Components for Curbing Complaints

I received a call this week from a client who had just investigated a string of racial harassment complaints and wanted to reinstitute the training that we had conducted several years ago. While we were discouraged to hear that they were experiencing new complaints, I was not surprised since the client had neglected to do three key things:

1. **Repetition, Repetition, Repetition.**

   Just as with raising kids, you have to repeat things frequently or they will not retain your advice. People forget, get busy, and just plain don't think it's important unless you keep reminding them that diversity, harassment and discrimination matter. Regular refresher workshops - every two to three years - should be key components of any prevention program.

2. **Integrate New Employees.**

   Make sure your new hires know you take these issues seriously and run yearly sessions to integrate them into your culture and values.

3. **Make Sure Leaders Lead.**

   Unless leaders model appropriate behavior and monitor the workplace to ensure inappropriate behavior stops, employees will not take any diversity or discrimination prevention programs to heart. Critics have blasted the new Starbucks program led by CEO Howard Schultz, along with USA Today, encouraging baristas to start race conversations with employees by writing "race together" on customers' coffee cups. Some commentators have pointed out that Starbucks and USA Today need to look at the composition of their own executive team before holding lower level employees responsible. [Read more...](#)

There is a Solution

While I applaud Schultz for trying to do something, modeling is KEY. Without that, your efforts will fail. We, at Workplaces That Work, always use diverse workshop teams to lead sessions for just that reason.