

American Public Works Association

# DIVERSITY RESOURCE GUIDE



**TIPS, TOOLS, & TRIUMPHS**

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*A big "thank you" goes to members of the Kansas City Metro Chapter for allowing us to use their diversity logo. Juanita Jackson (chair), Larry Frevert, Edward Ieans, Chuck Madden, Michele Ohmes, Ron Schikevitz, Rick Smith, James Williams, and Shelley Wolff, all had a hand in the development of the logo*

# Introduction

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**A**PWA Chapter Leaders and/or Diversity Liaisons have asked the APWA Diversity Committee for assistance in locating and/or presenting topics on diversity at their chapter meetings, information on establishing new member welcoming and orientation meetings, and exercises for stimulating thought and discussion on the issue of diversity.

This resource guide will address only a portion of creative ideas – you will think of others through your experiences and your reading. You are encouraged to share these experiences with the APWA Diversity Committee.

The APWA Diversity Statement is as follows:

*“The American Public Works Association recognizes, appreciates and fosters the synergy, which is created when the work environment values the differences in individuals and practices inclusiveness and open communication.”*

The American Public Works Association values all individuals and different perspectives of those individuals, and believes in providing the process for all to feel included as part of the whole. Diversity includes race, gender, creed, age, lifestyle, national origin, disability, personality, educational background, processing style, thinking style, energy level, assertiveness level, weight and height, values, political views, marital status, goals and ambitions, likes and dislikes, social status, income level, tenure within an organization, level of position within an organization, geographic origin, management vs. union, rural vs. urban, etc. Diversity is neither an affirmative action nor an equal opportunity program. It means “differences in people” and how we accept and use those differences depends on whether diversity becomes an asset or a liability for APWA and for our workplace.

Your APWA Diversity Committee supports you and thanks you for your work on helping to change our environment to celebrate diversity. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact us. Or if there is another area of diversity you would like to see highlighted in the next production of the resource guide, please contact us.

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*A special thank you is given to Elizabeth Mitchell (training supervisor, Louisville & Jefferson County MSD), former member of the Diversity Committee, for her contributions on the Exercise Section of this guide.*

# Why Diversity is Important

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Achieving diversity in APWA is not just the right thing to do anymore; it is a matter of survival, of productivity, and of prosperity. The for-profit world has seen this coming for quite some time. They have experienced the creativity of a more diverse staff and a better understanding of the needs and wants of their customers. Being supportive of all types of members simply makes good business sense and strengthens APWA for all its members.

President John F. Kennedy said, "Change is the law of life. Those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future." With the changing face of the workforce (i.e., globalization, dominant cultures losing their dominant status, people working longer, healthier lifestyles), functioning in a diverse work environment and participating in a diverse association will be as much a part of our lives as computers are. We can either embrace/celebrate diversity and use it to APWA's benefit or we can fail to recognize the world's demographic future and lose out on valuable resources and contributions to the association. Finally, many people in the profession who experience "difference" will seek out other associations to meet their needs if this association doesn't serve a diverse population.

# Global Understanding

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If we could at this very moment shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 – but maintain the existing human ratios – our world would look like this:

59 Asians

14 Europeans (includes former Soviet Union)

12 Africans

8 South Americans (includes Caribbean)

5 North Americans

1 Australian

1 Oceanian

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70 People of Color

30 White

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70 Non-Christian

30 Christian

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One-third of the entire world's wealth would be in the hands of 4 people – all citizens of the United States.

*Source: Handbook of Economic Statistics, published by Directorate of Intelligence, Washington, D.C., 1994. The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1995 ed. By Robert Fanighetti, Mahwah, NJ, 1994. All rights reserved by the REACH Center 180 Nickerson St., Ste. 212, Seattle, WA 98109*

# **Cross-Cultural Communication**

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North American values and behaviors differ from those of other cultures. As our APWA Congress becomes more international in scope and some of our chapter members are traveling abroad for business purposes, it would be to our benefit to understand the various differences in our cultures related to behaviors and mannerisms, as the world will never share the same language or culture. Also some of our chapters have members from other cultures and we need to be as inclusive as possible in servicing our members. Following are just some of the areas that will require further study when participating with persons from other cultures.

## **Personal Space**

Dependent upon the culture, personal space may be anywhere from a few inches to several feet. Different cultures have different comfort zones and communication tends to break down when someone becomes uncomfortable with the personal space afforded them. North Americans tend to prefer 8 inches to 3 feet; Mexican Americans accept up to 18 inches; Japanese Americans prefer a distance of 3 to 6 feet.

## **Silence**

Some cultures are uncomfortable with stretches of silence while with others, it might convey respect or be used to emphasize a point.

## **Gestures/Body Language**

Unspoken messages through gestures, the way we sit, or nod our heads may all be understood within our own culture, but be misinterpreted by people from other races, cultures or even age groups or genders. A gesture of the hand can signal “victory,” “okay,” or “come here” in the U.S., whereas in other cultures it can constitute an insult or an obscenity. Eye contact may be a sign of paying attention or a display of aggression or disrespect.

## **Greeting**

In North America, shaking hands is a polite way to greet people – an occasional pat on the back might also be acceptable. However, in some Asian countries, body contact is considered disrespectful and a nod or a bow or very gentle shaking of the hands may be considered appropriate.

## **Volume of Speech**

Speaking in a soft voice may mean shyness in some cultures or a matter of politeness in others. Speaking in a loud and brash manner might be hostile behavior in one culture or totally acceptable in another.

## **Time/Punctuality**

*(Note: The following statements are generalistic in nature and certainly should not be understood to be reflective of everyone within a particular culture.)* Punctuality may have little significance to Native Americans since they believe you can't be in two places at once and you should be wherever you are needed at that time, rather than paying attention to the clock. Mexican Americans tend to consider themselves punctual if they arrive up to 30 minutes after the scheduled time. North Americans tend to rush to and from everywhere and place a high priority on meeting deadlines. Some cultures handle only one thing at a time where other cultures handle many priorities at once.

# **New Member Welcome/Orientation**

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Because “inclusiveness” has been a theme of the APWA Diversity Committee over the past several years, they established the First Timers’ Meeting at the annual APWA Congress and Exposition for first time attendees. This concept can certainly be expanded to include welcoming new members into your chapter activities. Do your new members really know what your chapter and the national association offer them as benefits? Do they feel welcomed into the group or do they feel excluded and never return? Most of us tend to talk with people we know and not venture out to greet someone we have not met before (a malady formerly called “the old boys’ club”). Listed below are some suggestions for making sure everyone feels welcome at your chapter meetings.

- Recognize new members by name at each of your meetings; give them a nametag with a special sticker/ribbon that identifies them as a new member; ask them to provide their background at their first meeting.
- Ask regular members to introduce themselves to anyone who is wearing that sticker/ribbon.
- Ask board members/past presidents/retired members to call each new member to invite them to your next meeting; ask that individual to meet them at the door and introduce them to at least three people.
- Form a welcoming committee to greet everyone when they enter the room; if they see someone new; have them introduce the new member/guest to someone.
- Ask a member to follow-up with each new member who attends a meeting to let them know they appreciated their attendance and look forward to seeing them at the next meeting.
- If you have enough new members, hold an orientation session for them one hour prior to a regular meeting; advise them of the chapter activities and possibilities for leadership roles; make the orientation quick and snappy and hold an introductory exercise to get them acquainted with each other.

- Try to determine the leadership interests of new members and then work them into some committee or task force work; if you delay involving someone who is interested in volunteerism, you may lose them; get them involved immediately.
- Make sure you hand a new member your business card and mean it when you say “Give me a call if you have any questions about APWA;” ask for their business card; put some facts about that individual on the back of their card so you’ll remember a little about them the next time you see them.
- Contact your Membership Chair and ask for the names of five new members to call to welcome them to the association.
- Write an article for your chapter newsletter welcoming the new members by name and providing a bit of information about them.
- Make sure lines of communication between members (new and ongoing) and chapter leaders are always open; enable all levels to share ideas.

# Chapter Program Ideas

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If you are looking for ideas on how to integrate the facets of diversity into chapter programs, the following subjects/topics might help in your thought process. Educational programmers are finding administrative/management topics are of high value to many employers. Perhaps you and some colleagues could construct a panel discussion or you could invite a special speaker to a chapter program, such as an attorney or an HR administrator.

You might also wish to seek out speakers from diverse backgrounds for your various chapter workshops, seminars and other activities on technical topics. Speakers and presenters representing APWA's membership at large (different races, different genders, retired public works individuals, those with disabilities, younger members, etc.) should be actively approached and offered opportunities.

It is always good to have a discussion with all of your speakers prior to their presentations about the audience to whom they are presenting. You are encouraged to emphasize that the chapter is sensitive to diversity, and that humor and jokes or stories that refer to age, gender, race, ethnicity, lifestyle, religious preferences, etc. should not be included in a presentation to a professional association like APWA. For speakers that chapters have chosen for humor or "entertainment" value, you may wish to remind that the chapter does not want any attendee ridiculed or embarrassed by comments or participation in a presentation. Most speakers will appreciate knowing who is in their audience and level of tolerance.

Suggested diversity topics/ideas are:

- Working with, motivating, and leading several different generations in the workplace (see separate section on Multi/Cross-Generational Statistics and Information).
- Discussion of mini-mentoring programs within the chapter.
- Trends of the future workforce; how to be "effective" in the new environment.
- How to create an effective diversity program in your workplace.

- Crafting harassment policies in your workplace.
- Evaluating personality types and understanding how to work with each of them.
- Communication, communication, communication.
- How to manage diversity in your environment; how to create awareness of diversity in your workplace; and how to create a more respectful workplace.
- How to initiate and understand cultural awareness and influences; recognize how unconscious biases govern our decision-making processes; and understand how attitudes can foster feelings of mistrust among people.
- The American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) and how it affects cities/municipalities.
- How mentoring a diverse population benefits the whole.
- How providing for the inclusion of various backgrounds, skills, and experiences develop solutions and benefits for your place of employment.
- Recruitment, interviewing, and retention approaches

# Newsletter Articles/Quotes

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Your chapter newsletter editor is most likely looking for articles and filler material or sidebars each month. This could be your opportunity to subtly promote diversity in each issue of your newsletter. For instance, suggest a filler box labeled “Diversity Quotes” or “Diversity Corner” for each issue. Some of the following ideas may inspire more creative ideas in your mind.

- Interview two or three members about their experience with diversity in the workplace.
- Ask different members to write a case study on how their workplace emphasizes the value of diversity; create a series of articles.
- Ask your editor to use quotes as filler material in your monthly newsletter:
  - “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” *(Eleanor Roosevelt)*
  - “I always wondered why somebody didn’t do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody.” *(Lily Tomlin)*
  - “Probably the closest to perfection a person ever comes is when he or she fills out a job application form.” *(Stanley J. Randall)*
  - “The unfortunate thing about this world is that good habits are so much easier to give up than bad ones.” *(Somerset Maugham)*
  - “Good judgment comes from experience and experience comes from bad judgment.” *(Barry LePatner)*
  - “When what we are is what we want to be, that’s happiness.” *(Malcolm Forbes)*
  - “A loud voice cannot compete with a clear voice, even if it’s a whisper.” *(Barry Neil Kaufman)*
  - “If you think you’re too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room.” *(Anita Koddick)*

- “Education is when you read the fine print. Experience is what you get if you don’t.” (*Pete Seeger*)
- “What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity.” (*Joseph Addison*)
- “Opportunities are often things you haven’t noticed the first time around.” (*Catherine Deneuve*)
- “Some people march to a different drummer – and some people polka.” (*Los Angeles Times Syndicate*)
- “He who knows others is clever; he who knows himself is enlightened.” (*Lao-Tzu*)
- “Up to a point a man's life is shaped by environment, heredity, and movements and changes in the world about him. Then there comes a time when it lies within his grasp to shape the clay of his life into the sort of thing he wishes to be. Only the weak blame parents, their race, their times, lack of good fortune, or the quirks of fate. Everyone has it within his power to say, ‘This I am today; that I will be tomorrow.’” (*Louis L'Amour*)
- “It is never too late to be what you might have been.” (*George Elliott*)
- “How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because some day in life you will have been all these.” (*George Washington Carver*)
- “There are those that look at things the way they are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were, and ask why not.” (*Robert F. Kennedy*)
- “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” (*Oliver Wendell Holmes*)
- “Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.” (*Carl Jung*)
- “No matter how far you have gone on the wrong road, turn back.” (*Turkish proverb*)

- “Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home. So close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual persons; the neighborhood they live in; the school or college they attend; the factory, farm, or office where they work. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.” *(Eleanor Roosevelt)*

# Exercises

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*The following exercises are designed to stimulate thought and discussion about the subject of diversity within your APWA Chapter or your employment setting. However, since issues related to diversity (in all its forms) are sometimes sensitive, it is recommended that you seek the assistance of a trained facilitator when conducting some of these exercises. This will help to ensure that individual experiences, opinions, and deep-seated beliefs are managed in a respectful and otherwise appropriate manner, which promotes healthy discussion and understanding of all points of view.*

## **What is Diversity?**

Diversity is the many types of differences we recognize in ourselves and in others. It means “differences in people.” There is little value in placing together a group of people who all have the same feelings, thought processes and looks. We can find diversity even in a group of 30 year old, native-born, white males of the same religion, size, and coloring. No two people are identical. Obvious differences could include:

- Age
- Gender
- Culture
- Disabilities
- Physical Size (height, weight)
- Physical Attributes
- Marital Status

Not so obvious or invisible differences might include:

- Management vs. Non-Management
- Main Office vs. Field Workers
- Thinking style/assertiveness level
- Habits/likes and dislikes/personality style
- Knowledge
- Goals and ambitions
- Political views
- Values
- Lifestyle/sexual orientation
- Education
- Religion

Discuss in a group what other areas of diversity might be obvious and not so obvious and how these can impact our ability to work together.

## **Benefits of Diversity**

Some benefits of diversity in the workplace and other environments include:

- New learning opportunities
- Improvement of the work product
- Increased innovation
- Additional creativity
- Different approaches to solving problems

Discuss how/why diversity impacts the work we produce.

## **Preventing Discrimination**

In order to prevent or conquer discrimination, the following actions might apply:

- Implement programs supporting diversity
- Allow and respect differences
- Recognize needs of all people
- Appreciate everyone's contributions
- Confront your prejudice
- Trust and be sensitive toward others

Ask participants for other ideas on how they can prevent discrimination in the workplace. Discuss why it is important to identify acts of discrimination and to work toward eliminating them.

## **Confront your Biases**

Prejudice is a preconceived feeling or bias. We all have biases that we need to recognize.

- Define biases
- List some common biases

Working in small groups, determine means which can be implemented at work to recognize and eliminate biases.

## **Coat of Arms Exercise**

- Divide the group by decade of birth (or by gender, work locations, etc).
- Hand out flip chart sheets and markers to each group.
- Ask each group to design a shield or coat of arms that reflects what is important to the group. You can precede this exercise

with a short discussion on what goes on a shield and what the importance of each item is.

- Allow 15-20 minutes.
- Have groups display and explain symbols/meanings they put on coat of arms.
- In closing, focus on similarities, differences and how these impact working relationships.

## **Team Diversity Exercise**

- Prepare flip charts, one for each subgroup with heading “What Really Bugs Me.”
- Hand out flip chart sheets and markers to each group, with instructions that groups are to list items that bug them when working in a team. Emphasize that this is NOT a GRIPE session, but an opportunity to write down issues which teams need to address in order to function more smoothly.
- Allow 15-20 minutes for groups to work.
- At this point, you can either
  - Have each group present their list to the whole.
  - Let each group keep their list to work on.
- Assign group/team to come back to next session with ideas about how to eliminate “Bugs.” Challenge each team to initiate one of these ideas and to report back successes (or issues which blocked success).

## **Identification Icebreaker**

You will need to read the following list of items as quickly as you can, leaving participants only enough time to make quick decisions, not time to ponder. Instructions to the group: “As I read out the items in the following list, please raise your right hand if you agree with the item; raise your left hand if you disagree with the item. There is no right or wrong answer, only your opinion.”

- I have a fear of snakes.
- I am allergic to cats.
- I do not like broccoli.
- I am a football fanatic (or basketball or baseball, depending on the season; if you have a local team, use that name).
- Others consider me a workaholic.
- I am a political conservative.
- I am balding.
- I can remember when FDR was president.
- I know who was president after FDR.
- When nervous, I tend to stutter or forget my answer.

- My favorite food is chocolate.
- I am over 35 years old.
- I work better under stress.
- I have attended religious services for a faith other than my own.
- I still live in the house in which I grew up.
- I believe that others do not understand my culture.
- My best friend is just like me.
- I can speak a language in addition to English.
- On my last vacation, I went outside the United States.
- I could be more active in APWA.
- Immigration will continue to make America stronger.
- I work with someone of a different culture.
- I volunteer to demonstrate the Hokey Pokey right now. (At this point, note if there are any right hands up and ask those volunteers to step forward to demonstrate the Hokey Pokey).

To conclude the exercise, ask participants if they had trouble responding to any of the statements, or if any of the statements made them uncomfortable in responding. Remind them that each of these questions represent everyday issues of diversity – even the ability to identify FDR or Harry S. Truman, or to dance the Hokey Pokey. Diversity comes in many aspects and we all need to increase our awareness.

## **Let's Find out Worksheet**

Assign partners within the group. Hand out a list of questions and allocate 10 minutes for each to find out answers from partners.

Questions for Partner A to ask Partner B:

- Favorite hobby
- Type of car partner drives
- Type of pet partner has (or had as child if not current owner)
- Does partner have significant other?
- General part of country/world where partner spent last vacation
- What partner did last weekend
- Who is partner's favorite author
- Gender of partner's significant other
- Exact location of last vacation
- Exact neighborhood where partner lives
- Last book by favorite author which partner read

However, partner B is NOT to reveal:

- Street address or exact neighborhood where she/he lives
- Whether or not she/he has a significant other or gender of other
- Specifically what she/he did over the weekend
- His/her favorite author
- Favorite “hang-out” spot (grill, bar, restaurant, club)
- Exact site of last vacation

In order to accomplish this, partner B needs to be vague, indirect, change the subject, focus on the other partner and monopolize the conversation, focus on work-related topics only, etc. Lying is permitted, but only if it's the LAST RESORT!!!)

To process, discuss issues of communication, clarity, stress or frustration, and interpretation. How can these same types of communication problems impact our ability to work together? Brainstorm together as a group.

## **Getting Acquainted Exercise**

This activity takes about 5-10 minutes and is accomplished within the established groups. Place copies of questionnaires on each table (one for each participant). Tell participants that this exercise is to get them acquainted. Ask participants how getting acquainted can be positive. Tell participants to look at the questionnaire on the table. The first person answers #1, followed by others in the group. Then the entire group moves to #2, etc. At the conclusion of the time, ask participants what they got out of the exercise. Some answers might be: got to know others on a more personal level; got to exchange ideas, points of view, feelings and attitudes about topics of diversity.

Getting acquainted handout:

1. My name is...
2. Two things I would like for you to know about me are...
3. One word that best describes me is...
4. The reason I am here is...
5. Right now I am feeling...
6. When I think of diversity, I think of...
7. To me, differences mean...
8. Sameness means...
9. I want this association/organization to be the kind of association/organization that...
10. I usually react to conflict with a person of another race by...

11. When a colleague makes a racist comment, I...
12. As a person, I am best at...
13. My vision of diversity in APWA is...
14. In order to achieve this vision, I will need to...

## **Who am I? Exercise**

This activity takes about 5-10 minutes and is accomplished within the established groups. Place copies of questionnaire on each table (one for each participant). Tell participants that this exercise is to get them acquainted. Ask participants how getting acquainted can be positive. Ask participants to respond to the questionnaire on their table. The first person is to answer #1, followed by others in the group. Then the first person answers #2, followed by others, etc. At the conclusion of the exercise, ask if the participants learned something about themselves or another in the group. To process, remind participants that we are all different because of our heritage and the environment in which we grew up, and that those differences bring interest and creativity into the workplace.

Who am I handout:

1. Identify the ethnic or racial identities of the following people in your family tree: your mother, father, and grandparents (if known).
2. How strong is, or was, this identity for each?
3. What was the ethnic/racial identity of the neighborhood in which you grew up?
4. How much time/exposure/contact do you have with those of another ethnicity/race?
5. What attitudes/behaviors do you find most difficult to discard when interacting with someone of a different ethnicity/race?
6. Give an example of how your perceptions/family history has impacted a professional relationship.

# Multi/Cross-Generational Statistics and Information

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Generations within the APWA membership include the Traditional/Eisenhower/Silent/Veterans/GI Generation (before 1945); the Baby Boomers (from 1945-1964)\*, and the Generation Xers/Baby Busters (from 1965-1976). While APWA membership will rarely consist of those in their early 20s or late teen years at this given point in time, there are some of the Millennium Generation/Echo Boom/Generation Y/ Nexters (from 1977-1994) coming up in the public works workforce. Each generation carries specific characteristics that create diversity in our association and in the workforce. That diversity can be to the association's/employer's benefit or their demise – it's all in understanding how those differences can contribute to create success and unity.

We first must understand what the different generations value, what motivates them, and what rewards they seek before we can fully determine how to service them in our association and how to create teamwork in the workforce. The following statements are generalistic in nature; certainly not all people within a particular generation fit the category perfectly.

*\*Note: Some individuals stress that the differences of the last half of the Baby Boomers and the Leading Edge Boomers are so vast that the creation of a separate generation name (Generation Jonesers) for the period of time 1954 - 1964 is advisable.*

## **Traditional Generation**

The Traditional Generation experienced great loss through the depression and World War II when their basic needs were not met. They determined they could satisfy those basic needs by pulling together through government and big business in creating affordable housing and jobs. Loyalty became very important to them. This generation is frugal, patriotic, reactively health conscious, and transitioning. They appreciate being known for their wealth of knowledge and their valued experiences. They entered a white male dominated workforce and some may struggle with a diverse workforce. They like to be rewarded with a personal touch, such as something to hang on their wall. Their outlook on life is practical; their work ethic, dedicated; their view of authority, respectful; they handle leadership through a hierarchy; their relationships are often a personal sacrifice; and a turnoff for them is vulgarity.

## **Baby Boomers**

Baby Boomers were born during a prosperous time. They pushed and challenged the status quo and saw themselves as a change agent. They want to make a difference in whatever they do and they appreciate public recognition. Boomers want to be entertained and they crave new experiences. They are adventurous, proactively health conscious, team players, too young to be old, and family-oriented. However, they see their job/career as a large part of their life and are sometimes labeled as workaholics. They protested in their youth for recognition of diversity. They drove the self-help phenomena. They are the largest generation (77 million) of the 20th century and will be in the workforce for a long time. They learned to use the computer at work. Boomers outlook on life is optimistic; their work ethic, driven; their view of authority, love/hate; they handle leadership by consensus; their relationships offer personal gratification; and a turnoff to them is political incorrectness.

## **Generation X**

Generation X is the smallest generation (44 million). They grew up in a decade of disillusionment and stagflation in the 70's; authority figures seemed to be frail and incompetent. They were left alone in their environment (latch key kids) and entered into more solo sports where they didn't rely on a team. They saw their parents (the Baby Boomers) downsized in their employment setting and 50% of the generation comes from divorced parents. They are less optimistic about their future than are Baby Boomers. They like to be left alone to do a job with very little supervision and like to be recognized for their merit and knowledge rather than longevity. Xers are diverse, entrepreneurial, independent, technologically focused, and computer literate. They learned to use the computer in college. Training is very important to them, as they want to learn and develop new skills. They do not see their job as the most important part of their life. They know things will change and they see change as an opportunity. Xers outlook on life is skeptical; their work ethic, balanced; their view of authority is unimpressed; they see leadership as competence; they are reluctant to commit to relationships; and a turnoff for them is a cliché, hype.

## **Millennium Generation**

The Millennium Generation was born when having children was considered popular and were born to older parents (Baby Boomers). This generation may become larger than the Baby Boomer generation. There is an intense parent focus with this generation (Soccer

Mom/Stay-at-Home Dad) and they live a much more structured life. They do not have to work; if they do, it is often for the social atmosphere or for extras they want to purchase. They are intimidated by people who present them with a challenge and they need to be trained on how to deal with difficult people. This generation is wary, electronically literate, seeks affirmation, and places a high value on integrity. They have great technical skills (having learned the computer at a young age at home and in school) but lack face-to-face skills. They thrive on structure and supervision. They respect the Traditional Generation the most and enjoy being teamed with them. This generation's outlook on life is hopeful; their work ethic, determined; they have a polite view of authority; they see leadership as pulling together; their relationships are inclusive; and a turnoff to them is promiscuity.

### **Approaches to Servicing the Generations in and Through the Association**

Each of the generations may be a component of any chapter meeting or volunteer group. Servicing them is a matter of incorporating considerations of the self-concept of all of the groups. We all like to see positive aspects of ourselves reflected when we participate in a larger group. Studies show that the majority of workers today want more of an emphasis on career development and job development than on a career ladder. They are trying to determine how they can control their own destiny – not depend upon their employer for that destiny. So the following information may be helpful as you work with the various generations through your chapter meetings and their volunteer work.

#### ***Traditional Generation***

- Utilize their expertise through committee work and advisory councils; this generation still wants to remain active
- Recognize their knowledge by asking them to mentor younger members, particularly the Generation, Xers as they feed on information
- Communicate the traditional values of the profession and the association to them/let this generation communicate these values to the membership through newsletter articles (could ask a member from this generation to team with an Xer member to prepare an article on the heritage of the association/profession – where it has come from, how it has changed and where it is headed)
- Link their knowledge to the future
- Ask them to provide a chapter/association orientation to new members

- You may need to still supply hard copies of newsletters, reports, etc. for them
- For visuals, you may need to use 14-point type and reserve some space at the front of the room to seat those with very weak eyesight; yellows, oranges, and reds look snazzier than standard blacks and blues, but they're also harder to see; have enough amplification in the audio system
- Have space on your registration forms for attendees to request special assistance if they have difficulty seeing, hearing or getting around
- Recognize their efforts through a picture with the chapter president or a plaque – something tangible
- At social events, make sure you have some of the standard foods; experimentation with ethnic and extremely low fat foods (vegetables only) does not set well with this generation
- Expect them to bring their spouse to social events

### ***Baby Boomers***

- Because of their quest for variety, learning and excitement, provide innovative and creative programs
- Reach out to their altruistic spirit through offering opportunities for volunteerism
- Recognize their efforts through public recognition in the chapter newsletter, at chapter programs
- Provide them with a lot of social occasions as they like to mingle and make small talk
- E-mail works for many of the Boomers, but some still prefer hard copies
- Make sure things are as easy as possible for this stressed out generation, such as streamlining the registration lines, making sure signing up for workshops and activities is a very easy process
- Realize that this is the largest segment of the membership of the association, but Generations X and Y will need to be cultivated/nurtured or the association will die off with the passing of the Baby Boomers
- At social events, use ethnic and exotic foods (however, make them healthy); this generation has been exposed to more tastes and experiences than the Traditional Generation and they crave variety and excitement
- Most Boomers travel in twos, so you may expect to see a spouse/partner at social events

## ***Generation X***

- Create a special learning environment and let them take it over through their entrepreneurial spirit
- Ask them to present a program on technological proficiency
- Goals are very important to them: ask them what their goals are and try to fulfill those training goals through various chapter programs
- Ask them to participate in diversity related programs as they are a culturally diverse generation and they expect and want diversity
- Talk with them how volunteering can increase their leadership potential, provide them with a network of experts at their fingertips, and further their career at a faster pace (what it can do for them)
- Provide them with opportunities to volunteer for short-term task force work rather than long-term committee work
- Try to alternate volunteer meetings between work time and personal time and explain to them exactly how much time you need from them; a time commitment practically requires a legal contract
- Introduce them to other members as they did not develop the same social skills as their parents had emphasized to them from their parents; instead the Xers were told to be authentic, work hard, and study hard
- Make sure your chapter web page is updated and as state of the art as you can get it; offer them listserves through their association so they can communicate with other professionals in their field
- E-mail them everything; they are averse to direct mail (except for postcards) and they like to communicate via e-mail rather than by phone
- Make sure APWA makes a difference in their career competitiveness and they will renew their memberships endlessly; once sold they stay sold
- At social events, make sure you have designer water and fresh vegetables; keep the cost low as Generation Xers are careful consumers and become wary when an association makes a lavish presentation of food; they like to know how their association dollars are spent
- Don't expect them to attend social events with a date/spouse

# Religious Days of Major Religions

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The following Christian, Jewish and Islamic religious days are provided for your information and use when planning chapter meetings, food events, or other special events. It is important that the major holidays of all religions be taken into consideration in planning. All Islamic and Jewish holidays begin at sundown on the evening before. Islamic calendars are based on estimates of the visibility of the lunar crescent, and the actual month may start a day earlier or later than predicted in a printed calendar. *We apologize in advance if we have missed any major holidays – please contact staff to advise of any necessary changes for the next production of this Resource Guide.*

Eid al Adha	03/06/01	Islamic
Muharram (New Year)	03/26/01	Islamic
Passover	04/08/01	Jewish
Easter Day	04/15/01	Christian
Shavuot	05/28/01	Jewish
Prophet Mohammed's Birthday	06/04/01	Islamic
Erev Rosh Hashanah	09/17/01	Jewish
Rosh Hashanah	09/18/01	Jewish
Erev Yom Kippur	09/26/01	Jewish
Yom Kippur	09/27/01	Jewish
Erev Sukkot	10/01/01	Jewish
Sukkot	10/02/01	Jewish
Sh'mini Atzeret	10/09/01	Jewish
Hanukkah	12/10/01	Jewish
Christmas Day	12/25/01	Christian

# Triumphs

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Working effectively with diversity will create a means for each of us to:

- Capitalize on each other's strengths
- Compensate for each other's weaknesses
- Develop patience and tolerance
- Become appropriately assertive, say what we mean, and ask for what we want
- Handle conflict and feedback appropriately
- Become a role model for others related to issues of human dignity and justice
- Increase different perspectives, ideas and solutions
- Come to terms with our attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about others
- Gain comfort with differentness
- Learn how others want us to treat them
- Realize we are all both originators and victims of discrimination and stereotypes at times
- Create a welcoming environment for all our members
- Understand and respect individual differences
- Increase APWA's effectiveness and productivity

# Additional Resources

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In addition to the information supplied in this handbook, the Diversity Committee offers this list of possible resources for speakers, materials or exercises about diversity:

- College, university or trade school minorities or foreign student office
- Local cultural or heritage association or clubs (German-American Club, Italian-American Association)
- Local branches of foreign embassies or embassy offices
- Religious organizations (churches, synagogues, temples)
- City/county government industry recruitment offices or labor offices
- High school or college student exchange programs
- Stores or restaurants run by those of other cultures
- Society for Human Resource Management books at <http://shrmstore.shrm.org/shrm/> (in upper right hand corner click on down arrow where it states “New Books” and then click on “Diversity”)
- The National Association for Diversity Management at <http://www.nadm.org> (at left side, click Resources, then click on Diversity Links and on Publications)
- American Institute for Managing Diversity at <http://www.aimd.org> (on right, click on Diversity Information Resources Center and on Diversity Store)
- National Multicultural Institute at <http://www.nmci.org> (click on NMCI Publications Catalog)
- DiversityInc.com at <http://www.diversityinc.com/index.cfm>
- National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, *Retention by Design: Achieving Excellence in Minority Engineering Education*, NACME, New York, 1991 (describes the pipeline for minorities in engineering and the problems involved in producing minority graduates)
- National Society of Professional Engineers, *The Glass Ceiling and Women in Engineering*, Washington, D.C. (study of how cultural and organizational barriers prevent women from advancing in the engineering field)

# The Cold Within

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*Six humans trapped by happenstance  
In black and bitter cold  
Each one possessed a stick of wood,  
Or so the story's told.*

*Their dying fire in need of logs,  
The first woman held hers back  
For on the faces around the fire  
She noticed one was black.*

*The next man looking cross the way  
Saw not one of his church,  
And couldn't bring himself to give  
The first his stick of birch.*

*The third one sat in tattered clothes  
He gave his coat a hitch,  
Why should his log be put to use  
To warm the idle rich?*

*The rich man just sat back and thought  
Of the wealth he had in store,  
And how to keep what he had earned  
From the lazy, shiftless poor.*

*The black man's face bespoke revenge  
As the first passed from his sight,  
For all he saw in his stick of wood  
Was a chance to spite the white.*

*And the last man of this forlorn group  
Did naught except for gain,  
Giving only to those who gave  
Was how he played the game.*

*The logs held tight in death's still hands  
Was proof of human sin.  
They didn't die from the cold without  
They died from the cold within.*

*-Anonymous*

# The Cracked Water Pot

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*A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole, which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.*

*For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made.*

*But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.*

*After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."*

*Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"*

*"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.*

*The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."*

*Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.*

*The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."*

*Moral: Each of us has our own unique flaws. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are, and look for the good in them. There is a lot of good out there. There is a lot of good in us! Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.*

*Remember to appreciate all the different people in your life!*

*-Anonymous*

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## *Notes*

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