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On The Move

Diversity News

Duluth Racism Ads Drive Some Into A Rage • by Larry Oakes

Read the full article at: <http://www.startribune.com/local/139064969.html?page=1&c=y>

A close-up of a white woman's face on billboards plastered along major roads confronts motorists with a message, in large, black letters: "It's hard to see racism when you're white." The billboards are part of the Un-Fair Campaign, which also includes dozens of posters that have appeared in office windows, including one poster depicting a young woman with this message written in black marker across her forehead: "Is white skin really fair skin?" One of the stated goals of the campaign is to create a community dialogue. Hundreds of the city's white residents have complained that the campaign's kick-off images and messages are offensive. The campaign, they say, blames all racism on whites and implies that white people aren't smart enough to recognize racism. Meanwhile, the campaign's defenders and sponsors, including Mayor Don Ness, say they've received dozens of hateful messages and e-mails from all over the world, as news of the campaign hit websites that cater to white supremacists and other racists.

The Un-Fair Campaign, which launched the billboards in January 2012 and so far has spent \$4,600, didn't set out to shock or offend people, said Ellen O'Neill, executive director of the YWCA of Duluth, one of the campaign's 15 sponsors. She said the sponsors hope white people will try to imagine what it's like to be non-white in a place like Duluth, MN which is 90 percent white. "It's possible to never interact with a person of color here," O'Neill said. "It makes the problem more invisible." O'Neill said the campaign is directed at people 18 to 30 years old because market research indicated that people of that age group were more likely to lead behavior-changing movements, such as anti-smoking or recycling campaigns.

She said the stakes are high because only 25 percent of Duluth's black students and 34 percent of American Indian students graduate from high school in four years, compared with 80 percent of white students. Similarly, she said, census data indicate that only 18 percent of the city's whites live in poverty, compared to 67 percent of blacks and 56 percent of American Indians.

GE to Hire 5,000 Veterans

General Electric Co. plans to hire 5,000 veterans over the next five years and invest \$580 million to expand its aviation business. GE's "Hiring Our Heroes" partnership will help match veterans with jobs.

The company, whose products range from jet engines to light bulbs, will also team with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to sponsor 400 veterans' job fairs this year. GE currently employs more than 10,000 veterans and has about 100 U.S. employee reservists currently serving overseas.

GE, which is based in Fairfield, Conn., also plans to open several manufacturing training centers in locations such as Houston and Cincinnati to help build job skills.

DOL Requests Comments on Proposed Changes to Disabilities Rule

Submit comments through February 21, 2012 at <http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/503/>

The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs has announced a 14-day extension of the comment period for its proposed rule to revise regulations implementing Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The rule proposed by OFCCP would strengthen the affirmative action and reporting obligations of federal contractors by requiring them to set hiring goals, where 7 percent of their employees are qualified workers with disabilities. The proposed changes also detail mandatory actions contractors would have to take in the areas of recruitment, training, record-keeping and dissemination of affirmative action policies — obligations similar to those that have long been required to promote workplace equality for women and minorities. In addition, the rule would clarify OFCCP's expectations of contractors by providing specific guidance on how to comply with the law.



Speaking Up Is Hard To Do • By Elizabeth Bernstein

Read the full article at: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204136404577207020525853492.html?mod=WSJ_hps_sections_careerjournal

Have you ever clammed up at a party or found yourself tongue-tied at a meeting for fear of saying something stupid—even though you consider yourself at least as smart as anyone else in the room?

Research from scientists at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute offers an explanation of why many people become, in effect, less intelligent in small group settings.

If we think others in a group are smarter, we may become dumber, temporarily losing both our problem-solving ability and what the researchers call our "expression of IQ."

The clammering-up phenomenon seems to be more common in

women and in people with higher IQs, according to the report, published in January 2012 in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* journal.

The Virginia Tech scientists used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to study how the brain processes information about social status in a small group and how people's perception of their status affects their cognitive performance. They found that two primary factors influence how we behave in a group: personality and position, says Michael Woodward, an organizational psychologist in New York and author of "The You Plan: A Five-Step Guide to Taking Charge of Your Career in the New Economy."

If you are quiet in a group setting, it doesn't necessarily mean you are shy, but it does mean that you might be an introvert. Yet, even extraverts may choke in group settings if the boss is present or he feels others are more successful. So if you are ever in a situation where your brain shuts down like a frozen computer and you are the only one who can share diversity and inclusion facts, here are some ways to cope:

- *Join with someone who is more outgoing than you, or has a higher position within the group.*
- *Talk to the person running the meeting beforehand. Mention the points you want to discuss and ask for an opportunity to bring them up.*

- *Prepare. In a business meeting, know what you want to say, practice your delivery and bring notes. This will help prevent you from being distracted by what others are saying and wondering how you should respond.*
- *Take a break. If you are in a situation that is making you anxious or draining your mental energy, get some water or take a walk.*
- *Realize others in the room likely feel the same way. And remember: The people who froze the most in the Virginia Tech study were actually the smartest.*

UPCOMING EVENTS:

"REINVENTING DIVERSITY TRAINING" WEBINAR

Wednesday, February 22, 2012 at 1:00PM (EST)
Cost \$29

Register at
www.societyfordiversity.org

Creating the New Standards of Global Business • By Gregory Unruh

Read the full article at: http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/02/creating_the_new_standards_of.html

Not so long ago, businesses were merely expected to conform to the laws and regulations of the countries in which they operated. In states where there were efficient governments that represented the will of the public, this worked fine. But as business became more global, spreading to emerging and developing markets in pursuit of cheap resources and labor, corporate leaders entered countries with weak institutions, bureaucracy and corruption.

While distasteful, many businesses took a "when in Rome" approach and quietly engaged in bribery and other shady business practices that were the norm in the

respective country or region. Some corporate leaders even argued that it was a question of values. Who were they to impose the values of their home market on another country? That would be ethical imperialism.

That view has given way to a new reality. There is a growing recognition among global leaders that every decision they make — whether in the name of business efficiency or setting organizational culture — either reinforces existing practice or changes it in some way. Thus each decision represents an opportunity to forge new global standards of practice and to make these choices explicit.

With corruption, many business leaders feel like it is something forced on their organization by unscrupulous politicians. But there is both a supply and demand side to corruption. You

cannot have a market without both. And business is the supply side.

Many business leaders have begun to dedicate their organizations to this new norm and fight corruption. This is not easy and requires well-thought-out strategies, but many global leaders see it as an investment in the future. Corruption robs a company of the assets it competes on, like the quality of its product, the efficiency of its customer service and its reputation and brand equity. Thus fighting to make anti-corruption a global business norm is a fight to protect the company's assets and its future.

Corruption is just one example of these new standards being forged by global business leaders. Human rights, environmental protection, workplace equality and other important issues, are all implicit in the decisions of executives.



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