

T H E  
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D I V E R S I T Y M A N A G E M E N T C O N S U L T A N T S  
P L L C

# CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN THE WORKPLACE: THE BUSINESS ADVANTAGE



Presented By:  
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# AGENDA



- I. Understanding Diversity
- II. Making The “Business Case” For Diversity
- III. Diversity Management
- IV. Cross-Cultural Communication



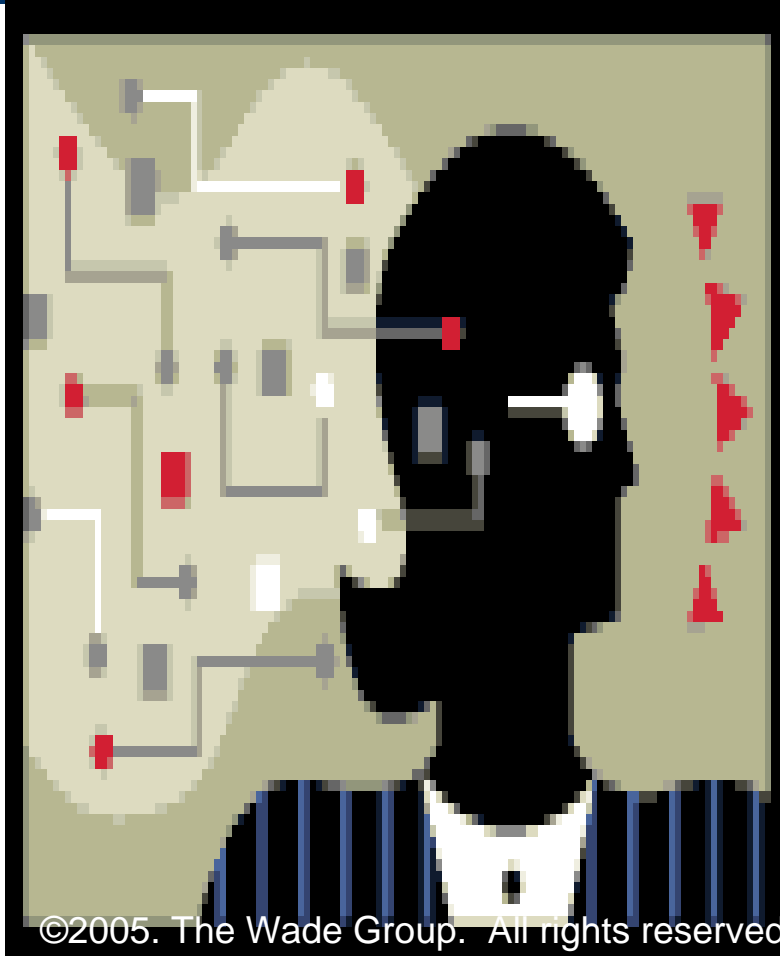
# OBJECTIVES



1. **Understand diversity – even personal diverseness – and why it is important;**
2. **Understand that people, in general, have different values, opinions and perceptions based on their individual culture(s);**
3. **Understand diversity management and it's bottom-line benefits;**
4. **Expand awareness of how biases and stereotypes impact communication; and**
5. **Focus on branding diversity within the organization.**



# I. UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY: What Is Diversity?



- Cultures
- Age
- Education
- Profession
- Tenure
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Values
- Socioeconomic Status
- Hobbies/Recreational Interest
- Political Affiliation
- Geographical Origin
- Race
- Gender
- Family Status

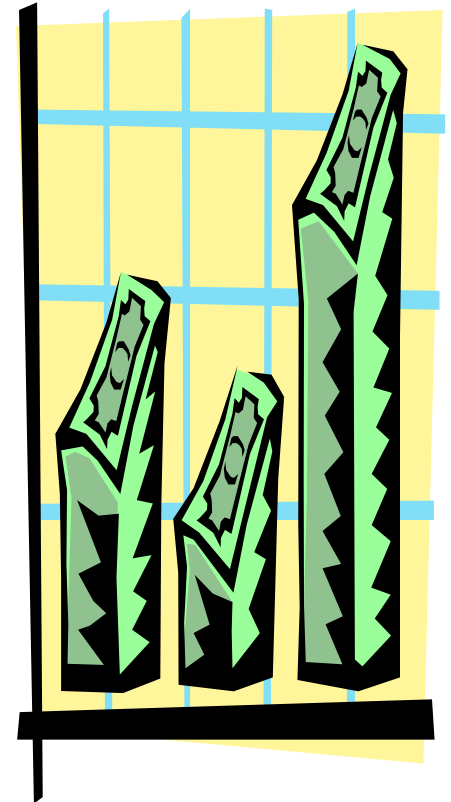
# Manifestations of Diversity



## II. MAKING THE “BUSINESS CASE” FOR DIVERSITY

### DIVERSITY IMPACTS THE BOTTOM LINE.

- “Politically Correct”
  - “Right Thing To Do”



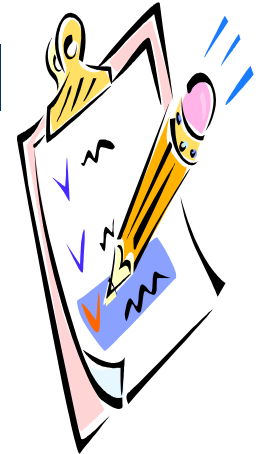
# 5 Key Factors That Make Diversity Initiatives Important To Business

- Return on investment in human capital—ROI
- Capitalize on new markets
- Attract the best and the brightest
- Flexibility ensures survival
- Increasingly diverse workforce



# III. DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

- Holistic approach
- Not about leveling the playing field
- Not a program for addressing discrimination
- Not a prepackaged set of solutions
- Organization benefits
- Staff Development
- Bottom line: Maximizing the contributions of all employees



# People Systems: Do They Support Diversity Management?

- Recruiting
- Hiring
- Mentoring
- Training
- Evaluating
- Compensating
- Expectations



# IV. CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

## Barriers to Cross-Cultural Communication

- Assumed Similarity
- Nonverbal Communication
- Verbal Language
- Inappropriate Humor
- Preconceptions and Stereotypes



# The Impact of Poor Cross-Cultural Communication Skills



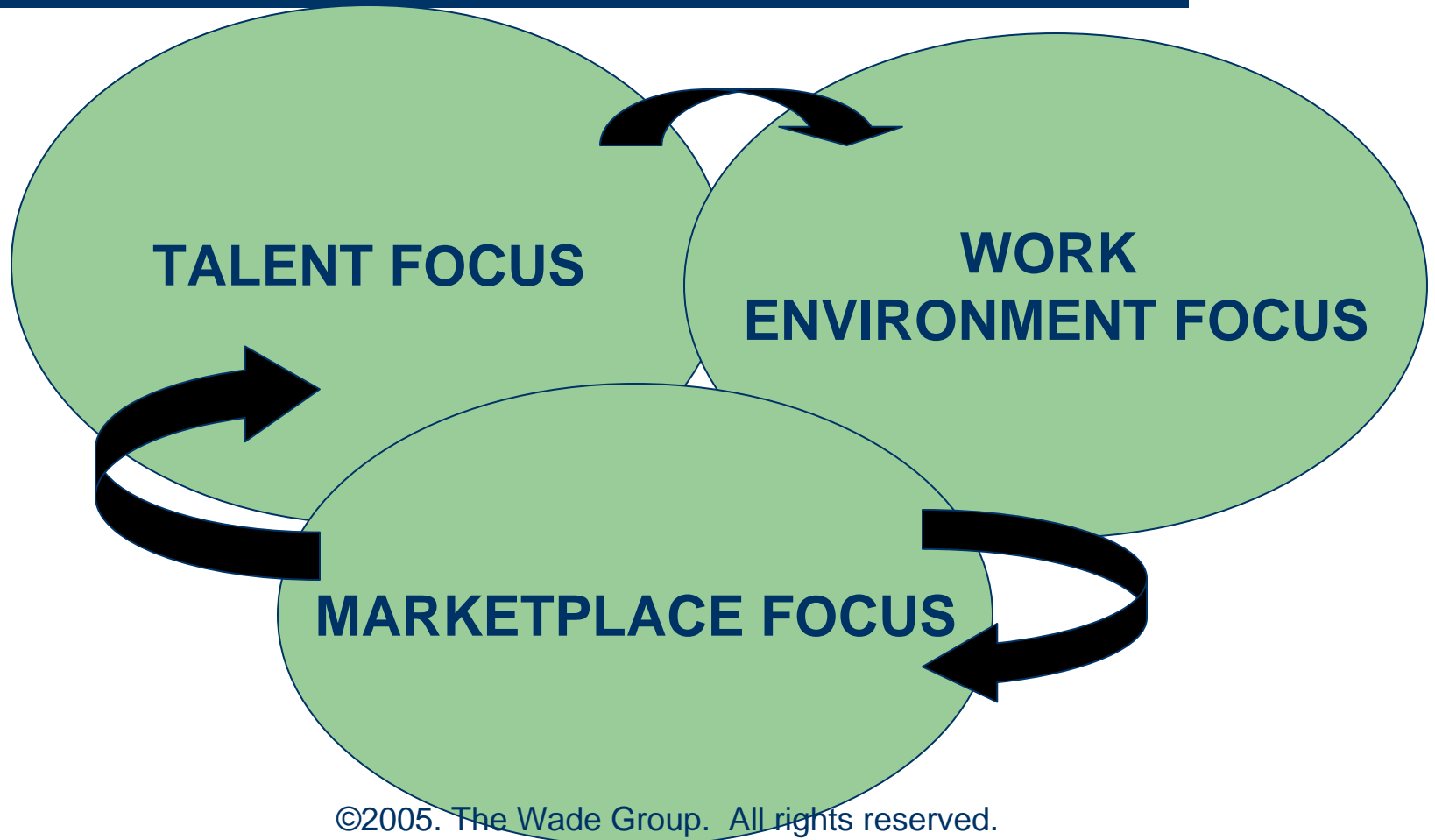
- Lower productivity and poor performance
- High employee absenteeism and turnover
- Conflict and tensions among staff
- Increased grievances, charges and complaints
- Lack of innovation and problem-solving
- Lack of trust in governmental processes and systems

# Bridging Cross-Cultural Communication Barriers

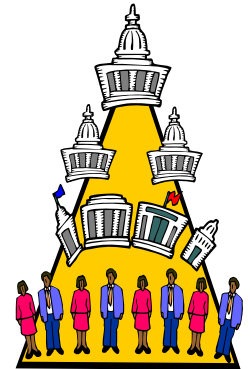


- Self-awareness
- Not to act on our own stereotypes
- Respect
- Culture-specific awareness
- Establish trust and show concern and empathy
- Show sensitivity to face-saving needs
- Sense of humor and patience
- Be aware of nonverbal messages
- Listen for hidden meanings
- Avoid language with questionable connotations
- Walk in the other person's shoes

# V. What's Your Organization's Diversity Brand



# SUMMING UP DIVERSITY



- Diversity is “a collective mixture characterized by differences and similarities.”
- People from diverse backgrounds are inherently able to work and live together with respect and harmony.
- The purpose of diversity training is to help individuals and organizations examine their assumptions about diversity and to assist them in becoming more culturally competent.
- On the organizational level, diversity training examines systemic issues that impede multi-cultural employees from becoming as productive as possible and develops strategies for making the organization more effective and successful.
- Organizations that are proactive in planning, training, and rewarding diversity can increase awareness, morale and productivity and decrease liabilities.

# Vangela M. Wade, JD, CDP

Vangela M. Wade, principal and chief trainer of The Wade Group, PLLC, is an attorney and a certified diversity management professional. As a training and workshop facilitator, Wade is knowledgeable, engaging, sincere, and energetic. She is effective in drawing participants into group dialogue and guiding others into productive discussion. Without appearing judgmental, she challenges participants to go beyond their comfort zones to achieve higher levels of self-awareness and personal transformation.

Before beginning her career as a diversity management and training consultant, Wade practiced law with the largest corporate defense firm in Mississippi, Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens & Cannada, PLLC. As a partnership-track associate attorney, Wade concentrated her practice in the areas of labor and employment law, general litigation and governmental affairs. She provided training to human resource personnel throughout the state on various federal and state employment laws, statutes and regulations. Additionally, she served as Special Counsel to the Mississippi Legislature's Standing Joint Committees on Congressional Redistricting and Legislative Reapportionment.

Prior to joining Butler Snow, Wade was an Assistant District Attorney with the Madison County District Attorney's Office. Immediately following law school, she clerked at the Mississippi Court of Appeals for the current Presiding Judge Leslie D. King.

## Other interesting facts about Ms. Wade:

- Listed as a consultant with the National Center for Cultural Competency at Georgetown University
- Panelist at the American Bar Association's 2003 Equal Employment Opportunity Committee's Midwinter Meeting in Hollywood, Florida;
- Panelist at the Mississippi State Personnel Board's 2002 Public Sector Human Resource and Employment Law Forum;



# Wade Cont'd

- Panelist at the American Bar Association's 2001 Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois addressing the Labor and Employment Section on "Best Practices: What Works to Recruit, Train and Keep Women and People of Color at Law Firms and Law Departments";
- Coauthored Chapter 1 of the Mississippi Employment Law Practice Handbook: Overview of Federal Labor and Employment Laws;
- Authored "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: An Update" published in the Mississippi Manufacturers Association's newsletter;
- Presented lectures on "Diversity Management" for Lorman Education Services and the Mississippi State Human Resource Management Conferences;
- Lectured on "Stopping Workplace Violence Epidemic" for the Council on Education in Management and Employment Law.

## Memberships

- American Bar Association
- Mississippi Bar Association
- Hinds County Bar Association
- Magnolia Bar Association
- Metro Jackson Black Women's Lawyers Association
- National Association for Multicultural Education
- Diversity Leadership Forum
- Leadership Jackson
- Mississippi Chapter of American Society for Training and Development

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