



Diversity of Thought – What I learned from the Globe Crossword Puzzle

This past December, I received an email from the Globe and Mail with a link to their holiday crossword puzzle. Full disclosure, I am not a fan of crosswords, can't stand the things. But, hey, I thought it could be a fun sideline with family and friends coming over throughout the holiday season. So, I downloaded the nine pages – that's right, nine pages of crossword and taped them together to form this one MASSIVE crossword puzzle. Intimidating as hell, but no worries, I would have the help of many minds.

And so, as holiday entertaining continued, I watched the reaction of our guests. Some jumped at the chance to hear the clues and help complete the crossword. Some enjoyed it and some wanted nothing to do with it, but all were dragged in, none the less.

What really surprised me was the range of knowledge, problem solving skills and divergent thinking among my friends and family. Even those who claimed not to be interested in crosswords, were drawn into the sometimes-ridiculous word shout outs. It was so interesting to see what obscure pieces of knowledge people had and how their thought processes led them to the answers.

And at some point, I realized that what I was witnessing was the benefit of collective diverse thinking styles that are so important when undertaking any challenge.

“Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.” Malcolm Forbes

Having the great pleasure of working with teams and leaders, as I do, I often see this diversity of thought when I put teams through leadership simulations. Fun and challenging, the winners are those that take advantage of the thought diversity that exists in their teams.

As leaders, how do we leverage diversity of thought?

In a recent article in Strategy and Business, Adam Bryant wrote that the word, “manager” should no longer be part of our workforce vocabulary. It implies making sure people are doing their jobs and that as manager, you are there to plan, organize, command, and control the team. More and more, however, we expect our teams not only to complete their regular tasks, but to leverage

their diversity of thought. Today's workplace is always in a state of change where disruptive challenges are constant. We benefit most when our teams take on challenges and deliver unique solutions.

Bryant goes on to suggest that "manager" be replaced with "team leader", which implies that the job is to lead the team by setting the priorities while coaching team members to challenge themselves, develop new skills and succeed together. In this way, leveraging and encouraging the diversity of thought in your team results in a benefit for everyone - individuals learn and grow, the team succeeds, and the company gains innovative approaches to the challenges ahead.

Whether your team is in the C-suite, on the shop floor, around the boardroom table or a crossword puzzle, diversity of thought is a valuable team asset to be leveraged by the leader.

If you are interested in becoming more of a team leader and less of a manager. Contact me and let's talk.

**Have questions about how to measure your corporate culture, let's chat!
To book a FREE 30-minute call with me click the button below.**

[CLICK HERE](#)

Cheers!



Cheryl Byrne
Supporting the Work of Leaders
647.464.8121
www.cherylbyrne.ca

Cheryl  Byrne