

## Diversity Committee – November 2008

### December 2008 CELEBRATIONS

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|---|---|
| 6 - St. Nicholas Day (International)              | 22 - <a href="#">Winter Solstice</a> (Dec 22-Mar 20)  |
| 7 - Pearl Harbor Day (United States)              | 25 - <a href="#">Christmas</a>  |
| 8 - Bodhi Day - Buddha's Enlightenment (Buddhist) | 26 - <a href="#">Kwanzaa</a> 31 - <a href="#">New Year's Eve</a> (United States, International) |
| 8 - <a href="#">Eid al-adha</a> (Islamic, Muslim) |   |
| 13 - <a href="#">Santa Lucia Day</a> (Sweden)     |   |
| 22 - <a href="#">Hanukkah</a> * (Jewish)          |   |

### DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

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#### Cultural Intelligence

*by Melanie Joy Douglas, Monster.ca*

“As Canada ever more relies on immigration to maintain our population, the need for cultural intelligence is becoming paramount. Those organizations and people who are committed to removing stereotypes and tapping into the wealth of international talent will find themselves sitting on top, as the visible minority in Canada becomes a visible (and much-needed) majority.

Cultural intelligence is the newest accepted facet of intelligence, finding a place alongside emotional, interpersonal, and social intelligence.

Signs of one's culture appear every day -- in social norms, customs, symbols, humour, expectations, beliefs and communication. Cultural intelligence, then, is the ability to grow on a continual basis through understanding and learning of other cultures, and to deal successfully with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

#### Why is this so important?

Cultures differ greatly in processes, attitudes, and approaches to daily activities – essential activities in the workplace. Furthermore, cultural differences can be found in communication styles, decision-making styles, attitudes toward conflict, approaches to completing tasks, attitudes toward disclosure, and approaches to knowing.

Thus, it is crucial for Canadian citizens and Canadian organization to have knowledge – and appreciation – of how different cultures operate in the Canadian workplace and abroad.

#### Cultural intelligence helps!

Studies have already shown that organizations that have implemented forms of cultural intelligence have seen positive results in the following areas:

**Communication** – As culture is frequently at the heart of communication challenges or miscommunications, understanding cultural communication styles (from language to eye contact to technology) helps everyone communicate more effectively, in that common ground is identified, and thus people are able to surpass stereotypes and avoid conflict.

**Innovation** – Organizations with cultural intelligence in place are able to leverage their diversity and have a competitive advantage, as they are able to think on a multi-perspective, cross-cultural level.

**Trust** – Trust is an essential part of a thriving workplace. Different cultures, however, have different ways of building trust. Misunderstandings can arise between workers of different cultures before they have even created a sense of trust or credibility with each other. Trust is the link between communication and productivity.

**Productivity** – Research has proven time and time again the strong correlation between trust and productivity.

## Tips for Implementation

Earley and Mosakowski developed this six step approach for attaining good cultural intelligence:

1. Examine your CQ (cultural intelligence) strengths and weaknesses in order to establish a starting point.
2. Select training that focuses on your weaknesses.
3. Apply this training.
4. Organize support in own organization.
5. Enter the cultural setting, starting with focus on strengths.
6. Re-evaluation; possibly define further training.”



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## ON TOP OF DIVERSITY EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2008

### 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit on the Mature Workforce. | November 5, 2008. Calgary, AB.

We can only attract, retain and engage the mature worker if we reshape the way we react and respond to age in the workplace. But how do we do that? And how do we sustain it? This year's agenda includes the insider view on strategic workforce planning from 3 practitioners.

Register online: [www.workplaceinstitute.org](http://www.workplaceinstitute.org). Contact: Barbara Jaworski. T: 416.704.3517/ 1.866.864.9324. F: 416.762.7265. E: [bjaworski@workplaceinstitute.org](mailto:bjaworski@workplaceinstitute.org).



### LONDON WHEELCHAIR RELAY CHALLENGE | NOVEMBER 15, 2008

Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario presents the 9th annual Wheelchair Relay Challenge Saturday, November 15th, from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm. Join the Canadian Paraplegic Association at Carling Heights Optimist Centre and help raise funds for the programs and services that support individuals with a spinal cord injury. Whether you're looking for a corporate team building experience, a group outing or just an opportunity to get outside and have fun, this event is for you. To register contact Cassandra Lebel at 519-433-2331 or [cassandra.lebel@cpaont.org](mailto:cassandra.lebel@cpaont.org) or visit the Canadian Paraplegic Association website at [www.cpaont.org](http://www.cpaont.org)



### **Thought Leaders' Forum on the Future of Work.** | November 24, 2008. Toronto, Ontario.

A Conference Board of Canada event that focuses on the top workplace issues identified by past conference delegates and dealt with by workplace experts. The conference provides practical suggestions you can use at your organization.

Register online at <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/conf/Dec08/diversity/default.asp>

Contact: Rhiannon Simard. E: [simard@conferenceboard.ca](mailto:simard@conferenceboard.ca)

## DECEMBER 2008

### **Conference Board of Canada 2008 Workplace and Diversity Inclusiveness Forum.** | December 2--3, 2008. Toronto, Ontario.

This event features best practice case studies from innovative Canadian organizations, as well as insights and practical tips from thought leaders, to help you optimize inclusiveness in your organization.

For more information: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/conf/Dec08/diversity/default.asp>

Contact: Rhiannon Simard - [simard@conferenceboard.ca](mailto:simard@conferenceboard.ca)

## RECOMMENDED STORY

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### Halloween in the Office

By: [Susan M. Heathfield](#), About.com

"Traditions are important in companies just as they are in families. And, Halloween is one of the best holiday traditions to establish and to celebrate at work. I have a couple of Halloween stories for you today. Let's start with the Halloween in the office story that's freshest in my mind.



Today was our employees' day to bring their children trick or treating in the office. So around 4 p.m. an army of princesses, bunnies, bears, dragons, goblins, pumpkins, spidermen, super heroes, and even a unicorn, descended on our offices with their parents in tow. Cider, doughnuts and lots of candy highlighted the event. The children were beyond darling. I am so happy we sponsor this event each year. It's also an opportunity for families with similar interests to get to know each other.

## **Pagan Halloween**

Heading in a completely different direction, in my article about **celebrating Halloween in the office**, I wrote that it is not associated with religion in the minds of most employees. In response, I received a note from a Pagan reader who said she had expected to come to my HR site and find an article about diversity and inclusion for the most important Pagan and Wiccan day, Samhain. So, I said I'd explore the tie this week.

The early history of Halloween has pagan roots. But that history is either unknown or faded in memory to the thousands of people who **celebrate Halloween in the office**. Take this opportunity to **learn about Samhain** from About.com's Patti Wigington.

Celebrating Halloween at work appeals to the child in each of us and helps create a **motivational, team work-oriented work culture**. These tips will give you many ideas about how to plan and carry out a Halloween celebration at work."

This article was originally published on Wednesday October 29, 2008