

Box 1.4 (Continued)

Consumers and corporate peers alike have recognized the company's efforts. La Siembra received the 2002 Socially Responsible Business Award at the 18th Annual Natural Products Expo held in Washington, DC (Ontario Co-operative Association, 2003).

There is accumulating research evidence that such corporate practices constitute good business. The benefits include (a) cost savings due to lower turnover of employees, less absenteeism, and improved productivity; (b) winning the competition for talent by being more attractive to women and members of minority groups; (c) driving business growth by leveraging the many facets of diversity, such as marketing more effectively to minority communities or to senior citizens; (d) improved corporate image with a positive impact on the company's stock standing; and (e) reaping the benefits of an increasingly global marketplace by employing workers from different nationalities in, or outside, their native countries.

Conceptual Framework and Organization of the Book

For too long the question posed by management in organizations has been (and continues to be) “*Is diversity good for business?*” The conceptual model presented in this book suggests reframing the question to “*How can diversity work for organizations?*” Successful and seamless inclusion is the desired outcome of good diversity management. This, however, is not an undertaking for companies and employers alone. It needs to be reinforced and permeated through national and international laws and policies as well as via cultural tolerance in educational content and messages that the media convey concerning intergroup behavior. This broad perspective guides the conceptual framework for the book (see Figure 1.1).

The book is divided into three parts. Part I presents the macro, or large-systems perspective on diversity: global demographic trends, legislation, and public policies in different countries. Part II presents the micro/*mezzo*—or smaller systems—perspective on diversity: how diversity is defined in different countries, theories explaining diversity, interpersonal and cultural aspects, and communication in the workplace. Finally, Part III presents solutions or practical intervention approaches: diversity paradigms, the inclusive workplace model, and case studies demonstrating how corporations in different parts of the world can apply the model.

Macro Dimensions	Micro/Mezzo Dimensions	Practice Applications
Demographics trends	Individual and group aspects of diversity	Diversity management paradigms
Legislation	Theoretical explanations of intergroup relations	The inclusive workplace model
Public policy	Culture and communication	Practice applications for the model
Global economy	Interpersonal cross-cultural relations in the workplace	Cases for discussion

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework and Organization of the Book

This book utilizes an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from different bodies of knowledge to provide the demographic, legislative, and theoretical background for understanding diversity from an international perspective. Applying the above principles, the book also offers practical guidelines that can help managers create an organizational culture that welcomes and utilizes the diversity of their workforce and ultimately creates the inclusive workplace.

Summary and Conclusion

The focus on diversity in global business today is quite different from civil rights legislation and from affirmative action programs. It is no longer only a matter of righting past wrongs or of trying to achieve equality of opportunity by addressing underrepresentation of specific groups. Diversity efforts are focused on managing and engaging the company's heterogeneous workforce in ways that give it a competitive advantage. The progressive expansion of diversity compliance may be viewed as a continuum: equal employment opportunity (EEO) legislation means that it is against the law to discriminate; affirmative action programs mean that companies need to take positive steps to ensure equal employment and promotion opportunities; and diversity programs are proactive and aim to achieve a diverse and heterogeneous workforce that values employee differences—and contributes to the local as well as global community.

It is important to state that diversity programs without the foundation of strong legislation and sound proactive public policy may be fleeting. Left to the