

The Diversity and Inclusion Handbook

by Sondra Thiederman

Handbook Review by Gary Tomlinson

“A diverse and inclusive workforce is one of the most critical advantages and hidden secrets of today’s truly effective leaders and organizations. **Diversity** and **inclusion** are concepts that have evolved from responsible business objectives and employee engagement goals to become the essential ingredients for individual and organizational success today and in the future.”

“The foundation of any successful inclusion and diversity effort lies in the ability of each leader and each team member to communicate respect for people different from him or herself.” Sondra Thiederman has written a straightforward, simple to understand handbook that can be easily applied and one that will make an immediate change in both the person and the workplace. She believes that; “diversity is not an imposition, it’s an advantage; Inclusions is not a problem, it’s a solution; Working together is more than a good idea, it’s essential to individual and organizational success.”

Gary Tomlinson (reviewer) recently had the opportunity to interview the author, Dr. Sondra Thiederman.

Reviewer: What would be one or two key messages you’d like the reader to take away from *The Diversity and Inclusion Handbook*?

Sondra Thiederman: The biggest message I want readers to take away is that it’s imperative in our workplace today that we value the differences around us. Those differences might be gender, it might be age, it might be nationality or it might be different sets of abilities. But at the exact same time I believe we also need to focus on the common ground we all share. Every human being, regardless of their differences, shares a great deal more with one another than we realize. I believe there’s been a misconception in the workplace that says if we focus on what we have in common we are by definition devaluing the ways in which we differ. And that is wrong. That simple isn’t true. It’s very possible for us to value diversity, to value differences while simultaneously looking at identifying the common ground we all share. The two can live side by side.

Reviewer: What would you say to a CEO, or any manager for that matter, about the importance of this subject that goes beyond just the fact that it’s the right thing to do?

Sondra Thiederman: That’s a great question and one I’m glad you asked. There’ve been countless studies that firmly establish the fact that the more we value the differences between

each other and the more we identify the common ground we share in our work teams, the more productive and the more innovative we're going to be. An inclusive workgroup, project team or organization is one in which people of all backgrounds comfortably work together toward a common purpose. These unified teams have been proven to be more successful because the individuals on those teams trust each other and are more willing to share information and ideas. They have a sense of shared responsibility, a desire to collaborate and a preoccupation with solutions to achieve their goals. We need to value more of the ways we are different and more of the ways we are alike because that's what makes a team more productive and more innovative.

The Diversity and Inclusion Handbook is a WALK THE TALK[®] Publication. WALK THE TALK[®] Company helps individual acquire the skills and confidence they need to be effective leaders and helps organization develop cultures built on Ethics, Values and Superior Performance. They offer a full range of proven resources and customized services all designed to help you turn shared values like Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Customer Service, Trust and Commitment into workplace realities. You can purchase this handbook, as well as their other books, by giving them a call at (888) 822-9255 or visit their website at www.walkthetalk.com.

To learn more about Dr. Sondra Thiederman and her work, visit www.thiederman.com.

Gary Tomlinson is a business consultant and motivational speaker. As a business consultant he specializes in strategy execution management. He works with senior executives to help them clarify, deploy and achieve their organizational initiatives down to an individual level. Gary uses a unique and dynamic methodology that is part process, part software and part roadmap that enables his clients to close the gap between planning and implementation. As a motivational speaker, Gary's favorite topics are the "Art of Telling," "Making Change when Change is Hard" and "Top Ten Messages from Ten Top Books." You can engage Gary at gary@gary-tomlinson.com. To see his other book reviews, book reports and educational videos visit his website at www.gary-tomlinson.com.