

Press Release

The Five O'Clock Club

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Workplace Diversity: A Key to Success

NEW YORK - Hiring managers across the U.S. are bracing themselves for one of the most turbulent rides in recent history. Most H.R. professionals have heard the Bureau of Labor Statistics predictions: the job market will soon expand beyond the resources our society can provide. There will be a 10.3 million job-surplus by 2010.

The labor shortage is great news for people who feel they may be victims of age, gender, or racial discrimination. In the coming job market, hiring managers cannot afford to be exclusive. Diversity will be a necessity.

Richard Bayer, Chief Operating Officer of The Five O'Clock Club, the nation's premier career-coaching and outplacement firm says the shortage will be a blessing for office environments. "It's a great opportunity for organizations to reexamine the makeup of their workforces. Companies are stronger when they employ people from different backgrounds, genders, personalities, ethnicities and ages. Generally speaking, companies market products and services to all types of people and it's best to have employees who understand diverse markets. What's more, the most effective teams are a balance of personalities, skills, and backgrounds. Having the melting-pot in your office is a strength."

"Historically, hiring managers have tended to hire people who make them feel comfortable, people who are just like they are," noted Bayer. What are the consequences? Why not build an entire office of extroverts or Harvard MBA's? "Having no mix produces too much of one kind of

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thinking,” says Bayer. “Companies need balance. Enron’s team of gunslingers could have used a couple of worry-warts. The dot.coms could have used some older folks to bring wisdom and balances. Harvard MBA’s could be balanced by the pragmatism of people who attended Podunk U.”

How can hiring managers avoid discrimination in hiring? The Five O’Clock Club suggests the following tips:

1. **Intend to hire a diverse mix—** Before you start putting together a new team, enter the process with the diverse mindset. Intentionally bring together people from very different backgrounds. Hire the best candidates, but try to make your organization reflect the diversity of the markets you compete in.
2. **Look for people who are ethical, hard-working, and have the appropriate skill level—** as opposed to people who share your beliefs and background. Someone from your Alma Matter might not necessarily round out your team. Evaluate each candidate on a purely objective level, or at least try your best. Some hiring managers even create exercises to evaluate their own predispositions and attitudes.
3. **Establish a hiring panel—** A democratic hiring process can increase the chances that equal consideration is given to all candidates. Take the ‘power to hire’ away from a single manager who may gravitate only to a certain type. A diverse staff of hiring managers can insure that your entire company is diverse.
4. **Forget the ‘war for talent’ fad—** Drop out of the bidding wars for “stars only.” Work harder to increase the morale, loyalty, and productivity of your existing staff. A diverse staff can be excellent for morale, and interesting as well. No employee will enter the office feeling outnumbered or bullied. Create office incentives to encourage diversity, recognize and celebrate ethnic and religious holidays, and create a diversity committee.

The Five O’Clock Club is the nation’s premier career counseling network. It is the only career program in which members meet with professional counselors and peers on a regular weekly basis in a friendly, club-type format. The Club offers small group career counseling across the U.S. and Canada.

Richard Bayer, Ph.D., and economist, ethicist and author on labor economics, is the Chief Operating Officer of The Five O’Clock Club. He is a frequent guest on local and national media including the TODAY SHOW, CNN and others. He and the Club have also been featured in *The Economist*, *Success* magazine, *FORTUNE* magazine and other publications. Dr. Bayer is co-

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chair of The Employment Roundtable, and a member of the Board of Workforce America (The Five O'Clock Club's not-for-profit arm, which helps adults in Harlem).