Keeping Your Edge

MANAGING A DIVERSE CORPORATE CULTURE

Produced in association with the Society for Human Resource Management

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Throughout our history, the demographics of the American workforce have shifted periodically, but almost never as dramatically as they have during the past decade. According to the 2000 census, for the first time, non-Hispanic whites are the minority population in the 100 largest U.S. cities. By 2010, almost half of all the nation’s new workers will be individuals traditionally classified as minorities. Since women will soon represent half of the U.S. workforce, corporations that have invested in diversity initiatives targeting women will be reaping the benefits in the very near future.

There is more to this picture. Workforce demographics, the census, common sense, and experience are sending a new message to the corporate world: In the 21st century, diversity means more than gender and race. Now, and in the years ahead, companies must consider other elements of diversity – age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities, and religion. Research is showing that companies that address these issues are the ones that will maintain a strong competitive edge in the recruitment of the most valuable new employees well into the foreseeable future.

While business has become focused on grappling with questions about the faltering economy, the problem of the skilled worker shortage has nevertheless remained firmly in place. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that between 1998 and 2005, 20.3 million new jobs will be created in the U.S. “In 2001, 1.2 million jobs could be created, if economic growth continues at the same rate as the second half of 2000,” reports the Employment Policy Foundation, a nonprofit organization focusing on workplace
trends and policies. “Of all the newly created jobs in the economy, some 500,000 could go unfilled as the U.S. continues to face a critical shortage of skilled workers.”

At the same time, a survey conducted in 2000 by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in conjunction with CareerJournal.com indicates that 62 percent of job seekers prefer to work for organizations with a demonstrated commitment to diversity.

THE EFFECT ON THE BOTTOM LINE
Affirmative action programs, mandated by the government, were first recognized and established in corporate management policies in the 1970s. Diversity programming gained a broader corporate foothold only in the politically correct decades that followed. The consensus today goes one step further: Employers, employees, and customers alike agree that diversity initiatives make good business sense from both the employees and customer perspective. While the topic is now de rigueur on the business agenda, its success still depends on support from the top of the corporate ladder.

An ongoing study of FORTUNE 500® companies conducted by the Diversity Analysis Research Team (DART) at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania is measuring diversity’s effects on employee performance. Its preliminary data provide some statistical proof of the positive correlation between diversity, performance, and organizational practices that determine how diverse groups are created, led, and managed. Karen A. Jehn, Ph.D., codirector of the study with Yekaterina Bezrukova, Ph.D., reports: “The greater a company’s diversity in a given department, the higher potential it has to perform well. Specifically, groups that have human resource practices focusing on the value of diversity outperform those that do not.”

The groups being studied by DART are differentiated by gender, race, age, level of education, tenure with the company, and functional background. The researchers also note that groups with high gender diversity performed twice as well as groups with lower levels, and groups with a high level of racial diversity are more intensely focused on career advancement and professional success.

In a survey conducted in 2001 by SHRM entitled “The Impact of Diversity Initiatives on the Bottom Line,” respondent companies that had few structured diversity initiatives stated that the main reasons for the lack of structure are time and money. Expenses, they said, were related to training, staff salaries, consulting fees, and additional recruitment efforts. But such organizations might also take into consideration the fact that successful diversity initiatives lead to greater employee loyalty, retention, and productivity. The benefits can often equal, if not outweigh, the costs.

CREATING A DIVERSE WORKPLACE
When a corporation creates a strategy that makes diversity one of its core corporate values, its first step is usually to write a mission statement. This is followed by the development of a program that integrates diversity goals into corporate operations. Such a program might include revamped recruitment practices, affinity groups for employees, outreach to new hires, mentoring programs, linking diversity objectives to performance standards, and financial support of diversity initiatives through corporate philanthropy.

As Fred J. Kleiner, chairman and CEO of Wyndham International, Inc., says, “Diversity must be an integral part of the corporate culture. To accomplish this at Wyndham, we are actively involving all levels of employees in the creation and implementation of our program.”

For the past 30 years or so, the focus has been on recruiting minorities and women, often via ancillary programs directed to colleges and universities. Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. has a track record which proves that college recruitment offering special training and work experience will produce future leaders. Con Ed’s Management Intern Program for recent college graduates with business and engineering degrees helps new employees make the transition from school to work through a series of rotational assignments, mentoring, and panel assessments.

But in today’s market, such a focus is just the beginning; the creation of a diversified workforce is now geared to a much broader group of individuals. Martha R.A. Fields, author of Indispensable Employees: How to Hire Them, How to Keep Them, says, “When developing a successful targeted recruitment strategy, it is important to combine recruitment with retention programs that offer continual learning and support such as mentoring and affinity groups.”

Truly committed companies must maintain an inclusive corporate culture that offers attractive opportunities for advancement. Notes Cornelia Gamlem, a SHRM board member: “There is a greater variety of issues addressed in diversity initiatives today. Organizations have realized that diversity is less about representation of women and racial groups and more about understanding and respecting individual differences. Executives and managers must encourage inclusivity by setting examples and offering training programs that teach people from different backgrounds to work together.”
Pitney Bowes Is Ahead of the Curve on Generational Diversity

Pitney Bowes, the leading global provider of integrated mail, messaging, and document management solutions, is also a leader when it comes to generational diversity.

Johanna G. Torsone, vice president and chief human resources officer, says, “It is important to maximize the talent and expertise of all generations and create a welcoming and inclusive environment. To achieve this, we must continue to recognize each employee’s uniqueness and develop programs that serve Generation X and Y employees as well as baby boomers considering retirement.”

Members of Pitney Bowes’ Diversity Leadership Councils are constantly seeking new strategies and programs to deal with issues such as diversity training, regulatory barriers, modes of communications among employees, high turnover among Generation Y employees, and transitional employment for those about to retire. How can multitasking and team-based cooperation solve managers’ problems? Questions such as these are addressed by the company’s leadership development program.

Life Works Online, the intranet service of Pitney Bowes’ Life Balance Resources program, assists employees with life cycle events and issues. Workers of all ages find it helpful. Baby boomers use it to help locate colleges for their kids or Medicare forms for their parents. Generation Xers use it to locate child care or summer programs for school-age children. Generation Y will surf the site to find an apartment or purchase an automobile.

For Michael Critelli, Pitney Bowes’ chairman and CEO, flexibility is the key to solving generational challenges: “Flexible benefits, remuneration, work schedules, policies and procedures, will help us recruit and retain our workforce. But these programs must not only be flexible and customizable enough to satisfy different needs of our employees, but standard enough to realize critical operating efficiencies and innovative in design in order to manage additional costs.”

“THE GREATER A COMPANY’S DIVERSITY IN A GIVEN DEPARTMENT, THE HIGHER POTENTIAL IT HAS TO PERFORM WELL.”
– KAREN A. JEHN, PHD

3 percent of FORTUNE 500 executives are members of a nonwhite minority group.

One of the best ways to broadcast to diverse populations the message that advancement is possible for them is to have someone from their number at the top of the corporate ladder. Until this goal is achieved, firms can take other steps toward diversity. Mentoring, for example, has long been valued as a powerful force for career development, and mentoring programs that nurture the careers of women and minority employees can be found in many corporations. Other companies offer employees the opportunity to attend programs such as the leadership institutes offered by UCLA’s Anderson School. These forums provide supportive environments in which participants can openly discuss key management issues.

BENEFITS THAT ATTRACT AND RETAIN EMPLOYEES

In its 2000 survey of the 50 Best Companies for Minorities, FORTUNE magazine listed three primary qualities that women and minority job hunters seek: competitive salaries, fulfilling work, and a legitimate opportunity for advancement. Despite progress in salary equity, some studies reveal that women still earn only about three-quarters of what their male counterparts do.

Both female and minority employees are very conscious of a long history of compensation disparity with their white male coworkers. The 2001 SHRM survey shows one way corporations are dealing with this problem: Some two-thirds of the respondents (67 percent) report that their companies audit compensation systems at least once a year to uncover potential inequities among different groups of employees. Such a step declares – loud and clear – that management takes a proactive approach toward remunerative equality rather than waiting for complaints or litigation.

A count of female CEOs at FORTUNE 500 companies is often used as another measure of women’s progress in corporate America. The results remain startling; in the magazine’s 2001 list, there are only two female CEOs among the 500. When the additional 500 companies in the FORTUNE 1000 are factored in, only four more women CEOs are added. Evidently, the glass ceiling is still firmly in place. And the picture in the top corporate ranks is no better for racial minorities, regardless of gender: While more than one-third of the country’s population is nonwhite, only about one-third of the 2001 Fortune 500 executives are members of a nonwhite minority group.

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Affinity and support groups are also widely used tools. Where they don’t already exist, employees like Jim Tribiano may take the initiative to create their own. When he arrived at Georgia Power, a division of Southern Company, Tribiano looked around and saw a lot of forty-something workers, but very few in their twenties and thirties. Knowing that he wanted a long-term career at the company, he decided to establish a newcomers’ network that would make Georgia Power a more enticing place for younger people. Now into its second year, the New Professionals Group he created regularly attracts a crowd for meetings and gets Georgia Power’s wholehearted support.

Encouraging cross-gender and cross-racial mentorships, rewarding managers for participation in mentoring programs, and giving managers “diversity ratings” in their performance reviews are becoming more commonplace. Linking managers’ take-home pay to their implementation of diversity strategies has proven effective: a full 76 percent of FORTUNE magazine’s 50 Best Companies for Minorities award bonuses to managers who achieve measurable diversity goals.

In the March 2000 issue of SHRM’s HR Magazine, Margaret Simms, vice president for research at the Joint Center for Economic and Political Studies, points to employer-sponsored as well as independent affinity groups that are beginning to fill the traditional role of mentors. With effective links to senior management and a company’s human resource department, these networks can ultimately lead to higher employee retention and better performance. Catalyst, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of women in business, affirms that mentoring and network development are two of the top 10 tactics for cracking the glass ceiling.

**OTHER ISSUES IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

Another set of issues confronting human resource managers in the multigenerational workplace is articulated by Pitney Bowes chairman and CEO Michael J. Critelli. “As baby boomers retire, corporations risk losing institutional memory and understanding of legacy systems,” he says. “We see shifts in skill levels, job focus, and work ethic, and changes in the type of work that needs to be done. There’s a certain

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**Incorporating Diversity into the Wyndham Culture**

One of Wyndham International, Inc.’s top business objectives for 2001 is to put in place a formal companywide diversity program that affords strategic, economic, and customer value: strategic value in the higher level of market alignment and organizational performance it can provide; economic value through the $2 trillion in aggregate income that minority markets represent; and customer value in the way that guest loyalty is earned through recognizing and meeting individual needs.

“I want diversity to be more than a corporate initiative at Wyndham hotels and resorts,” says Fred J. Kleisner, chairman and chief executive officer. “I want it to be a living part of our culture, a belief system and service philosophy that permeates from each of our employees.”

Stressing his personal commitment to diversity, Kleisner has enrolled all levels of management throughout the organization to develop diversity plans for their individual hotels and offices. In addition, the performances of those managers will be appraised going forward against the efforts they establish.

Three committees have been created at Wyndham to ensure the appropriate steps are taken: an Internal Diversity Steering Committee, made up of corporate associates who lead these efforts; a Diversity Field Input Committee, made up of employees from throughout the organization who provide guidance and feedback; and an External Diversity Advisory Board, consisting of outside experts who provide counsel on key issues.

“Diversity is not only the No. 1 initiative in human resources; but for me personally, it is my No. 1 goal,” says Mary Watson, senior vice president, human resources. “I am 100 percent committed to creating a culture that embraces and celebrates our differences – one that creates an enriching and rewarding experience for all who come in contact with it.”

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Fred J. Kleisner, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Wyndham International
Supplier diversity is not an isolated program at Philip Morris,” says chief operating officer William Webb, “but an integral part of how we see our role in the world and how we conduct our business.” According to The Wall Street Journal, this philosophy has made Kraft Foods, an operating company of the Philip Morris Companies – which also includes Miller Brewing Company, Philip Morris U.S.A., and Philip Morris International – one of the country’s pioneers in supplier diversity.

In the early 1980s, the company formalized years of experience with minority vendors by creating the Supplier Diversity Program. Commenting on its business value, Director of Supplier Diversity for Kraft Foods Sharon Patterson says, “Minority and women suppliers, like small businesses in general, are often more innovative, faster, and flexible than larger companies. Having access to goods and services from the best and widest variety of suppliers is just common sense.”

The program also helps the marketing divisions of Philip Morris understand important segments of increasingly diverse U.S. markets. Suppliers agree. George Hill, president of Adhesive Systems, a Philip Morris vendor, affirms the company’s catalytic role: “It takes great effort and integrity to run a program that truly identifies, develops, and sources minority companies committed to customers and the community. Philip Morris does this with compassion, concern, and real interest.”

Recently, Philip Morris hosted the first-ever Supplier Diversity Billion Dollar Roundtable (BDR). Together with nine other charter members inducted into the BDR, Philip Morris was recognized for leadership in supplier diversity and its achievement of spending more than a billion dollars’ annually with minority- and women-owned businesses. Through its example and participation in the BDR, Philip Morris hopes to inspire other companies to solidify their commitment to supporting diverse suppliers.
Pitney Bowes
AD page
Impact of Diversity Initiatives on the Bottom Line

A SHRM SURVEY OF THE FORTUNE 1000

Creating and managing diversity is a corporate imperative in 21st century America. When companies consider their diversity initiatives today, the conventional issues of race and gender are being joined by ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion. As was made clear by the 2000 census, the U.S. continues to attract new immigrants, while Latino and African-American populations in the U.S. are growing rapidly. In an economy in which companies find themselves ever more competitive for employees and market share, companies must continue to address race and gender, while expanding initiatives to reflect the changing demographics of the U.S.

In a new survey of companies on the FORTUNE 1000 list, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) reports on the impact diversity initiatives have on the bottom line. “Companies that recognize the strategic value of human capital are the companies that succeed,” says Helen Drinan, president and CEO of SHRM. “In today’s marketplace, where a company’s competitive edge is its people, top U.S. companies agree that a diverse workforce means a significant impact on the bottom line.”

DO DIVERSITY STRATEGIES WORK?
In this new century, special attention is being paid to programs designed to create an inclusive corporate culture. A decade since these programs became mainstream, CEOs and managers are beginning to ask: Are they working? Evaluations can pinpoint the most effective techniques and operations and serve as a guide to those who are developing new programs.

The latest survey appears to answer the question, “Are they working?” with a resounding “yes.” A full 91 percent of the survey’s respondents believe that diversity initiatives help an organization maintain a competitive advantage. A majority of respondents cite additional benefits, such as improvement in corporate culture (83 percent); better employee morale (79 percent); higher employee retention and recruitment (76 and 75 percent, respectively); and decreased complaints and litigation (68 percent). Many maintain that diversity also encourages creativity (59 percent), decreases interpersonal conflict among coworkers (58 percent), facilitates progress into new markets (57 percent), and improves client relations (55 percent) – all factors that leave their imprint on the bottom line.

IMPLEMENTING DIVERSITY INITIATIVES
Diversity training, which SHRM considers fundamental to any diversity initiative, provides the opportunity for a company to enable senior management and staff to develop concrete skills that will facilitate enhanced productivity and communications among employees of different backgrounds. Almost half of the survey’s respondents report that they have increased their diversity training efforts during the last three years, and 66 percent say they plan to augment...
Leveraging Diversity, an awareness and skills-based training program. In the first year, nearly 2,700 employees at all levels have participated in the 200 sessions tailored to the individual cultural needs of our offices around the world.

Robert Selander, MasterCard’s president and chief executive officer, appointed a Diversity Council made up of a cross-section of line managers from MasterCard’s strategic business units worldwide. The council, which Mr. Selander co-chairs, has developed and implemented a series of initiatives aimed at helping MasterCard compete more effectively within the global payments industry by attracting, developing, and retaining top talent.

MasterCard has tracked its progress against key performance indicators, such as education, strategic inclusion, and career development. We regularly communicate the status of these initiatives to our employees, who are more fully aware and engaged in the concept and practice of diversity.

In today's increasingly competitive global marketplace, MasterCard considers diversity a business imperative tied to our corporate strategy of providing targeted, customer-focused services to our members and to consumers around the world.

We view diversity as understanding, respecting, valuing, and leveraging differences and similarities within MasterCard. Our diversity efforts focus on ensuring that MasterCard's work environment, policies, and practices provide each employee with an equal opportunity to use his or her individual skills and experiences to contribute to our business goals.

MasterCard is furthering its efforts to promote and increase diversity globally. To assist in this effort, we established a team dedicated to Diversity and Work-Life efforts, and successfully launched Diversity Contributes to Business Goals at MasterCard.

Robert W. Selander, President and Chief Executive Officer, MasterCard International

Diversity Contributes to Business Goals at MasterCard

Wyndham
1/2 page AD
such programs in 2001, a convincing demonstration of faith in the benefits of inclusivity.

Companies that responded to the survey make diversity training available to managers (99 percent) and executives (89 percent), as well as other full- and part-time employees (84 and 63 percent, respectively). While participation in some diversity training programs remains voluntary, more than half the respondents report that their company mandates training for all full-time workers, regardless of their employment level.

The widespread belief in inclusiveness is further reflected by the fact that a full one-half of respondents maintain staff dedicated exclusively to encouraging diversity. The organizations’ three most common initiatives are diversity-focused recruiting (75 percent), training and education (66 percent), and community outreach (61 percent). Recognizing that increased awareness and inclusive hiring are the first steps toward success, companies nowadays reach out further than ever to veteran and potential workers, offering diversity-related career development opportunities such as mentoring (39 percent) and special promotion opportunities to break the “glass ceiling” (20 percent); celebrations of cultural markers (38 percent) like Black History Month; and bilingual and English as second a language (22 and 19 percent, respectively) training programs. It is initiatives such as these that will retain the diverse talent targeted recruiting efforts have brought to an organization.

Fewer than one-fifth of respondents indicate that their organizations have either very informal efforts or nothing structured at all in the way of diversity programs. This is most frequently attributed to lack of time on the part of the staff (41 percent of these respondents), followed by high costs (18 percent), the absence of federal/local mandates (16 percent), and philosophical opposition (9 percent).

AN EXPANDING DIVERSITY AGENDA

For companies with diversity programming already in place, race (96 percent) and gender (88 percent) still top the list of concerns, but things are changing. In light of the 2000 census reporting explosive growth in minority populations, we see a correlated 85 percent of corporate diversity strategies designed to address ethnicity. Other changes in workforce demographics are being met head-on by programs dealing with age (65 percent), disability (64 percent), sexual orientation (57 percent), and religion (54 percent).

How can the success of diversity initiatives be measured? Most respondents (88 percent) suggest looking at changes in staff demographics. Others recommend conducting employee opinion surveys (79 percent) and tracking complaints and lawsuits (55 percent). Whatever methods a company employs, it is widely agreed that each measurement check should provide feedback that can be used to shape future plans, thus making evaluation an integral part of the ongoing process to achieve diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace.

SHRM members may download the full report, free of charge, at www.shrm.org/surveys; nonmembers may purchase the report by calling 1-800-444-5006.
of new workers with diverse religious beliefs pose questions regarding, for instance, flexibility in business attire and work hours. Some corporations now offer religious diversity training specifically to promote understanding and tolerance.

The influx of new immigrants into the workforce is accompanied by the need to understand new cultures and their characteristics – most notably, language. The Hispanic population is the fastest-growing minority group in the U.S. and, according to projections, will account for almost one-quarter of the country’s total population by 2050. Companies are starting to recognize that one detriment to the career advancement of Hispanics is the language barrier, and they are taking action. In SHRM’s 2001 survey, 22 percent of responding companies are including bilingual training for managers and employees in their diversity initiatives, and 19 percent offer company-paid training in English as a second language.

Of all seven aspects of diversity investigated in the SHRM study, sexual orientation is perhaps the most sensitive. Thus, some managers take it for granted that all employees are heterosexual, which can create corporate policies that neglect the needs of some workers. Last fall, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, a bipartisan non-profit organization dedicated to advancing equality based on sexual orientation, gender expression, and identity, reported that 77 of the top 100 companies on the FORTUNE 500 include sexual orientation in their nondiscrimination policies.

In addition, from August 1999 to the fall of 2000, the number of FORTUNE 500 companies that offer or announced their intention to offer same-sex domestic partner benefits jumped 46 percent, from 70 to 102.

DIVERSITY EXTENDS BEYOND RECRUITMENT
Experience shows that a reputation for diversity in the workplace speaks loudly and positively to consumers. A diverse workforce enhances a company’s understanding of its diverse markets, particularly when doing business globally or in culturally diverse domestic arenas. Programs that address supplier diversity hold purchasing managers responsible for increasing the number of and volume of business conducted with minority- and women-owned vendors.

“Supplier diversity programs help to create more businesses, more entrepreneurship, more employment, and

(Continued on page S17)
UCLA’s Executive Education Programs Prepare Managers for Organizational Leadership and Career Advancement

UCLA’s Leadership Suite of executive education programs is composed of the African American Leadership Institute; Women’s Leadership Institute; Latino Leadership Institute; and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Leadership Institute.

Held at The Anderson School at UCLA, the suite of programs is based on research conducted by Professor William G. Ouchi, who found that several groups of executives face important obstacles to career advancement. Those whose gender, culture, race, or sexual orientation differ from the white male corporate majority often do not find peers or a support system as they move up the organizational ladder. The five-day institutes held at the top-ranked Anderson School provide supportive environments in which participants can openly discuss key management issues from a personal, interpersonal, and organizational perspective.

“The UCLA Leadership Institutes are extremely popular with both executive participants and their organizations because they deliver results,” says Laurie Dowling, director of Anderson’s Office of Executive Education Programs.

“Participants learn fresh ways of leading and managing and return to their organizations better prepared for promotion and increased responsibility. They gain critical leadership skills, career-enhancing strategies, and network bonds that will enable them to increase their visibility, productivity, and value to their organizations.”

Participants explore specific issues and hidden biases that might inhibit advancement. They discuss topics such as the use and abuse of power, mentoring, managing overt and covert prejudices, stereotyping, internal entrepreneurship and change management, and the role of gender, race, or sexual identity differences in workplace dynamics.

The Society for Human Resource Management

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the leading voice of the human resource profession. SHRM provides education and information services, conferences and seminars, government and media representation, online services, and publications to more than 160,000 professional and student members throughout the world. SHRM has long recognized the competitive advantage gained by companies that seek and support a diverse workforce. SHRM believes the future success of organizations worldwide will depend on their ability to recognize and adapt to rapidly changing workforce demographics. Creating an environment that allows employees to better understand, appreciate, and interact with others and allows them to contribute to an organization’s work program has a direct, positive impact on an organization’s bottom line. To learn more about SHRM, call 800-283-7476 or visit www.shrm.org.
Sensitivity to and acceptance of diversity aren’t optional. “Strengthening communities by reaching out to diverse suppliers has been a cornerstone of Philip Morris’ business policy for more than 20 years. By learning to reach out to diverse suppliers, we also learn to reach out to diverse customers.”

Studies show that customers and clients also weigh a company’s diversity reputation when making purchasing decisions, a particularly important factor as manufacturers watch the redistribution of America’s purchasing power. The Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business reports that minority buying power almost doubled in the last decade. In 2001, African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans represent a projected $1.31 trillion in disposable income. And the single largest minority in the U.S. - people with disabilities – collectively possess a disposable annual income of more than $175 billion.

All in all, it is abundantly clear that a healthy corporate culture is one in which all employees feel welcome. A good corporate diversity program helps create that culture while boosting employee loyalty and morale and a company’s overall productivity. Most important, as Robert W. Selander, president and CEO of MasterCard International says, “Sensitivity to and acceptance of diversity aren’t optional. They represent a better way of life and a better way to conduct business.”

Con Edison’s Management Intern Program Receives High Ratings

Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc., supplier of electricity, steam, and gas to New York City and Westchester County for more than a century, takes pride in helping create the energy that runs the nonstop city. Also known as a leader in diversity, Con Edison was nationally recognized in 2000 when its name appeared on Working Woman magazine’s Top 25 Companies for Executive Women and FORTUNE magazine’s list of America’s 50 Best Companies for Minorities. The company’s Management Intern Program and Blue Collar Prep Program for women interested in nontraditional job categories have been singled out as models.

Saumil Shulka, Con Edison’s first woman plant manager, was a Management Intern. She recalls: “When I was recruited upon graduating from City College of New York, I discovered the excitement of power generation. The rotational assignments gave me an understanding of the business and how it operates.” After completion of her internship, Con Edison’s encouragement led Shulka to embark on a trailblazing, 18-year career in power generation. Recently, she took on another challenge, becoming a plant manager in the telecommunications arena.

Con Edison did not wait until his graduation to recruit Carlos Torres. He was still an undergraduate engineering student at the New Jersey Institute of Technology when he joined the company’s co-op program. Torres’ next stop, the Management Intern Program, encouraged him to set high goals and create a long-term career plan while developing and refining his talent and experience. “My official and unofficial mentors made an invaluable contribution to my development and success,” says Torres, currently a section manager of Con Edison Bronx/Westchester Electric Operations.

Today, both Shulka and Torres acknowledge the value of their intern experience by enthusiastically recruiting new Con Edison interns and serving as mentors themselves.