

Major U.S. **DEMOGRAPHIC** groups

	Number	Percent of U.S. population
Total	284,800,000	100.0 %
English-at-home speakers ⁶	245,497,600	86.2 %
Christian ²	217,872,000	76.5 %
White ¹	211,460,626	75.1 %
Protestant ¹⁸	150,944,000	53 %
Female ¹	145,532,800	51.1 %
Male ¹	139,267,200	48.9 %
"born-again" or "evangelical" ⁹	125,312,000	44 %
Republican ⁸	90,950,000	33 %
Democrat ⁸	85,440,000	31 %
Catholic ²	69,776,000	24.5 %
Non-English speakers ⁶	38,087,127	13.8 %
Nonreligious ²	37,593,600	13.2 %
Hispanic/Latino ¹	35,305,818	12.5 %
Black ¹	34,658,190	12.3 %
Baptist ¹⁸	34,176,000	12 %
Evangelical (theologically) ¹⁶	22,049,360	8.0 %
Methodist ²	19,366,400	6.8 %
Spanish speakers ⁶	20,744,986	7.5 %
Southern Baptist ³	15,800,000	5.6 %
Lutheran ²	13,100,800	4.6 %
vegetarian ¹⁹	12,000,000	4.2 %
Asian ¹	10,242,998	3.6 %
United Methodist Church ²⁰	8,251,042	2.9 %
Presbyterian ²	7,689,600	2.7 %
Multiracial ¹	6,826,228	2.4 %
Pentecostal ²	5,980,800	2.1 %
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)	5,503,192	1.93 %



U.S. DEMOGRAPHICS (continue)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ^{3, 20}	5,038,066	1.8 %
Episcopalian ²	4,841,600	1.7 %
GLBT (gay, lesbian or bisexual) ⁵	4,300,000	1.51 %
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ^{3, 20}	3,595,259	1.3 %
Judaism ^{2, 21}	3,702,400	1.3 %
Eastern Orthodox ⁹	2,756,170	1 %
Assemblies of God ¹¹	2,575,000	0.93 %
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod ^{3, 20}	2,512,714	0.9 %
Native American ¹	2,475,956	0.9 %
Buddhist ¹³	2,400,000	0.87 %
Episcopal Church ²⁰	2,333,628	0.82 %
French speakers ⁶	2,308,795	0.8 %
Gay men ⁵	2,000,000	0.70 %
Non-denominational ¹¹	2,000,000	0.7 %
prison population	2,000,000	0.7 %
German speakers ⁶	1,851,418	0.7 %
Megachurch attendance ¹⁴	1,800,000	0.64 %
Jehovah's Witnesses ²	1,708,800	0.6 %
Chinese speakers ⁶	1,578,099	0.6 %
Italian speakers ⁶	1,565,165	0.6 %
Churches of Christ (non-instrumental / Corsicana, TX) ²⁰	1,500,000	0.53 %
American Baptist Church in the U.S.A. ²⁰	1,484,291	0.52 %
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church ²⁰	1,430,795	0.50 %
Muslim ²	1,424,000	0.5 %
agnostic ²	1,424,000	0.5 %
bisexual ⁵	1,400,000	0.49 %
United Church of Christ ²⁰	1,330,985	0.47 %
Baptist Bible Fellowship International ²⁰	1,200,000	0.42 %
atheists ^{2, 10}	1,139,200	0.4 %
Tagolog speakers ⁶	1,008,542	0.4 %



U.S. DEMOGRAPHICS (continue)

Independent Christian Church, Churches of Christ (instrumental / Joplin, MO) ²⁰	1,071,616	0.39 %
Hindu ¹³	1,000,000	0.36 %
Church of God (Cleveland, TN) ²⁰	944,857	0.33 %
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ¹¹	910,000	0.33 %
lesbians ⁵	900,000	0.32 %
Polish speakers ⁶	865,298	0.3 %
Unitarian Universalist ²	854,400	0.3 %
Seventh-day Adventists ¹¹	809,000	0.29 %
Neo-pagan (incl. Wiccans) ¹²	768,400	0.28 %
Korean speakers ⁶	749,278	0.3 %
Church of the Nazarene ¹¹	608,000	0.2 %
Vietnamese speakers ⁶	606,463	0.2 %
vegans ²²	591,468	0.2 %
Portuguese speakers ⁶	515,017	0.2 %
Japanese speakers ⁶	511,485	0.2 %
Pacific Islander ¹	398,835	0.1 %
Reformed Church in America (RCA) ¹¹	304,000	0.11 %
Libertarian party members ⁷	200,000	0.07 %
Baha'i ¹¹	142,000	0.05 %
Native American Religionist ²	120,735	0.04 %
Mennonite Church USA ²³	110,000	.036 %

SOURCE: **U.S. Census Bureau Information**
http://www.adherents.com/adh_dem.html

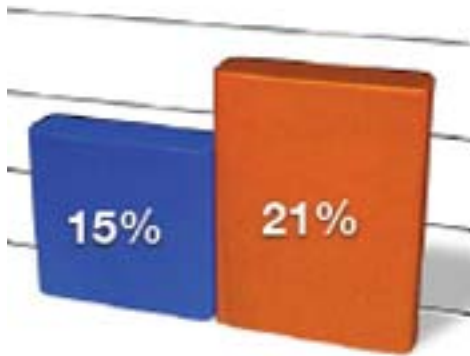
AMERICAN ANCESTRY - DEMOGRAPHICS

Ancestry	All persons	Percent foreign born
All persons	248,709,873	7.9
Albanian	38,361	32.8
American	13,039,560	0.1
Armenian	267,975	44.5
Assyrian	46,099	58.6
Australian	36,290	39.4
Austrian	545,856	11.2
Barbadian	33,178	74.6
Basque	37,842	14.2
Belgian	248,075	11.0
Belizean	21,205	75.3
Brazilian	57,108	72.5
British West Indian	35,822	79.5
Bulgarian	20,894	32.3
Cajun	597,729	0.1
Canadian	361,612	34.1
Cape Verdean	46,552	28.9
Croatian	409,458	7.5
Czech	772,087	3.7
Czechoslovakian	240,489	7.7
Danish	980,868	3.8
Dutch	3,475,410	3.6
Dutch West Indian	33,473	4.0
Egyptian	73,097	69.2
English	22,703,652	2.8
Estonian	20,996	47.5
Ethiopian	33,868	81.4
Finnish	465,070	4.8
French	6,204,184	2.7
French Canadian	1,698,394	6.7
German	45,583,932	1.8
Greek	921,782	21.0
Guyanese	75,765	85.3
Haitian	280,874	70.9
Hungarian	997,545	12.4
Icelander	27,171	20.2
Iranian	220,714	77.0
Iraqi	20,657	69.5
Irish	22,721,252	1.2
Israeli	69,018	56.6
Italian	11,286,815	5.7
Jamaican	410,933	72.8
Latvian	75,747	36.4
Lebanese	309,578	25.5
Lithuanian	526,089	6.6
Luxemburger	28,846	4.6
Maltese	30,292	30.4
Nigerian	86,875	55.5
Norwegian	2,517,760	1.9
Palestinian	44,651	56.9
Pennsylvania German	246,461	0.2
Polish	6,542,844	6.2
Portuguese	900,060	25.8
Romanian	235,774	29.1
Russian	2,114,506	9.2
Scotch-Irish	4,334,197	0.7
Scottish	3,315,306	4.6
Serbian	89,583	21.5
Slavic	43,301	6.2
Slovak	1,210,652	3.3
Slovene	87,500	7.8
Swedish	2,881,950	2.0
Swiss	607,833	5.9
Syrian	95,155	23.4
Trinidadian and Tobagonian	71,720	80.8
Turkish	66,492	53.5
Ukrainian	514,085	17.9
Welsh	1,038,603	1.7
Yugoslavian	184,952	25.3

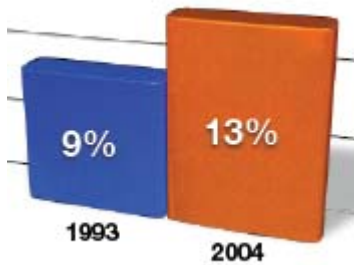
The following information comes from the online media source:

Latino Community - Factoids

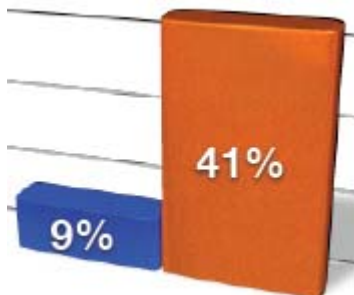
November 12, 2008



Latinos account for 15 percent of the [U.S. population](#). Between 1990 and 2007, the [Latino population](#) increased 100 percent, compared with a 21 percent increase for the entire population. (Source: *U.S. Census Bureau*)



From 1993 to 2004, the proportion of the Latino population age 25 and older with a bachelor's degree increased from 9 percent to 13 percent; 17.3 percent of Blacks have bachelor's degrees, compared with 27.6 percent of whites.



Fifty percent of Latinos are homeowners. Compared with 69 percent of non-Latinos; this is up from 41 percent in 1994. (Source: *Consumer Expenditure Survey*)

Latino Community – Factoids (continue)



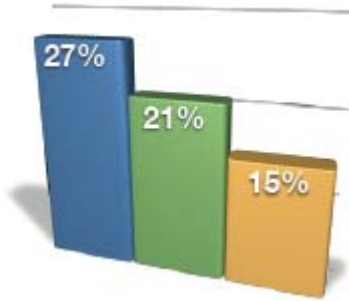
Growth of Latino buying power: \$212 billion in 1990, \$489 billion in 2000, \$862 billion in 2007, \$1.2 trillion in 2012; the nation's total buying power will rise from \$4.3 trillion in 1990 to \$7.2 trillion in 2000, to \$10 trillion in 2007, and to \$13 trillion in 2012. (Source: *Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia*)



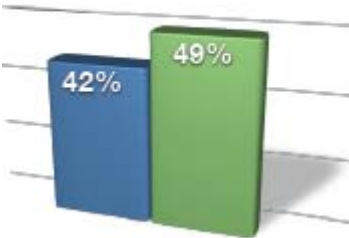
Between 1997 and 2002, the number of Latino business owners grew 31 percent; this is three times faster than the 10 percent increase for all U.S. firms

African-American Community – Factoids

November 12, 2008



From 1990 to 2007, the nation's Black population increased by 27 percent, compared with 15 percent for the white population and 21 percent for the total population. (Sources: *American Community Survey*, *U.S. Census Bureau*)

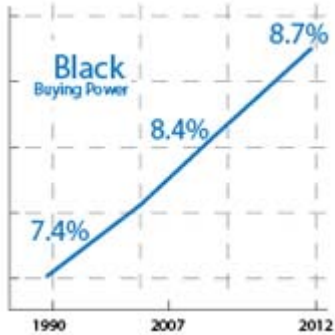


As of 2005, 49 percent of Blacks were homeowners, compared with 70 percent for non-Blacks; this is up from 42 percent in 1994. (Source: *Selig Center for Economic Growth*)



The number of Black-owned firms increased 45 percent from 1997 to 2002; this is 4.5 times faster than the 10 percent increase in the number of all U.S. businesses. (Source: *Survey of Business Owners*, *U.S. Census Bureau*)

African-American Community – Factoids (continue)



In 2007, the Black share of total **buying power** is 8.4 percent, up from 7.4 percent in 1990. This is expected to rise to 8.7 percent by 2012, which accounts for nine cents out of every dollar spent nationwide. (Source: *Selig Center for Economic Growth*)

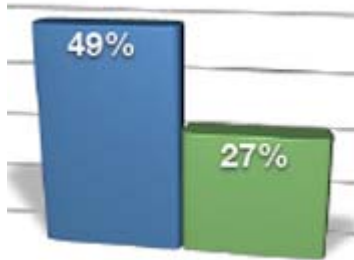


There are 43 Blacks in the 110th Congress, of which only one was a U.S. Senator--Barack Obama from Illinois.

African-American Roland Burris from Illinois was appointed by the Illinois governor to replace Obama. He was sworn in just before the Presidential Inauguration.

Asian-American Community - Factoids

November 12, 2008



Forty-nine percent of Asian Americans 25 and older have a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 27 percent for all people 25 and older. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)



Two million people in the United States speak Chinese at home. Next to Spanish, Chinese is the most widely spoken non-English language in this country. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

Asian-American Community – Factoids (continue)



The \$83,804 in average income enjoyed by Asian-American married-couple households is 8 percent higher than that of non-Latino white households. Moreover, on average, Asian Americans working full time earn more than their non-Latino white counterparts (\$47,189 vs. \$46,794). *(Sources: The U.S. Asian-American Market, U.S. Census Bureau)*

New York
Los Angeles
Honolulu
San Francisco

Cities with highest Asian-owned firms are New York, [Los Angeles](#), Honolulu and [San Francisco](#). *(Source: U.S. Census Bureau)*

What 'to' Say to Bi-racial/Multi-ethnic Co-workers

By Yoji Cole

Along with the presidential candidacy of Barack Obama, who is half-Black and half-white, comes the question of the year: "What are you?" It seems mixed-race or multiethnic people are being asked this question now more than ever before.

What are you? What is your nationality? Where are you from? No, where are you really from? Which side do you feel more? [These are all questions](#) that can be perceived as offensive because they make assumptions rather than demonstrate authentic, intellectual curiosity.

Curiosity is not wrong in and of itself. Often, it's the delivery and not the question that is the problem. Here are ways to properly inquire about a person's racial or ethnic heritage that are less likely to offend.

1. Learn the lingo.

"Some folks use the words 'multiracial,' 'multiethnic,' 'mixed race' and 'biracial' interchangeably, but it's important to know what folks prefer," says Farzana Nayani, vice president, Multiracial Americans of Southern California ([MASC](#)).

Nayani, who is also an education consultant and cross-cultural researcher, adds that people should not shy away from having conversations in the workplace about heritage. Such conversations can build friendships and networks.

Nayani says, "If you have a person of one race but two ethnicities, it would be more appropriate to say they are multiethnic. And if that person identifies as multiracial, that's their choice. So learn the lingo but also have the conversation about what's preferred."

2. "What is your heritage?"

"As an Afro-Latina, I get questions a lot," says Miriam Muley, founder and CEO of 85% Niche. "They do not understand that one can be 100 percent Black and 100 percent Latina. It does not compute for them, so they continue to press trying to fit you into a box."

Being fit into a box is a pet peeve of people who are biracial or multiethnic. Following Census 2000, there is still debate about what box to check off for census, corporate and other demographers. In 2000, nearly 7 million biracial/multiracial people checked off two or more boxes to reflect their mixed heritage.

The key to properly asking someone about their heritage is making sure the question is open-ended and does not try to define them before they answer.

"Asking 'What is your heritage?' leads the discussion down an intellectual path rather than a degrading path," says Sara Buchanan, director of sales, southeast region, at DiversityInc.

Buchanan is half-Black and half-white. Her mother, who is white, can trace her lineage back to the Mayflower. Her father's family was brought to the United States in the slave trade. Her father's family can also trace their lineage to American Indians.

"Having family that literally came across on the Mayflower as indentured servants, and then having people on my dad's side who were brought over here, and then also having Indian blood makes for an interesting mix," says Buchanan. "Really, I am an American."

3. "Do you identify with one culture more than the other?"

Instead of asking, "What are you mostly?"--which can be construed as a confrontational question that tries to pigeonhole a person--ask an open-ended question, such as the one above.

Buchanan faced a tricky situation while attending a networking mixer thrown by a [DiversityInc Top 50](#) company. She was talking to the company's CEO and it was apparent that he was trying to place her heritage.

"He was at a loss for words. I knew what he wanted to ask me, but he didn't know how to ask," says Buchanan. She says she prefers a straightforward question that does not assume she's chosen one side over the other.

"The best way to do it is to just ask. Don't beat around the bush about it," says Buchanan. "I actually helped [the CEO] and said, 'You want to know my heritage?' He said yes. And in my case, I identify with both and not one more than the other. If someone is interested, then ask, but ask in a way that allows that person to share their heritage. Don't ask from an assumptive point of view."

4. Keep communication clear by reflecting back what's been said to you.

Muley is concerned about how biracial and/or multiethnic workers are asked about their personal experiences. She suggests that people who have asked for further demographic information rephrase what they've been told to indicate that they've heard and understand the explanation.

"Rephrase their comments to ensure that you understand their point and to let them know that you are really listening," says Muley. "You can also advance the conversation by asking questions such as 'How did you feel about that experience?' or 'What suggestions do you have for people of non-mixed backgrounds in this area?' The key is to ask for their guidance and acknowledge their expertise in this area."

5. Know that biracial and multiethnic people are diverse.

One of Nayani's colleagues was conducting corporate training and expected to walk into a room of Asian executives. When she arrived, she thought she had walked into the wrong room because the people did not "look" Asian.

"The people in the room were a multiethnic group of Asians who identified as Asian," says Nayani. "Be aware that people can identify with [an ethnicity] that they don't look like."

Such a situation can become a problem in the workplace if a person is using stereotypes to describe people, says Nayani: "People who are multiethnic can look like different races or ethnic groups. You could be speaking about another group in generalities and they could be in the room."

Muley says the key to asking non-confrontational questions is attitude. "You can sense genuine interest and nonjudgmental behavior and you can sense when people are trying to put you into one of the many 'boxes' in their head," says Muley.

What to Say to Biracial/Multiethnic Coworkers

I was originally listed as white on my birth certificate, given up for adoption and then at 18 months old my race was changed to colored. I am almost 50. My mom is white, my dad is black. I reject the label African American because that, in my mind, is someone who immigrated from Africa. I prefer the term biracial.

Kimberley Gomez

Posted: Monday, Jul 21, 2008
What to Say to Biracial/Multiethnic Coworkers

I think that it is a mistake to look for wording on how to ask someone his heritage. This is a very personal question, and generally inappropriate to the work place.

Dan Segalman

Posted: Friday, Jul 18, 2008
What to Say to Biracial/Multiethnic Coworkers

I feel the same way OT My family is Sicilian-Italian. I have taken after the darker roots and most people think that I am Latin American especially since my spouse is and my last name reflects that culture. Many others believe that I am Arabic, multiracial or from Northern India. I usually fit in with whichever ethnic group I am associating with. Like you the rest of my family is light skinned and I have always had a slight identity crisis. My advice to you is to hang in there and roll with it. My appearance gives me the flexibility to be comfortable with just about anyone. We also have a special identity because we cannot be put in a box that easily.

Deb B

Posted: Thursday, Jul 17, 2008
What to Say to Biracial/Multiethnic Coworkers

I am constantly being asked "What are you?" by people because they want to fit me into a box. People often ask me where my "accent" is from, even though I was raised in the U.S. and I don't have an accent, they just look at my features and assume I'm an immigrant. People assume I'm Latina or Arab and speak to me in Spanish or Arabic all the time. Meanwhile, my actual background is second-generation American from Greek, Maltese, and Albanian heritage. My family identifies as white, but I feel like I have a totally different experience than everyone else because I have the darkest features. I feel like I'm not allowed to talk about this most of the time because I'm not actually a minority. How can I explain my experience to people?

O T

Posted: Tuesday, Jul 15, 2008
What to Say to Biracial/Multiethnic Coworkers

I agree, why do we have to appease someone else's curiosity, especially in the workplace? Are you willing to treat me differently if you can relate to me in some fashion? Is that why you ask the question??? As a person whose mother is part Portugese/German and Black/Creole and whose father is black, what does that make me? I am fairskinned with curly-straight hair and by appearance looks hispanic. Many people assume I'm white or hispanic, but I identify with the black community; that was how/where I was raised and all I ever thought of myself as. Yet even at 50 years old, I am still asked that question, what are you. I am still discriminated against by whites

AND blacks. I am still rejected in MY community and it hurts a lot.

Enough is enough. Why can't we just accept each other as human and enjoy each other's diversity

and background? Get over it. Who in this nation really is 100% anything, anyway?

Jackie Graham

MCOM 105: ARTICLE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

1. How well does this article address the concerns and feelings of this group of people?
2. This approach to diversity understanding – Is it appropriate, too little or too much?
3. How would you assess if these suggestions are offensive vs. being straightforward?

If assigned to type up your responses... **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**

YOUR MCOM 105 - HOMEWORK PAPER LAYOUT REQUIREMENTS

Fully comply with directives below or receive no credit

Print your responses on paper and submit it on the day due, never later.

NEVER elect to e-mail assignments! E-mail ONLY when assigned to do so.

Be candid and honest in approach. Never write what you think the professor wants to hear.

Typed & 2 pages maximum answering all questions, no exceptions. That means write tight, be specific, precise and clear with all wording. Good grammar & spelling is expected.

(Note - Never ask “what’s the minimum?” That’s a clear signal you are thinking of being lazy or doing as little as possible. Don’t embarrass yourself by asking that.)

Double- spaced typing.

Cite specifics from the article and quotes from people you contact. Name your contacts. Always include a way for Prof. Rucker to contact them to verify your quotes.

Made-up information results in an automatic FAILING GRADE in the class, not just on the assignment. Do all assignments with a priority of integrity.

Expect NO MAKE-UP opportunities or extra credit to improve your assignment grades.

Article Online: DIVERSITY INC.

<http://www.diversityinc.com>

10 Things NEVER to Say to Latino Executives

By Yoji Cole

It's a case of damned if you do, damned if you don't. After trying to fit in a mostly white corporate culture in the 1980s, Jim Huerta's boss challenged him about whether he was "being Latino enough."

Huerta spent the first 12 years of his corporate life working in the mining industry, where most employees were white. People regularly butchered his name, so he pronounced it without a Spanish accent. Huerta developed a relationship with a white-male mentor, who, upon hearing Huerta say his last name without the Spanish accent, corrected him, using the Spanish pronunciation of his name.

Following that interaction, Huerta regularly used the proper Spanish pronunciation of his name and "the response became immediate. It was a look or a question asking, 'Where are you from?'"

"The conversation was different," Huerta recalls. People started asking him "'How do your people do that?' or 'Do you eat that kind of food?' Those questions never came up before and I wasn't taking them as flattering investigation of who I was. I was being categorized as not necessarily 'one of us,'" says Huerta.

Questions and comments steeped in stereotype can alienate Latino executives. The problem for the company is that the best and brightest will leave for places where they feel welcomed and like a valued member of the team.

Here are 10 things you should not say to Latino executives:

1. "Don't worry, you'll get the promotion, you're Latina."

This comment tells the Latino person that his or her ethnicity speaks louder than accomplishments; it's a classic affirmative-action stereotype that Latinos and Blacks deal with constantly. Donna Maria Blancero heard that comment regularly when she was the lone Latina professor at a university in Arizona. Now the senior vice president of research and intellectual development at the National Society for Hispanic MBAs, Blancero says her methods of coping changed over the years. "At first it would leave me speechless and then leave me angry," says Blancero. After years of hearing that line, Blancero started to respond with, "Really? I thought it was because I had a Ph.D. from an Ivy League university, teaching awards and a publishing record."

2. "When did you arrive in this country?"

This comment assumes that everyone of Latin descent is a foreigner.

3. "Hola! Habla Ingles?"

This question is patronizing, especially when those three words are the only Spanish the speaker knows. Just speak English.

4. "Do you live with your parents?"

Don't assume that because someone is Latino, he doesn't live on his own. When Huerta worked for a white male who was president of the division, his boss asked him if he lived

with his parents. "I would at first joke to try to make him see I was uncomfortable, but finally I stopped answering him ... He slowed it down, but keep in mind this guy was a money maker for the firm. You almost have to bite your tongue until there's a little blood seeping out the side of your cheek. If you get angry and offensive, it's not a matter of right or wrong. It's a matter of a senior leader saying you're too sensitive."

5. "You're not like them."

"My first response is 'How do *they* act?' because I might say, 'Well, I do act like that,'" says Huerta.

6. "Can you show me your knife?"

Raymond Arroyo, chief diversity officer at Aetna, one of DiversityInc's 25 Noteworthy Companies, was asked this question by a sales associate 20 years ago when he traveled to Toronto with three other Latino executives. At the time, mainstream news reports out of New York City told about Puerto Rican gangs wielding knives. Arroyo suggests that Latino executives, when facing such prejudicial comments, not "be too sensitive and educate [people] when you can."

7. "Why don't all you Latinos stop doing that?"

This statement assumes that because a person is Latino, he or she can influence an entire group. Latinos certainly are a varied group, from different countries of origin and with different race/ethnicities/cultural background. Lumping them all together is a common and silly assumption. "The question is steeped in stereotypes. Another stereotype is that ... because we are Hispanic or Latino, we are going to solve the problems of our communities. They will come to us with questions about selling [to Latinos] or human-resources questions," says Federico Preuss, counsel at Aetna.

8. "You're not white."

Earlier in his career, Preuss was filling out forms as a new employee when a human-resources executive asked, "What are you?" Preuss, who is from Argentina and whose grandfather is from Germany, has a typical "white" look. Latinos can be of any race.

9. Butchering a Latino's last name.

"It's no one's fault," says Preuss, who has given up trying to correct people who mispronounce his last name. At Aetna, while other executives may refer to each other using surnames, most times people refer to Preuss using his first name, Federico. Preuss suggests Latino executives correct people in private rather than public. "Try to talk it out and not get angry to a level where both of you won't get over it," says Preuss. "If you really want to be an executive, you need to take a positive view of things and try to teach and not correct. The person corrected will be embarrassed and might look at you as a candidate who won't grow well in the organizations."

10. "Do you speak Spanish?"

"That's code for, 'How Latino are you?'" says Henry Hernandez, a management consultant and former vice president of diversity and inclusion at American Express. "It's almost a double-edged sword being asked that question. Being Latino, many times the challenge a

lot of us face is that we may not be Latino enough or Hispanic enough for some of our peers. But you can't make an assumption that because someone is Latino they're bilingual or that they're first- or second-generation [U.S. citizen]. My wife is fourth generation and I am second generation and her Spanish is much better than mine."

Readers' Comments

Posted: Monday, Jan 05, 2009
10 Things NEVER to Say to Latino Executives

While in agreement with 10 with an executive, I also think this question is OK among peer-level employees in informal settings, like the lunch room, if and when followed by a conversation in Spanish. I am a White American (mostly British ancestry), but I speak Spanish at home, but I have found that by showing an understanding of not only the languages of Spanish but Latin-American cultures, that offense is not usually taken. One of the great traits among Latinosa and Latin American were I live is their friendliness.

I would note that other Latins (from central Spain specifically) speak Spanish, are encountered in some workplaces, and don't consider themselves Latinos (as the term generally refers to Latin Americans rather than Latin Europeans, a group that also includes non-Spanish speakers--Italians, Romanians, Romansch, French, Catalans, Portuguese).

R P

Posted: Saturday, Oct 11, 2008
10 Things NEVER to Say to Latino Executives

I called a national sales 800 number to request an estimate for an alarm installation - one reason I selected this company was its longstanding presence and reputation for trustworthiness.

The reason I deselected this company from consideration was that when I gave my name to the salesperson, I heard a pause, followed by "Uh, what's the usual name you use?" Me: Excuse me?" Agent: "What name do you usually use?" Me: Excuse me?" Agent: You know, is there another name you use some of the time?" Me: "My name is José. Why would I use another name?"

As a longtime immigrant to the US, people often ask me if I was raised in Canada or the Midwest - I worked hard to perfect my language skills, and I am a training consultant and presenter in my profession, so the investment has paid off. I guess I need to brush up a pseudo-Latino accent for this salesperson, to fit and further enable his stereotype? ¡No!

José Kirchner

Things 'to' Say to Latino Co-workers

By Zayda Rivera

If you've read [10 Things NEVER to Say to Latino Executives](#), you have a good idea of what to avoid saying in order not to offend your colleague or embarrass yourself. But understanding better ways of communicating with your Latino coworkers can be trickier.

"It's really easy to point out the things not to say," says Rene Rodriguez, president and founder of the Latino social-networking web site [Babbalu.com](#), part of the [DiversityInc Recruitment Network](#). He says when it comes to things to say, it's more about your approach than your words. "Whether you're African American or Asian or Latino, you get to know the person ...you get to know their culture."

Knowing about your coworker's culture can make it easier to address things specific to a person's job that crosses cultural lines.

"Performance is performance whether you're Latino or African American or white," says Ana Mollinedo Mims, managing director of The Hunting Ridge Group and former vice president of global communications, community affairs and diversity for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide (no. 19 on [The 2008 DiversityInc Top 50 Companies for Diversity® list](#).) "How you carry yourself, how you present yourself and how you communicate are things that are difficult for employers to talk about with their Latino employees because they're not the things that you can measure like your performances."

Knowing how to address a specific situation that may involve cultural aspects is key to open communication among coworkers.

So before you speak to a Latino coworker concerning something that may be culturally sensitive, take a look at these six things to say to Latino coworkers.

What is your ethnicity?

The word Latino is an umbrella term that covers many different cultures. Although they are connected by the Spanish language, Cuban culture varies from Puerto Rican culture, which varies from Mexican culture, which varies from Colombian or Peruvian cultures.

"I was once told, 'Happy Cinco de Mayo!' by a coworker at a previous job who assumed all Latinos consider the fifth of May a holiday," says Mims. "He didn't know I was Puerto Rican and that Cinco de Mayo is a Mexican holiday. If he had simply asked, 'What's your ethnicity?' or even, 'Do you celebrate Cinco de Mayo?' I could have easily answered, 'I'm Puerto Rican, but enjoy the festivities of Cinco de Mayo.'"

"We celebrate Cinco de Mayo and we're Cuban," says Rodriguez. "For St. Patrick's Day, my sister makes a mean corn beef! It's kind of hard because we don't really look at where the person's from to gauge what we should say or what we should not say because we treat everyone on the same path."

By phrasing the question in a general but direct way, you can avoid the embarrassment of making the wrong assumption while learning something about your coworker that you didn't know before.

How do you want to be perceived?

Different cultures have various fashions, and at times these differences may be at odds with the general attire needed for day-to-day business. But there are more effective ways to address the issue of a colleague's inappropriate attire than criticizing.

"I was the only woman on a government-affairs team in the South, and I was the only minority in the whole office," recalls Mims. "[My boss] called me into his office one day to have a conversation about the way I was dressed. He said, 'How do you want to be perceived when you walk over to the capital? Do you want to be perceived like you're a lobbyist or do you want to be perceived like one of the assistants or the secretaries?'"

Keeping away from a cultural reference and sticking to the point at hand can prove to be beneficial for not only the employee but the supervisor as well.

"He spurred a thought pattern in me that wasn't there before, that nobody had shared with me before," says Mims. "A lot of Latinos don't come from the background ... their families have not walked in those places, in those rooms, among those types of situations to coach them to do that.

"I went back to him and said, 'You know what, all the other lobbyists were wearing suits.' And he looked at me and he goes, 'That's right.' And I said, 'I got it.'"

Share with me why you think that way.

Instead of expecting all Latinos to have similar opinions, ideas, experiences and backgrounds, a better approach is to see them as individuals first. That means you shouldn't expect your Latino colleague to answer for all Latinos when speaking about an issue.

"First of all, don't generalize because the only thing we have exposure to is what the media tells us and our own personal experiences," advises Mims. "You need to put aside what the media tells you [about a group of people]. You're different than other Latinos that I've met. Tell me more about why you think that way.' Or don't even make the cultural reference ... and then it's no longer a cultural thing--it's just a difference in thinking."

What types of food are traditional in your family?

Taking the direct approach works well, especially when dealing with culturally specific things like food.

"I remember living in Birmingham and having one of my colleagues ask me if I ate Cuban sandwiches," says Mims. "I said, 'What do you mean? I've been a vegetarian since I was 21. Why did you ask me about the sandwich?' He said, 'Because a friend of mine was telling me he had one and that it was really cool, and I was just wondering what was in it.' And I said, 'Oh, so here's what's in it' ... All of a sudden we got into what turned into this really good conversation about Cuban food, and what he really wanted to know was, when I came here did my parents change how they ate? He didn't know how to get there. He thought that would be too direct and too personal."

You got this job because you are the best candidate and you're Latino.

Let's face it: Successful Latinos, like other traditionally underrepresented groups, are often viewed as filling quotas rather than as accomplished professionals in their field. But that doesn't mean that being Latino doesn't give them a competitive edge for the same reason their experience does. In understanding that both a person's experience as well as his or her culture could be assets to a company, you gain a better perspective as to why they may be in that position.

"The truth of the matter is, if my being a woman and Hispanic is going to be of value to a company, which it should be, then I have to be willing to tap into my cultural resources and my gender

resources because that's what gives me value in the position over somebody who doesn't have that," Mims says. "I can't get offended if they ask me, 'What do you think Hispanics are going to think about this?' That's the value that I bring. We have to start seeing what we inherently have as a value and being able to use that value rather than always getting offended. So if you hired me because I'm Hispanic, I might as well tell you how we think. That's why I'm there, and not some white woman who couldn't do that."

I'm sorry, I don't speak or understand Spanish. Please speak in English.

Out of habit, a bilingual Spanish-speaking employee may revert to their native tongue if they are around others who also speak the language. But if there are others in the room who don't understand, it can sometimes make them uncomfortable.

Rodriguez feels that in such a situation, it's OK to ask your coworker to speak in English. "If you're in a room with five people and two are Latino and three are not ...whatever the case may be, it's rude for those two people to be speaking in a manner that the other people do not understand," says Rodriguez. "That goes more to a courtesy issue, not so much a race issue."

Readers' Comments

Posted: Saturday, Oct 11, 2008
Things 'to' Say to Latino Coworkers

It's good to see a magazine like yours trying to help all peoples negotiate the treacherous waters of race and ethnicity. I just wanted to comment on one point that E Alvarez made in an otherwise excellent series of observations. "I realize that being able to blend in with other Caucasian Americans is an asset??" What about the other kinds of Americans? And are we talking here about "white privilege?" A lot of Latinos seem to buy the idea that American=white=human. Have you ever been asked: Where are you from? And when you say: "I'm from whatever US state you were born in, but "unfortunately" you are not white, then you are asked: Where are you really from? But if you flipped that question to the "American", then he looks baffled: Can't you see I am an American? Good for E. Alvarez that he can blend in and enjoy the privileges that come with being perceived as white. Thank you and keep up the excellent work. Don Quijote de la Panza!!

henry bourgeois

Posted: Sunday, Aug 03, 2008
Things 'to' Say to Latino Coworkers

Many Indigenous/Native American organizations state that of the 37 million labeled Hispanic/Latino in the last U.S. census 75 - 95 percent are Indigenous. A language does not define an ethnic or cultural group of people. Ever wonder why the majority of us in the "Americas" were not called Indigenous Hispanic/Latino/African/European, etc...? Instead of first Hispanic/Latino...African...etc? I have always considered myself Indigenous...not Hispanic or Latino...I find it offensive to invalidate my long Indigenous heritage since the arrival of the Spaniard Hispanic/Latino, who have dominated most the Americas where Spanish predominates. Look at our faces...do you see mainly Hernan Cortez or Indigenous? Which is the dominant gene features? What about our food, dance-rhythm-music, frame of reference?

javier del sol

Posted: Friday, Aug 01, 2008
Things 'to' Say to Latino Coworkers

Raul is a white from Chile.

If you have an Hispanic accent, then you'll probably be considered Hispanic. If you don't have an accent, then your looks determine how people place you into a category.

As this article points out, people may look at you and assume **WRONGLY!!**

But I agree with Clyde--I never ask about what someone's ethnicity is. They will say something if they want to.

Anne Herrera

Posted: Thursday, Jul 31, 2008
Things 'to' Say to Latino Coworkers

In my 23 years in the pharmaceutical industry, one of the greatest rewards for me has been the ability to learn about the cultures of the people that have crossed my path, with a particularly strong interest in Latin America. I have never danced around this question; I will usually ask, "Where are you from originally?" at what seems to be the right moment. If the employee gives a US city as an answer, I'll talk with them a little about that city and then ask, "What is your heritage?" or something similar. Fortunately, my intentions are almost never misunderstood, because the employee usually senses that I genuinely want to know about the culture that they call their own. If there's any chance that my intentions might be misunderstood, I will be quick to follow up with a more detailed question such as "Where in Puerto Rico is your family from?" In my case, it helps that I chair the Latin employee network at my company and that my wife is Colombian. However, if I didn't feel secure in my general knowledge of the particular part of the world that the employee happens to be from, I would be more careful so as not to say anything that could be perceived as unenlightened or insensitive. Instead I would ask them to talk about their place of origin so that I can learn something new.

Michael Esposito

Posted: Wednesday, Jul 30, 2008
Things 'to' Say to Latino Coworkers

This article is more confusing than enlightening. The reason? The persons quoted make the mistaken assumption on several occasions that all Hispanics are part of a separate race.

"Performance is performance whether you're Latino or African American or white."

"That's why I'm there, and not some white woman who couldn't do that."

"That goes more to a courtesy issue, not so much a race issue."

Fact is, Latino or Hispanic is not a race. No one in the U.S. would assume every person named Johnson is part of the same race. Why make that assumption when someone's name is Jimenez?

Interestingly, there are more people of sub-Saharan African (AKA black) ancestry in Latin America than in the United States. Afro-Cuban salsa legend Celia Cruz is a notable example. And as a host of white Hispanic celebrities from Andy Garcia to Alexis Bleidel will attest, Hispanics can be Caucasian as well.

Let's celebrate the true diversity of our nation. That's not done by lumping all people with a Spanish surname into a monolithic racial bloc.

Raul Ramos y Sanchez

MCOM 105: ARTICLE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

- 1. How well does this article address the concerns and feelings of this group of people?**
- 2. This approach to diversity understanding – Is it appropriate, too little or too much?**
- 3. How would you assess if these suggestions are offensive vs. being straightforward?**

If assigned to type up your responses...WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

YOUR MCOM 105 - HOMEWORK PAPER LAYOUT REQUIREMENTS

Fully comply with directives below or receive no credit

Print your responses on paper and submit it on the day due, never later.

NEVER elect to e-mail assignments! E-mail ONLY when assigned to do so.

Be candid and honest in approach. Never write what you think the professor wants to hear.

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(Note - Never ask “what’s the minimum?” That’s a clear signal you are thinking of being lazy or doing as little as possible. Don’t embarrass yourself by asking that.)

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Expect NO MAKE-UP opportunities or extra credit to improve your assignment grades.

10 Things NEVER to Say to a Black Co-worker

By Eric Hinton

"Fried chicken anyone?" "You speak really well." "Is that your real hair?"

In 2008, you'd think the taboo subjects and phrases would be clearly outlined and understood by all when it comes to what is and is not acceptable to say to a Black colleague. But that's far from the case. Here are 10 things you never want to say to a Black coworker or boss.

1) You're so articulate

You're so ... articulate? Smart? Different? Yes, the speaker may intend a compliment, but what may be meant as praise instead comes across as being condescending. It implies the person being complimented is an exception to the rule and is exhibiting behavior atypical of others of his or her ethnic background.

"I haven't had it said to me, maybe I'm not articulate enough, but I've heard a number of Blacks say they've had it said to them ... you're so articulate or you're so smart or intelligent," says Berlinda Fontenot-Jamerson, former director of diversity at Disney ABC Television Group. In her many years in the diversity industry, Fontenot-Jamerson has seen and heard it all. Some of it still makes her cringe.

"I feel like education and awareness is my mission, so I try to be kind when I check people to help them understand what they just said," she says. "I might make a joke to help them understand that it was a faux pas, and hopefully I have good enough relationships with them to have further conversations with them."

2) Is That Your Real Hair?

Danielle Robinson, director of diversity, talent and organizational design at Diageo, a wine, beer and spirits company, said she was amazed when she got this question from a colleague. But instead of getting angry, Robinson explained to her coworker why the question was inappropriate.

"There are a number of ways to respond. But I told the person they had no idea if they might be asking that question to someone suffering from a medical condition [such as] someone recovering from cancer treatment," she says. "I wound up giving this one woman a little lesson because you never know what the situation might be of the person you're asking a question."

3) "You" people

"I've heard this one several times," says Fontenot-Jamerson. Who exactly are "You people," and how do they differ from regular people? Use this poorly chosen phrase at your own risk.

4) Do you eat a lot of ... (plug in the offending stereotype here)

Some stereotypes simply refuse to die. There's nothing wrong with natural curiosity about the ethnic eating habits of some of your coworkers. The problem lies in focusing on stereotypical Black fare such as fried chicken, watermelon, etc. It reveals the speaker has a very limited and narrow perception of Black culture and cuisine.

"One of my young relatives told me when they go out on interviews they may get queries about fried chicken and the stereotypes about the food that we like to eat," says Fontenot-Jamerson.

5) Why are you so angry?

This one is more often directed at Black males, thanks in large part to the media, which often portrays Black men as being angry and/or criminals.

6) Why are you acting white?

Consider this a relative of "You're so articulate." Why would exhibiting proper behavior, manners or dialect be categorized as acting white? If that's the case, what does it mean to act Black?

7) You don't sound Black over the phone.

What does Black sound like?

8) I don't think of you as Black.

DiversityInc Partner and Cofounder Luke Visconti received a letter from a reader who was presented with this particular compliment. He responded, "What you are experiencing is the first instance of a person accepting another person who is outside of their 'tribe.' Although the words and the sentiment are insulting, the person expressing them is (usually) not consciously trying to insult you. In their backward and ignorant way, they are actually trying to give you a compliment."

9) You graduated from where?

This particular offense came to our attention directly from one of our readers, Beatriz Mallory, who wrote, "In a career of nearly 30 years, I've heard them all. I am both African American and Hispanic, so I get it from both sides, on top of being a female. In trying to recall the worst, I'd have to nominate this one. It is the unguarded question "YOU went to CORNELL? WOW!" The implication is that in their mind, someone like me isn't automatically worthy of such an accomplishment. I never express my annoyance."

10) The N-word

The ultimate faux pas. Just because you've seen repeats of Dave Chapelle's show where the word is used liberally, that doesn't give you--or anyone--license to make conversational use of the word. To read more on the debate, read [Double Standard: Can You Use the N-Word?](#) in the Jan./Feb. 2008 issue of *DiversityInc*.

And don't fall into the trap of thinking substituting an "A" for the "er" makes the word acceptable. Fontenot-Jamerson believes it's a word used far too casually among youths, both white and Black.

"The new generation uses the N-word very loosely [and] the white kids do it too," she says. "I've been in the company where the youngsters have been using the word because they don't understand the history that comes with it."

Like Fontenot-Jamerson, Robinson looks at each misspoken phrase as an opportunity to teach and educate. "A lot of the questions are usually out of ignorance or genuine curiosity. So I always look at opportunities like these as a chance to educate," says Robinson. "Instead of getting angry, you don't want them to make this mistake with someone else. There are ways to ask a question more inquisitively that won't offend."

Readers' Comments

Posted: Wednesday, Jan 14, 2009
10 Things NEVER to Say to a Black Coworker

You're so articulate - I hope people feel that way about me and if someone said it, I would say thank you.

Asking a person where they graduated from is a perfectly acceptable question when meeting new people. It helps a person create a schema in their mind and it is a normal way of conducting a conversation. If you always assume that the question is delivered in a hateful manner then that really says more about you than the person asking the question. If we were attending the same college then the question would not be where did you go to school but what is your major. I have to agree with Christine on this one.

Why are you acting White? I have never heard a White person say this but I have heard this

question asked by Blacks, of Blacks.

Is that your real hair is a bad question for anybody not just Black people.

Why are you so angry? Maybe you are angry looking. Maybe the "Cool Pose" is not working and you should try being affable.

Five of the questions are justified and unacceptable in any context. The other five could be dependent upon the delivery and situation. I think the author needs to stop wearing his heart on his sleeve and stop looking for insults in normal everyday conversations. If the question is nonthreatening when asked between two people of the same ethnic background then it might not be and probably is not offensive when the speakers are different races.

Keevin Higgins

Posted: Thursday, Jan 08, 2009
10 Things NEVER to Say to a Black Coworker

5 is not primarily aimed at black men. As shown by some reaction to Michelle Obama, black women have long been tagged with being "angry" when what they are exemplifying is forthrightness, non-deferential assertiveness, strength, authority, etc. Traditional intragroup socialization supports such attributes in African American women, but outside of the group those attributes are often interpreted negatively.

Frances Pressley

Posted: Thursday, Jan 08, 2009
10 Things NEVER to Say to a Black Coworker

I agree w/the articles, but I couldn't help notice that the word whites isn't capitalized while Blacks is. That there is racism. Would you dare present it the other way around?

Chris Cope

Posted: Tuesday, Oct 14, 2008
10 Things NEVER to Say to a Black Coworker

RE: "YOU went to CORNELL? WOW!" The implication is that in their mind, someone like me isn't automatically worthy of such an accomplishment. I never express my annoyance."

I'm not sure how Beatriz Mallory can know what is in the mind of the speaker in this example, unless she encountered other clues that were not included here.

If I met a colleague and found out the person had graduated from an Ivy League school, I can imagine myself saying something similar, regardless of the person's background. In my case, saying "Wow!" would be a way of expressing surprise (because very few people in this country graduate from these elite schools) and awe (because I couldn't help but feel somewhat inferior, not having gone their myself).

Maybe a better way to express this would be to say, "That's impressive," but I think "Wow" is still pretty neutral.

Christine F

Things 'to' Say to Black Co-workers

By Daryl C. Hannah

If you've read [10 Things NEVER to Say to a Black Coworker](#), you know that complimenting a Black coworker for being "articulate" is a no-no. But does that mean you keep it to yourself when you think he nailed his presentation? Not if you express yourself with some sensitivity and tact.

Knowing what to say to a coworker of a different race can be tricky, but "it's all about common sense," advises Redia Anderson Banks, the former chief diversity officer with Deloitte & Touche, No. 16 on [The DiversityInc 2008 Top 50 Companies for Diversity® list](#). "As with speaking to anyone, in our western culture we tend to say what we mean or what we think. We have to learn to do it with tact."

Anderson, who now runs her own consulting firm, also says most offensive comments and questions are not malicious, but certainly can be avoided by not making assumptions and by asking culturally-sensitive questions.

"It's important to ask [questions] from a place of trying to understand and be genuine in your desire to learn. Chances are the other person will see that and the other person will be glad to share their thoughts," says Anderson.

In DiversityInc's [Things Never to Say](#) series, we've given plenty of examples of insensitive comments to avoid. Now, we are turning the tables and offering advice on some things to be mindful of when talking to coworkers from traditionally underrepresented groups. Here are four better ways to compliment, communicate with or ask questions to a Black coworker without offense.

"You presented your project very well."

Complimenting someone on a specific task as opposed to their speech, intelligence or "difference," removes the condescending stigma attached to remarks such as "you're so articulate" or "you're so smart."

Berlinda Fontenot-Jamerson, the former chief diversity officer with Disney-ABC Television Group, suggests that being specific in your compliment can help you avoid "the stereotypes that say [Blacks] don't know the king's language, have no desire to learn [and] we'd rather use Ebonics and slang."

"When someone says 'you're so articulate,' they are saying they didn't expect you to be, if you think about the definition of the word articulate. Instead, simply say 'I enjoy our conversations, I always know what you mean,'" saysCarolynn Johnson, vice president of business development for DiversityInc.

"I like your hairstyle."

Different cultures are sensitive about different things. Black women are particularly sensitive about their hair, warns Fontenot-Jamerson.

Asking whether a person's hair is real or fake is certainly not an appropriate question, even if your curiosity stems from admiration. "If you would like to know whether a person's hair is real or fake to compliment it, simply compliment it," says Fontenot-Jamerson. "It's as simple as saying 'I like your hair.'"

"Simply saying 'that style looks really great,'" is a good option, says Johnson, who also advises that you should be specific when offering compliments.

As far as how that coworker's hair is done or whether or not it's real: unless he or she volunteers the information, it's none of your business.

"I see you as an individual."

Saying to someone "I don't consider you Black" or "you don't act Black" is usually not intended to be malicious or come across as insensitive--but it does, warns Fontenot-Jamerson. In fact, what the person is really trying to say is, "I see you as an individual."

"[It's] all about establishing a rapport," says Fontenot-Jamerson. "Ninety-five percent of the time, people are not intending to be malicious--it's an ignorance of not knowing what to say."

"Where did you go to school?" or "That's great, what did you think of their program?"

Sometimes it's more a matter of changing your tone than your words. It's fine to ask a coworker about his or her educational background, as long as you accept the answer without shock or judgment. Instead of asking "you graduated from where?" which implies surprise that a Black coworker went to a certain school, Hilary Shelton, executive director of the Washington bureau of the NAACP says you should simply ask, 'Where did you go to school?' "The problem isn't the question, it's the value associated to the question and the expressing shock after finding out that an African-American coworker went to an Ivy League school," he says.

"Degrees don't make people," adds Johnson. "Character does."

Readers' Comments

Posted: Thursday, Jul 31, 2008
Things 'to' Say to Black Coworkers

Do you know what? I am beginning to think I blurt out stupid things to people no matter who they are or what sex or race, and then wish I could just suck the words back into my mouth like soda through a straw.

I said a really dumb thing to a black co-worker, quoting something a black friend of my daughter's had said, jokingly, about her choice of name for her new son. I later thought of this site, which I recently found, and realized what I said was most likely inappropriate and stupid for me to have repeated to her, as I am Caucasian. I blush now as I think about it. I just pray she forgives me and forgets it real soon.

As I stated earlier, however, I have a tendency to open up and blurt foolish statements before thinking in lots of situations - to my boss, to my friend who is hurting, to my spouse. Sometimes it has nothing to do with anything except that we are all are human and do and say very stupid things.

Thanks for listening.

Pamela G

Posted: Thursday, Jul 31, 2008
Things 'to' Say to Black Coworkers

The obvious inference from statements like "Articulate", and "You Don't Act Black" is the persons surprise that the stereotype that they hold of what Black People are probably comes from not knowing any, only knowing one, or getting their views from T.V.

The beauty of statements like those is, they you immediately know who you are dealing with.

Unfortunately some people will always see race first, and the person second, and therefore will continue to say stupid things in an effort to overcompensate for how uncomfortable they really are.

Harold Mansfield

Posted: Monday, Jul 28, 2008

Things 'to' Say to Black Coworkers

Sometimes being "articulate" has nothing to do with proper language usage. Sometimes it just means that an idea was expressed clearly in a way that was meaningful and easily understood by the audience. My experience has shown me that being able to speak articulately - in this sense of the word - is NOT something that comes easily to everyone, all ethnic backgrounds. As an African American myself, I think we sometimes have a chip on our shoulder needlessly when others are trying to sincerely compliment us. Do we get this upset when another person of color says that we speak articulately? Just a thought...

Janice Bradley

Posted: Friday, Jul 25, 2008
Things 'to' Say to Black Coworkers

I agree with Lisa D. I am impressed by anyone that succinctly and clearly expresses a concept or idea. Regardless of age, race or gender if someone is articulate, then quite simply they are articulate. Anyone that can speak articulately has had to work to develop that skill, race nor any other attribute provide an inherent advantage. People take courses all the time to work on and hone this skill. And in today's society in which it seems that speaking well is no longer a requirement, we should celebrate it more.

C G

Posted: Tuesday, Jul 22, 2008
Things 'to' Say to Black Coworkers

While I understand and appreciate the sensitivity noted in previous comments, I do tell white people when they make an articulate presentation or clear expression of ideas.

I am a communication professional, so I may feel differently than others do about this issue. In my view, most celebrities, political leaders and even media figures, who are paid to express themselves, do so poorly. Our popular culture overall is somewhat inarticulate. This seems equally true across race, gender, ethnic, class and age lines. Finding a person who cares enough to think first and then speak well seems to be the exception, and I'm always glad to know that person. When appropriate I do give positive feedback, since I know it takes work to make good self-expression sound effortless.

I have heard whites compliment each other on being articulate (mostly in work or academic settings); it is possible they don't use it much in front of blacks since they are uncertain whether it might cause offense.

There is a history behind the discomfort with this particular word and the thinking behind it. Acknowledging that, I hope we are moving to a time when people who appreciate sincere, clear communication between individuals will collaborate with, not offend, each other.

Lisa D

1. How well does this article address the concerns and feelings of this group of people?
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Things 'to' Say to Asian Co-workers

By the DiversityInc staff

Chalk it up to cultural insensitivity, a lack of understanding or simple ignorance, but there are a number of cultural landmines that otherwise-earnest employees can stumble into when attempting to interact with coworkers of different ethnic backgrounds.

Much of the ground covered by DiversityInc's [Things Never to Say](#) series over the past several months included comments that reflected stereotypes, such as that Asians are passive, are disproportionately found in technology sectors and are not risk takers. Many people who find themselves making these remarks have no intention of being offensive, but that doesn't make the comments any easier for the recipient to take.

So how do you go about interacting with your Asian colleagues without putting your foot in your mouth? Here are some suggestions on ways to compliment, communicate with or simply ask earnest questions to an Asian coworker without offending him or her.

Compliment an Asian colleague on what he communicates instead of how well he speaks English

Complimenting an Asian person on how he or she speaks English only comes off as condescending, warns Linda Akutegawa, vice president of resource and business development for [Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics](#) (LEAP). To do so means you are presuming that the coworker is foreign-born when that may not be the case. And even if English is that coworker's second language, such a "compliment" is likely to come off as insensitive.

"To be surprised that someone speaks English well ... why would they assume otherwise just given the diversity in this country?" asks Akutegawa, who is Japanese American.

But what if you find yourself in a potentially awkward situation and you feel compelled to comment? For example, Akutegawa recounts a situation she was in where an Asian person dismissed his own English as poor. What do you say then? "When that's happened, I've looked at them and said, 'I disagree. I think your English is fine and you speak it very well. You shouldn't be self-conscious about it,'" she says.

Besides, what classifies someone as speaking well? Akutegawa says, "Is it someone that speaks with or without an accent? Or is it that they're using words that are grammatically correct? Who's to judge? What I always tell people is if you make sense and you get your point across ... that alone should be the judgment in terms of how effectively someone is able to speak."

Compliment actions--leave race out of it

You're in a business meeting and the boss is berating everyone around the conference table. All the employees sheepishly accept the abuse--except your Asian coworker, who offers a valid counterpoint. What do you say? What *should* you say?

A lot depends on how something is said, says Akutegawa. "That Asian-American coworker took a chance on pushing back on something that everyone else was afraid to push back on and ends up getting the type of result everyone else is looking for but was afraid to do themselves ... in that sense there's nothing wrong with saying, 'That was great. I'm so glad you spoke up on that.' You take race out of it but focus on the action. I mean, does it really matter that the person happened to be Asian when they did it?"

Jae Requiro, who is Filipino American and a manager of diversity consulting and inclusion strategies at Toyota Motor North America, recounted a tale to DiversityInc for the Things Never to

Say series of a friend who was the only Asian woman present at a meeting. Following the meeting, a male colleague said to her, "You're not at all like my Asian wife--you speak up."

"I do think his intent was absolutely not to insult anyone," says Requiro. "I think individuals who are having conversations with someone who is different from them often unintentionally hurt someone's feelings. In my experience, asking questions rather than making statements is often a better approach. It really is about intent versus impact. You may be trying to reach out to build a connection, but the way it impacts that other person could be very insulting."

Acknowledge ignorance when making a connection

The underpinnings of most of this dialogue are fear--fear of saying the wrong thing or being perceived as being insensitive when you're simply trying to communicate with your coworkers. One way to deal with this head-on is to simply acknowledge your ignorance upfront, offers Akutegawa. Here are two ways to broach potentially awkward subjects:

- "I really don't know that much about (Asians or Asian culture). Can I ask you about this?"
- "My interaction with Asians has been very limited. I'm curious about this. Can I ask you a question?"

"I think people would be OK with seemingly ignorant questions being asked if it's in the spirit of wanting to be open and wanting to learn different things," Akutegawa says. "I think people get most annoyed when people are doing it just to be stupid."

Readers' Comments

Posted: Monday, Aug 25, 2008
Things 'to' Say to Asian Coworkers

While I recognize the importance of showing respect to people, whether Asian or another race, and realize how ignorant we sound when we make the wrong comments to people who are different than us... I have to add my own observation.

I am a white, American woman, who lived in China for several years. My husband, and of course a whole slew of in-laws are Chinese, and I've lived for years confronted by their comments and questions toward me. I couldn't count the number of times I've been asked a question that started with "Do Americans like...?" or "How do Americans do...?". "What do Americans eat?" "What kind of music do Americans like?" as if we "Americans" are all the same. My step father, who is Chinese American, visited us in China and most people there refused to believe that he was, in fact, American and couldn't speak Chinese.

Sure, many people in America are ignorant about those who are different from themselves, but this is true in most cultures, and can be seen more dramatically in cultures with less diversity than ours. I don't think ignorance is the same as racism and making assumptions may be ignorant, but not necessarily demeaning.

missy el

Posted: Saturday, Jul 26, 2008
Things to Say to Asian Coworkers

20 years ago, when I was traveling through Europe and meeting a lot of people from different places, I stopped asking people where they were from. For one thing, there was a lot of anti-American sentiment going around and I didn't want to be asked that question, and for another, I enjoyed trying to identify various accents etc. What I have found is that it's not necessary to ask. Over time, people will reveal the important parts of their background to you, if you are someone they feel they can trust. If something comes up like "last time I visited my grandparents in China" (or wherever)the conversation could then logically flow into whether or not the grandparents have ever

been here, which leads to when the parents came over, which leads to where the co-worker was born, and so on. I see no real need to know any of this in the workplace until and unless the person brings up a natural conversation starter in this way. If something like this never comes up chances are the person either totally identifies with the "mainstream" or does not wish to share their personal life with co-workers.

Susanne Taylor

Posted: Tuesday, Jul 15, 2008
Things to Say to Asian Coworkers

Why can't people just treat others as equals regardless of race? To make assumptions/presumptions about ones intelligence is pure ignorance. Should I assume that someone who's overweight is lazy and stupid? The blond, just an airhead? The Caucasian in the suit, the big boss? There needs to be a guide to ignorant and stupid things NOT to say to anyone, PERIOD.

richie leong

Posted: Monday, Jul 14, 2008
Things to Say to Asian Coworkers

In reading the "Things to say to Asian Co-workers" article, I found one part of it not quite right. The last part titled "Acknowledge Ignorance when Making a Connection" doesn't really give people the most appropriate things to say to someone who may be Asian.

"I really don't know that much about (Asians or Asian culture). Can I ask you about this?"

"My interaction with Asians has been very limited. I'm curious about this. Can I ask you a question?"

The above two questions are framed such that the person asking them is making an assumption that all persons of various Asian backgrounds can speak for those of other Asian backgrounds. Additionally, it puts the Asian person on the spot as though they have to speak for a whole group. Clearly Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, etc. are all different cultures and each individual is different. So telling people that making an assumption that it's ok to talk to someone as though they can speak for a culture that isn't even part of their heritage is really making a huge blunder.

Suzanne Blanding

7 Things NEVER to Say to Asian-American Executives

By Yoji Cole

Jae Requirio remembers her friend's story vividly: Following a meeting in which her friend was the only Asian-American woman, a male colleague said to her, "You're not at all like my Asian wife ... you speak up."

"It was a big slap in her face. She didn't even know what to say to him," says Requirio, who is Filipino American and a manager of diversity consulting and inclusion strategies at Toyota Motor North America.

Stereotypes are like a slap to the face because they shock and sting. They are usually uttered without much forethought and reveal the speaker's ignorance. And in corporate settings, they can reveal why someone is excluded from after-work networking events or passed over for promotion.

Asian-American executives too often find themselves fighting to disprove the "model minority" stereotype, a group that works hard, is rarely controversial, but ultimately is not "American" enough for leadership opportunities.

Here are seven questions and comments Asian-American executives have frequently fielded from coworkers and why you should not repeat them:

"You must be the IT person."

Linda Akutegawa, who is Japanese American and vice president of resource and business development for Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP), says that too often it is assumed that Asian-American executives are not leaders but support staff. Read about the business case for immigration in the [September 2007 issue](#) of *DiversityInc* magazine.

"Implicit in that statement is that you're good at numbers and technology so you're good behind the scenes but not good at leadership," explains Allan Mark, who is Chinese American and the America's director, diversity strategy and development for Ernst & Young, No. 43 on [The 2007 DiversityInc Top 50 Companies for Diversity list](#).

For Asian-American executives who recently immigrated to the United States, the problem is two-fold. Not only are they stereotyped as not leadership material, but their cultural norms are interpreted by U.S.-born executives as proving the stereotype.

"In America, the leadership skill is defined by how confrontational, direct and aggressive you are," says Sameer Samudra, Six Sigma black belt at Cummins, No. 20 on the Top 50 list.

Samudra, who was born in India and came to the United States as a student in 1998, remembers a boss questioning his commitment to work because he was reserved during meetings. "We respect authority and come from a hierarchical culture," says Samudra. "Our leadership style considers how well the team members get along, so there's an emphasis on team building and learning in the process."

"You aren't like them" or "You don't act very Asian."

There are many variations to this comment. Akutegawa has an Asian-American friend who for a significant amount of time had organized a regular tennis outing with a group of white executives. One day, one of the executives turned to her friend and said, "I didn't know people like you play tennis."

"He was shocked," Akutegawa remembers her friend saying.

"Many times you feel caught in the middle," says Mark. "You feel like you're in no man's land where you're not part of the mainstream Caucasian culture, while at same time you're not part of the group that recently immigrated."

"Asian Americans are not risk takers."

"My response to that comment is 'Why do you think we all gave up our old country and came to this country?' We walked away from our families and a comfortable life and came to this country. That's a huge risk," says S.K. Gupta, vice president of operations, Lockheed Martin Space Systems.

"Where are you from? No, where are you *really* from?" or "When are you going to go home?" Or "How often do you go home?"

These questions assume that all Asian Americans are recent immigrants. "We call that the double-sum question," says Akutegawa, who points out that especially among Chinese and Japanese Americans, there are families who have lived in the United States for at least six generations. "They ask you the first time and you say 'California,' but that's not what they're looking for. When you're asked the second question, it's truly frustrating."

"I was born in the [San Francisco] Bay area. I can drive home in a few hours" is how Requirio answers questions implying she is a foreigner.

"Oh, you speak English good!" Or "Do you speak your language?"

"Don't tell me I speak English good," says Requirio. "I should because I was born here and it's my first language." And often, parents who are immigrants do not teach their children their native tongue in order to ensure their children assimilate into American culture. Requirio's parents did not teach her Tagalog, the Philippines' native language.

"I'm Filipino-American, of course I speak English," says Requirio.

"The implication is that we're all foreigners and saying 'good' reveals their own ignorance of English," says Akutegawa.

Also, inherent in being surprised that an Asian American speaks English well is the assumption that an Asian American, who speaks with an accent, has difficulty communicating. Gupta's boss, early in his career, gave him a low score on a performance review because he said Gupta was difficult to understand when he got excited. Gupta took the criticism in stride. He enrolled in an accent-reduction class, but after a few classes, the teacher kicked him out. The teacher said he didn't have a problem communicating or being understood. His boss couldn't hear the words coming out of Gupta's mouth because he only heard his accent.

Now Gupta says, "I use my accent as an ice breaker. I make speeches and presentations all the time and I often start by saying, 'If some of you detect an accent, please remember that I didn't have one until I came to this country.'"

"You're not a minority because all Asians are rich and successful."

This comment reveals the damage stereotypes cause. Gupta remembers a time 20 years ago when he was told that Asian-American executives should be last to receive a raise because they don't need money.

Mark says that while it's true that a high percentage of Asian Americans graduate with college degrees, the number of Asian-American senior leaders, CEOs and corporate board members remains woefully low. "If you look at executive levels and more senior management levels, you don't see many Asians and obviously not at the board level," says Mark.

Asian Americans currently occupy 1.5 percent of corporate board seats among Fortune 500 companies, up from 1.2 percent in 2005, according to the 2007 Corporate Board Report Card by the Committee of 100, an Asian-American corporate-advocacy organization.

"You're not Asian, you're from India."

For the record "Asian American" is a general term for Asians and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) living in the United States. According to *U.S. Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting*, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders refer to people who can trace their original background to the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands, including Native Hawaiians.

Gupta adds that the Asian-American community needs to come together under its common cultural traits. "We Asian Americans need to figure out how to substitute the individual configurations for the overall Asian-American culture," says Gupta.

Why? Because many believe that Asian Americans are too disparate as a group for marketing efforts.

"At IBM, I attended an Asian industry conference about two years ago. A senior leader said it's too hard to do anything with Asian Americans because they're not one homogenous culture," Gupta recalls hearing. "My response was that our culture may not be one but our values are the same, so let's focus on the community's values rather than the different cultures."

Posted: Monday, Jul 14, 2008
Things to Say to Asian Coworkers

I think this article is offensive. Perhaps I've been doing HR too long... maybe I am biased because my boyfriend is Taiwanese, and I am a Eastern European woman, pale, blond-haired, and blue-eyed. Perhaps I've had a long day. Regardless, I don't understand what "Asian" has to do with any of these enumerated issues.

Isn't it commonsense not to attribute a quality to anyone based on race, age, ethnicity, gender, etc.? Why is this article "Asian"-based? These pearls of wisdom seem to apply to any race, religion, sect, nationality. Moreover, doesn't the term "Asian" itself lump widely differing cultures? What is the value in labeling employees "Asian" except to create a cubbyhole? Asia encompasses nearly 1/3 of the world's land area; it's kind of silly to think that we are describing one set of personality traits.

Put another way, for those employees who are unsure of how to communicate with a person of color or nationality, I applaud their self-recognition -- at least they recognize a bias within themselves. By the same token, however, I think it would make more sense to advise everyone to treat everyone else based on personality and merit, not just people who may or may not be from a single continent.

Deirdre Kamber

MCOM 105: ARTICLE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

- 1. How well does this article address the concerns and feelings of this group of people?**
- 2. This approach to diversity understanding – Is it appropriate, too little or too much?**
- 3. How would you assess if these suggestions are offensive vs. being straightforward?**

If assigned to type up your responses...WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

YOUR MCOM 105 - HOMEWORK PAPER LAYOUT REQUIREMENTS

Fully comply with directives below or receive no credit

Print your responses on paper and submit it on the day due, never later.

NEVER elect to e-mail assignments! E-mail ONLY when assigned to do so.

Be candid and honest in approach. Never write what you think the professor wants to hear.

Typed & 2 pages maximum answering all questions, no exceptions. That means write tight, be specific, precise and clear with all wording. Good grammar & spelling is expected.

(Note - Never ask “what’s the minimum?” That’s a clear signal you are thinking of being lazy or doing as little as possible. Don’t embarrass yourself by asking that.)

Double- spaced typing.

Cite specifics from the article and quotes from people you contact. Name your contacts. Always include a way for Prof. Rucker to contact them to verify your quotes.

Made-up information results in an automatic FAILING GRADE in the class, not just on the assignment. Do all assignments with a priority of integrity.

Expect NO MAKE-UP opportunities or extra credit to improve your assignment grades.

By Yoji Cole

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Frank McCloskey's wife of 31 years, Debbie, talked about her husband with her new coworkers, telling them about his job as vice president of diversity for Georgia Power. During lunch one day, Debbie, who is white, had just finished telling a story about Frank's diversity efforts when a colleague of hers said, "I want to tell you how courageous it is that you are married to an African American." Oops! Frank is white.

Too often, white men--and to a lesser extent, white women--are assumed to have no role in diversity-and-inclusion efforts. But white people who are heterosexual, Christian and not disabled can and do champion diversity efforts. To assume otherwise is like assuming that talented Black or Latino executives do not exist.

To further explore stereotypes about white people in the corporate-diversity world, DiversityInc talked to several white men intimately involved in diversity-and-inclusion efforts. Here are 10 things they suggest never saying to your white colleagues.

1. **"You're a carpet-bagger" or "Why is a white guy doing this?"**

It is often said in murmurs but not openly talked about that white people involved in the diversity industry are carpet-baggers, people involved for the money rather than the mission. Luke Visconti, partner and cofounder of DiversityInc, takes offense at such sentiments.

"A person at a financial institution [who works in diversity] said I'm only making money from diversity. But if she is working in a diversity department, isn't she making money off of diversity also? Now that we got past the fact that we both make money on diversity, let's look at what we do for diversity," says Visconti.

In 2006, Visconti and DiversityInc Partner and Cofounder Foulis Peacock pledged to donate 2 percent of DiversityInc's gross revenue to fund scholarships for financially disadvantaged students through its foundation. In addition, Visconti regularly speaks throughout the country on diversity issues and donates all of his speaking fees. In 2007, DiversityInc donated more than \$200,000 to that effort.

"Foulis and I staked our whole lives on this," says Visconti. "It's bigoted to say that I'm a carpet-bagger ... It's insulting and it's behavior that you wouldn't want perpetrated on yourself."

Peacock adds, "When you hear, 'What's a white guy doing in this [diversity] space?'--which people have said with a smile--their perception was that if you're doing this, aren't you taking something away from people like yourself and giving it to someone else? And that's not the point at all.

"Diversity is not about promoting one group over another group, and for too long, that's how it's been viewed," says Peacock.

2. "You're not diverse"

Diversity includes white people. It is incorrect and insulting to use the word "diverse" to refer to people other than white heterosexual men with no ADA-defined disabilities. All people are included in the concept of "diversity." As a result, properly executed diversity management benefits all people in an organization.

Also, too often, non-white people assume whites don't come from a diverse background or have any experience with different cultures. Some white people also make this mistake. But Peacock points out that while his skin might be "white," his background is diverse, even more so than many people from traditionally underrepresented groups.

"I come from a family with two different histories, from different sides of the world," says Peacock, who is from England and whose mother was originally from Iran. "I am more multicultural than a lot of people who have never stepped outside of this country. By saying [you're not diverse], all you're doing is switching people off."

Peacock adds that in today's society, being exclusionary by any standard should not be tolerated. It is also not the best method of building networks. "Anything that is exclusionary you have to avoid," says Peacock. "The reason Sen. [Barack] Obama is so successful is ... because he's getting the white vote. Why is he getting this? Because for the first time, someone is talking about how all of us will achieve this American dream, and the important word is 'all' of us."

Furthermore, Visconti makes the point that in today's America, many white people have a personal involvement with traditionally underrepresented groups. "Twenty-two percent of American households have a biracial component," says Visconti. "Practically every family has an LGBT component, and many people have a non-visible disability and/or will develop an ADA-defined disability in their lifetime."

Moreover, Visconti affirms that to assume a white person cannot have a true, heartfelt connection with diversity is historically wrong.

"Benjamin Franklin was the president of the Anti-Slavery Society, William Lloyd Garrison founded the abolitionist newspaper 'The Liberator' and was a mentor to Frederick Douglass, and Lyndon Johnson had a profound change of mind and became an advocate of civil-rights and anti-poverty legislations. Many white people have been and still are at the forefront of societal change to eliminate oppression and increase equity," says Visconti.

3. "There's no way you as a white person can understand"

But the knee-jerk response is "If that's true, then why should I try to understand?" says Howard Ross, the white founder and chief learning officer for Cook Ross, a Maryland-based diversity consultancy.

Don't beat up your white colleagues by cloaking them in the shroud of "ignorant oppressor" while wearing the shroud of "victim." Look for the personal stories that will develop commonalities and shared ideas.

"Now at some level that's true--I can never be an African American, Latino or Asian American. But also, it minimizes the various levels of discrimination that everyone deals with and can understand through the human dynamics that apply to all people," says Ross.

Visconti adds that saying you can't understand because you're white is treating a white person as if he or she is ignorant of culture and diversity issues. "It belittles the good intentions [white people] may have," says Visconti. "It doesn't progress the discussion. Considering that nearly [one-quarter] of U.S. households have a biracial or multiracial component, you should never assume a white man or woman is not intimately involved with issues surrounding diversity."

4. White men are automatically "in the corporate in-crowd"

Being isolated or segregated from the in-crowd is not unique to executives who are Black, Latino, Asian American, Native American, people with disabilities or LGBT people.

"For the most part, [white men] don't feel they're included or privileged," says McCloskey. "Unfortunately, it's too easy to put [that feeling] at the foot of race, diversity and gender initiatives. Corporate America by and large doesn't do a good job of feedback. I hear from white men that 'I don't think I'm a part of something and I don't know why.'"

McCloskey adds that corporate leadership must rid itself of subtle behaviors that create disengagement and mistrust, "not only for African Americans, women and other dimensions of diversity but also for white men."

5. "You're just a typical white person"

Yes, Barack Obama said it and was thoroughly chastised for describing his white grandmother as a "typical" white person. The implication in such a statement is that all white people are alike, and that white people are all predisposed to be prejudiced. But characterizing anyone based on the presupposed behavior of a group is a slippery slope that leads to confusion and miscommunication, says Ross.

"Any language that sees white people as a group, such as 'typical white men,' is as offensive to white folks as it is to people of color," says Ross. "When branded 'typical white person,' it diminishes them and creates a sense of hopelessness and that [they are] never going to be anything other than a 'white person.'"

"Don't assume I don't want to learn," adds Visconti.

6. "You KNOW you're being racist"

In the absence of concrete evidence, don't assume that a comment considered prejudiced was the result of a conscious thought process designed to stereotype, says Ross.

"We're learning that an overwhelming number of decisions people make are not made by bad intentions but are made by people blind to their own behavior," says Ross. "Rather than assume that a person intended to be sexist or prejudiced, assume they didn't mean any malicious intent."

McCloskey adds that often people who are not white assume whites know their behavior is racist or prejudiced: "But being in a place of privilege is such a powerful place to be that the assumption is that everyone is living my life experience."

Ross says people should stop before they reply to a comment deemed prejudicial and ask themselves if their reaction is the result of thinking the white person is like "all white people" or is a person who "happens to be white."

"If I'm dealing with them as 'all white people,' my triggers will be [switched]," says Ross. "If I'm dealing with them as 'a person who happens to be white,' then they'll be [communicative]."

7. "You talk about us when we're not around"

Being in the majority group provides freedom from the constant concern of race issues and fear of people who do not share your racial or ethnic background. So white people usually are not talking about Blacks, Latinos or Asian Americans when people from those groups are not around.

"Generally, we're being oblivious and doing our thing," says Visconti. "Being oblivious doesn't make you a bad person. It just makes you oblivious."

8. "You've got all the money."

"My first response is, 'No, I don't,'" says Jeff Hitchcock, executive director for the Center for the Study of White American Culture. He adds that while the majority of people who are poor are white, it is true that the percentage of whites who are poor is less than the percentage of Blacks, Latinos and Native Americans who are poor.

But such a comment uses broad generalization to make a point. Generalizations rarely are the best way to open up the lines of communication on a one-on-one basis.

Hitchcock also says that many people mistake the make-up and the purpose of his organization, assuming that any reference to white culture must be a veiled reference to white supremacy. To dispel that notion, he put the following in bold letters on the center's homepage: "Not an organization for white supremacists as some people might infer, we are instead a multiracial organization that looks at whiteness and white American culture."

9. "I don't like white people" or "I don't get white people"

Unfortunately, people do communicate things like this. "In a business setting, a person probably wouldn't respond, but people can give off vibes," says Hitchcock. "Sometimes I get that vibe from people of color and I don't know if it's me giving off a vibe or it's them--it's probably both."

Hitchcock contends that it's tough not to acknowledge that anger when considering a history that included slavery, segregation and systemic racism. Such a national culture forced Black people, Asian Americans and Latinos into subservient roles. But, he says, assume the best rather than assuming the worst when interacting with people.

"As a white person, you should be aware of that history and how that has led us to the present," adds Hitchcock.

"What gets me in trouble is thinking that my truth is the truth--holding onto some idea I need to let go of and I'm holding on to it because I'm comfortable," says McCloskey. "You're saying, 'You adapt to me.' I'm saying leadership in the past has been rewarded for forcing others to adapt. It's time for leadership to expand its ability to adapt to others who are different."

DIVERSITY INC. - Readers' Comments

Posted: Sunday, Aug 24, 2008
9 Things NEVER to Say to White Colleagues

Some of these comments could be part of a constructive dialogue, if you know the person fairly well. If prefaced by, "I know this isn't very PC, but sometimes I feel like..." and followed by, "what do you think about that?" these comments could be used to carefully open a can of worms that can actually be healthy to explore.

Again, this would be a conversation that would be in the context of a positive, well-established relationship and a clear commitment to honest communication and mutual growth - they are not cocktail party fodder or small talk. But I wouldn't say "NEVER" about any of them.

We have to acknowledge that dealing with "whiteness" is different from dealing with other kinds of difference, because it **is** historically the dominant group and people who were raised thinking of ourselves as white and being seen as white **do** have things to learn in a different way from other people. So it can be helpful to us to hear these kinds of things, which we may never have considered... whereas people on the 'outside' in some way are already very strongly aware of all the things the dominant group thinks of us, and do not need to be reminded.

v scott

MCOM 105: ARTICLE ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

1. How well does this article address the concerns and feelings of white people?
2. This approach to diversity understanding – Is it appropriate, too little or too much?
3. TEST SOME OF THESE SUGGESTIONS ON AN FRIEND or STUDENT not in this class.

Describe briefly their reactions to these suggestions. Quote them accurately.

If assigned to type up your responses... **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**

YOUR HOMEWORK PAPER LAYOUT: (Fully comply with directives below or receive no credit)

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