

## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Report



**Mary Sample**

**Friday, November 06, 2009**

## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

### Introduction

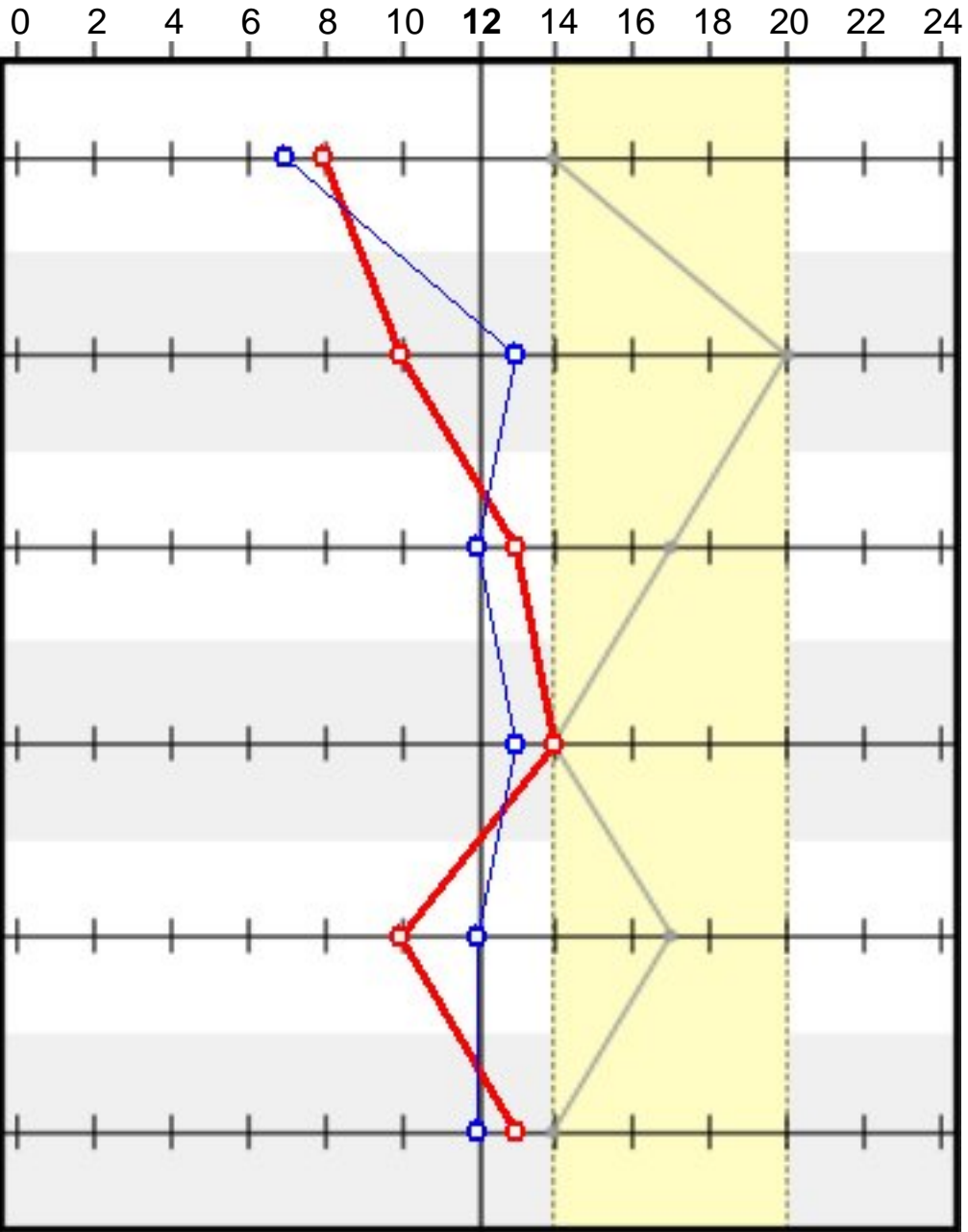
In recent years, it has become increasingly recognized and understood that an organization's success rests heavily upon how well it harnesses the whole array of skills and experiences of its employees. This mainly means how well it fosters widespread teamwork, bringing together people of very different backgrounds and styles to enhance creativity, the ability to solve problems more effectively, discover new approaches to old issues, and realize many other benefits. Extensive research from a wide variety of sources has identified six specific steps that are common to people and organizations that harness the benefits that can flow from diversity. These steps are seen to be a necessary foundation in building and maintaining a strong and successful team of people who are happy to work with each other to achieve greater levels of success. The progressive steps in building this pyramid are:

1. That people and organizations need to be aware of the benefits that can flow from cultural diversity, and to recognize that a climate of mutual trust needs to be built and maintained. It is also recognized that this helps to foster growth and to derive strength from the knowledge, skills and experience that different people bring.
2. That minority groups need to feel included in the major decision- making processes of the organization, and that their views and ideas are genuinely valued and seen to be important.
3. That different beliefs, stated views, actions and re-actions are fully understood and are naturally tolerated and accepted as part of the rich overall 'tapestry' of human behavior
4. That warmth, sincerity and good will is shown to every individual and group without applying collective stereotypes, so that they feel high levels of mutual empathy
5. That groups ( and the organization as a whole ) permanently adapt and change where their beliefs or reactions are limiting, or are prone to bias or prejudice towards people that are different from the majority.
6. That individuals and the organization as a whole persist in their efforts to recognize diversity and cultural awareness shortfalls, and commit to increasing overall knowledge, and to seek to reap the long term benefits from people's differences rather than to celebrate their similarity.

The Diversity & Cultural Awareness instrument details these steps as categories. The instrument uses these categories to give an individual the opportunity to rate their personal performance, as well as to estimate the performance of the organization around them. Although this is a subjective judgment, the resultant gaps between individual scores, organization scores and best practise scores can be a rich basis for further follow up and action.

## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

### YOUR SUMMARY SCORES



— Personal — Organization

The Realm of best Practise

## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR SCORES

Now that your individual score has been plotted, you should be in a position to:

- 1. Review your personal awareness and commitment levels in each of the six categories.**
- 2. Review the relative performance of the organization in terms of your perception of its scores in each category.**
- 3. Compare your score and the organizational score and the gap between the two in each category.**
- 4. Determine what you might like to prioritize for yourself and for the organization in terms of making future changes to your cultural diversity behavior or actions.**

The essential value in any measurement instrument is in the extent to which it provides a useful indicator about a current situation and provides some guidance in terms of what you might do to change it for the better. This should ideally be helpful in a way that individuals can reflect upon and judge whether any adjustments or changes are necessary or desirable.

By completing this profile, the intensity of your scores and those that you have assigned to the organization as a whole, should provide a useful basis for such a review to take place. To deepen or extend this further, you may want to ask two or three of your colleagues to complete the profile to assess whether they see cultural diversity to be the same as you (especially as far as the wider organization is concerned). By averaging their scores and plotting them on the grid, this can create an interesting comparison between your own and the organization's awareness and commitment that others perceive to exist.

Whatever your scores, and whether they are yours alone or enhanced by the views of others, you may want to develop your skills in categories other than the ones in which you are already strongest.

## **Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile**

### **THE SIX DIVERSITY & CULTURAL AWARENESS CATEGORIES**

#### **AWARENESS AND CLIMATE**

Any individual or organization that wants to bring about a greater appreciation of the prevailing levels of diversity (and to benefit from it directly) need to first build a strong foundation of awareness. This awareness foundation is built by understanding the different ways in which people, or groups of people can look, feel and act, and by becoming aware that a climate of open, mutual trust needs to be established to ensure that this is seen as a strength to foster, not a weakness to be attacked.

#### **LEVELS OF INCLUSION**

Individuals and groups make many decisions in the organization and agree to take certain actions every single day. If the decision making processes are controlled by only a few people, or biased towards only one or two majority groups, the risk is run of disenfranchising the so called 'minorities', or of subordinating their interests and input. Inclusion involves not only ensuring that all individuals and groups are given an equal voice, but also ensuring that every opinion is genuinely valued and considered to be worthy of equal consideration.

#### **LEVELS OF TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING**

Once awareness has been raised and people have been included in organizational decision making more equally, the depth and breadth of people's diversity of beliefs, stated views, actions and reactions will be better appreciated. However, appreciation does not necessarily lead to tolerance and/or understanding. As a result both individuals and the organization as a whole need to actively defend people's right to offer a different view and reject intolerance of any kind. In addition, more effort needs to be invested in thinking about why people hold their particular views and perspectives.

#### **DEGREE OF EMPATHY**

Empathy represents the highest level of understanding about another person's beliefs or viewpoint. It therefore reflects on individual's ability to put themselves in the shoes of another person and to make a sincere and positive effort to appreciate the entire context without applying a limiting 'stereotypical' view, which an issue may be being judged or perceived. Empathy is created by showing warm and genuine interest in the opinions of others and looking to understand the unique underlying feelings and beliefs that may underpin words and/or actions.

#### **DEGREE OF ADAPTATION AND CHANGE**

Whilst it is easy to accept some levels of cultural and general diversity in relation to our own perspective, and to accept greater understanding of diversity occasionally, it is of little sustained value until cultural awareness fundamentally and permanently adapts and changes individuals and the organization as a whole. Such adaptation is usually reflected in policies, procedures and principles initially, but should also be visible in the day to day practices of every individual (so that these become the 'normal' role models of behavior).

#### **PERSISTENCE AND COMMITMENT**

Even concerted effort to establish the diversity and cultural awareness 'pyramid' does not necessarily lead to sustained success. Bias, prejudice and discrimination may continue to prevail in less visible ways and can act to undo much of the 'good' work done to change attitudes. Individuals and organizations therefore, have to maintain their commitment and persistence and to become entirely intolerant of negative reactions from others. In addition, they need to ensure active and on-going cultural learning, as it is through deeper education that we truly change ourselves.

**In the following pages, you will find each of the above categories elaborated further. Each category includes general action steps to improve in the future. A category graph is also included detailing the raw scores for yourself and the organization for individual questions. Finally, detailed action/coaching guidelines are included for individual and organization scores that total less than 3. (improvement scope is indicated)**

## **Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile**

### **AWARENESS & CLIMATE**

**Effort to become more aware about the diversity of people around you, or the cultural breadth that prevails in your organization, is built upon an open-minded attitude and a willingness to accept that the journey towards greater enlightenment is valuable and worthwhile in the first place. This typically means that individuals need to reflect upon where their prevailing attitudes may be closed minded or limited and what needs to be done to change this (and to bring about a climate that is welcoming and trusting of diversity of belief, opinion and action).**

Awareness is typically heightened, and the organizational climate is changed by actively talking about diversity and by focusing people's minds on the strengths and the benefits that it can bring. At the same time effort needs to be committed to drawing attention to fear, trepidation, bias, discrimination and prejudice in relation to looking different or having views and beliefs that are different to the 'majority' position.

At this 'fundamental' level, the organization needs to help every individual to appreciate the limitations and restrictions that can apply if negative reactions to cultural diversity continue to exist. Formal training can therefore, be arranged that helps individuals to reflect upon their own upbringing, background and personality and to appraise their own beliefs, values and customs relative to others. Such training can also involve people in early debate about how culture arises from the so called 'norms' that are created by:

- Racial background
- Country of origin
- Religious belief
- Type of work
- Family values
- Age group
- Gender issues
- Other common interest factors

#### **Specific actions to increase diversity awareness and to create a more open climate:**

##### **For the individual**

1. Look to spend more time reading about diversity and cultural issues and to increase your levels of knowledge.
2. Participate in discussions and meetings to talk more about the prevailing culture and beliefs in the organization.
3. Involve yourself in diversity awareness training and actively participate in reflection about your own culture and its characteristics.

##### **For the Organization**

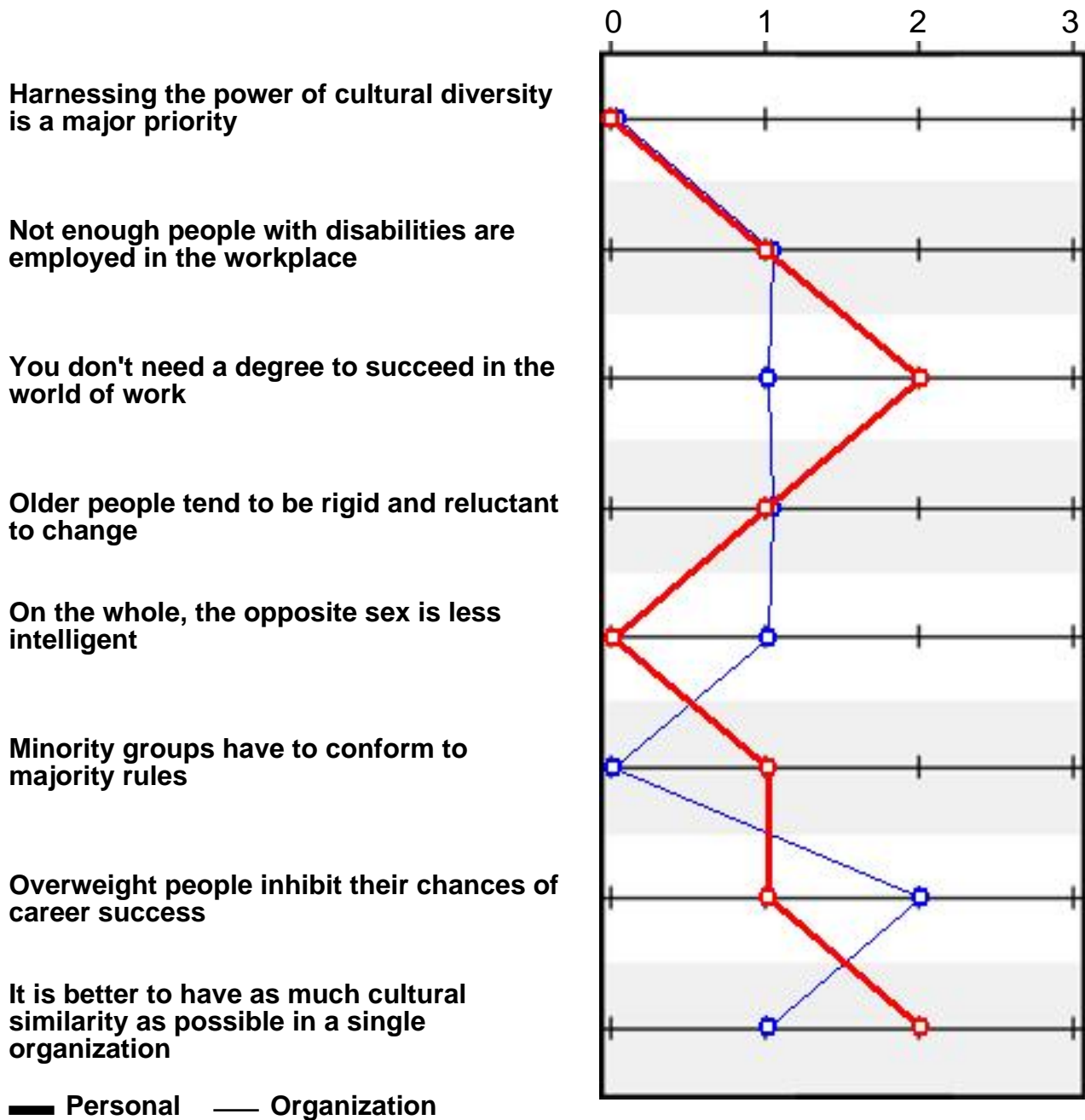
1. Audit the cultural feelings through opinion surveys
2. Find ways to demonstrate senior management commitment to greater diversity

## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

# AWARENESS & CLIMATE

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Summary Scores - Individual: 8 out of a possible 24  
Organization: 7 out of a possible 24



## **Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile**

### **LEVELS OF INCLUSION**

**With their heightened awareness of cultural diversity, both individuals and the organization can appraise the extent to which people are afforded fair and free involvement and inclusion in the major decisions that are made by enterprise, or the collective processes that cause action to be taken. This typically means that a rigorous appraisal is made of whether all recognizable groups and people are included in key discussions, meetings or collaborations and that their opinion is given equal weight and is truly valued.**

Organizational decision making is usually effected at many levels of a commercial enterprise, starting with the governing board (or board of directors) and the executive team, to advisory groups, committees, task forces and action teams. All of these groups ideally need to broadly represent as many people as they can across the enterprise, and not reflect only one or two majority groups. As a result, any decision-making team should reflect a balance of gender, religious or racial groupings, age or other relevant common interests (as much as this is possible).

Including a wide variety of people at all levels of organizational decision making helps to avoid the actual or perceived concentration of power in the hands of only a few. In addition, a balanced approach provides both representation of a wide range of interests in a direct way and creates a greater sense of perceived fairness and honesty.

Although care needs to be taken to avoid such efforts being seen as mere tokenism, this structural inclusion policy should create useful role models for the various interest groups to emulate. In addition, in more informal circumstances, it can help to ensure that all decision making is made by inviting broad input and opinion, in order to strengthen the decisions made, and to solicit wider support and commitment.

#### **Specific actions to increase diversity awareness and a more open climate:**

##### **For the individual**

1. Reflect upon whether you think that power is mainly vested in the hands of a majority group and why.
2. Review the potential limitations of beliefs or the extent to which some groups may be being excluded from organizational decision making.
3. Look around at people at decision-making meetings that you attend and ask why some groups are not represented directly.

##### **For the organization**

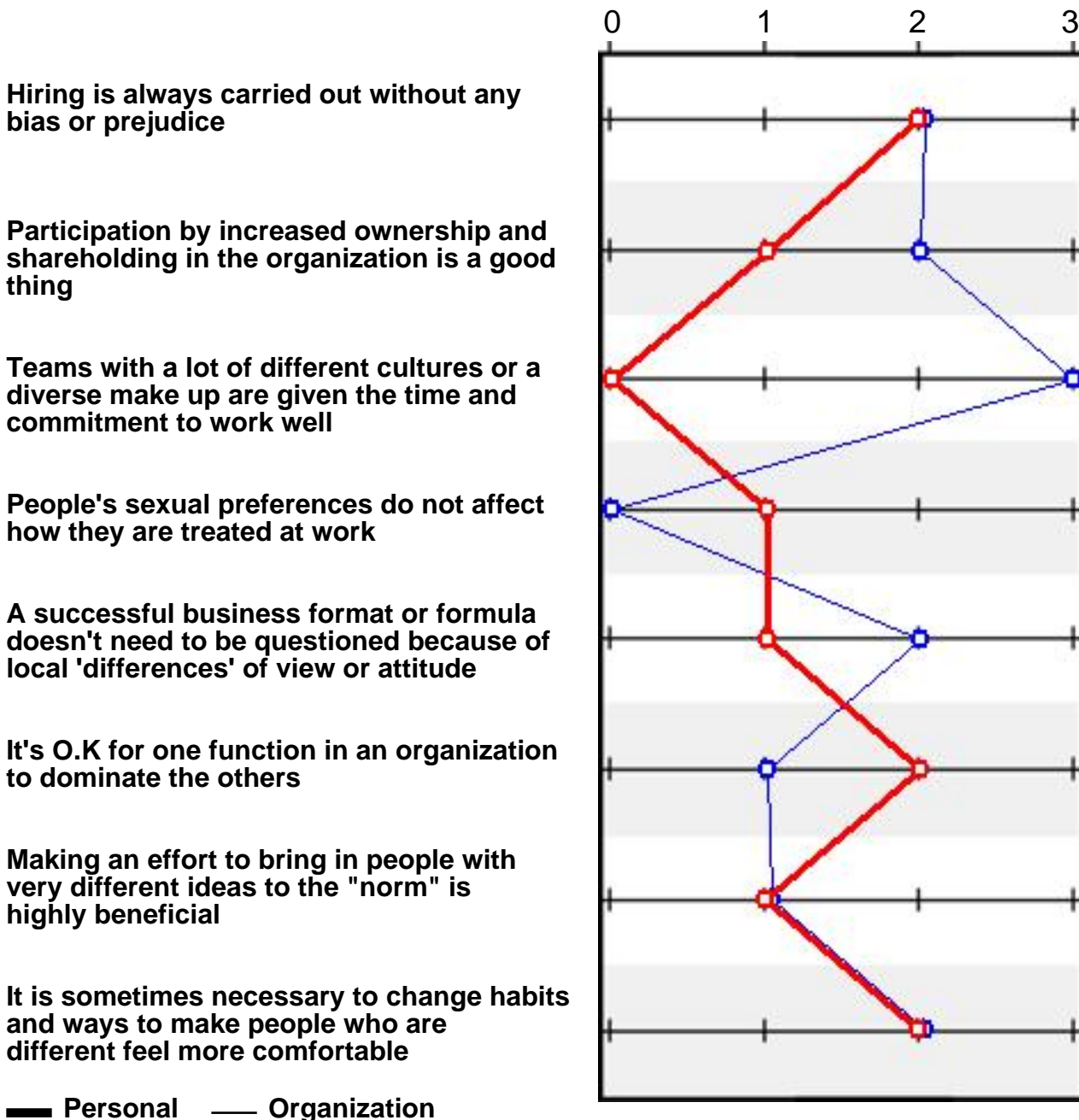
1. Look for representation from as many groups as possible in major meetings or committees that make policy decisions
2. Encourage all meetings to invite participation from individuals that represent different organizational interests.

## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

### LEVELS OF INCLUSION

With their heightened awareness of cultural diversity, both individuals and the organization can appraise the extent to which people are afforded fair and free involvement and inclusion in the major decisions that are made by enterprise, or the collective processes that cause action to be taken. This typically means that a rigorous appraisal is made of whether all recognizable groups and people are included in key discussions, meetings or collaborations and that their opinion is given equal weight and is truly valued.

Summary Scores - Individual: 10 out of a possible 24  
Organization: 13 out of a possible 24



## **Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile**

# **LEVELS OF TOLERANCE & UNDERSTANDING**

**Despite the fact that a wider representation of people's views may have been brought about in overall organizational decision making, levels of tolerance towards diversity, and understanding about cultural difference may go unchanged or even may have deteriorated. This often arises as a direct result of the altered power bases of individuals and groups with past vested interest, and because of the resultant increase in uncertainty about how to act in the 'new world' in what will be seen to be 'the right way'.**

Research has demonstrated that levels of tolerance are commonly related to the extent to which people can accept, and live with, a high level of general ambiguity. In other words, the more individuals can quietly and calmly accept that they may not fully understand why someone thinks or acts or looks differently (and remain open minded towards gathering more data) the more tolerant of and comfortable towards cultural diversity they are likely to be.

In general, intolerant individuals often tend to be more aggressive, cynical and authoritarian in their attitudes. They therefore broadly seek conformity to pre-set mental models of behavior and appearance, as well as certainty about how people are likely to act in a given set of circumstances. Differences of any sort are therefore potentially threatening to this ordered world of certainty, and it is therefore to be resisted by such people (overtly and covertly).

Intolerance is best broken down and rejected by greater levels of exposure to differences in attitude and belief, and by continuing education. Acceptance of ambiguity therefore has to be seen to be valued, and both individuals and the wider organization need to defend and promote the right, and even the requirement to offer a different perspective, be different, or not to conform to some pre-set norm that may have successfully prevailed in the past.

### **Specific actions to increase diversity awareness and a more open climate:**

#### **For the individual**

1. Read articles or even books on other cultures and on diversity in general.
2. Set up systems and procedures by which widespread input is invited as matter of course before decisions are made.
3. Calmly and quietly accept situations that you do not fully understand, and make less effort to come to a quick conclusion or to judge.

#### **For the organization**

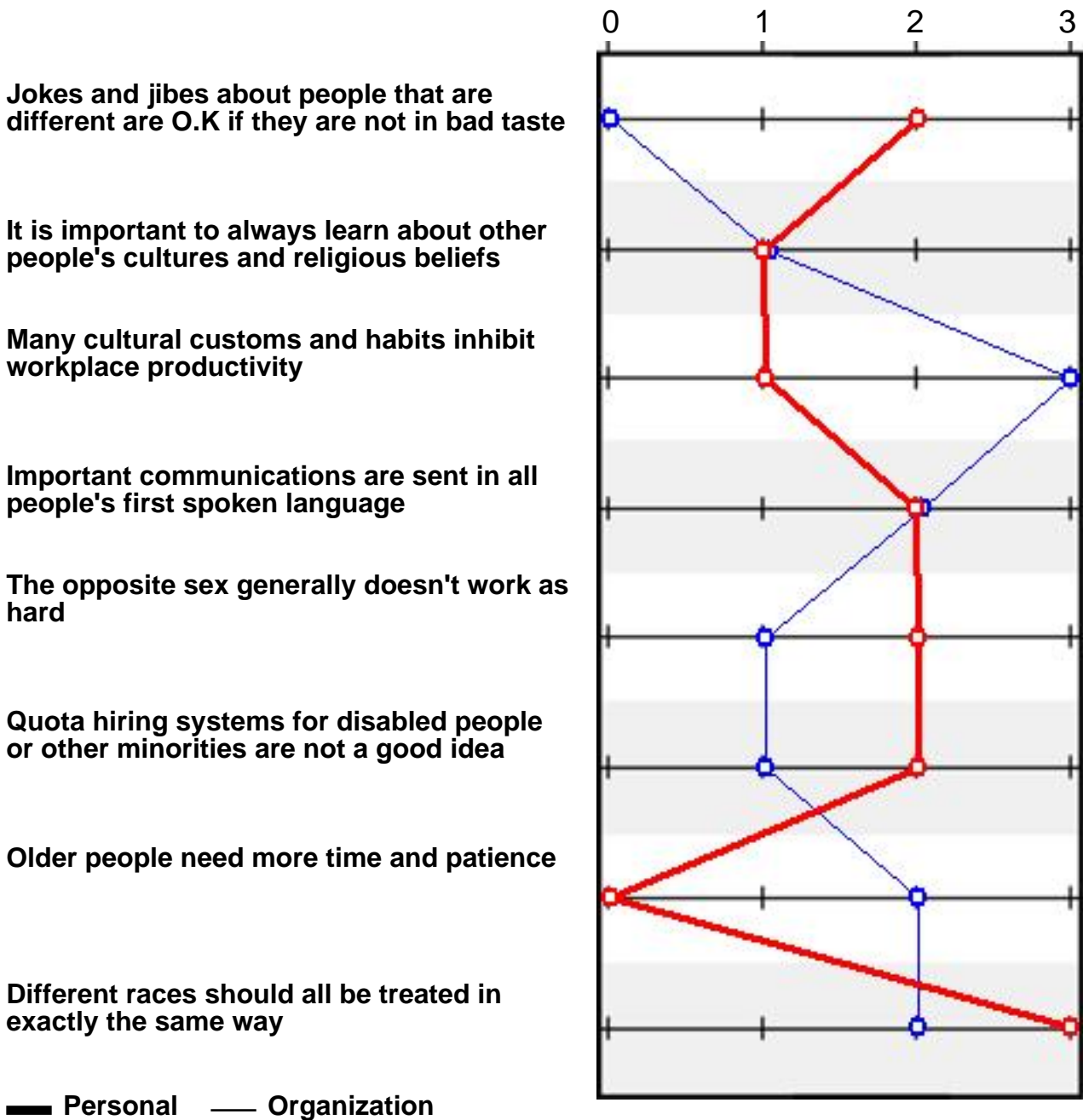
1. Encourage individuals to accept organizational 'ambiguity' as a normal reaction in some circumstances and coach people to seek more information before finally deciding.
2. Form people of different backgrounds and cultures into teams to work together to complete a short term task or project.

## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

# LEVELS OF TOLERANCE & UNDERSTANDING

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Summary Scores - Individual: 13 out of a possible 24  
 Organization: 12 out of a possible 24



## **Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile**

### **DEGREE OF EMPATHY**

**Tolerance and understanding can be demonstrated by people passively, invisibly and in non-committal fashion. In other words, acceptance of diversity can continue to be somewhat grudging and reluctant, and lacking in true warmth and sincerity. To move to the next level in the cultural awareness pyramid, individuals, and the organization as a whole, need to demonstrate open and genuine sensitivity to the needs of all kinds of 'different' people, whatever their background, appearance or beliefs. That is, they need to find many ways to empathize with them.**

One of the greatest barriers to genuine empathy towards people that are perceived to be 'different' is social stereotyping. Stereotyping is the process of ascribing or assigning particular behavioral traits to individuals on the basis of their apparent connection to, or membership of a group. This may or may not be accurate, but in either case, acts as a mental 'filter' through which judgments can be made.

Stereotypes are typically used as a convenient way to conveniently categorize people, and/or to 'simplify' individual reactions or to basically determine how 'the world' operates in general. People use stereotypes for race, religion, country of origin, gender, education, weight, height, age, accent and many other categories.

Stereotypes will continue to prevail whilst a close association between different people and groups is avoided (or they are arbitrarily kept apart). In other words, higher levels of personal familiarity helps distinguish people's unique perceptions and beliefs, and assists in demonstrating the limitations of the stereotypical thinking. By increasing involvement and proximity, an individual's unique identity therefore comes very much to the fore, and similarities (rather than differences) of reaction and feeling are consequently much more recognizable.

#### **Specific actions to increase diversity awareness and a more open climate:**

##### **For the individual**

1. Eat lunch at least with one person of difference each week or month and discuss their views on their involvement in enterprise decision-making.
2. Offer to directly help minority groups in the general community.
3. Think about the accuracy of your own mental stereotypes about different people around you.

##### **For the organization**

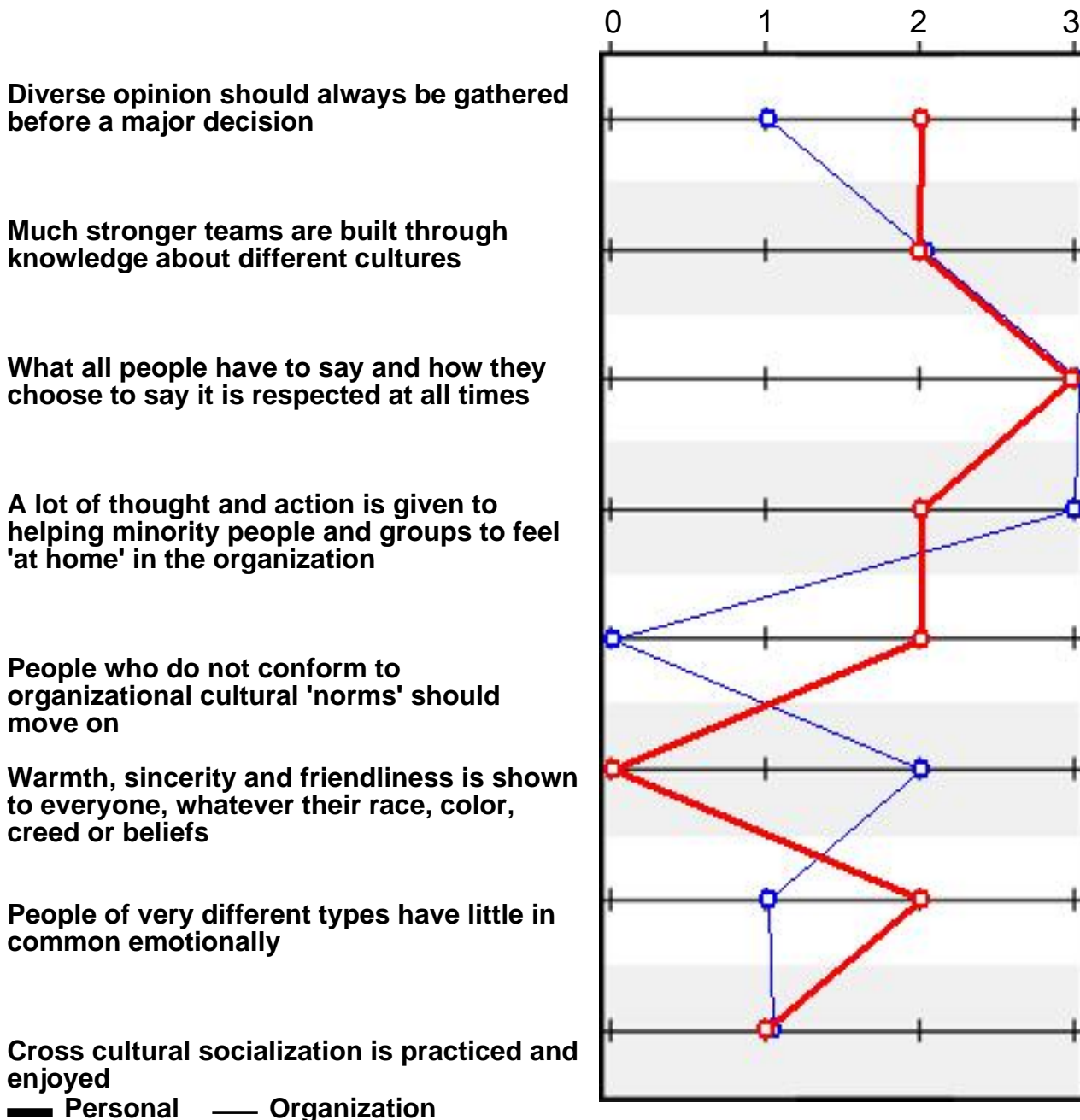
1. Become more vigilant for the existence of social stereotypes that limit or restrict more accurate and individual perception.
2. Find public ways and means to reward and recognize behaviors and actions that go against stereotypical 'norms'.

## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

### DEGREE OF EMPATHY

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Summary Scores - Individual: 14 out of a possible 24  
Organization: 13 out of a possible 24



## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

# DEGREE OF ADAPTATION & CHANGE

Almost of necessity, most of the initial efforts to develop organizational comfort with cultural diversity have to be informal. That is, a relatively slow and patient build up of awareness allows the organization to come to terms with shifting of attitudes towards groups that previously may have had little or no involvement in so-called mainstream enterprise processes. However, at an appropriate point, the organization needs to signal its formal commitment to supporting diversity at every level and to bring about structural adaptation and change to past practices.

The tools available to an organization to formally change or to adapt on a permanent basis typically involve the written policies, procedures, standards and rules that govern how people are expected to work together to achieve appropriate and acceptable results to the level or standards of performance required. This may relate to a range of processes and system including:

- The way that people are hired
- Goal and objective setting
- Promotion and career development
- Communication processes
- Reward and recognition
- Training and development selection

Policies and procedures can be amended or entirely re-written to promote and support greater acceptance of cultural diversity (and tolerance of difference) as a primary organizational requirement, and one that will be rewarded in a variety of ways. However, it should be recognized that changes in policy are unlikely to be sufficient in themselves, to ensure long-term adaptation and change. Full and committed policy implementation also has to occur so that change occurs in a way that is practical, meaningful and visible for all to see. If this is also supported by visible behavior by managers in the workplace, their actions are likely to serve as a powerful and positive role model for others to start to emulate.

### **Specific actions to increase diversity awareness and a more open climate:**

#### **For the individual**

1. Form or serve on a committee that reviews policies to help promote greater diversity.
2. Volunteer for assignments to work with different groups or cultures to your past experience.
3. Start to learn a new language.

#### **For the organization**

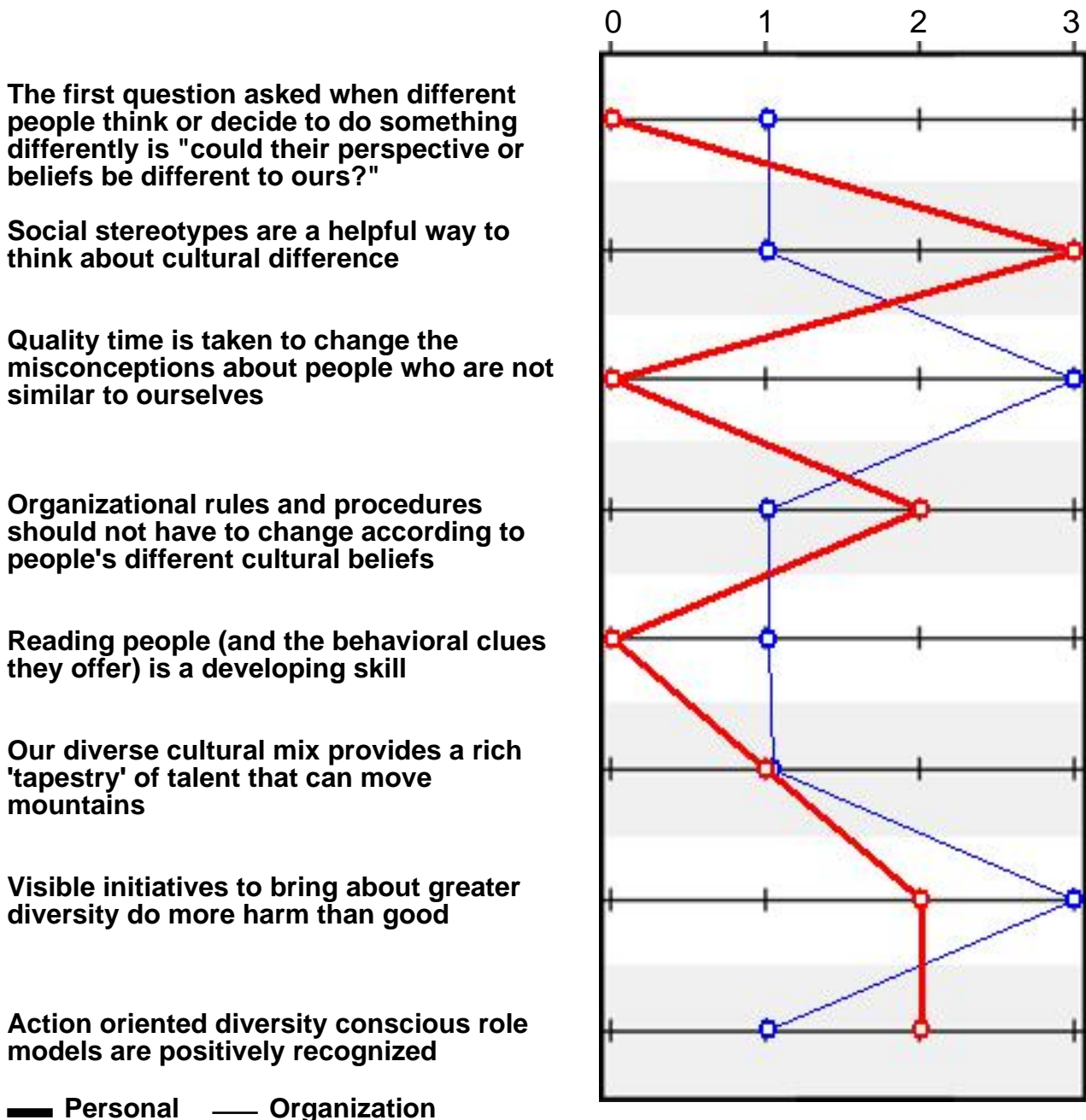
1. Review all the major policies and procedures of the organization to help encourage greater cultural diversity and awareness.
2. Make a point of publicizing one major policy change and the actions that you intend to take immediately as a result (and follow through strongly).

## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

# DEGREE OF ADAPTATION & CHANGE

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Summary Scores - Individual: 10 out of a possible 24  
 Organization: 12 out of a possible 24



## **Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile**

# **PERSISTENCE & COMMITMENT**

**A widespread cultural change of any sort often takes considerable time, energy and commitment. In these circumstances, this makes enormous demands of the organization to achieve a permanent and sustainable level of success. However, it can lead to some difficult conflicts and issues that may have a negative impact, and even undermine the overall goal to establish cultural diversity as a valuable organizational strength. In such situations, the organization needs to maintain the courage of its convictions, and to persist in its objectives, despite any level of opposition or discomfort.**

Ultimate success in accepting diversity as a widespread organizational benefit is often dependent upon two long-term strategies. The first is to focus on a model or a methodology for resolving conflict positively at all levels. This may involve widespread training and individual coaching, but more importantly, involves communicating a commitment to integrative or 'win/win' resolutions, and not 'win/lose' encounters that can create ill feeling and resentment.

Secondly, bias, prejudice and discrimination towards some groups may have been driven 'underground', or become manifest in much more subtle ways (once individuals see that it is now more openly difficult to resist diversity). As such, the organization needs to develop a much more 'aggressive' intolerance towards people and groups that continue to demonstrate negative reactions. This may include the application of more serious sanctions than may have been used in the past, and even the selective removal of individuals from positions of authority and influence (and possibly from the enterprise as a whole).

In the final analysis, organizations cannot afford to be complacent if they want to create a conformably diverse culture that relishes its breadth and capacity to tolerate ambiguity in general. As such, they must continue to commit to educating people and advocate the benefits of the goal in relentless fashion.

### **Specific actions to increase diversity awareness and a more open climate:**

#### **For the individual**

1. Regularly raise diversity and cultural awareness as a topic of discussion in many meetings and forums.
2. Test all major decisions made by you or the organization to ensure that they are not discriminatory in any way.
3. Work harder at finding win/win solutions that benefit as many people with differing interests as you can.

#### **For the organization**

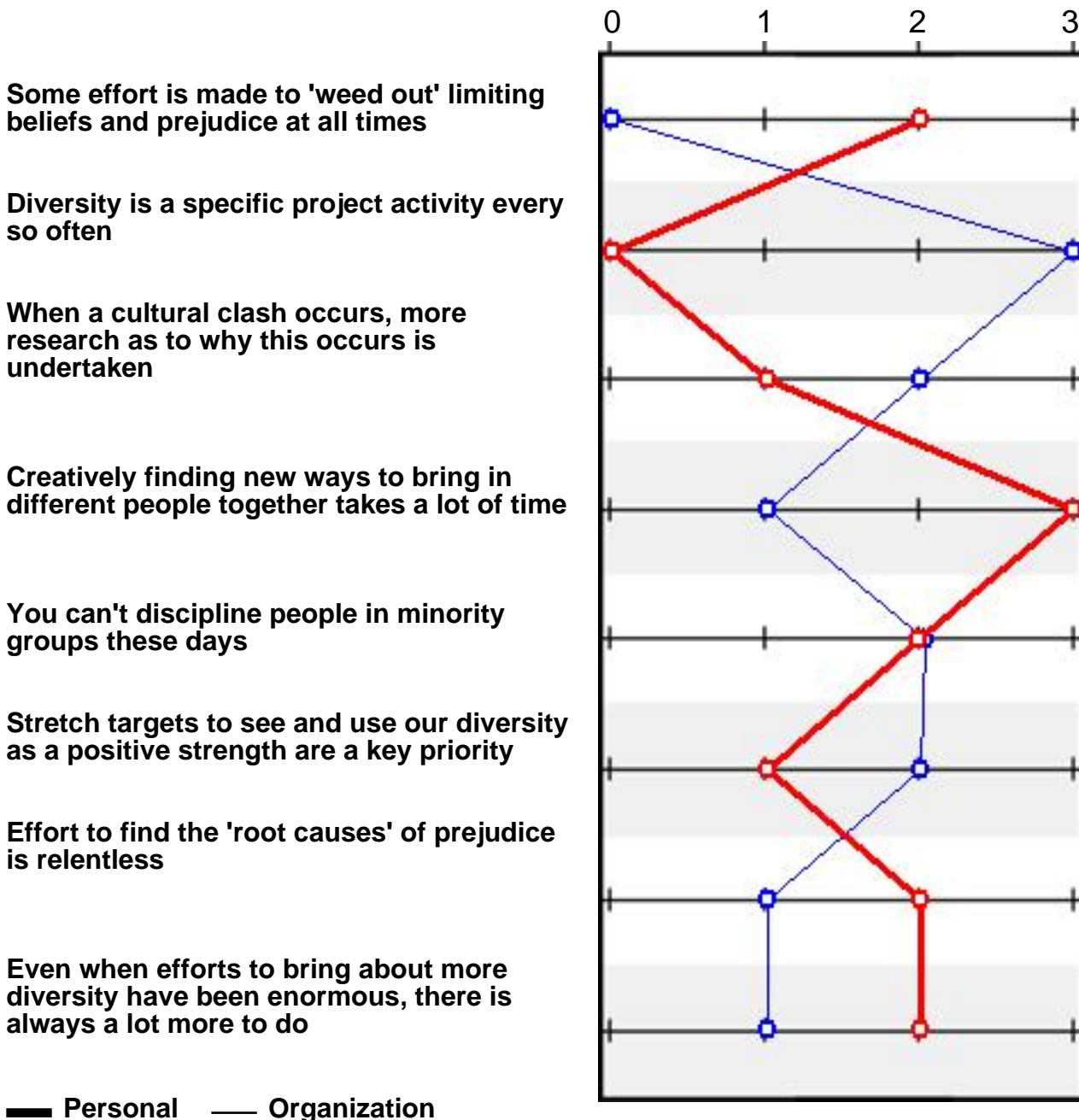
1. Invoke sanctions on individuals and groups that continue to discriminate.
2. Offer conflict resolution training and coaching to all those that would benefit from it.

## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

# PERSISTENCE & COMMITMENT

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## Diversity & Cultural Awareness Profile

### Summary

This profile and output report has suggested that better appreciation of diversity or other cultures in general is a progressive journey for both the organization and the individual in particular. We have suggested that this essentially involves coming to appreciate as much as you can about yourself and your own views and attitudes before looking to better appreciate those views and attitudes of those that you see to be different.

Although it has not been stated explicitly, we have been describing this journey in a step-by-step fashion, building on a solid foundation or base awareness of the diversity issues within the enterprise. Of course, these are steps that many organizations may not get beyond. Ultimately we have suggested that successful enterprises will make widespread changes to organizational culture and individual attitudes towards being more open and far less tolerant of any kind of discrimination, prejudice and bias.

This journey has been represented as the building of the inverted pyramid. The six steps or stages shown do not have hard or fixed boundaries and can be merged into one another or skipped altogether. However, for the most part, they reasonably reflect the stages that most committed organizations and individuals experience as they look to improve over time.

As we said at the outset, the ambitious aim has been to talk about how we bring about better human understanding, tolerance and appreciation of other people, even when they are very different to ourselves. Hopefully, we have provided some food for thought about how this might be done for each participant to tackle in their own unique and particular way.

**"Diversity involves a broad range of human uniqueness - personality, work style, perception and attitudes, values and lifestyle, work ethic, world view, communication style and much more. Valuing diversity means appreciating and encouraging people to be who they really are, helping them to develop their full potential and utilizing their special talents, skills, ideas and creativity".**

## My Contract For Change

1. My personal goals to manage diversity awareness more effectively in the future are :
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
2. As a result I will make more time to achieve the goals by giving less priority to:
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
3. Each week I will record my progress by
4. My support person(s) will be
5. My support person(s) will help me by
6. I will use the following methods to maintain my momentum and learn along the way:
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
7. I will reward myself for achieving my milestones by
8. My end reward will be

**Signed**

**Dated**