



Responding to Cross-Cultural Criticism Effectively

No one wants to be labeled as insensitive to the needs, desires or norms of another group. When we individually, or as an organization, are accused of being racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise insensitive, we naturally want to prove we don't deserve any of those labels. We focus on making the other person wrong and we miss the opportunity to build a positive relationship with the person giving us feedback. Here are some tips to help you handle those times when you are challenged ... without being defensive.

1. **Accept** the criticism. Don't deny the accusation. Apologize, if appropriate, then paraphrase the complaint to be sure you understand it from the other person's perspective.
2. **Acquire** information. What specific behavior or actions taken generated the criticism or complaint? Stay focused on behavior which can be observed. Ask the person complaining to translate any comments about attitude or beliefs into behaviors which represent those feelings or standards.
3. **Ask** for expectations. What is expected of you (or the organization you are representing) by the offended or critical individual or group? Don't defend or explain your past behavior. Focus on what is needed to be successful in the future.
4. Commit to **Action**. If you can change to accommodate the situation, do so. Or share the things you can do to influence change. It may be as simple as agreeing to discuss the information with key individuals. Focus on what you are able or willing to do, instead of the things you won't or can't do.
5. Express **appreciation** for the feedback. This may be difficult when you've been judged harshly or unfairly. But it is important to recognize that the negative feedback may help you improve your performance, increase your income or become eligible for a promotion.

Obviously, this five-step process should be followed up with taking the action you committed to in step 4. And when possible give feedback to the critical person or group after changes have been made or after their concerns have been shared.

2013

Recommendations

From Lip Service to Leadership: The Manager's Role in D&I

Reinventing ERGs for Business Relevance and Business Results

The Journey from Rights to Respect: Recalibrating Your Discussions about Diversity & Inclusion

LeaderThink®: Multicultural Wisdom for Leaders Who Want to Succeed

Diversity Champions 2.0: From Diversity Cop to Diversity Coach

Amazing Allies: Getting (and Keeping) LGBT Allies

Oops! I Didn't Mean to Offend!

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Popular Programs

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- Are You Ready to Move From Coexistence to Community?
- The Secret Fears of GLBT Allies
- All Different / All Alike!
- I'm on the Diversity Council — Now What?!
- High Tech/High Touch: Engaging Your Millennial Workforce

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"Talking about diversity and inclusion can be easy . . . with a little help from Tracy Brown & Diversity Trends LLC"

Hire Tracy and your attendees will experience **clarity**, increase their **confidence** & develop the **courage** they need to turn diversity into inclusion. They will build **leadership** and communication **skills** that will help them be **effective** in a **multicultural** world. They will have **fun** while learning and receive practical **tips** they can **apply** immediately. Your organization will **demonstrate** **commitment** to diversity and inclusion while building a **culture** based on mutual **respect**.