

Organization Offers 'Diversity Training in a Box' for Tough Economic Times

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J., June 19 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Should companies still undertake diversity training in tough economic times? According to Robin Parker, Executive Director of the Beyond Diversity Resource Center (beyonddiversity.org), the answer is “Yes, and more so.” Parker says that layoffs and company downsizing create job stress and greater cultural conflicts. “Diversity training is especially critical in tough economic times,” said Parker. “The atmosphere on the job is more likely to lead to intercultural conflicts that lower productivity and increase the number of discrimination complaints.” To keep costs for training low, Parker’s firm has created the Red Box Diversity System, which Parker calls “diversity training in a box.”



Red Box is a program of twelve educational modules that improve employee diversity skills. Every employee in an organization receives a small box of eleven exercises. Each month employees complete a new exercise that takes no more than thirty minutes to finish. During the twelfth month, employees meet in small groups for discussions and planning. “People often think that internet diversity training is cheaper than the pen and paper system used in Red Box,” said Parker. “Actually, Red Box is cheaper and therefore more cost effective than a comparable internet-based course.”

Pamela Smith Chambers, the Center’s training director, said that she wanted to develop a training program that would meet the needs of a diverse workforce. “The challenge was to craft a program that allowed for learning about diversity over time-the way individuals learn about cultural diversity best-yet also make the program self-directed and, therefore, cost effective. Red Box accomplishes both of these goals.”

Chambers said that the U.S. workforce is becoming more diverse, and consequently a greater diversity of ideas is available to organizations. She noted, however, that “unless employees learn to handle diversity well, diversity can create unhealthy conflict. Red Box not only teaches diversity skills, but how to develop those skills so they ‘fit’ each individual’s unique work setting and job function. Employees become empowered with flexible thinking strategies they can use to address diversity effectively as

they encounter new situations and interact with others.”

The Red Box Diversity System, created for organizations with 200 or more employees, was designed to be easy to administer. “One of the problems with many diversity programs is the requirement to bring employees together to attend workshops. This can be a scheduling nightmare. By making Red Box a self-administered program, and one that is done over a year, we’ve created training flexibility and matched it with in-depth learning,” said Parker.

The Beyond Diversity Resource Center is a nonprofit organization that works to build a society that sincerely honors individuals because of their cultural differences. The Center provides comprehensive training and education for those who work together to improve the quality of interactions among persons who are different from one another.

More information: www.beyonddiversity.org.

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