

The Case for a Diverse ASME Leadership

Diversity is not only people who look different –it's also people who have different experiences and thoughts.

What shapes the future is not what we have in common, but the interplay of our differences.

As your unit's representative on the ASME Nominating Committee, it is important for you to understand ASME's commitment to diversity and to incorporating "strategic diversity" into its business model.

Some persons, hearing the word "diversity," equate it with the affirmative action programs of the 1960s and 1970s. However, in recent years the diversity debate has shifted from the moral obligation of affirmative action to a business imperative.

The leading global organizations of the 21st Century will be those that create a constant stream of innovative goods and services, winning customers and earning loyalty through exceptional performance. No one type of person, or group of people, has all the skills and talents needed. Top 21st Century organizations -- faced with intense competition in global markets, record numbers of mergers and acquisitions, and the global war for talent -- are focusing on how to leverage diversity as their competitive differentiator.

ASME believes that diversity is both the ways in which we differ as individuals or organizations **and** the commonalities and similarities that justify and motivate diverse people and entities to work collaboratively together, in order to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Diversity includes attribute differences such as age, gender, ethnicity and physical appearance; as well as personal differences such as thought styles, religion, nationality, socio-economic status, belief systems, sexual orientation and education.

Closely linked to diversity is the concept of inclusion: the due diligence of seeking the reason(s) why and the way(s) that all people should and can participate in and contribute to projects, programs and processes, or any opportunity that will achieve the successful outcomes.

As you evaluate the candidates who will come before you during your term on the ASME Nominating Committee, consider their respective candidacies within the following context:

- Becoming indispensable to Young Engineers leverages **age** diversity. (Creating Membership, adding future leadership and present skills)
- Making a priority of Globalization leverages **geographic** and **cultural** diversity. (Adding Membership and creating opportunities)
- Achieving a Multi-disciplinary Approach priority leverages **technical knowledge/specialization** diversity. (Creating Membership, opportunity and recognition)
- Achieving a priority of enhanced Industry-Government involvement leverages **sector** diversity. (Creating respect and prestige)
- Increasing the number of female and under-represented minorities within the ASME Membership leverages **gender** and **ethnic** diversity. (Adding creativity and talent)

Inclusion of diversity within the ASME leadership at all levels will be a complex, on-going change process, designed to increase organizational capability by:

- Addressing factors of ‘differences’ that have an impact on bottom-line performance.
- Fully utilizing the potential contributions of all customers and Members.
- Eliminating/reducing barriers that stand in the way of inclusion and full participation.
- Unleashing the creativity that results from drawing from different ideas and backgrounds.
- Building relationships and demonstrating respect and fairness in interactions with Members, customers, suppliers, partners and communities.

By incorporating diversity and inclusiveness in its leadership structure and business plan, ASME may anticipate the following results:

- **Attraction and retention of top talent.** The average age of workers is rising. The number of women entering the workforce continues to escalate. Employees are becoming more mobile with changing needs and expectations. Continued success depends on ASME’s ability to attract and fully utilize the diverse pool of talent in the engineering profession.
- **Increased productivity.** Members and customers who feel respected, valued and connected develop stronger relationships and become more involved in their work. This in turn leads to enhanced teamwork, increased innovation and productivity, decreased Member turnover and reduced costs.
- **Stronger customer/market focus.** A diverse Membership base leads to better understanding and responsiveness to increasingly diverse customers and markets.
- **Recognition by the public.** The public is a diverse group representing many unique individuals. The public values and supports those organizations that recognize the differences among people.