

3. Define diversity management in your own words...
4. What would you say are the three main benefits of diversity management in your company?
5. Can you give an example of discrimination in the workplace?
6. Can you give an example of an intervention to combat inequality in the workplace?
7. In your opinion, what are the three categories of people most often affected by differences in treatment within companies?
8. What do you think would be the most interesting approaches to human resources management within a company, in order to promote diversity and equality in the workplace?
9. What is your opinion on "positive action" in favour of certain vulnerable groups in the labour market, to facilitate their inclusion? For example: job quotas for women or immigrants.
10. What is your position on "reasonable accommodation" for certain groups experiencing difficulties in the labour market, to make it easier for them to stay in work? For :
 - flexible working hours for Ramadan observers,
 - a hearing system for people with impaired hearing
 - end-of-career management for people in their sixties...
11. What concrete things did you learn about managing diversity in the workplace from this introduction?
12. Do you think diversity management is a necessity for companies?
13. Do you think that knowledge of the principles of diversity management can help to avoid or overcome misunderstandings and other relational difficulties at work?

How Can I Learn More:(Activity/Thing to do)

Racist incidents within the team: from mediation to a diversity plan...

Analysis of a real-life situation

"Autaquet"

- *Autaquet* is a cooperative and social integration organisation employing 40 people in four business areas, including sorting and recycling.
- The company's aim is to provide access to goods (second-hand objects) and services (collections, etc.) for people in financial difficulty and to promote the long-term integration of its workers, who are initially far from employment.
- The company has a director and a team leader for each of the business sectors.
- They came from the initial team of workers and were promoted to managers as the company grew.
- The principle of valuing skills and recognising experience is a value at Autaquet.
- In one of the teams, the manager makes racist jokes, and a worker of African origin feels hurt by these remarks.
- The tension between him and the rest of the team is palpable.
- One day, pushed to the limit, the worker loses his temper and gets angry. He damaged equipment and was rude to a customer.
- Management decided to dismiss him for serious misconduct. The team manager was also dismissed!

- Other workers of African origin are marked by these events.
- The group dynamic is tense and there is no longer any relationship of trust between the workers.
- Under the guise of humour, racist jokes are being made again, and some immigrant workers are afraid of losing their cool and being sacked in turn...
- **A new team leader has been hired, with the challenge of restoring trust and setting limits so that racist jokes and similar behaviour stop.**

Test Yourself:

1.2. You're the team leader! How are you going to react?

- Answer this question spontaneously and concisely.
 - Write down your answers.
 - Keep them.
 - Then take a look at the specialist advice on the next page.
 - And compare!
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- **Specialist advice is offered as an example, to inspire you to take action on your own issues and to encourage you to take action yourself!**
 - **This is not intended to force you to use the services of these specialists.**
 - **However, some of these services are free, others are not, and specialist centres may be located nearby or, like IRFAM, provide remote advice.**
 - **Other resources are available online, and you will be given details throughout this document. Take these videos, for example. Don't hesitate to use them!**

Here is the response of a mediation team to the "Autaget" situation

1.2.1. Documenting the request

- When the Autaget manager contacts them, the mediators ask about the company's background and expectations:
 - A series of measures have already been taken by management in response to the first case of harassment, which resulted in the dismissal of two people.
 - It is important to note that management did not side with one of the parties, and excluded both, the angry worker who chose violence in his reaction and the former manager, the instigator of the harassment.
 - However, no complaint has been lodged with the courts.
- Mediators consult a local anti-discrimination centre for legal advice:
 - The racist nature of the incident has been confirmed.
 - The company manager is legally liable if a member of staff displays harassing or racist behaviour towards another employee of the company.
 - For example, the Belgian law on protection against violence and harassment in the workplace condemns undesirable behaviour linked, among other things, to a person's alleged race, which has the effect of undermining their dignity and

creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment around them.

- In this situation, the perpetrator and his manager are liable to be prosecuted before the employment tribunals for harassment and discrimination.
- If the perpetrator is responsible for the victim, as in this case, this is an aggravating circumstance.
- Furthermore, legislation on well-being at work and against harassment requires company managers to anticipate as far as possible, and in any event to deal with this type of incident as quickly as possible, by prohibiting, for example, employees and managers from making racist, degrading and/or harassing comments, and by protecting the working environment from indiscreet questions, innuendoes, informal checks or arbitrary decisions to sideline an employee.
- The company can use any preventive approach: [internal rules](#), [charter of values or "diversity" charter](#), (example) [training \(VIDEO\)](#), [awareness-raising](#), [posters](#), [distribution of brochures or videos](#), [consultation with trade unions](#), appointment of a [trustworthy person](#), etc.
- Most EU countries have developed online tools for a diverse and inclusive working environment. The French-language Belgian site is [ediv.be](#). [There is also a Dutch version](#). For English : [Australia](#) - [Canada](#) - [GB](#).

1.2.2. Advising and supporting the operational manager

- A discussion is held with the team manager responsible for managing the dispute.
- It is informed about [laws on well-being at work](#) ([EN](#), [DE](#)), harassment and racism.
- He or she will act as a [point of contact](#) within the company for these matters.
- He will receive [training](#) in diversity and inclusion.
- To restore trust within the team and avoid tensions escalating, it is worth considering measures at several levels:
 - at management level;
 - at team level.

1.2.3. Working with management.

- A meeting with the manager revealed that she has training in human resources and anti-discrimination legislation.
- It has decided to dismiss the two parties involved in the dispute in order to send a clear signal to all workers: *"No more of that here!"*
- She is surprised by these facts, as she remembers that several years ago the team had taken an [anti-discrimination awareness](#) course, as well as [training in intercultural communication](#).
- This time she wants to *"take the bull by the horns"*...
- A new manager (and support person) was quickly recruited. He is of Moroccan origin.
- Employees are informed of its role at a special meeting of employees. The Director gives an introduction at this meeting, explaining the reasons for organising it.
- Concrete measures have been launched:
 - A clear procedure for reporting cases of harassment has been drawn up and disseminated to put a stop to abuses and to remind everyone of their responsibilities, as well as the [criteria protected by anti-discrimination law](#) ([EN](#), [DE](#), [NL](#)).
 - A support person is appointed. This person is "neutral" and has just joined the company. She is of foreign origin.
 - Questions on harassment and/or discrimination have been included in an anonymous survey currently being conducted within the company on psychosocial risks (stress,

burnout, etc.). At the end of the year, the results will be included in the annual report distributed to all the company's employees and partners.

- Disciplinary measures are now specified in the work regulations in the event of harassment or discrimination. The new version of the regulations will be posted in the company and distributed to employees on signature.

Test Yourself:

Assessment questions

- The mediators scrutinise the management's actions through an external evaluation.
 - All the management's comments are relevant in *principle*.
 - However, the outside observer, eager for methodological details, is entitled to question some of the proposals.
 - Can you answer these questions?
1. We are talking about a [questionnaire \(EN\)](#) or a [survey](#) circulated among staff on [harassment and well-being at work \(EN\)](#). What types of questions should be asked?
 2. How can respondents' anonymity be respected?
 3. In what ways (apart from the activity report) can management envisage sharing and discussing the results of the survey with the workers? At a meeting, for example? And what kind of meeting?
 4. Usually, it's advisable to repeat this information in various forms: on posters, in writing, at information sessions, in collaboration with the trade union, etc., and at various times: the aim is to ensure that everyone speaks with the same voice and that workers take ownership of it. What do you think?
 5. What are the roles and prerogatives of the trusted support person? Especially if this is a new position within the company.
 6. What are the limits of [professional secrecy](#) that a confidential person in a company must observe?
 7. Doesn't the fact that this person is also the hierarchical superior of certain workers pose a problem?
 8. Disciplinary measures are mentioned in the company charter. What can they be? Do they comply with employment legislation?
 9. It has been announced that the new manager is of foreign origin. Why point this out? What is the reason for this choice? Will he automatically be effective? Is this enough to guarantee the quality, "neutrality" and accuracy of his work?
 10. Have these initiatives been discussed with the workers? Will they support them?
 11. Are we sure that they meet the team's expectations and visions?
 12. Do you have any other questions about this case?

How Can I Learn More:(Activity/Thing to do)

1.2.4. Working with employees:

- Management and their assistants are advised to analyse precedents, draw lessons from them, and consider their own responsibilities and those of the various workers involved in the unfortunate incidents.
- *The analysis can be supported by a critical situation examination grid such as the one suggested on the following page.*
- This analysis should be shared at a meeting with all the workers (or a representative sample of staff). Meetings can be held in small groups to encourage discussion.
- Propose small working and discussion groups in which people who suffer harassment can explain, if they so wish and in a climate of trust, how they are affected. Report anonymously (to management) the experiences gathered (if desired).
- If a trade union delegation exists within the company, it should be involved in the process. Some trade unions have [delegates who specialise in diversity and discrimination](#) issues. They can be approached.
- Anamnesis with the director had shown that several years ago, the team had received awareness training in the fight against discrimination, as well as training in intercultural communication (notion of identity, confronting views, decentring on the other, etc.). These training courses or similar initiatives can be repeated at various times, as part of [ongoing training](#) for employees.
- Indeed, experience shows the importance of repeating this type of awareness-raising at regular intervals (because staff are changeable) and with different approaches (because everyone is sensitive to different channels of communication). But we also know that these actions are not enough. They must be accompanied by other measures that are deemed useful, such as revising work regulations and appointing a support person.
- The harassment audit and the subsequent debriefings should ideally be led by someone from outside the company, such as a mediator, - and in the absence of managers, in order to free up the voice of the rank and file. Management will be provided with an overall summary of the results and the resulting courses of action, so that it can take a decision if necessary.
- In this particular case - racial harassment and the use of "humour" - an awareness-raising module on humour, whether "racist" or "sexist" or in reference to any other type of discrimination (disability, age, etc.) can also be planned, ideally with the participation of an *action-theatre* team (examples of which can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)), so as to enable everyone to express what they have experienced and how they think they can avoid it in the future. And to explore together the '*proper use*' of humour among colleagues.

Test Yourself:

Example of a team tension analysis grid

Analysis of critical situations

<p><i>A critical situation is an incident in a company that is out of the ordinary. It can be positive or negative, and can raise questions for the observer. If it is negative, its repetition may pose a problem for the company...</i></p>	
1) Actions/facts (to be objectified)	1. Actors (present, absent, invisible, etc.) - who are they? 2. Acts (committed, observed, reported, etc.) - what are they? 3. Indicators (SMS, emails, reports, regulations, etc.) - what are they? 4. Spin-offs (identified, reported, etc.) - what are they?
2) Emotions/feelings (expressing subjectivity)	5. Express how you felt in the situation - Please describe. 6. Express what you imagine others may have felt - Please describe.
3) Negotiation (exploring intersubjectivity)	7. How can difficulties, tensions and conflicts be prevented? 8. How can we increase the likelihood of "good deeds"?
4) Recommendations (to guide governance)	9. For the person concerned by the facts - please list one or two. 10. For other people: immediate professional circle - please list one or two. 11. For the structure, management, etc. - please list one or two.

Resources

This simplified table is inspired by [Magalit Cohen-Emerique's theory of culture shock \(EN DE ES\)](#) ([VIDEO](#)).

How Can I Learn More:(Activity/Thing to do)

1.2.5. Assessing the impact:

- The impact of the above activities on management and workers needs to be measured, in order to identify the interventions that are still necessary.
- This assessment can be made immediately, at the end of the activities mentioned, orally and by means of an [assessment form \(EN\)](#).

- In the medium term, it should also be seen as a qualitative survey of all employees or a representative sample (age, origin, gender, functions, etc.).
- It will look at what has been learned from the information and awareness campaigns, what people think of this type of intervention, the changes in behaviour that have been achieved, the needs of employees (which may evolve), but also changes in respect between members of the company, etc.
- The results of the assessment must be presented in summary form to all employees and used by management to steer its actions.
- Mediators can help with this type of assessment and extract recommendations for future action.
- Their recommendation is therefore to keep a "[diversity plan](#)" (see the third part of this document) on standby, which would monitor all the human resources parameters relating to diversity and interculturality, in order to anticipate points of friction before any difficulties arise.

Test Yourself:

Analysis of the mediators' work

1. Which actions proposed by the mediators do you consider urgent? For what reasons?
2. Which ones do you find more of an accessory? For what reasons?
3. Reread the presentation of the Autaquet case. Which of the initiatives recommended by the mediators had already been planned, or even started to be implemented by management, before their intervention? What were the results?
4. What failings on the part of management and/or senior staff led to the conflict described?
5. How can this type of failure be avoided?
6. What is your overall opinion of the mediators' work?
7. And if it had been you, how would you have acted, *with your own resources*? Do you have any practical suggestions for supplementing or following up the mediators' proposals? Please let us know.
8. Explain how they represent added value over and above what is presented.

Reread your spontaneous answer to the question in point 1.2.

1. What are the similarities between your unsolicited proposal and the development of mediators?
2. What are the differences between your initial action plan and the mediators' proposals?
3. What are the reasons for these differences?
4. After reading the mediators' approach, would you like to change your initial proposal?
5. If so, in which direction?
6. If not, why not?

What about your company?

1. Do you experience situations similar to the one analysed above in your own company? Please elaborate.
2. Does the case presented inspire you in dealing with your company's difficulties? If so, in what way?
3. If not, why not? How are your needs different?
4. And what resources are you able to invest to meet your needs?
5. How do you intend to respond to the difficulties within your company, given your resources?
6. Have you already started working in this direction?
7. If so, how?
8. What results do you achieve?
9. How do you measure these results?
10. Are they satisfactory? Encouraging?
11. Where should you go from here?
12. If you haven't yet taken any concrete steps to address the problem you've identified, why not?
13. What do you need to take action? And how do you plan to get there?

Test Yourself:

Looking back

1. Reread your positioning at the end of the theoretical introduction (point 1.1.)
2. Would you now like to review some of your answers to these questions?
3. If so, which ones and how?
4. If not, why not?
5. What can you learn from analysing this situation?

What is it all about: Part 2

What about mediation?

- Mediation is used in the justice system, in schools, in culture, in the public arena, in customer relations, etc., but not very much in the workplace!
- *Yet it represents a valuable approach to managing diversity within a company or in vocational training, in the event of conflicts, but above all to preventing them.*
- The mediator's aim is to restore a relationship of trust between the parties, in order to increase their ability to manage their differences.
- Its special features are :
 - Limited room for manoeuvre ;
 - Its legitimacy lies in its impartiality;
 - Its watchword: to involve the parties in the construction of negotiated solutions, without the vocation of deciding, but with the aim of encouraging consensual ground;
 - Its practices, which take account of the power relationships between individuals and groups within companies...

- While the specific context of the company is codified, legislated, hierarchical and structured (sometimes with the presence of unions and councils), the mediator's domain remains *relational and informal*!
- In principle, the mediator is external and independent of the company. But this point is difficult to apply, even if more and more lawyers and social workers are specialising in this field, the company has to pay them for their intervention... The notion of independence is therefore something to think about. A competent person within the company can also take on this task.

... and a cross-cultural one at that!

⇒ *The intercultural approach to mediation in the workplace and in vocational training is a tool for managing diversity, helping to create the conditions necessary for respectful, appropriate and efficient communication between workers, where everyone is listened to and recognised for their differences, in balance with the norms of the majority.*

⇒ The steps to be taken to apply these principles are :

- deconstructing people's representations of each other;
- overcoming misunderstandings and building mutual trust between workers ;
- analyse your own values and identities to better understand yourself and be understood;
- integrate the position and constraints of others to better understand them and take them into account.

⇒ **The general aim of intercultural mediation is to raise awareness of ethnocentrism and egocentrism, of the stereotypes and prejudices that are so "usual" among colleagues and that lead them to consider as "natural" the causes of culture and context, which are in fact changeable variables! This awareness is supposed to trigger a process of change in the individual's outlook and behaviour.**

How Can I Learn More:(Activity/Thing to do)

1. A simple example of intercultural tension in the workplace to clarify the issue... and learn how to prevent it.

A true story: "The broom"

- A trainee from sub-Saharan Africa is doing an apprenticeship in the cleaning department of a large company.
- She has a basic level of French.
- This is the start of the course.
- She's in charge of cleaning a room with a broom.
- The tool handle comes off and the broom breaks apart.
- The trainee doesn't know the tool, she panics and thinks she's broken it.