. Also, for employees to understand different cultures, managers should encourage employees to work in diverse groups. In working on some tasks with employees who have different cultures, all employees could discover how to work in diverse workplaces without any obstacle.

The second idea is to spread the most important core values of the company among

employees. Most of the companies have their own core values, which would not be changed whatever happens. I think there are two merits for spreading their own core values in the workplace. The first one is that employees can understand the meaning of the tasks they do. All employees do not think or behave totally the same, however, if a core value is kept in all employee's mind, they would not ignore the core value when they do something. The second one is that, according to Verne Harnish, in his book "Scaling Up", a thoughtful and meaningful core value are critical to the long-term growth strategy of any company. Actually, the companies introduced in his book could get much growth by making thoughtful and meaningful core values and spreading them among all employees. I think this merit works because company growth makes all employees, regardless of their backgrounds, do their tasks with a feeling of enjoyment. So, companies tell their employees their core values regularly so that they can be reminded of the core values.

The third idea is to view all employees as individuals. This means companies must not assess their employee's performances from their backgrounds or cultures. Imagine a Chinese employee who could not perform well in a month. If he or she is assessed his or her performance from their backgrounds, for example, "you are not suitable to this job because you are Chinese, he or she would feel discriminated, which decreases his or her motivation to work hard. According to a survey conducted by SEEDA in 2006, racial or ethnical discrimination in the workplace has a huge impact both at individual and organization levels. I think companies should have some standards for assessments to prevent discrimination happening, which I think make it possible to assess all employees equally. The best way to make it possible is to make managers trained for accepting diversity kindly, for example, thorough lectures. Managers always assess their subordinates. So, if they cannot accept diversity, they surely do not assess equally. And, I believe managements must be more open to accept diversity than their subordinates.

Though I mentioned three ideas for succeeding with the diversity management in the workplace, it will definitely take a long time and much effort for it to come to fruition. I believe this is not realized with only some employees. I think all workers including employees, managers and even the president must work together. They will face many challenges along the way, however, I believe they can manage diversity in their workplaces by helping one another. (798)

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We should acknowledge the differences

Why does Silicon Valley always out-innovate Tokyo? Silicon Valley has apparently given rise to much more innovations in various fields compared to Tokyo even though Tokyo also has a comparably decent infrastructure given its wealth and the cutting-edge technologies it possesses. There might be a number of factors of this difference such as the education systems or the number of venture capitalists. Among them, the difference between the diversity the two places have has been highlighted as an important factor. But why? Basically, diversity, being different from one another, poses a lot of problems and inconveniences such as discriminations and language problems. In fact, a team with heterogeneous members is hard to manage. However, innovations would not likely to happen if there was no problem to tackle in the first place. In that sense, it can be said that diversity is paradoxically one of the key factors of innovative ideas in Silicon Valley. In addition, as the Harvard business review implied, a great degree of diversity in a workplace is conducive to people's performance and creativity in a certain situation.

As indicated above, it is obviously crucial for companies out there to promote diversity in their corporate environment. As a matter of fact, some of the greatest companies such as Intel, Facebook, and eBey have tried to enhance the diversity in their workplaces in an attempt to maintain their competitiveness.

However, as mentioned above, a great degree of diversity in a workplace may bring about some problems. Especially, the minority people are suffering from them. In fact, the turnover rate of minority people in a firm empirically tends to be high. Companies must tackle these problems if they are to manage the diversity and thrive well. One of the problems involved is a tendency called homophily. Homophily refers to a tendency among people to feel more affinity or intimacy with people who are similar to themselves. This seems natural considering that people from the same country, social class, or with the same ethnicity usually share some common backgrounds. Having different backgrounds or interests thus could be a hindrance of socialization, especially for the minorities. This tendency may worsen in a corporate environment where there are heterogeneous employees. Hence, interactions across ethnic or religious boundaries are more difficult.

One of the typical principles with which people try to mitigate such diversity problems is to try to behave as if everyone in a firm is equal. Indeed, it seems ethical to treat everyone equally. However, this principle may just raise another problem. One of the problems that arise from the principle is a peer pressure. A peer pressure refers to a social pressure to be similar to or to behave in the same way as the majorities. In general, the larger a company becomes, the more cohesive it gets and the more peer pressure it creates. The peer pressure in an environment where diversity exists may be especially detrimental to the minorities because this means that there is a social pressure to act as if they are similar to others even though they have something unique. The principle of treating everyone equally may accelerate the peer pressure further. Facing this pressure, the minorities would be discouraged to open up their true self in the interactions with their colleagues. In this situation, socially fulfilling and meaningful interactions would be more difficult to nurture. Therefore, counterintuitive as it may seem, the first step to tackle the problems involved and manage the diversity is to clearly acknowledge the differences and pay respects to each of them rather than treating everyone equally.

In summary, despite its advantages, there are problems involved in an increasing diversity in workplaces. These problems may highlight the fact that being different in itself is a difficulty for the minorities in a firm. Therefore, the main emphasis should be on how to eliminate or reduce such impediments when a company tries to nurture and manage its diversity. To do so, we should acknowledge the differences rather than ignoring them.

(667 words)

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第三位　阿　部　悠　輝

Appropriate Environment Changes Unfavorable Diversity to Beneficial One

Diversity helps bring about a symbiosis to nurture life in a biological environment. Wilson (2007), a leading authority on biodiversity, pointed out that there are many symbiotic relationships resulting from the Earth's biodiversity. He cited the example of friendly bacteria living symbiotically in the mouth and throat of humans to provide health benefits. In addition, he argued that the collapse of nature's biodiversity caused by the destruction of the environment upsets and breaks the existing symbiosis (Wilson, 2007). As the biological environment is connected to the characteristics and the ecology of organisms, it is possible that cognitive diversity is also being influenced by the environment.

In the diversity management field, it is generally accepted that cognitive diversity is the same as cultural diversity. Plummer (2003) defined cultural diversity as "the inclusion and acceptance of the unique world views, customs, norms, patterns of behavior, and traditions of many groups of people." As Reynolds and Lewis (2017) reported, cognitive diversity is also defined as "differences in perspective or information processing styles." The attitude of a person toward the inclusion of views, customs, norms, and behavior might be influenced by that person's immediate environment. For example, religion influences the

perspective of persons and their thought processes. When people in Japan discuss death, they are unlikely to come across people from another religion, and therefore they need not consider a different religious view. On the other hand, in a country like Malaysia where many religions are practiced, people have different views on the phenomenon of death based on the tenets of their religious following, such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. In that situation, they need to minimize their functional bias to avoid religious conflict, which may lead to higher cognitive diversity. Based on the inference that cognitive diversity is promoted by the environment, this essay will discuss how companies need to establish the appropriate environment to promote beneficial diversity and increase the efficiency of their workforce.

First, companies need to make sure that they share their vision with employees. An organization's environment must nurture and welcome different viewpoints, but it also needs to unify the company's vision and objective in order to avoid any conflicts caused by the differences. In this context, Parker (2005) considered that bringing together people with different backgrounds and viewpoints may increase interpersonal conflict, thus escalating differences into conflict. While we, as human beings, have the sensation of exclusion instinctively, it is possible for us to develop a symbiotic relationship toward a common vision. For instance, the mission statement of Patagonia, a designer of outdoor clothing and gear for the silent sports, is to "build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis" (Patagonia, 2018).

Most employees who love outdoor activities personally value this vision, and they are united

to conserve the environment by making and selling good products conducive to that vision.

In a cooperative environment, which is better suited to manage differences, we are likely to

gain new perspectives and ideas, and thereby add value to the overall mission and success of

the organization.

Second, it is better to place persons having high cognitive diversity in the position of

managers and executives. Executives and managers are responsible for executing the practice

of inclusion throughout the organization when there is a surge in diversity. Therefore, they

must have the ability to influence and utilize diverse perspectives and channelize the same

toward positive organizational changes. Effective management of diversity is not only in

including diverse people in groups, but also in encouraging them and utilizing their varied

talents and perspectives. Thus, leaders having high cognitive diversity are necessary for

effective management.

Third, companies need to decide whether an environment of unity or one of diversity

is required based on their industry sector. While sectors such as information and

advertisement may need diversity, businesses such as hotel service, retail, and manufacturing

require unity. For example, if the quality of customer service in a hotel or restaurant is too

different from the established norms in the area in question, customers are likely to feel

uncomfortable. Such services need to be unified and standardized to assure quality. In such

situations, employees with a strong sense of unity, and with reliable loyalty and commitment to the organization, can contribute to standardization in the retail or hotel industry.

In the past, organizations believed that employees would like to be assimilated into a homogeneous environment like *Melting Pot* because it is more effective than an inclusive one. However, people are now increasingly celebrating the situation of *Ethnic Stew*, which helps retain differences or diversity to create new and innovative ideas. In keeping with this trend, organizations must learn to establish and pursue the appropriate environment for prosperity and lead people who value their differences. (798 words)

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