

For Diversity



Against Discrimination

DIVERSITY

in small and medium-sized enterprises

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE 2006

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An initiative of the European Union

www.stop-discrimination.info



Lessons on implementing diversity strategies in SMEs: the challenges

- Desire to protect personal nature of the business – the need for autonomy and control
- Conflict between the 'threat' of government legislation and the need for compliance
- The pressures of day-to-day business management





Lessons on implementing diversity strategies in SMEs: the challenges

- Lack of time and resources for business development
- Lack of internal HR (and diversity) experience and expertise
- The central influence of the business owner's values, attitudes and beliefs
- Reliance on own, informal, staffing and management systems





Successful strategies

- Make time for reflection and business development; focusing on business needs, problems and constraints
- Explore the links between diversity, needs and business development
- Seek advice and support (including from business support organisations and other business owners)
- 'Put aside' personal values and beliefs
- Involve staff / other managers and listen to their views





Successful strategies

- Develop a range of formal staffing / HR policies in consultation with managers and staff – and use and develop these policies!
- Think diversity! with a focus on business success / development, evolving customer needs and wider potential market opportunities
- Recognise the progress made and capture the outcomes and benefits
- Highlight your commitment to diversity in recruitment, marketing and tendering materials





What to do and what not to do

- Do not resist the legislation / use it as a basis for business (and staff) development and to help you win new business
- Do not rely on personal values and 'gut instinct' / develop objective policies and procedures that are understood by all
- Take the opportunity to develop your own understanding of diversity issues and use this for the development of your business





What to do and what not to do

- Do not try to 'go it alone' – seek help and support from those with experience and expertise
- Do not see diversity as a separate issue / incorporate it into **all** your business development activities
- Do not focus only on the time and resources required / Develop a simple system to assess the benefits on a regular basis

