

Carlton Lamar Robinson is a partner of Human Capital Management who believes that diversity matters because it is how others perceive us, who they think we are, that has a great deal to do with how they orient us and what they teach others about us. If ones perception is misguided relative to diversity in the workplace they have both compromised and conquered the individual truths that represent the potential benefits of diversity itself. Dr. Robinson has dedicated eight years of research and experience to this document in an effort to expose some of the truths about diversity management.

Welcome to the world of Diversity Management Pantheons, where in the coming years we will change the course of history regarding diversity in the workplace. At issue is whether we trust organizations, executives, and individuals to make fair decisions irrespective of social categories and absent governmental intervention. And if/when we trust them, we must then absorb the mistrust these entities convey to us in regards to sharing diversity-related information that may advance the meanings of diversity in the workplace. Where our truths are conquered by a consultant, speaker, and/or workshop, we risk the preservation of former thoughts and practices. To devalue ones individual truth is to mismanage diversity altogether.

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Diversity Management Pantheons: A Regime of Truths • Dr. C. Lamar Robinson

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by
Dr. C. Lamar Robinson

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Prologue	7
Preface	9
Introduction	11
Diversity Matters.....	11
Diversity Management Pantheons: The “regimes of truth”	13
The diversity challenge to meritocracy	16
The need to implode diversity management	17
The beginning of workplace diversity	18
Diversity as a catalyst of change	19
Plan of the book.....	21
Discovery.....	23
Worldview and experiences of diversity	24
Application	43
The Five Pillars of Diversity Management Pantheons.....	44
Pillar One: Diversity Arbitrage	44
Pillar Two: At-Will Employment Doctrine.....	46
Pillar Three: Diversity Collage	47
Pillar Four: Poor metrics	51
Pillar Five: Marketed practices of diversity.....	54
Descriptions of Diversity Management Pantheons.....	57
Integration.....	61
Workplace Diversity Key Terms.....	61
Sample Diversity Plan Elements.....	63
4 Key Inhibitors Diversity Implementation.....	64
Backlash.....	65

Dr. C. Lamar Robinson

Teaching to distinguish diversities	69
Role of higher education.....	73
Workforce diversity training.....	74
Distinguishing diversities.....	74
Communicating diversity	76
Managerial Implications	78
Discussion	80
The Requisition	85
If you do nothing	86
How to frame diversity in the workplace	87
The Books ROI.....	89
Appendix A Tip Sheet for the Diversity Professional	91
Appendix B Tips for rebuilding workforce diversity plans	92
Appendix C Tips for assessing the needs assessments	93
Appendix D: Metaphysics of Workforce Diversity	96
References	101

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Prologue

Welcome to the world of Diversity Management Pantheons, where in the coming years we will change the course of history regarding diversity in the workplace. At issue is whether we trust organizations, executives, and individuals to make fair decisions irrespective of social categories and absent governmental intervention. And if/when we trust them, we must then absorb the mistrust these entities convey to us in regards to sharing diversity-related information that may advance the meanings of diversity in the workplace. Where our truths are conquered by a consultant, speaker, and/or workshop, we risk the preservation of former thoughts and practices. To devalue ones individual truth is to mismanage diversity altogether.

Where those individual truths are routinely compromised by organizations that identify themselves as employers of choice, there can be no advancement, no trust, no understanding, and ultimately no positive change relative to diversity in the workplace. Our truths permeate every stratification of employment, every industry classification, and every level of education. Rather than hide our truths through illusionary images of inclusion, our truths deserve a place in the pantheons of every organization. Possible?

Preface

I began researching workplace diversity in 2001. My interest was stimulated initially by learning how to become a better leader and manager. This research has allowed for both emic and etic perspectives regarding a wide range of workplaces. The most emergent theme is that the environment of a diverse workforce can be managed many ways depending largely on the size of the organization and the skill of the team leaders. Surprisingly, I found that “diversity” is an unmanageable item in *business terms* and more likely to be manipulated or implied in the workplace, if recognized at all.

Multiple academic disciplines of literature highlight “diversity” as a component of leadership while others identify it as a source of conflict. True to form it is a component of leadership only where it is effectively managed, at the team level. Beyond the team level “diversity” is a superficial descriptor for too many unmanageable outputs; hence, the difficulty in creating acceptable business cases relative to diversity. As a result, the term “diversity management” is both an idiom and a misnomer that should be imploded.

Through many training opportunities, I have shared private conversations with both minority and majority workers who have been negatively impacted by “diversity management practices”; they appear to outweigh those who can “pinpoint” positive experiences. The term now means nothing to most workers other than corporate charades, window dressing, and managed equity. Those outputs forced me to investigate, on a rather broad level, whether those perceptions were widespread or isolated. During multiple investigations I found that “diversity management” became whatever an organization wanted it to be. The fallout is an ever-growing diverse workforce who yearns to be valued but devalues the changelings of diversity management.

The purpose of this document is to enlarge individual, business, and scholarly perspectives of workplace diversity by examining diversity management from a different perspective than what has been previously communicated. As a result, readers will “actively” create and learn a new vision of diversity in the workplace. This document will illuminate discovery within diversity management; demonstrate integration & application of traditional diversity management practices; teach/educate readers on the distinction between diversity-related training and diversity-related education.

Great debate is emerging, again, about whether diversity-related policies are still needed. A better debate is how to identify organizations and practices that promote “free equity” in the workplace where there are no predispositions of what the workforce “should” look like. This document should afford each reader an opportunity to better recognize organizations that promote “free equity” or the Diversity Management Pantheons that promote managed equity.

A test to the contents of this document is the workforce itself. If you believe that Diversity Management Pantheons do not exist give this book to a co-worker/ subordinate and await their response. The goal is to move beyond Diversity Management into a new era of Free Equity in the workplace; some organizations are closer than others.

Lastly, I owe a great deal of gratitude to the recent organizations I have worked with that helped me to distinguish efforts in managing workforce diversity.

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Diversity Management Pantheons: A Regime of Truths

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