

IN CLASS EXERCISE: REWARDS FOR WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Purpose: To learn about the different needs of a diverse workforce.

Time: Approximately 40 minutes.

Directions: Divide the class into groups of approximately size 6. Each group is assigned 1 of the following people and is to determine the best benefits package for that person.

- *Lise* is 28 years old. She is a divorced mother of 3 children, aged 3, 5, and 7. She is the department head. She earns \$37,000 a year on her job and receives another \$3600 a year in child support from her ex-husband.
- *Ethel* is a 72-year-old widow. She works 25 hours a week to supplement her \$8000 annual pension. Including her hourly wage of \$7.50, she earns \$17,750 a year.
- *John* is a 34-year-old Black male born in Trinidad who is now a Canadian resident. He is married and the father of two small children. John attends college at night and is within a year of earning his bachelor's degree. His salary is \$24,000 a year. His wife is an attorney and earns approximately \$54,000 a year.
- *Sanjay* is a 26-year-old physically impaired Indo-Canadian male. He is single and has a master's degree in education. Sanjay is paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair as a result of an auto accident. He earns \$29,000 a year.
- *Wei Mei* is a single 22-year-old immigrant. Born and raised in China, she came to Canada only three months ago. Wei Mei's English needs considerable improvement. She earns \$18,000 a year.
- *Mike* is a 16-year-old white male in his 2nd year of high school. He works 15 hours a week after school and during vacations. He earns \$6.25 an hour, or approximately \$4875 a year.

Background Our 6 participants work for a company that has recently installed a flexible benefits program. Instead of the traditional "one benefit package fits all," the company is allocating an additional 25 percent of each employee's annual pay to be used for discretionary benefits. Those benefits and their annual cost are listed below.

Benefit	Yearly Cost
Extended medical care (for services such as private hospital room, eye glasses, and dental care that are not provided by the Medical Services Plan) for employee:	
Plan A (No deductible and pays 90%)	\$3000
Plan B (\$200 deductible and pays 80%)	\$2000
Plan C (\$1000 deductible and pays 70%)	\$500
 Extended medical care for dependants (same deductibles and percentages as above):	
Plan A	\$2000
Plan B	\$1500
Plan C	\$500
 Supplementary dental plan	 \$500

Life insurance:	
Plan A (\$25 000 coverage)	\$500
Plan B (\$50 000 coverage)	\$1000
Plan C (\$100 000 coverage)	\$2000
Plan D (\$250 000 coverage)	\$3000
Mental health plan	\$500
Prepaid legal assistance	\$300
Vacation	2% of annual pay for each week, up to 6 weeks a year
Pension at retirement equal to approximately 50% of final annual earnings	\$1500
Four-day workweek during the three summer months (available only to full-time employees)	4% of annual pay
Daycare services (after company contribution)	\$2000 for all of an employee's children, regardless of number
Company-provided transportation to and from work	\$750
University tuition reimbursement	\$1000
Language class tuition reimbursement	\$500

The Task

1. Each group has 15 minutes to develop a flexible benefits package that consumes 25 percent (and no more!) of its character's pay.
2. After completing Step 1, each group appoints a spokesperson who describes to the entire class the benefits package the group has arrived at for its character.
3. The entire class then discusses the results. How did the needs, concerns, and problems of each participant influence the group's decision? What do the results suggest for trying to motivate a diverse workforce?

Source: Exercise developed by Steve Robbins, with special thanks to Professor Penny Wright (San Diego State University) for her suggestions during the development of this exercise. Exercise modified by Nancy Langton.