

## Leadership Commandment 8: [Let Differences Become Your Direction](#)

Diversity in the workplace (in all its forms) is not something to be feared or squelched – it's an advantage to be nurtured and encouraged. And that's the precise reason why leadership commandment number eight is...[Let Differences Become Your Direction](#).

### Dealing with the Reality of Differences - Questions to Answer:

- How can we take full advantage of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our changing demographics?
- What behaviors must everyone adopt in order to encourage more creativity and innovation?
- How can we work smarter in order to “do more with less”?

### 7 Ways to Make Differences Your Direction

1. Hire and Promote People Who Are ‘Different’: Staff your organization – and your team – with people who bring unique backgrounds, experiences, ideas, skills, and abilities to relate to a diverse population.
2. Encourage “Out of the Box” Problem Solving: Teach, use, and reinforce creative thinking and problem-solving techniques. Get in the habit of using phrases like: “What if we...” and “Here’s a crazy idea...” and avoid verbiage such as “That will never work.”
3. Keep the Environment “Safe”: Make sure that all team members feel comfortable sharing ideas without fear of criticism. Make it clear that behaviors which inhibit or discourage the free-flow of creative ideas are unacceptable.
4. Support Intelligent Risk Taking: Let everyone on your team know that taking risks in trying new things is not only okay, it's encouraged – as long as it is done intelligently.
5. Provide Freedom with Fences: Set the parameters for projects and assignments, but allow team members discretion on how they tackle those tasks.
6. Cherish the Challengers: The next time someone on your team questions an approach or strategy, don't roll your eyes – extend your hand, say thank you, and ask the person for his or her thoughts on what types of productive changes might be made.
7. Do a “Uniqueness Inventory”: Write down the names of all of your team members. Next to each name, list what's unique and special about the person that could be beneficial to the team and organization.

**Take Away...to Remember:** Leadership is not about keeping people and organizations where they are. Rather, it's about maximizing their potential. You've been blessed with more diversity...more choices...more options...more 'tools' than have existed in any other time in history. Tomorrow's success is there for the taking if you follow the eighth commandment of leadership and [Let Differences Become Your Direction](#).