



What Does Dale Carnegie have to Say about Diversity in the Modern Workplace?

by Mark Marone | November 5, 2020

- Building diversity in the workplace can benefit businesses and society, yet true diversity can only be achieved through the creation of an authentically inclusive environment
- Inclusivity requires that we grow our self-confidence, take a genuine interest in others, become aware of our differences, and learn the cultural competencies necessary to sustain outward change
- The Dale Carnegie principles hold timeless wisdom and universal appeal because they teach us the mindset and skills that lead to increased friendliness, cooperation, and respect within a diverse workforce

Dale Carnegie may not have lived to see 2020, but his principles apply to our world today more than ever before. The fight for racial justice in America has put a renewed focus on inclusivity and diversity, particularly in the workplace. Creating a space where diverse people thrive together is at the core of Dale Carnegie's teachings.

In *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie explains that there is "one indispensable requirement, one essential infinitely more important than any rule or



Building a diverse team within a company—be it diversity of age, gender, race, orientation, abilities, religion, educational background, or any number of other factors—is critical for success.

In a [study on workplace diversity](#), McKinsey & Company discovered that “companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians.” The Harvard Business Review [cites research](#) showing how diverse teams rely more on facts and apply more innovation to solutions, making them smarter, more efficient, and more accurate than non-diverse teams.

But diversity isn't just about the bottom line. A workplace that celebrates diversity is one where team members are acknowledged, where each individual's ideas are heard, and where a culture of respect and open communication is upheld. In [a study](#) published in *Psychology Today*, workers saw noticeable improvements in eight aspects of their overall wellbeing—including happiness, physical health, and feelings of purpose—as they actively took part in Diversity & Inclusion training. But diversity can only provide these benefits when it is sustained through the method of inclusivity.

Inclusion as a Method

Simply assembling a diverse team does not mean diversity magically exists. Diversity cannot be forced or manufactured; it must be learned and practiced until it permeates our very culture. This is not a once-and-done solution, nor can it be achieved by the efforts of only a few. Inclusivity exists only so long as every member of the team works toward it daily.

The techniques that lead to inclusivity seem simple, yet they produce revolutionary results, both in the individuals themselves and in the companies they bring these skills into. According to another [McKinsey & Company study](#), nearly three-fourths of workers who reported feeling included at work also reported that they felt fully engaged within their company. This translates to better productivity and higher employee retention.

Dale Carnegie's principles guide us through the necessary changes in our attitudes and behaviors. It starts with a combination of increased self-confidence and genuine interest in others. This opens us to learning the cultural skills necessary to resist habits and practices that promote inequality and exclusion.

The Path to Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace

1. Change Starts Within

For any outward change in the workplace to take place, we must first make the internal choice to resolutely pursue that change. To be an active part of an inclusive environment means first understanding and having confidence in ourselves. We must reflect on our experiences and view our unconscious biases, our struggles, and our privileges with an honest assessment. With a renewed interest in and knowledge of self, we can now



People, he says, “You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.” How do we live this?

By continually implementing other Dale Carnegie principles, including becoming a good listener by encouraging others to talk about themselves. Within an inclusive environment, each person feels comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings, which are shaped by their diverse background. The more we engage with others and take an interest in them, the more we will end up wanting to learn.

Inclusivity cannot exist if we do not take a genuine interest in the culture and experiences of others. Recognition of teammates and employees as both good workers and diverse individuals is one of the strongest ways to increase engagement, company loyalty, and office morale. We cannot celebrate diversity if we never make genuine connections with others, and we cannot make genuine connections without a mindset of genuine interest.

2. Inclusion Requires Cultural Awareness and Cultural Competency

Choosing to change is only half the equation. Acquiring the skills necessary to put change into action is the other half. This means extending our cultural awareness, which is the way and frequency with which we recognize and reflect on our cultural differences. Being culturally aware allows us to effectively relate to and manage coworkers and employees.

Through our continued interactions, we begin to understand each other’s values and see each other’s struggles. Recognizing the differences and strengths among workers then creates an attitude and environment of respect that provides psychological safety for every team member. We become more competent in understanding how diversity affects all aspects of our lives.

With cultural awareness, we have developed an attitude of respect and inclusion. Now, it’s time to put our cultural skills to work and turn our intentions into actions. Becoming culturally competent means acquiring the skills necessary to lead changes toward inclusion within a team of diverse workers. These competencies can be easily learned and practiced through the Dale Carnegie principles.

Successfully navigating cultural differences in the workplace means learning to disagree agreeably to resolve conflict, enhancing relationships to create an environment of trust, and holding ourselves and others accountable for negative actions or words. These important skills allow managers and workers to interact respectfully while honoring differences.

Genuine Inclusion Leads to Diversity

Being diverse is simply a state of being human. We must know ourselves, take a genuine interest in others, become aware of our differences, and develop the skills necessary to create an inclusive environment. Not only does this benefit businesses, but its effects ripple out into the world, enhancing diversity through inclusivity on all levels of society.

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