

https://dspace.org/

Managing diversity and attitude change in a South African food-processing company

Friedman, Michelle

2006-11-03T08:34:34Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/1597

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

This is a retrospective case study of an intervention aimed at transforming communication and interpersonal relations in a small company in South Africa. The objective was for the Innergize consultancy to integrate black factory workers and white office staff across race and class into one team by healing the psychological effects of *Apartheid*. The research questioned how change would be recognised and if it could be sustained within an organisation.

The workshop method used by Innergize separated the two groups so that conflict within the groups could be resolved, personal growth facilitated and attitudes towards race surfaced. Then the staff joined together and continued the process through communication, cultural exchange and gender awareness.

The staff developed on a personal level, interpersonally, and a climate of trust resulted. The success was partly due to individual attention given to each person, clearing the past before addressing the present, and offering tools for sustaining the process. Structures were set up to sustain changes at the organisational level, however the project ended abruptly, due to a number of factors.

The study concluded that in order for a transformation process to be successful at both interpersonal and organisational levels, management must remain committed to a long-term process.

Keywords: managing diversity; attitudes; healing; race; organisational change; personal growth; South Africa; workshops; communication.