Case Study

Yuqing Lei

Texas A&M University

Case Study 1

A major initiative to address the problem of risky drinking was implemented by Lovelace Health Systems in New Mexico where cirrhosis of the liver is almost two times the national average and drug-induced deaths per capita are among the highest in the United States. The company is a managed health care organization in which seventy percent of its employees are enrolled in their health care plan. In an effort to target the problem of substance abuse with an emphasis on prevention and reduction, an employee assistance program (EAP) and an employee wellness program (EWP) were offered on a voluntary basis. Additionally, mandatory drug testing was required for new applicants offered a job. The new initiative, Project WISE for Workplace Initiative in Substance Education, required a health risk appraisal with questions about alcohol use and other health risks to be evaluated and acted upon if the employee showed moderate or high−risk behavior for alcohol use.

The importance of HRD involvement is, “to ensure that each employee is a positive contributor to an organization’s effectiveness, and that he or she will continue to contribute in the future” (Werner & DeSimone, 2012, p. 358). To support this motivation for practice, a HRD professional must have genuine concern for employees who show evidence of a problem with alcohol use and seek to design and implement Project Wise with an emphasis on the impact the substance abuse has on job performance. Since the first tenet of EAPs is “based on the premise that work is very important to people” (Werner & DeSimone, 2012, p. 365), the door is open for efforts toward helping the employee overcome the risky drinking behavior by relating it to job performance. Additional issues to consider are cost effectiveness, cross cultural variations and preferences, and organizational culture and attitudes toward alcohol use. The negative impact of risky drinking on organizations and people is far reaching and deserves a genuine effort toward developing effective interventions.

Substance abuse is a real problem in the U.S. workforce. Studies on alcohol abuse, including drug abuse, show employees two and a half times more likely to have lengthy absenteeism of eight days or more and functioning at approximately 67 to 70 percent of their work potential (Dwyer, 2012). Problems with substance abuse give rise to additional behavior patterns, such as, missing deadlines, poor relationships with coworkers and difficulty understanding new information (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). With the constantly changing nature of jobs and the workplace environment and demands, there are often short timelines for processing new information. This amount of lost productivity is very costly to organizations. An excessive amount of alcohol intake in the U.S. cost 223.5 billion dollars in 2006 with 1,876.1 million in New Mexico, alone, in the same year (Sacks et al., 2006).

The ethnic diversity of New Mexico is 47.0 percent Hispanic or Latino, 39.8 percent white and 10.2 percent American Indian and Alaska Native according to the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau. Understanding cultural attitudes and behaviors, and the perception of EAPs within cultures is a priority in such a diverse population, which is likely to be the make-up of Lovelace employees.

In establishing organizational policy, Lovelace can have a significant impact on the organizational attitudes through leadership by example. In a long-standing wellness program by Central States Health and Life Company, a written policy established guidelines on the use of alcohol at company-sponsored events (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). This kind of communication gives guidance for responsible behavior related to alcohol consumption and provides boundaries for acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Supervisors should be trained to show leadership by following company policy.

Risky drinking is defined as moderate risk when a person drinks up to three to four drinks per occasion or drinks every day, or high risk when a person usually or occasionally drinks five or more drinks per occasion (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). An initial step to increase awareness of the dangerous consequences of risky drinking is through education. With the prevalence of alcohol abuse in New Mexico, it cannot be assumed employees have knowledge about the negative impact moderate and high-risk behaviors have on them. Building a culture of health creates both individual and group responsibility toward achieving and maintaining good health (Jones & Paul, 2011).

Lifestyle campaigns can be used to encourage employees to reduce risky behaviors, such as overuse of alcohol (Ames & Bennett, 2011). Posters and flyers showing photos of people in settings having fun and enjoying social activities and outdoor recreation without the use of alcohol can create good visual reminders. These materials can include messages about the benefits of healthy lifestyles and dangers of risky alcohol use. Periodic healthy living tips with an emphasis on positive behaviors for healthy lifestyles and dangers of excessive use of alcohol can be distributed through weekly or monthly healthy living emails, wellness newsletters and employee meetings. Many resources are available from substance abuse treatment centers, community organizations and government agencies. Guest speakers with information and personal stories about the impact of risky drinking are also possibilities to use at appropriate times.

Social health promotion is another approach to create awareness. Team Awareness training uses a classroom environment to incorporate information about reducing alcohol use within team building, stress management and policy learning (Ames & Bennett, 2011). The emphasis in this type of training is on social support and peer referral through encouragement of creating strength within work groups.

After the initial screening with the health risk appraisal administered to Lovelace employees, a referral to resources, counseling and/or treatment is the next step to take. It is important in the design and implementation process to have identified resources in place. Determining whether counseling will be administered within Lovelace or contracted to an outside provider is a major decision. There are advantages and disadvantages to both. Services within the organization would give greater control by Lovelace, along with, ease of accessibility for employees. Whereas, using an outside provider would allow greater flexibility of access during non-work hours and assurance of confidentiality. The most important consideration for Lovelace HRD professionals is to determine what will best serve the employees needing assistance and which option will encourage the most employees to use the services. Cost of inside versus outside services is a consideration. Monitoring and follow-up is a key component of the counseling and treatment process in order to ensure the chosen interventions are successful.

Some interesting studies of web-based interventions using web-based feedback sometimes combined with 15 minute motivational interviewing sessions showed lower levels of drinking in 30-day follow-up assessments (Ames & Bennett, 2011). By providing data regarding a person's drinking behaviors and the risks related to the drinking, the goal of the free web service focuses on reducing high risk drinking. The web service is available at CheckYourDrinking.net. Interventions like this have several advantages. Privacy of the employee is preserved and services available on the Internet are available at any time. This might not be a complete approach to changing behavior, but can be given as a resource to encourage employees to utilize and seek further assistance when needed.

It is challenging to have genuine interest in people's lives, yet be in a position to quantify their progress. Equally challenging is to differentiate the effect of multiple wellness related issues on individuals. In the workplace, absenteeism, job performance and cost savings can be used to evaluate how effective education efforts and interventions are on employees. In a program like Project WISE cost effectiveness can be analyzed by calculating the cost of treating problems and comparing it to the costs associated with replacing the employee (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). Although these have been used in the evaluation process, there are critics who assert the methods and designs of evaluation efforts do not have the scientific rigor needed in terms of comparison groups and random assignments to treatments (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). Evaluating the long-term success of interventions like Project WISE is challenging in terms of keeping records and tracking success over extended periods of time.

Collecting data about such delicate matters as substance abuse and its effects on individuals in the workplace lends itself to concerns about confidentiality and voluntary or mandatory participation. Maintaining confidentiality must be a top priority related to participation in counseling and treatment for risky use of alcohol. Prior to the new program, Project WISE, EAPs , and EWPs have been offered on a volunteer basis. The new requirement for employees to complete a health risk appraisal and the company's use of that information to categorize employees in terms of risky drinking must be handled with care. Certainly Lovelace Health Systems would most likely benefit from these employees participating in the program, but allowing them the ability to make decisions on a voluntary basis would be ideal. Relating the risky drinking behavior to job performance can be a motivation for an employee to participate in interventions. Avoiding any negative consequences for participation is important in the referral, counseling, and treatment process.

Project WISE has the potential to both educate and offer interventions specific to the problems related to risky drinking behaviors. If the design and implementation of the new program is handled by HRD professionals with the intent to offer resources to employees struggling with problems related to alcohol abuse and the negative effects on their health, it will alleviate skepticism and create confidence by employees in the goal of Lovelace to invest in the lives and health of its employees and set the stage for the 190,000 people served by the company.

Case Study 2

Alverno College is a University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin that focuses on liberal arts education for female undergraduates. Alverno College has emphasized an "ability-based curriculum" since the 1970s. Rather than having students take examinations, samples of student work are collected to determine student mastery of expected outcomes from courses and the student's program of study as a whole. The faculty and trained volunteers determine the quality of the work submitted by each student. Diagnostic Digital Portfolios are maintained by the university for every student and hold evidence of their mastery (Werner & DeSimone, 2012).

A portfolio is defined as "a purposeful collection of student work that represents achievement, progress, growth, and reflection" and "serves as the basis for ongoing evaluation" (Ziegler & Montplaisir, 2012, p. 16). We feel favorably towards the idea of using portfolios to evaluate student learning. There are several aspects to a portfolio that we believe to be advantageous to students. First, portfolios allow for documentation of student progress over periods of time (The University of Texas at Austin, 2011). A student portfolio can be assembled solely from coursework within a specific course or from a combined sequence of courses in the student's major (University of Wisconsin, 2011). It is the University of Wisconsin's (2011) belief that "collecting student work over time gives departments a unique opportunity to assess a student's progression in acquiring a variety of learning objectives" (p. 1). In this way student growth and progress can be monitored and evaluated. These portfolios can move along with the student and continue to build and develop. We also support the notion of portfolios because of their flexibility. The flexibility of portfolios allows for individualization for each student (The University of Texas at Austin, 2011). Just as no two students learn in the exact same way, no two student works will be alike. Students will take what they learn and use and apply it in all different ways. Portfolios allow for these individual differences to be respected and taken into consideration (Nae-Dong, 2003). When searching for a true reflection of student work, progress and personal growth, portfolios offer a valuable collection for use in formulating an assessment of student potential. Some disciplines may be more suitable for use of portfolios than others. Alverno College focuses primarily on liberal arts education, which could be more appropriate for use of portfolios than studies in medical fields such as, nursing or pharmacy where students are required to take board exams in order to practice. Other disciplines such as, engineering could benefit from a combination of portfolios and examinations. The use of portfolios as an expanded evaluation tool is worthy of more attention and inclusion in academia.

There are numerous reasons to support the use of work samples, or portfolios, as a replacement for examinations. According to Williams (2005), standardized assessments are becoming increasingly focused on how a student's performance compares to other students and less about what is being learned. The resulting list of rankings does little to tell what the student is learning or how they are able to utilize it (Williams, 2005). Portfolios allow much more student involvement than examinations. With guidance and oversight from the teacher students may participate in what goes into their portfolio. Students also "participate in the process of portfolio evaluation, while more traditional assessment is teacher-centered and usually conducted in a more mechanical way" (Nae-Dong, 2003, p. 295). One of the learning objectives for portfolios is self-evaluation, which allows students to "value their work, reflect on their performance, enhance their learning and autonomy, alter their views of the teacher's role and their own role, encourage themselves to take responsibility for their learning and involve themselves in the assessment process" (Nae-Dong, 2003, p. 295). Ziegler and Montplaisir (2012) state, "student reflections are specifically vital to increasing understanding, as reflections can lead to deep, long-term learning ultimately contributing to better understanding" (p. 17). While traditional assessment only focuses on results, the evaluation of portfolios focuses on stressing improvement, student effort, and personal achievements. Ultimately, portfolios focus on what the student has learned and can do with what they have learned rather than what they are not able to express on a multiple-choice standardized test.

Wiedmer (1998) defines electronic portfolios as "a purposeful collection of work, captured by electronic means, that serves as an exhibit of individual efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas" (p. 586). Electronic portfolios, ePortfolios, are viewed by some as the modern form of paper portfolios. In their digital form, ePortfolios can reach a much larger audience by a webpage, email, or other form of electronic means (Worley, 2011). This enhanced medium also allows for students to include clippings of their own voices, video, diagrams, or other digital images (Wiedmer, 1998). This electronic format, however, does have downfalls. With the use of electronic portfolios a student loses the opportunity to "verbally conduct a tour through their samples, explain the significance of each exhibit, describe their goals for a project, explain the skills required to complete it, and discuss what abilities it illustrates" (Worley, 2011, p. 330). This also results in the loss of the critical evaluations and guided self-evaluations that are crucial to student learning, growth, and understanding. An additional disadvantage to note regarding electronic portfolios is, every student may not have access or the knowledge to create, utilize, and maintain one (Wiedmer, 1998). Internationally, there is better access to electronic resources in some areas than others. Another consideration is related to electronic portfolios in certain disciplines, such as art. If artistic expression is a part of a student's product for a portfolio, an electronic portfolio could have limited true expression of the work. Although a great deal of progress has been made, the generation gap continues to pose some challenges in the area of use of technology.

It is our belief that professional portfolios would be advantageous to create and maintain in our Human Resource Development masters program. According to Worley (2011) portfolios, especially electronic, are beginning to replace resumes in the business world. It has been her experience that students have been turned away from interview opportunities solely because they did not have an electronic portfolio to present. A professional portfolio comprised of students' most excellent scholarly papers, projects, and other works would be beneficial to have with HRD masters program students upon graduation to take with them as they enter the competitive job search.

Alverno College is one of several universities making the use of portfolios to replace examinations for its students. The use of portfolios allows for individualized evaluations of student work that focuses on documenting progress. Portfolios may be used in replacement of a resume for some companies and may even be a requirement (Worley, 2011). It is our belief that students, particularly in our master's program, who build portfolios will find them useful in their future endeavors in the workforce.

Case Study 3

The scenario of a private, non-profit hospital that serves low-income neighborhoods is introduced. The long standing mission of this hospital is to provide quality service to the community. This service has been offered regardless of an individual's ability to pay but due to recent healthcare changes in the industry it is necessary that the hospital attract more clients with the means or healthcare packages to keep the hospital financially sound. In an effort to improve efficiency, the hospital is moving to a new facility which includes a new computer system. How changes are managed will help determine if they are able to interest and retain a new population of clients.

Management training is viewed as one of the most effective ways to increase management skills, productivity, and effect organizational change (Terrion, 2006). The management team is in need of a training program at this time that will allow the hospital to capitalize on the move to the new facility and use of the computer system to build a new image that will attract new clientele. They must first create a leadership team that is ready to tackle the challenge of such a large project. In healthcare organizations the "development and implementation of initiatives designed to improve quality and efficiency rely on successful execution of individuals" (McAlearney & Butler, 2008, p. 320). The managers lead the charge in this new organizational change. They will often be bombarded with many other tasks that, without training, could lead to confusion on what the focus is. Management training has to be specific and linked to the organization's strategy to developing new clients. It must also be a conscious effort that provides individuals the opportunity for growth learning and change (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). By conducting management training it will increase the chances of a successful move and launch of the new system with focus on building an image that will attract and retain new clients to the hospital.

The first step would be to identify the candidates for the program. We suggest starting at the top of the organization with the training of executive leadership. Executive leadership will be driving the strategic needs of the hospital. They will need to be trained on how to manage the change in the organization’s culture to attract the new clients. While attracting new clients, they must maintain their existing mission and current clients. The will need to have a plan for merging the existing culture with the one they would like to create. Additionally, they will need training in change management in order to lead the change for the entire staff if they hope to become the preferred healthcare alternative for new clients. If the executives have a clear vision for the hospital then the rest of the leadership team will be able to understand and facilitate their roles more effectively. Often times in organizations there is a direction and managers know what they should improve on, but there is little focus from the executive leadership on how to obtain those goals.

The next step would be to identify and train key senior and mid-level managers. The senior and mid-level managers will be executing the move and launch of the new computer system with frontline employees and will need to learn how these changes fit into the organizational culture as well as how to best implement the new changes. After identifying the candidates, the next step would be to build a training program that focuses on the individual training needs of the participants while linking them back to the overall strategic needs of the hospital (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). A management training program ensures that efficiency and quality focused programs and initiatives are properly and “strategically targeted, delivered, and emphasized to provide the organizational change” (McAlearney & Butler, 2008, p. 327).

Our focus would be on training effective team leadership and change management. The hospital has an already existing mission vision they would like to maintain, but they must find a way to interests new clients. They are also transitioning facilities and implementing a new system in order to make the hospital more efficient. This will require the organization to expand its current vision and approach to doing business, thus causing the hospital to undergo an organizational change (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). It will need its managers and executives to lead teams of people to implement these changes.

According to Gregory-Mina (2010), effective teams align team goals with the overall organization objectives. Leaders will need to develop their teams that are efficient and productive and will require a focus during the management training on how to effectively develop a high-performing team. The ability of teams to function and manage processes are influenced by the organizational culture. In turn, if a leader is effective then it will increase the likelihood that the team's plan will be in close organizational alignment and that team deliverables will satisfy organizational objectives (Gregory-Mina, 2010). Effective leaders, along with clearly defined organizational goals and mission, will allow the hospital to make the change they are seeking.

An additional focus for training would be to create a model of planned change that the change can be implemented seamlessly through the organization. "Organizational change is admittedly difficult, and changing organizational activities and incentives in attempts to improve quality and efficiency is perhaps among the more challenging organizational change initiatives recently introduced in U.S. healthcare organizations" (McAlearney & Butler, 2008, p. 327). Since the change affects all levels of the organization, using training programs for leadership can provide a vehicle for this organizational focus.

Not only will the leadership need to manage the change of the direction and vision of the organization, they will also need to manage the change of location and computer systems. Management training that focuses on project management would be beneficial for the move and implementation of the new system. The move to the new facility will require detailed planning and quick execution in order to keep the flow of business. The new system will require training on how to use, implement, and manage it effectively. The changes must be planned out from top to bottom to create a structure and plan that will not only be quick to execute, but leave little room for error so that they are able to capitalize on the new facility and system to entice new clients into the hospital.

The move to a new facility could pose challenges on many levels including resources, operations and logistics. Operationally, the hospital would want to be able to maintain day to day operations if possible or reduce the amount of time the operation of the hospital will be closed for business to reduce costs. The transition to the new building may be done in stages but will require careful planning in order for clients to know which facility different departments are working in. It will be important to let all clients know of any changes as well as the community to avoid a loss in business.

In addition to managing the operations of moving to a new facility, there may be a need for additional resources to help facilitate the move, such as temporary staffing to help move equipment, assist with clean-up, or even provide service so employees will be able to make the transition. A challenge for this organization will be the cost associated with such additional resources. It is possible to make plans but unforeseen events can add costs quickly.

Logistically, there will need to be a back-up for every plan. Weather could delay timelines or inspections could fail and modifications need to be made depending on the new facility. Careful coordination of staffing and personnel will need to take place in order to ensure coverage during this time. Additionally, the new computer system will need to be tested prior to the move to ensure no data is lost in the transition.

This hospital has a complex undertaking to make an organizational change to attract new clients while maintaining a long-standing mission. It will require the development of leaders through a structured, focused management training program that will assist in preparing them to lead teams that will facilitate a move to new facility and implement a new computer system through effective change management.

Case Study 4

Extrusion is a Norwegian company that made the decision to make a change in its organization by flattening its organizational structure and increasing the amount of employee participation in the organization. The new CEO of the company fervently supported this change and hired a management professor to document the progress and changes that would result from the major change in organizational structure (Werner & DeSimone, 2012).

Organizations that have a flat structure have fewer managerial layers, or levels, than traditional hierarchical structure. In organizations with a hierarchical structure, information is typically isolated at the top level and challenging to pass on to all levels successfully (Wei, Liu, & Herndon, 2011). Information and decision-making can be passed on much quicker and more effectively in flatter organizations with fewer levels for the information to pass through (Rodrigues, 1994). In organizations with a flat, or horizontal, structure, it is “easier for employees to access information and collaborate across functional units” (Wei, Liu, & Herndon, 2011, p. 23). Unlike hierarchical structure, flat structure is commonly joined by decentralization, “which relates to the decision-making discretion that is pushed down to lower levels of the organization" (Wei, Liu, &Herndon, 2011, p. 23). According to Wei, Liu, and Herndon (2011), "decentralized organizations may be more effective, efficient, and adaptive because decentralization allows for more flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness while seeking more proactiveness from employees" (p. 23).

The Baldridge National Quality Award was established in 1987 to provide a systematic national framework for assessing quality levels in U.S. companies. Rodrigues (1994) states "Badlridge Award winners apply participative management, empower employees, and have a flat organizational structure" (p. 30). These winning organizations use a participative approach in decision making because the outcome has several benefits. Employees tend to accept a decision more readily when they have been a part of making it and the variety of input that results from employee participation often leads to a decision of high quality (Rodrigues, 1994). Additionally, a participative approach "develops an environment of trust, which helps to develop an achievement orientation among the employees" (Rodrigues, 1994, p. 30).

Organizations making a big change, such as in their organizational structure, may find resistance in employee willingness to change. According to Werner and DeSimone (2012), "planned interventions are the primary means through which organizational improvement and change takes place" (p. 478). There are three main roles that must be implemented: the change manager, the change agent, and the employees within the organization that is undergoing change. The change mangers role is to assess the need for change, determine what intervention activities would be most appropriate, carrying out those activities, and evaluating the results. "Some organizations elect to develop a parallel structure for introducing change- one person responsible for ongoing management functions and another person responsible for managing change" (Werner & DeSimone, 2012, p. 485). However, if an organization takes this route issues may arise from it. Werner and DeSimone (2012) state, “Using a parallel structure may lead to a situation in which the change manager does not have sufficient power to create the conditions for change, particularly if others perceive the functional manager in the organization as not supporting the change process” (p. 485). Another issue that may come from a large change is manager and executive lack of knowledge of the process of change and the skills to manage the results of impact on employees from change. A problem that may stem from this is a manager’s misunderstanding of the nature of planned change compared to forced change. Forced change uses tactics such as threat of discipline that produce changes in behavior that may not be permanent. Employees react quickly to avoid consequences but may, however, revert to their old behaviors once the threats of discipline are relieved (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). Many organizations appoint an internal member of their staff as the change agent because “the knowledge they possess regarding the organization’s mission, structural components, technology, internal politics, and social factors can be very important for establishing a trusting relationship with members of the system that will undergo the change” (Werner & DeSimone, 2012, p. 486). However, the problem that may come from this is that “system members may feel an internal change agent is too close to the existing situation and cannot be objective. Additionally, the internal change agent may not possess the specialized knowledge needed for a particular change intervention” (Werner & DeSimone, 2012, p. 486).

Werner and DeSimone (2012) offer several topics for an organization to address in order to ease the issues that arise with organizational change. The question regarding discrepancy needs to be answered. It must be clearly explained to individuals involved and affected why the change is a necessary one. The question of efficacy must be addressed. Employees want the assurance that the change is going to be successful and the outcome will be positive. The course of action to implement the change is a topic to be discussed. An explanation of why a certain course of action was chosen and why it is the correct one is necessary. It is important for all management to “practice what they preach” and it be addressed that the key leaders of an organization also support the change. Finally, to ease the tensions of change, it is necessary to discuss the topic regarding what about the change will benefit the employees. Employees want to know what they will gain from these changes and why they should personally support it (Werner & DeSimone, 2012).

There are many benefits to changing to a flat organizational structure such as more efficient communication, more participation, and the creation of a trusting environment (Wei, Liu, & Herndon, 2011). As Extrusion seeks to make this change in organizational structure issues may surface such as lack of expertise or employee resistance (Werner & DeSimone, 2012). However, if proper measures are taken such as extensive communication and the preparation of managers this company can successfully make the change to a flatter organizational structure with more employee participation.

Case Study 5

IBM’s commitment to a diverse workforce is demonstrated by its rich corporate history. The company hired its first woman employee as early as 1899 (Rangarajan, 2011). It was long before women won the right to vote in the United States. Then, in 1914, IBM hired its first employee with a disability, which was 76 years before the Americans with Disabilities Act came in to effect (Rangarajan, 2011). Later, in 1924, the company appointed its first black sales man, which was 18 years before the Title VII Civil Rights Act (Rangarajan, 2011). Nowadays, IBM has become a leading role in workplace diversity with a nickname called Big Blue.

There are variety kinds of diversity, such as race, gender, age, religion, and disability. In our opinion, every form of diversity is important for the development of IBM, and the company should emphasize diversity in all forms. Previous studies have shown that heterogeneous teams, in other words diversity groups, tended to produce superior outcomes as compared to homogeneous teams (Torres, 2010). Moreover, as the world economy becomes more and more globalized, large IT companies, such as IBM, must be able to incorporate all forms of cultural differentiation and diversity within their values and corporate culture (Kaiser, Major, Jurcevic, Dover, Brady, & Shapiro, 2013). In addition, maintaining a multi-cultural knowledge and diverse skill base would make the organization more competitive in the global economy. The reason is that unique culture and diversity workforce is hard to be copied or imitated (Scott, 2007).

Therefore, IBM should create a culture that diversity, is should include every employee and exclude no one. Also, the HR professionals and supervisors within the company should foster the idea and understanding of diversity among the employees and partners by conducting multi-cultural trainings and setting related policies. In order to develop and ensure the successful changes of diversity structures, the company should pay more attention to employees' personal identities, higher-order needs, and their authentic self-expressions. Moreover, leaders of IBM need to support HR professionals to promote the understanding, respect, valuing and accommodating of human and cultural diversity.

On the other hand, if it must be an emphasis, in my opinion, IBM should emphasize on gender differences. According to current data, about 30% of IBM's employees today are women and this percentage is predicted to increase in the next few years (Rangarajan, 2011). In this case, it is important to take gender differences in to consideration and IBM should design more related programs for its female employees in order to provide women with a fair work environment.

As mentioned above, in order to create effective and comprehensive initiatives of diversity, employees at all levels should get involved in the initiative process. The top management’s role is to focus on individuals’ needs and provide support and facility to the initiatives. According to Slater and his colleagues (2008), the role of the CEOs of IBM is crucial to the initiatives. CEOs within the company should communicate with every diversity group, in order to carry out further progress and amend existed programs (Slater, Stanley, Weigand, Robert, Zweilein & Thomas, 2008). Moreover, for the organization level, build a closer relationship with minority groups can provide its employees an impression that the company truly cares and supports the diversity initiatives.

On top of that, supervisors and HR professionals in IBM can use self-directed approach to create diversity-related policies and programs. The self-directed approach can be used by an organization of any size. Organizations use this approach to cast a wide net and reach as many employees as possible throughout the initiatives ("So you need," 2013). For a large organization, like IBM, it is hard for the HR department to evaluate and create unique-designed diversity initiatives for every individual within the diversity groups. However, by implementing the self-designed model to the individual level, the HR professionals can leave most of the direction-setting up to the employees. In this case, the global programs become the employees’ initiative to set developmental goals and needs with their supervisors or HR consultants. And as a consequence, it increases the individuals’ own mobility, and ultimately helps them achieve the right fit within the organization.

Moreover, a successful diversity initiative also needs to be continual rather than a one-off effort. In this case, enhancing the corporation of all levels, the ongoing trainings, and communications between different levels within the company will help to create and maintain a corporate culture that welcomes diversity. Additionally, the HR department should also continually search for new and diverse talent pools in order to meet the evolving staffing needs.

We don't think it is a good idea for IBM to maintain the same diversity initiatives in the other countries. Although the United States is one of the first countries that carry out the concept of workplace diversity initiatives (Dowling, 2013), it is not a concept that can be exported wholesale all over the world. National cultural differences play an important role in determining whether diversity initiatives take hold. In other words, while conducting the diversity initiatives, IBM must keep those differences in mind.

Every country has its own unique culture. For instance, when it comes to initiatives that aimed at gays and lesbians, in the United States organizations can freely discuss about it. However, in most of the Asian countries, such as my homeland China, it is not appropriate to speak up about issues related gays and lesbians in offices or at meetings. Moreover, in India, it is against the law to be gay (Dowling, 2013). If IBM conducts the same homosexual-related initiatives in India, it could lead to great conflicts and violations. In this case, for multinational organizations, like IBM, sticking with the same initiatives in other countries may leads to greater cultural and policy-related conflicts. In other words, the diversity initiatives in IBM have to vary at the national or local level.

On top of that, besides the universal concerns of diversity, such as gender differences (Dowling, 2013), different countries have different emphasis in targeting diversity groups. For example, organizations in the USA tend to seek racial and ethnic balance, while European and Canadian companies pay more attention to immigration and nationality issues (Dowling, 2013). Therefore, as a multinational corporation, while striving for consistency in their HR policies across countries, IBM should also strive for policies that respect local cultures and traditions.

References

Ames, G. M. & Bennett J. (2011). Prevention and intervention of alcohol problems in the workplace. *Alcohol Research and Health*, 34(2), 175-187. Retrieved from http://content.ebscohost.com.lib-ezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/pdf27_28/pdf/ddd/rzh/2011434691.pdf?T=P&P=AN&K=2011434691&S=R&D=rzh&EbscoContent=dGJyMNHX8kSeqLE4zOX0OLCmr0ueprVSs6i4TLCWxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMPGus0m0q7JQuePfgeyx44Dt6fIA

Check your drinking. (2000-2012). Retrieved from checkyourdrinking.net/CYD/CYDScreenerP1_0.aspx

Bjornstad, A., & Lichacz, F. (2013). Organizational flexibility from a network organizational perspective: A study of central predictors and moderating factors in military contexts. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *34*(8), 763-783. doi: 10.1108/LODJ-02-2012-0021

Dowling, D. C. (2013). *Cross-border diversity initiatives for recruiting and retention*. Retrieved from http://www.americanbar.org/publications/international_law_news/2013/spring/crossborder_diversity_initiatives_recruiting_retention.html

Dwyer, D. (2012, April 3). Don't be penny wise and pound foolish. *Psychology Today*, Retrieved from http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/got-minute/201204/dont-be-penny-wise-and-pound-foolish

Frone, M. (2006). Prevalence and distribution of alcohol abuse and impairment in the workplace: A U. S. national survey. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 67(1), 147-156.

Gregory-Mina, H. J. (2010). The importance of teams and how to lead teams through change initiatives in 21st century organizations. *The Business Review, Cambridge*, *16*(1), 61-66.

Jones, E., & Paul, R. (2011). How employee assistance programs can build a 'culture of health'. *Behavioral Health Care*, 31(6), 32, 34-35. doi: ProQuest document ID: 898439044

Kaiser, C. R., Major, B., Jurcevic, I., Dover, T. L., Brady, L. M., & Shapiro, J. R. (2013). Presumed fair: Ironic effects of organizational diversity structures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *104*(3), 504–519. doi:10.1037/a0030838

McAlearney, A. S., ScD.,& Butler, P. W. (2008). Using leadership development programs to improve quality and efficiency in healthcare. *Journal of Healthcare Management*, 53(5), 319-31.

Nae-Dong, Y. (2003). Integrating portfolios into learning strategy-based instruction for efl college students . *IRAL: International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 41, 293-317. Retrieved from http://web.ebscohost.com.lib-ezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=8c1370a3-d5a3-4e82-bde5-9c5e4b549181@sessionmgr111&vid=7&hid=127

Rangarajan, V. A. (2011, 7 27). *Ibm diversity – not just a program but a culture*. Retrieved from file:///H:/diversity_ibm/IBM Diversity – Not just a program but a culture Recruitment Blog.htm

Rodrigues, C. (1994). Employee participation and empowerment programs: Problems of definition and implementation. *Empowerment in Organizations*, *2*(2), 29-40. doi: 10.1108/09684899410061645

Sacks, J., Roeber, J., Bouchery, E., Gonzales, K., Chaloupka, F., & Brewer, R. (2013). State costs of excessive alcohol consumption, 2006. *Preventative Medicine*, 45(4), 474-485. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2013.06.004.

Scott, O. (2007). Diversity issues and practices at work in san antonio. *Business Communication Quarterly*, *70*(82), 82-87. doi:10.1177/108056990707000115

Slater, Stanley, F., Weigand, Robert, A., Zweilein, & Thomas, J., (2008). “The business case for commitment to diversity”. *Business Horizons*, *51*, 201–209. *So you need a career development model*. (2013). Retrieved from http://www.insala.com/Articles/career-development/so-you-need-a-career-development-model.asp

Terrion, J. L. (2006). The impact of a management training program for university adminstrators. *The Journal of Management Development*, *25*(2), 183-194.

Torres, C. (2010, 5 4). *Organization and culture*. Retrieved from file:///H:/diversity_ibm/Organizations and Culture Managing Diversity - IBM case.htm\

U.S. department of commerce united states census bureau. (2012). Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/35000.html

University of Texas at Austin. (2011, September 21). *Assess students: Portfolio*. Retrieved from http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/students/plan/method/portfolios.php

University of Wisconsin: Office of the Provost. (2011). *Outcomes assessment*. Retrieved from http://www.provost.wisc.edu/assessment/manual/manual2.html

Wei, L., Liu, J., & Herndon, N. (2011). Shrm and product innovation: Testing the moderating effects of organizational culture and structure in chinese firms. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *22*(1), 19-33. doi: 10.1080/09585192.2011.538965

Werner, J.M.& DeSimone, R.L. (2012). Human resource development (6th edition).

Wiedmer, T. (1998). Digital portfolios: capturing and demonstrating skills and levels of performance. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *79*(8), 586. Retrieved from http://web.ebscohost.com.lib-ezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/ehost/detail?vid=4&sid=5c3c04be-9c17-4ffb-bb49-30504c6cf4a@sessionmgr14&hid=26&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ

Williams, B. (2005). Standardized students: The problems with writing for tests instead of people. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *49*(2), 152-158. Retrieved from http://web.ebscohost.com.lib-ezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=8e31e283-33a6-4d46-bde8-a05282815578@sessionmgr12&vid=2&hid=10

Worley, R. (2011). Eportolios examined: Tools for exhibit and evaluation . *Business Communication Quarterly*, *74*(3), 330-332. doi:10.1177/1080569911414558

Ziegler, B., & Montplaisir, L. (2012). Measuring student understanding in a portfolio-based course. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 42(1), 16-25. Retrieved from http://web.ebscohost.com.libezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=8644b179-23d7-4282-bf6a-a2377be36ada@sessionmgr115&hid=127