Inclusive Leadership in the Private Healthcare Sector in South Africa – Netcare (Pty) Ltd – a case study

1. Purpose

South African workplaces are by definition multi-cultural melting pots, no more so than in the healthcare sector where employees provide healthcare services to a multitude of cultures and creeds (Netcare, 2011). In the 17 years since democracy, employers have made great strides in dealing with sensitivities around multi-cultural diversity and the Netcare Group is a prime example of this (Netcare, 2011).

This submission will share the methodology used by Netcare (Pty) Ltd, the largest private healthcare group in South Africa, within the Hospital Division which operates 54 Hospitals (a micro level within the company) to create and build an inclusive workplace.

1. Design/ methodology/ approach

The submission will share the processes and systems by which employee feedback is solicited and used to mutual advantage to create as well as perpetuate an authentic environment of inclusive leadership and develop workplace harmony (PNC, 2011)(Sharma, 2003) as a result. The submission will also show how different cultures and those previously disadvantaged have been empowered and advanced by not focusing on a pure numbers exercise vis a vis traditional affirmative action as opposed to a culture of inclusive leadership (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005)) (McKinsey, 2012) (Moss & Grunkemeyer, 2007) (Chapman & White, 2011). The use of a values-based culture (O’Malley, 2010) to create a common purpose within the organisation (Blanchard, 2010) (Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi, 2011)(Bacon, 2012)(Johnson, 2010) has been used and examples of same will be shared to illustrate the successes and learning opportunities (Guiliani, 2005).

1. Findings

Netcare (Pty) Ltd is South Africa’s largest private healthcare group with 54 registered private hospitals, which also provides primary care through the Primary Care Network, renal care through National Renal Care in partnership with Adcock Ingram, and emergency care through Netcare 911. Netcare (Pty) Ltd also work in partnership with the public healthcare sector in order to provide capacity and services to disadvantaged communities.

Netcare has achieved significantly in creating an inclusive workplace evidenced by the following:

* Most empowered company in the listed health sector for the third consecutive year (Financial Mail Top Empowerment Companies survey - 2011);
* Top Empowered Company of the Year (2011), Top Empowered Big Business and Top Empowered Company in Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals in the Metropolitan Oliver Empowerment Empowerment Awards (2011); and
* Level 1 Gold Community Contributor acknowledgement from the National Department of Social Development (2011) and the National CSI Registrar (2011).

From the employee engagement surveys conducted within the Company both by Deloitte (Pty) Ltd and Achievement Awards (Pty) Ltd, the Company has consistently been rated as a workplace which embraces inclusive leadership.

1. Research implications

The findings and opportunities/ learnings can be applied to the public health sector which is currently upgrading its management and facilities to provide for the proposed National Health Insurance. The findings can be applied to the private health care sector internationally and locally in South Africa in general.

1. Originality

The submission is entirely original and has not been presented in any academic or conference forum to date.

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