

# Building Innovative and Diverse Teams

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# the Loudest Duck



Moving Beyond Diversity  
While Embracing Differences  
TO  
Achieve Success at Work

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# Diversity

- First start with what you sincerely believe
- Is diversity as simple as a mix of different people?
- Is diversity done for the purpose of satisfying a federal mandate? (Noah's Ark)
- Achieving diversity increases the likelihood of success?
- What, if any, is the relationship between diversity and innovation?



# Diversity and Innovation “Science”

- Companies with diverse leadership attain 73% more in revenue from innovation than less diverse companies <sup>1</sup>
  - Companies with diverse leadership and boards are 33% more likely to outperform less diverse companies on profitability <sup>1</sup>
  - 2015 Deloitte study found that idea generation was a critical factor that set breakthrough innovators apart from the rest <sup>2</sup>
- Diverse thinking and experience is essential for idea generation <sup>2</sup>

1. McKinsey & Company, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/delivering-through-diversity>  
2. Deloitte Innovation Solutions | Innovation Starts with Insight <https://www2.deloitte.com>

# Diversity and Innovation

## “Why isn’t the playing field level?”

- Differences – age, race, gender, dominant group, non dominant group, religion, culture, education, sexual orientation, political party, marital status, health, weight, beauty, financial status, language, accent....
- Culture – Grandma beliefs, myths, stories, fables, urban legends, cultural & social and bias, frames of reference breakthrough innovators apart from the rest
- Unconscious confirmation - beliefs & archetypes – myths, fables, urban legends
- Like to Like vs. Like to Unlike – what are you most comfortable with?

## Diversity and Innovation

### “Wheel, Duck, Nail, and Nice”

- U.S. Culture: The squeaky “**wheel**” gets the grease; speaking up will get you noticed and rewarded. Stand out to be an individualist.
- Chinese Culture: The loudest “**duck**” gets shot; speaking up might get you in trouble or even killed.
- Japanese Culture: The “**nail**” that sticks out gets hit on head; it’s better to fit in.
- Humility culture: If you can’t say anything “**nice**” don’t say anything at all; Only say nice things – don’t disagree.

## Diversity and Innovation “Lived Experiences”

- 32<sup>nd</sup> Accounting and Finance Squadron Commander, Incirlik Air Base, Turkey
  - Religious warfare...1994-1995
- 7<sup>th</sup> Comptroller Squadron Commander Dyess Air Force Base, Texas
  - Too quiet...1998-2000
- Mission Support Group Commander, Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi
  - He is just an Airman...2007-2009
- Chief Operating Officer, Department of Education, Office of Federal Student Aid
  - He has a husband...2019-2020

# Diversity and Innovation

## “Take Aways”

- Effective listening
- Solicit diverse views...especially difference from your own
- Encourage connections across the workplace
- Be inclusive and outwardly supportive of diversity efforts
- Interview a diverse group of candidates
- Provide development opportunities fairly
- Provide honest feedback

# Diversity and Innovation Questions

You must decide. Is it worth it?

