

善用多元化 为企业创造价值

文 | 泰德·普林斯

美国有很多鼓励多元化的强有力的法律，它们要求企业不能因为人们的背景和社会地位而歧视他们。大多数人认为此类法律有利于实现公平待人，是对待那些与大多数人有所不同的人群更加宽容的一种方式。这种看法误解了多元化涉及的重点，其实多元化更大的好处在于，在这一政策能够得到正确理解和执行的情况下，能够鼓励人们更包容地接受新思路、新看法和新文化，从而鼓励创造力、革新精神以及能让公司大大提高竞争力的思维方式的产生。

新兴企业的创始人和管理者需要实践多元化，其主要原因不在于这能使其待人更加宽容公平，而是因为多元化能助其获得更大的商业性成功。

换句话说，多元化是能让新公司获得并保持更大竞争力的关键因素。因此，企业鼓励多元化不应该被看作是一种慈善行为，应该说它关乎企业自身的利益，能让企业通过增强包容性来获得更大的成功。

多元化带来商机

当今世界，多元化主要涉及以下七个领域：种族、性别、性取向、文化、宗教、残障、年

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龄。接下来，让我们来看看，企业如何通过给各类群体公平地提供机会来使自身的发展更加成功。

种族 在美国，反对种族歧视的法律让数以百万计的不同种族的人们获得了成为企业重要雇员、CEO和有贡献者的机会。这在非洲裔美国人群体中表现得更为明显，他们在音乐、体育、时尚等领域具有特有的开创性，反种族歧视法律让其得以进入相关公司工作。这些公司为这个群体生产出的新产品，随后会扩散到整个社会群体中。

一个非常明显的例子来自篮球鞋。人们通



常认为篮球鞋的时尚潮流源于非裔美国人，然后才扩展到广大白人群体。这一发展轨迹催生的新兴的、充满活力的、快速增长的篮球鞋市场为进入者带来了巨大利益。在这类市场中，非洲裔美国人和拉美人等少数族裔是新时尚的推动者，占据了销售额的主要部分。

教育市场的发展也是反对种族歧视带来的收获之一。以往亚洲人在美国的教育领域很受歧视，但如今他们已成为其中一个非常成功的群体，亚洲人比白人的学习成绩更好已成为广泛共识。受教育程度的提高，为亚洲人提供了更多成为企业重要雇员和进入新领域的机会。

现在美国教育产业的增长已严重依赖来自亚洲的需求，除此之外，来自亚洲的美食以及瑜伽、武术等体育休闲活动都已成为美国社会生活的组成部分，它们为美国社会增加的价值达数十亿美元，而且其中大多数商业设施是由白人经营的，所以说白人也从这些新兴领域获得了收益。

性别 几乎所有的地方都还存在着歧视妇女的问题。即便是在美国，身居高位的女性也比男性要少得多得多。有时候这种情况对公司业务的发展是不利的，因为女性更了解女性的需求，职位较高的女性能更有效地制定针对女性消费者的销售方案；有时候她们甚至比男性更了解男性，比如，男性用什么样的香水会有魅力。

另外，据最新研究显示，男性与女性拥有不同的风险预测机能，如让他们互相配合工作，比如合作买卖股票，能够更好地平抑风险。尤其是在一些高级职位上，女性能根据当前状况做出合理安排，避免像男性领导者那样做出过于冒险的决定。

性取向 社会上对性取向异于常人的人存在着广泛的歧视，然而来自美国的研究表明，同性恋人数比例较高的城市更有创造力。公司员工中若有同性恋者，也能更好地针对这个消费群体制定市场影响计划，甚至还能因此提高产品定价，因为其他公司不会专门为这个人群提供服务。

同样的情况也发生在变性者人群中，不管你个人对此持何观点，但事实是，这类人群形成的市场非常有利可图。

文化 大多数人都不知道，有相当大比例的在美企业的CEO都不是出生在美国，他们主要来自印度、中国和拉美国家。

众所周知，移民做事的积极性更高，动力更强。这些是移民必须做到的，因为他们放弃了母国安稳的生活和熟悉的文化，移民到陌生

的国家之后，他们没有朋友，甚至可能不会说这个国家的语言。

另一方面，国内不同地区间的移民也具有这样的特点，比如从中国的西部地区移居到其他地区的居民。每个公司都应该尝试雇佣一些移居者或外国人，哪怕他们不会说中文。他们会用你想不到的角度去解决问题，还有可能开发出你从未想到过的新产品。

宗教 如果你歧视没有宗教信仰或跟你有不同宗教信仰的人，你就会错过一些非常聪明的人，并且会错过向有宗教信仰的人销售产品的机会，而他们可能会想购买一些特殊的商品或者服务。

在美国，与宗教信仰有关的产品和服务的市场需求非常大，而且这类人通常喜欢从与他们有相同宗教信仰的人那里购买这类产品和服务。另外，如果人们有非常坚定的宗教信仰，只要他们不是极端分子，你就可以确信他们有很好的伦理价值观。此外，美国的宗教企业，例如教会中小学、大学以及教会办的企业，已经为美国的经济增长做出了重要贡献。

残障 在美国，歧视残障人士是违法行为，除非你能明确指出他们身体上的不便妨碍他们从事某项特定的工作。同时这也意味着，只要这位残障人士能坐在电脑前工作，就不能拒绝其应聘行政管理工作。

聘用残障人士工作无疑对社会有好处，因为这可以减轻社会的经济负担，而且事实上残障人士的心态通常好于常人，工作效率也高于常人。

面向残障人士的产品和服务的市场空间也非常巨大，不但是残障的年轻人，老年残障人士也有很多消费需求，比如他们需要辅助行走的产品。企业雇佣这样的员工，尤其是年纪更大一些的残障人士，他们能帮你出点子，以便从这个巨大的市场中获利。

年龄 在美国，强迫人们退休是违法的，除非有其它理由，例如其体力无法胜任工作。

因此，你不能强制达到某个年龄的员工退休，这里只有一个主要的例外，即可以强制享受高额退休金的企业高管退休。

其实，生产效率最高的工人中有很多是年龄比较大的人，他们拥有丰富的工作经验，更有智慧并且不太容易犯严重的错误。如果你雇佣年长的人，就会间接获得这些经验，并能赢得他们的感激之情，这种感激会通过较高的忠诚度等形式表现出来。

与很多国家一样，中国正面临人口老龄化问题。很多公司都要重新认识随老龄化人口而来的快速增长的产品和服务市场。在此期间，多雇佣年长的员工无疑是加深这种认识的一个有效途径。

多元化的新领域

对于企业要应对的多元化问题来说，上文提及的七个方面最为重要。同时，随着防歧视、促平等理念的不断拓展，多元化的内涵也在不断扩大。现在社会上出现了一些新的歧视问题，现有法律还未加以覆盖。我认为，有些国家未来可能颁布法律，禁止在教育和性格这两个领域存在歧视问题。

教育 我认为，美国会在未来十年内出台禁止教育歧视的法律。这一法律可以确保一个人的教育背景不成为其被拒绝雇佣的理由，也就是说，当一个人能够胜任某项工作的时候，他不会因为自己的学历较低而失去这个工作机会。

可能有人认为这不合情理：难道一个拥有更高学历的人不比低学历者更适合去做某项特定的工作吗？当然不是这样。因为做事的效果并不由学历决定，而是取决于当事人，取决于他的性格和能力。一个学历很高的人也有可能缺乏常识，或者缺乏与人相处的能力。

美国有一个名叫彼得·泰尔（Peter Thiel）的富翁，他每年会向想创业的新兴企业家提供100万美元资助。他为此开出的条件

多元化的领域

种族
性别
取向
文化
宗教
残障
年龄
教育
性格



是，这些新企业的创办者不能是大学生，如果他们本身是大学生，想获得他的资助就必须立刻退学。

彼得·泰尔属于新一代成功人士，这些人认为，接受过多的教育有时会阻碍一个人个性和职业的发展。在他们看来，人们应当正确认识教育与特定工作的相关性，同时，一个人的天赋能力或其它的东西有时比教育更重要。这种观点不无道理，想想看，一个拥有文学学位的人和一个没有学位却很善于与人打交道的人，其中哪一个更适合做销售工作呢？

性格 这是指带有某种性格特征的人遭受到的系统性歧视，表现为具有某种性格特征的人因此比他人处于更差的职业环境和社会条件之下。

在这个问题上，我经常用性格内向和外来举例说明。销售人员通常性格外向，在技术或者工程文化占主流的公司里，他们经常遭到歧视。他们在这些公司里通常不会被提拔为管理者，因为在公司刻板的管理文化体系中，他们被视为言行粗鄙的街头混混，而外向性格无助于公司扭转这一看法。

当然我也见过相反的例子，也就是歧视内向性格的人。这种情况通常发生在销售文化占主导的公司里，过于内向和强调内省的人会受到同事的轻视、疏远甚至被视为胆小鬼。在以上两种情况下，个人性格与公司主流文化

企业应当看到**多元化与商业竞争**的关系，倡导多元化能**让企业从遭受歧视的人群那里获得商业优势**。

格格不入的人通常会选择离开，最终公司会形成单一的性格文化。

对性格的歧视并不限于内向和外向性格，比如有些公司会歧视分析型人格，这种公司的管理者一般偏爱凭直觉下判断，他们讨厌看到他人的行为呈现强迫性的、细节导向性的或是学院派特征。当然，我们也可以因此得出相反的结论：分析型人格的人也会歧视那些拥有伟大直觉的人，认为他们粗鲁、不学无术甚至无知。

与那些传统的歧视一样，性格歧视通常很微妙并且难以察觉，甚至成为一种外人难以指摘的文化。但无论如何，歧视确实是存在的。

性格歧视的结果与其它形式的歧视不同。在企业中，遭到性格歧视的人很难得到晋升，得到的工作机会很少，薪水总是很低，也很难拿到隐形的福利。最重要的是，他们会受到公司中各种小圈子的排斥。

很多时候人们可能觉察不到性格歧视的存在，即便觉察到，也会认为它并非出于恶意，只是人们言行的一种自然表现方式而已。但确实有一些人长期遭受着这样的歧视，而且得不到反歧视法律的救济，这无疑增强了他们的挫败感。

行动起来

在反歧视法律发挥强制作用的领域，人们以及企业通常是能够接受多元化的，但很多时候他们只是被动行事。

我相信，即使没有相关的法律规定，有些企业也会通过积极地促进多元化来赢得竞争优势，原因在上文中已经提到。换言之，企业不能将多元化仅仅看作社会问题和伦理问题，还应当看到它与商业竞争的关系，倡导多元化能让企业从遭受歧视的人群那里获得商业优势。

如果企业善于与各类人群打交道，就能获得更大的商业成功，这有助于企业为投资者、股东和雇员带来更大的价值。☑

(作者系佩斯领导力研究院创始人兼CEO)

“Diversity is not just about Fairness: It’s Also about Business Growth and Innovation

**Dr. E. Ted Prince
Founder and CEO
Perth Leadership Institute
www.perthleadership.org**

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In the US there are many strong laws that require that companies not discriminate against people due to their background or status. They are called policies for encouraging diversity. Most people see this as being a way to be more tolerant of people who are different from most other people. They see it as being a way of being fair to others.

However this really misses the point of diversity. Really its advantage is that it encourages people to be receptive to new ideas, perspectives and cultures that can, if this policy is followed correctly, encourage creativity, innovation and ways of thinking that can make companies far more competitive.

Founders and managers of new and young companies need to follow diversity not mainly because it will make them more tolerant and fairer to others, but because it will help them to be more successful as business people.

In other words, diversity can be one of the key ways that young companies become more competitive and stay that way. So diversity should not be regarded as being an act of charity. Rather it is a matter of business self-interest that will help make the company more successful by making it more inclusive.

There are seven major areas of diversity in today’s world. Later we are also going to look at new emerging areas that I think will also be important in the future. The seven areas are:

- Racial
- Gender
- Sexual
- Cultural
- Religion
- Physical
- Age

So let's look at how providing equal opportunity to various groups can actually make a company more successful.

Racial discrimination: In the US, the laws against racial discrimination have resulted in millions of people of different races becoming valued employees, CEOs and contributors. This applies to African-Americans who have opened up new industries such as music, sports and fashion to many companies and allowed them to create new products for these new groups, which have then spread to the main groups in society.

A great example is sneakers. Generally sneaker fashions have originated with African-Americans and then have been adopted by larger groups of white people, thus resulting in new, vibrant and rapidly expanding markets which have enriched the companies that decided to enter them. In these markets, racial groups such as African-Americans and Latinos are the driving consumer force, driving new fashions and creating new streams of revenues.

Of course sneakers are only of many categories that ending racial discrimination has opened up. Another area is education.

Traditionally in education Asians were discriminated against but now in the US they comprise a very successful group; Enabling Asians to become valued employees and part of US society has opened up new areas, particularly in education where Asians are now widely recognized as being more successful than American whites.

Now the education industry in the US relies disproportionately on Asians for growth in education revenues. Again this is not the only area; Asian food, travel and leisure activities such as yoga, martial arts are some of the areas that Asians have brought to the US that now generate billions of dollars in revenues for American businesses, most of which are run by whites who have profited from these new areas.

Gender Discrimination: There's still discrimination against women almost everywhere. Even in the US there are far less women in senior positions than men. But that's counterproductive because if you have more women, they are better equipped to figure out how to market better to women and sometimes, even to men (e.g. what fragrance should a man wear?).

And new research shows that men and women have different risk profiles (e.g. in buying and selling stock) and it's better to have them work together to balance risk. Particularly at higher level positions that can prevent men making riskier decisions than are justified in the circumstances.

Sexual Discrimination: There is widespread discrimination against people with sexual preferences and identities that are different to most people. Yet research in the US shows that cities with a higher proportion of gays are more creative. And having gay people on staff means that a company will better be able to market and sell to this large group of people, maybe even getting higher prices since many companies won't market to them.

The same things goes with transgender discrimination; no matter what your personal views about transgender, it does happen, more often than people realize and these groups of people also represent a niche market that could be highly profitable.

Cultural Discrimination: Most people don't know that a hugely disproportionate number of CEOs in the US were not born in the US but in other places, mainly India, China and Latin American countries.

It's well-known that immigrants tend to have higher levels of motivation, initiative and drive because that's how you have to be if you are prepared to give up the safety of your own country and culture to go to a strange land with no friends and even maybe no language.

Immigrants, mostly from another country, but even from within China, such as the western provinces, can also bring many of these benefits. Every company should try to hire some immigrants or foreigners, even if they don't speak Chinese. They will provide another perspective that you would get otherwise and will probably help you to invent new products that you wouldn't otherwise have invented.

Religious Discrimination: If you discriminate against people who believe in a religion or in a religion that isn't the same as yours, you are going to miss out having some of the smartest people. Also you are going to miss out on being able to market to people who have a religion that want to buy particular products and services.

The markets for products and services for religious people in the US are absolutely huge and usually these people tend to buy from people who have the same religion as them. Plus, if people have a strong religion you can be sure that they have good ethical values (as long as they are not extremists, and you get these in every religion). Plus religious businesses in the US have been important contributors to expanding the US economy (e.g. religious schools, universities, companies). What's not to like?

Physical Discrimination: In the US it is illegal to discriminate against people with physical handicaps unless you can show that their handicap prevents them from doing a particular job. But that means you cannot reject a physically handicapped person who could still sit at a computer if the job is administrative in nature.

The benefit to society is that many more people with handicaps have jobs and that means society has to spend less to look after them as well as the fact that these people will be happier and more productive than otherwise.

But the market for products and services for physically handicapped people is huge; not just for younger people but also for aged people for example who have trouble walking. When you hire such people especially at more senior levels they can help you figure out how your company also can profit from this huge market.

Age Discrimination: In the US it's illegal to force someone to retire unless there is another reason for this, e.g. they don't have the strength to do the job. So you cannot have a mandatory retirement age; there is only one major exception, namely senior executives who have a high pension.

Some of the most productive workers are older because they have a huge amount of experience, more wisdom and are less likely to make serious errors. So if you hire older people,

you gain experience and often their gratitude which will show up in other ways such as higher job loyalty.

Like almost every other country in the world, China is ageing rapidly so many more companies are going to have to figure out how to address the rapidly growing market for products and services for aged people. What better way to do this than to hire older people?

The above 7 areas are the most important areas of diversity for companies. However the definition of diversity is constantly expanding as governments everywhere try to prevent discrimination and promote equality.

And there are new areas of discrimination that are now being uncovered, even though laws haven't yet been passed to cover them. There are two areas in particular where I think some countries will pass laws against discrimination, although it might still take some time. These are educational discrimination and personality discrimination.

New Areas for Diversity

Educational Discrimination: Laws to promote educational diversity would be used to ensure that one's education background is not used unfairly to not hire someone who could do a job well, even though he doesn't have high educational qualifications.

You might think that this doesn't make sense. After all, if someone has a higher educational qualification than someone else, doesn't that mean they are better suited to do a particular job than another person who doesn't have such a high qualification?

Of course not! It all depends on the person. It depends on their personality and natural competences. You can have a high education but no common sense for example, or be terrible at dealing with people.

In the US one of the richest people is called Peter Thiel. Every year he gives scholarships for \$100,000 to new entrepreneurs who want to start a new business. However his condition is that they must not be at university, and if they are, they must drop it immediately.

Peter Thiel is one of a new generation of successful people who have realized that too much or higher education can sometimes be a barrier to personal and professional success. Their perspective is that we have to look at issues such as the relevance of the education to a particular job, and the presence or otherwise of natural competencies that might be more important than just education.

Does a degree in Chinese literature make you better suited to do a sales job than a person who has no degree but is great at dealing with people?

I predict that education discrimination will be made illegal in the US within 10 years.

Personality Discrimination: What this means that people with certain personalities are discriminated against systematically in such a way that it leaves them in a worse position than

other people in professional or social terms without that personality just because they have that personality.

Let's take an example that I have seen often. It mainly has to do with introverts and extroverts. It's not uncommon to see companies that have strong technical or engineering cultures that in their own way discriminate against salespeople, who are, of course, mainly extroverts.

In such companies salespeople are looked down on and often won't get into management because the reigning culture stereotypes them as being frat boys, loud, obnoxious and crude. That they might possess elements of all of these characteristics doesn't mean any the less that they are being discriminated against on the basis of their extroverted personality.

I have also seen the reverse, discrimination against introverts. They are often discriminated against within companies that have a strong sales culture where signs of strong introversion and introspection are looked down upon, shunned or even viewed as being cowardly. In such companies the introverts usually leave, leading to a monoculture of extroverts. The same happens in the companies where extroverts are discriminated against, leading in this case to a monoculture of introverts.

Of course, I'm not saying that this discrimination happens just with introverts or extroverts. It happens with many different personalities. There are some companies that discriminate against analytical types (usually they are ruled by intuitives who reject what they see as being obsessive, detail-oriented or academically-tinged behavior). And of course you get the opposite, the companies ruled by analyticals who discriminate against the people with great gut feel which the analyticals often despise as being crass, uninformed or even ignorant.

The signs of discrimination with personality are often subtle and hard to pick up, just as they are with more traditional forms of discrimination such as racial or gender. People may have a pretty good idea that they are not behaving in a fair manner so often the discrimination gets baked into a culture in subtle ways which are hard to pick up for an outsider. But they still exist anyway.

The results of personality discrimination are not dissimilar to other forms. It's harder for people to become promoted in companies where this is practiced. Their salaries will generally be lower. They will receive less job opportunities within the company and less access to non-prescribed benefits. In essence they will be treated as not part of the club that unofficially exists in the company; yes, I hate to say it, even as a kind of inferior race.

Just as was the case with other, earlier forms of discrimination, people might dismiss the idea that there is personality discrimination or that, if there is, it's just innocent and the way people naturally are. But there are people out there who have suffered such discrimination all of their lives and who would strongly disagree. The fact that there is no formal or legal recognition of the issue increases their frustration just as it did with other forms.

Accept versus Promote?

It's common for people and companies to accept diversity once they are obliged to by law. But often they don't do anything unless there is no choice.

I believe that the companies that actively promote diversity even before any laws are passed will gain a competitive advantage. That is for the reasons I have set out above. In other words, companies should see diversity as not just being a social and ethical issue, but also a competitive and business issue that they can turn to the advantage of their own company and to the business advantage of the social groups that are being discriminated against.

If you innovate socially you will innovate in business terms. And that will bring you more profits and value to your investors, stockholders and employees.

Dr. E. Ted Prince, the Founder and CEO of the Perth Leadership Institute, located in Florida in the US has also been CEO of several other companies, both public and private. He is the author of two books: "The Three Financial Styles of Very Successful Leaders" (McGraw-Hill, 2005) and "Business Personality and Leadership Success", Amazon Kindle 2011 as well as numerous other publications in this area. He is a frequent speaker at industry conferences. He works with large corporations globally on leadership development programs and coaches senior executives and teams in the area of financial leadership. He has held the position of Visiting Professor at the University of Florida in the US in its Graduate Business School and also at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics in China.