

Read "An Organizational Behavior Moment" on page 76 at the end of Chapter 2 and on page 114 at the end of Chapter 3. Choose one of the two "Moments" and present your answer to the "Discussion Questions" at the end in a discussion posting, clearly identifying the topic chosen in the subject of the posting. Support your opinions by referencing sources such as the textbook or internet research. Be sure to cite your sources using APA format.

To receive full credit, respond to at least two other students' posts.

15. Watch a movie or TV show about another culture.
16. Attend a social event where you didn't know anyone.
17. Read a book written by a foreign author.
18. Listen to music from a different culture.
19. Attend an event where you were in a minority based on any demographic characteristic (age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation).
20. Learn something new about a country or culture other than your own.
21. Study a different language.
22. Attend an event about a different culture (an ethnic festival, a concert by musicians from a different culture, a student meeting of an ethnic group).
23. Have a conversation with someone from a different social class.
24. Develop a friendship with someone from a different background.
25. Discuss world affairs with someone who disagreed with you.

Scoring: Add up your total points for the 25 questions.

Scoring can range from 25 to 100

25–39: Your current environment is rather homogeneous. You can increase your DQ by making a concerted effort to reach out to people who are different from you, attend events that expose you to different cultures, and learn about people and cultures that differ from yours. Your score may be low because you live in an area where there is little diversity in people or cultural events. You will need to go out of your way to gain exposure to different cultures.

40–59: Your current environment could be more diverse than it currently is. You can increase your DQ by making a concerted effort to reach out to people who are different from you, attend events that expose you to different cultures, and learn about people and cultures that differ from yours.

60–79: Your environment is fairly culturally diverse. Look more closely at your scores for each question and determine whether there are any areas in which you can broaden your horizons even further. Perhaps, for example, you read and watch materials that expose you to different cultures but do not personally interact frequently with people who are different from you. If that is the case, join a club where you are likely to meet people different from yourself.

80–100: Your environment is quite culturally diverse. You experience a great deal of cultural variety, which should help prepare you for working in a culturally diverse work environment.

an organizational behavior moment

Project “Blow Up”

Big State University (BSU) is proud of the success of its international executive MBA (EMBA) program. The program is designed to bring together promising middle- and higher-level managers from around the globe for an exceptional learning experience. BSU's EMBA program has been ranked very highly by the business press. Alumni praise the program for its excellent faculty, networking opportunities, and exposure to colleagues from around the world. Students in the program can either attend weekend classes on BSU's campus or participate through distance-learning technology from campuses around the world.

One of the defining features of the program is the first-year team project. Students are randomly assigned to five-member teams. Each team has a faculty advisor, and each must develop a business plan for a startup company. A major part of the business plan involves developing a marketing strategy. The teams begin the project during orientation week and finish at the end of the next summer. Each team must turn in a written report and a business plan and make an hour-long presentation to the other students and faculty as well as several executives from well-respected multinational companies. Students must earn a passing grade on

the project to graduate from the program. The project is also a good way of meeting and impressing important executives in the business community.

The A-Team consists of five people, who did not know each other before the project began. They are:

- **Rebecca**—A 27-year-old marketing manager for a large, high-end Italian fashion company. Rebecca is a white female of Italian descent who was born and raised in New York City. Rebecca earned her bachelor's degree in business at the University of Virginia's McIntire Business School when she was 22. She speaks English, Italian, and Spanish fluently. She speaks a little German and Japanese as well. Rebecca is single. Her job involves analyzing worldwide markets and traveling to the 136 stores around the world that carry her company's clothes. She hopes the EMBA from BSU will help her to be promoted to an executive position.
- **Aran**—The 52-year-old founder and CEO of an Egyptian management consulting firm. His firm employs 12 people who consult with local companies on issues involving information systems. Aran is an Egyptian male who is a fairly devout Muslim. He earned his business degree 25 years ago at the American University in Cairo. He speaks English and Arabic fluently. Aran is married with two adult children. He is attending BSU's program because he wants to retire from his consulting firm and become an in-house information systems consultant to a large multinational firm.
- **Katie**—A 30-year-old financial analyst at a large Wall Street firm. At present, Katie's job requires little travel, but she works long hours as a financial analyst. Katie is an American female who does not consider herself to have any strong ethnic roots. She earned her business degree two years ago from New York University. Before going to college, she worked as a bank teller on Long Island. She was concerned about her lack of progress and went back to college to get a degree. She now wants to further her education to open up even more opportunities. Katie speaks only English. She is married but has no children. However, she cares for her elderly mother, who lives nearby in New Jersey.
- **Cameron**—A 23-year-old Internet entrepreneur who heads his own small but successful company. He is the youngest student BSU has ever accepted. He was something of a child prodigy, graduating from Georgia Tech at the age of 19 with a degree in computer science. Cameron is a single, African American male who has lived all over the United States. His company is based in Austin, Texas. He speaks only English. He is attending BSU's program because, though confident of his technical expertise, he

would like to learn more about business, since he is planning to expand his company.

- **Pranarisha**—A 31-year-old manager for a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that provides support to poverty-stricken areas of Thailand. Pranarisha's job is to coordinate efforts from a variety of worldwide charitable organizations. She speaks four languages fluently; however, she is not fluent in English. She graduated from the most prestigious university in Thailand. She is married with a four-year-old son and is a devout Buddhist. She is attending BSU's program at the request of her organization, so she can help to make the organization more efficient.

The A-Team was doomed almost as soon as the project began. The team's first task was to decide how roles would be allocated to individuals on the team.

Aran: Before we begin, we need to decide what everyone will be doing on this project, how we will divide and coordinate the work. Since I have the most experience, I should serve in the executive function. I'll assign and oversee everyone's work. I will also give the presentation at the end of the project, since I know how to talk to important people. Cameron will be in charge of analyzing the financial feasibility of our project, developing the marketing plan, and evaluating the technical operations. The girls will assist him in ...

Rebecca (Interrupting): Hold on a minute! First, we are not girls! Second, Cameron, Katie, and I decided last night over beers at happy hour that I should handle the marketing plan, Cameron the technical aspects, and Katie the financial aspects. You can serve as the coordinator, since you're not going to be attending class on campus—you can keep track of everything when we submit electronic reports.

Cameron: Yeah—your role would be to just make sure everyone is on the same page, but we'd individually decide how to conduct our own projects.

Aran: This team needs a leader and I ...

Cameron and Katie (in unison): Who says?

Rebecca: We're all responsible adults, and since the three of us are most accustomed to the Western way of doing business—which as we all know focuses on *individual empowerment*—then we'll get the most out of the project doing it our way.

Aran: You are all young and inexperienced. What do you know about the business world?

Katie: I know a lot more about finance than you.

Rebecca: Get with the twenty-first century. Just because we're women doesn't mean ...

Cameron: He isn't just ragging on women. He's ragging on me, too.

Katie: Yeah, but at least he gave you a real job. You're a guy—"Boy Wonder."

Cameron: What kind of crack was that? After all, you two didn't start your own company. You're a number cruncher, and Rebecca sells dresses, and ...

Rebecca: I think we need to stop this right now, and the four of us need to decide once and for all who is doing what!

Katie: Four of us? Wasn't our team supposed to have five people? Where's that other woman? The one from Vietnam? Parisa? Prana? Whatever her name is?

At this point, Professor Bowell, the group's advisor, walks in and tells them that the team is to be disbanded. Pranarisha had walked out of the group meeting (without anyone noticing) and informed Dr. Bowell that she just couldn't take it any longer. She had come here to learn how to run an organization more efficiently and how to work with businesspeople. However, she was so disheartened by the way the group was acting, she was

going to quit the program. This was the first time in over 10 years that Dr. Bowell had heard of anyone quitting the program in the first week because of the behavior of the members of her team. The advisor just didn't see any way that this group of individuals could get their act together to become a functioning team.

Discussion Questions

1. What happened with the A-Team? Why did the group process break down? What dimensions of diversity were responsible for the conflict?
2. Describe which barriers to effectively managing diversity were present in this situation.
3. What could have been done to manage the group process better?

team exercise

What Is It Like to Be Different?

One reason people have a difficult time dealing with diversity in others or understanding why it is important to value and respect diversity is that most people spend most of their lives in environments where everyone is similar to them on important dimensions. Many people have seldom been in a situation in which they felt they didn't belong or didn't know the "rules." The purpose of this exercise is to have you experience such a situation and open up a dialogue with others about what it feels like to be different and what you can personally learn from this experience to become better at managing diversity in the future.

STEP 1: Choose an event that you would not normally attend and at which you will likely be in the minority on some important dimension. Attend the event.

- You can go with a friend who would normally attend the event, but not one who will also be in a minority.
- Make sure you pick a place where you will be safe and where you are sure you will be welcomed, or at least tolerated. You may want to check with your instructor about your choice.
- Do not call particular attention to yourself. Just observe what is going on and how you feel.

Some of you may find it easy to have a minority experience, since you are a minority group member in your everyday life. Others may have a more difficult time. Here are some examples of events to consider attending:

- A religious service for a religion totally different from your own.
- A sorority or fraternity party where the race of members is mostly different from your own.
- A political rally where the politics are different from your own.

STEP 2: After attending the event, write down your answers to the following questions:

1. How did you feel being in a minority situation? Did different aspects of your self-identity become salient? Do you think others who are in minority situations feel as you did?
2. What did you learn about the group you visited? Do you feel differently about this group now?
3. What did people do that made you feel welcome? What did people do that made you feel self-conscious?

an organizational behavior moment

Managing in a Foreign Land

Spumonti, Inc., is a small manufacturer of furniture. The company was founded in 1987 by Joe Spumonti, who had been employed as a cabinetmaker in a large firm before he decided to open his own shop in the town of Colorado Springs. He soon found that some of his customers were interested in special furniture that could be built to complement their cabinets. Joe found their requests easy to accommodate. In fact, it wasn't long before their requests for custom furniture increased to the point that Joe no longer had time to build cabinets.

Joe visited a banker, obtained a loan, and opened a larger shop. He hired several craftspeople, purchased more equipment, and obtained exclusive rights to manufacture a special line of furniture. By 1997, the business had grown considerably. He then expanded the shop by purchasing adjoining buildings and converting them into production facilities. Because of the high noise level, he also opened a sales and administrative office several blocks away, in the more exclusive downtown business district.

Morale was very good among all associates. The workers often commented on Joe Spumonti's dynamic enthusiasm, as he shared his dreams and aspirations with them and made them feel like members of a big but close-knit family. Associates viewed the future with optimism and anticipated the growth of the company along with associated growth in their own responsibilities. Although their pay was competitive with that provided by other local businesses, it was not exceptional. Still, associates and others in the community viewed jobs with Spumonti as prestigious and desirable. The training, open sharing of information, and individual autonomy were noteworthy.

By 2009, business volume had grown to the extent that Joe found it necessary to hire a chief operating officer (COO) and to incorporate the business. Although incorporation posed no problem, the COO did. Joe wanted someone well acquainted with modern management techniques who could monitor internal operations and help computerize many of the procedures. Although he preferred to promote one of his loyal associates, none of them seemed interested in management at that time. Ultimately, he hired Wolfgang Schmidt, a visa holder from Germany who had recently completed his MBA at a German university. Joe thought

Wolfgang was the most qualified among the applicants, especially with his experience in his family's furniture company in Germany.

Almost immediately after Wolfgang was hired, Joe began to spend most of his time on strategic planning and building external relationships with key constituents. Joe had neglected these functions for a long time and felt they demanded his immediate attention. Wolfgang did not object to being left on his own because he was enthusiastic about his duties. It was his first leadership opportunity.

Wolfgang was more conservative in his approach than Joe had been. He did not like to leave things to chance or to the gut feel of the associates, so he tried to intervene in many decisions the associates previously had been making for themselves. It wasn't that Wolfgang didn't trust the associates; rather, he simply felt the need to be in control. Nonetheless, his approach was not popular.

Dissatisfaction soon spread to most associates in the shop, who began to complain about lack of opportunity, noise, and low pay. Morale was now poor, and productivity was low among all associates. Absenteeism increased, and several longtime associates expressed their intention to find other jobs. Wolfgang's approach had not been successful, but he attributed its failure to the lack of employee openness to new management methods. He suggested to Joe that they give a pay raise to all associates "across the board" to improve their morale and reestablish their commitment. The pay raise would cost the company \$120,000 annually, but Joe approved it as a necessary expense.

Morale and satisfaction did not improve, however. Shortly after the pay raise was announced, two of Spumonti's senior associates accepted jobs at other companies and announced their resignations. Wolfgang was bewildered and was considering recommending a second pay increase.

Discussion Questions

1. What weaknesses do you see in Joe's handling of Wolfgang?
2. Could Joe have anticipated Wolfgang's approach?
3. Can Wolfgang's career at Spumonti be saved?

team exercise

International Etiquette

A business traveler or expatriate must be aware of local customs governing punctuality, greetings, introductions, gift-giving, dining behavior, and gestures. Customs vary dramatically around the world, and what is accepted or even valued in one culture may be highly insulting in another. Many