

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY suffers the same plight as political diversity. Often, power is entrenched by a sustained history of big teeth players, predominately from a single gender and race in the U.S.—the white male. We frequently elect our country's officials in a similar way, and base our belief on their ability to lead by judging their race or gender. The stakes increase when women are vying for positions generally held by men. In Hillary Clinton's pursuit of the highest government position, United States President, she found herself fighting for respect and support from minority women.

The reasons were complicated since many of her critics and supporters were women themselves. These female critics were largely African American faced with two issues of discrimination often resulting in harassment—being female and being black. As black women, their struggle is intensified because they do not have double indemnity releasing them from gender and race distinctions. Without careful consideration, one might feel that African American women were resentful of Hillary Clinton, but to the contrary, they struggled to make the choice between Hillary Clinton, a brilliant, experienced, female political elite and Barack Obama, a brilliant, dynamic, Prince Charmingly black male.

Unlike African American women, Hispanic women did not face the same dilemma—having to choose between a white female candidate and an attractive and charismatic Hispanic male candidate. It made sense that Hillary would have a much easier win with the Hispanic female vote. With good conscience they could vote for Hillary—much more experienced, knowledgeable and prepared, as opposed to the newly branded Barack Obama or a ticket with Sarah Palin, the unknown late entry.

The same dilemma emerges in the workplace. Professional women are mentored and sometimes exploited by their white male benefactors. Women often place a higher value on relationships with males in the workplace for two primary reasons. Job security is a major reason women disenfranchise themselves from other women. Secondly, women recognize that other women will present competition. Thus Obama was able to leverage his race against Hillary's gender with African American women. An example of this dilemma occurs where two women are considered for a job. If both women are African American with similar qualifications, the process may select the one who is more attractive or more likeable to the interviewer(s). On the other hand, if one woman is white and the other African American, there may be other considerations not necessarily related to qualifications, such as race, attractiveness, or identity with the interviewer(s), whether black or white. Although rarely if ever admitted, it is likely that discrimination will surface and take precedence over candidates' qualifications.

Educating both women and men that having more women in decision-making and hiring roles will help end this outmoded dilemma. If choices aren't based on race and gender, the decision will become less complex and less difficult. Electing or hiring should be based solely upon qualifications, ability

and desire to do the job or serve the public. In the utopian world of no bias, prejudice or nepotism, all determinations should not be based on the color of one's skin (or whether one wears makeup on it or not) but by the content of one's character.



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