

Chapter 1

Expanding Your Market

In This Chapter

- Understanding the concept of diversity and why it matters
- Recognizing the upside of establishing a multicultural appeal
- Adapting to the current reality of the international marketplace
- Making integral changes to the way you do business

If you cater only to clients who look like you, act like you, and buy like you, you're essentially saying no to dessert, because you're passing up a chance at savoring a slice of a \$2 trillion pie. That's how much money minority consumers in the United States spend each year on products and services, and that figure is rising.

Like most salespeople and business owners, you may skip dessert, but you certainly don't want to miss an opportunity to expand your sales into new markets. Unfortunately, you may be limiting your income potential and not even know it by sending messages to the multicultural marketplace that essentially tell consumers to stay away. This kind of miscommunication is common when people from different backgrounds meet. You need to make only a few adjustments to overcome the cultural barriers, but those tweaks can make all the difference in the world.

This chapter gives you an overview of what it takes to attract customers from other cultures. Here, we offer a brief primer that defines key terms and concepts, and shows you how to bridge the gap and expand your appeal to the multicultural marketplace, whether you sell directly to consumers (B2C) or business-to-business (B2B).



When you begin to consider tapping the potential of the multicultural marketplace, lose the us-versus-them mentality. We're all part of this marketplace, whether we admit it or not. As the late great statesman and hugely successful Wall Street investor Bernard M. Baruch once said, "We didn't all come over on the same ship, but we're all in the same boat."

Grasping the Concept and Effects of “Cultural Diversity”

Most people in the United States are born with an understanding of “cultural diversity.” After all, this country is the great melting pot or salad bowl or whatever metaphor you want to use to describe the unique mixture of people of different races, colors, and cultures who have chosen to live in the land of opportunity. Depending on where you grew up, you probably went to school with African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Middle Easterners, Native Americans, Poles, Irish people, Italians, or Germans. If you’ve ever visited the homes of people from different cultures, you probably discovered that they ate different foods, decorated their homes a little differently, and had their own unique customs.

When you’re doing business with people from different cultures, particularly nowadays when immigrants tend not to melt as quickly into the same pot, cultural diversity may take on new meanings and significance. Many of these groups want to retain their culture and language while still learning American ways and the English language.

In the following sections, we define some key terms to preface our discussion of cultural diversity, cover important distinctions between cultural tendencies and stereotypes, point out the value of identifying cultural tendencies, and help you begin the process of becoming more aware and accepting of different cultures.

Defining a few important terms

Before jumping into discussions of cultural diversity and how it relates to the way you sell goods and services to people from other cultures, it’s important to agree upon definitions of some key terms. In the following sections, we explain what we mean when we say *culture*, *diversity*, *cultural diversity*, and *cross-cultural selling*.

Defining “culture”

Officially speaking, *culture* is a shared set of values, beliefs, and behaviors that may have little or nothing to do with ethnicity or race. In other words, ethnicity and race are nature, whereas culture is nurture — culture is learned. The United States, for example, is composed of many ethnic groups, yet most of us often share common values, including freedom, individualism, privacy, equality, time consciousness, materialism, directness, and assertiveness. Some people claim that a culture needs to share a language, too, but we’ll leave that up to opinionated politicians and pundits to debate.

No Tupperware for Middle Easterners?!

Back in the 1970s, my (Ralph's) second in command, Lois Maljak, was a sales manager for Tupperware. Her mentors advised her not to do parties for Middle Eastern clientele because Middle Easterners didn't understand the premise of throwing a party to sell merchandise.

Well, Lois went ahead and tried it anyway. She had great success. Although her Middle Eastern clientele didn't exactly do Tupperware parties like most people — a couple of hours in the evening and a few desserts — they certainly grasped the concept. In fact, they really knew how to throw a party. They usually held their parties during the day, serving full, lavish meals

and doing much more socializing than product demonstrations. And the people who attended the parties usually placed orders because they were great cooks and loved the product.

Selling the Middle Eastern clients on the idea of selling products at parties could take a little more effort, but the return on that investment was usually well worth it — consistent bookings and great sales. The guests became the salespersons, and the salesperson became the trusted supplier. Some of Lois's customers became a part of her sales team, which led to a host of success stories.



Culture can influence people's relationships with one another, their feelings about money, and their attitudes toward business. Becoming sensitive to the values, beliefs, and behaviors of people from other cultures can help you adjust the way you sell to these consumers and customize your products and services, as needed, to meet their unique needs and wants. When you make the necessary changes, your multicultural customers are more likely to feel comfortable doing business with you.

Defining "diversity"

Diversity is just a more politically charged version of *variety*, both of which Americans generally embrace. Just walk into any grocery store or pharmacy and check out the variety of toothpaste. One leading toothpaste manufacturer alone has more than two dozen varieties of toothpaste. Colleges and universities make a point of promoting the diversity of their student bodies and professors. We even seek diversity in our cellphones, pimping them out with custom ringtones, skins, and dozens of add-on features.

Yet, when we find ourselves in a roomful of people, we tend to feel uncomfortable around those who may differ from us in some way. Studies show that people in a crowd naturally gravitate toward those who they perceive are more like themselves.

Adapting can be difficult. People are afraid they'll have nothing in common to talk about or that they may say something insulting. Rather than take the risk, most people shy away from any sort of interaction with those to whom

they don't feel an affinity. Although you can gain new insights and experiences from talking with someone who may be different from yourself, it's often easier to avoid the person.



Although anyone who avoids interacting with people from other cultures loses out, as a salesperson or business owner, you have even more to lose in the form of money from lost sales opportunities.

Defining “cultural diversity”

In the previous two sections, we define *culture* and *diversity* separately. Bringing the two together, we arrive at *cultural diversity* — a group consisting of individuals or collections of individuals with different sets of values, beliefs, and behaviors. Obviously, the world is culturally diverse. Some countries are more culturally diverse than others; for example, most people consider the United States more culturally diverse than, say, Poland or Switzerland. Neighborhoods, schools, and businesses can also be more or less culturally diverse depending on the composition of their membership.

Defining “cross-cultural selling”

As a seasoned sales professional, business owner, or manager, you probably have a pretty good idea of what *selling* entails, but what's this *cross-cultural selling* thing all about?

The term *cross-cultural* merely means comparing or dealing with two or more cultures. In this book, that means you sell to someone from another culture. As you know, selling is about building solid relationships with your customers and clients. With *cross-cultural selling*, you discover ways to increase sales by building better relationships with people from other cultures.

Separating cultural tendencies from stereotypes

Throughout this book, we use several qualifiers, including “sometimes,” “often,” “many,” and “some.” Honestly, we're not trying to waffle on sensitive issues. We use so many qualifiers because we want to be careful not to cross the line from describing cultural tendencies to establishing dangerous stereotypes.

Many people around the world, for example, think Americans are always in a hurry. Most Americans would agree that many of us exhibit this tendency. In fact, the United States is the birthplace of fast food, microwave ovens, one-hour photo processing, and instant messaging (even e-mail was too slow for us). After all, “time is money,” as many of us like to say. Does this mean

that absolutely everyone in this country is preoccupied with time and is in a hurry? Absolutely not! And to say so would be to stereotype Americans. Stereotyping removes people's humanity by painting everyone with the same broad brush.

However, cultures do exhibit certain similar characteristics, and knowing these tendencies can enable you to serve the needs of people from specific cultures more effectively. People from Japan, for example, value relationships perhaps even more than the products or services you're selling. Knowing this tendency can improve your ability, as a salesperson, to sell to customers from Japan. You know upfront that you have to spend more time building a relationship before delivering your sales presentation.



Although we point out cultural tendencies that can help you customize your products and services, and adjust your sales presentations to people from different cultures, bear in mind that the only way to know what a specific customer believes or wants is to ask. Never stereotype any customer for any reason. Always treat everyone as an individual.

Flip to Chapter 4 for more about separating stereotypes from cultural tendencies.

Studying cultural tendencies to predict behavior

Although using cultural tendencies to predict behaviors may not exactly be politically correct, statisticians follow this practice on a regular basis. Auto insurance companies study patterns all the time, for example, to set insurance rates. If you have a teenage son who just started driving, you know exactly what we mean. Even though your son may be the most highly skilled defensive driver in his class, he's still going to get stuck with a higher rate, because male teenage drivers *tend to* have more accidents.

Advertisers are even more obsessed with studying trends; they spend millions of dollars a year segmenting their customers by age, income, gender, leisure activities, and hundreds of other factors. Music producers often target their recordings to specific ethnicities and age groups. Automobile manufacturers design cars and trucks for specific segments of the population. If these groups and others can use cultural tendencies to their benefit, so can you. Simply knowing that Asians tend to be more visual can improve the success of your sales presentation, for example. Likewise, being aware that when customers from haggle-friendly cultures offer you a super low price, they're actually sending you a strong buying signal that can improve your chances of making the sale if you take the right approach with them. In Chapter 4, we show you ways to become more sensitive to differences in other cultures.

Identifying the cultural impact on your business

Minority populations, including Hispanics, African Americans, Middle Easterners, and Asians, are expanding rapidly almost everywhere in the United States. Discovering a part of the country that's not affected by the rapid growth of at least one of these groups is rare.

Your life has probably been affected to some degree by this shifting demographic, but the change may have been so gradual that you barely noticed. Perhaps a few more ethnic restaurants have appeared on the landscape or a few more minority-owned nail salons or dry cleaners. Maybe you noticed a neighborhood newspaper printed in a foreign script or heard unfamiliar languages or accents in your local grocery store or while taking public transportation.

When you begin to see more businesses from other cultures in your neighborhood, this is usually a clear sign that populations of people from these other cultures are on the rise in your area. As a salesperson or business owner, you should see this as an opportunity — these new business owners and consumers are going to need not only products and services specific to their culture, but also basic goods and services.



Talk to your local chamber of commerce, Board of Realtors, Welcome Wagon, and other groups dedicated to welcoming newcomers to the community. They can likely clue you in on population and demographic shifts in your area. See Chapter 2 for more information on getting the latest demographic details.

Embracing the Global Rule

Many salespeople say that the way they relate to multicultural customers is to simply treat everyone “the same.” This may seem like the right approach on the surface, but it can actually turn out to be not such a good idea. New parents often say that about their children, too, until they’ve been parents for a few years and realize that each of their children is a unique individual with different needs, desires, talents, and passions.

Not only is treating everyone the same impossible, but it's also undesirable. It's tantamount to saying that if a customer came into your store with a Seeing Eye dog and a white cane because she was blind, you would just hand her a brochure to “read.” You'd never even think for a moment of doing

something like that. Instead, you would adjust your presentation to meet the customer's needs by reading the brochure to her and perhaps letting her touch or sample the product.



For similar reasons, you want to adjust your presentations to meet the unique needs of people who are culturally different. This is the *Global Rule*. Everyone knows that the Golden Rule is to “treat others as you would like to be treated.” The Global Rule goes one step further: *Treat others as they would like to be treated*. When you begin to practice the Global Rule, you soon discover that becoming more sensitive to other peoples’ cultures doesn’t require a great deal of extra effort, but it does require increased awareness, training, and sensitivity. Flip to Chapter 3 for details on assessing your awareness and Chapter 4 for the scoop on increasing your awareness.

Overcoming cultural snobbery

Far too many Americans are cultural snobs, wondering why people from other cultures would ever think of moving here if they have no intention of speaking and acting like Americans. The answer is that a good percentage of new immigrants (35 percent according to the U.S. Census Bureau) eventually do become U.S. citizens.

In fact, a poll of Hispanics conducted for the Spanish-language television network Univision claimed that 94 percent of Hispanics believe that citizenship is important. To prepare for citizenship, many attend school at night to learn English and American history after working 10–12 hours or more a day and 6 or 7 days a week.

These immigrants, especially the adults, can’t adopt a new language and an entirely new way of life overnight. If you studied a foreign language in high school or college, you’re probably well aware of how difficult it is just to become familiar with the basics, let alone master the nuances of the language.

It’s helpful to remember that the American culture is only about 200 years old, while some other cultures have been in existence for thousands of years. This may help explain why it can be even harder for immigrants to leave their culture behind when they arrive here.



Transitioning to a different language and an entirely new way of life can take a tremendous amount of time and effort, so lifelong Americans need to be patient. Although new immigrants may try to act like Americans, you need to make some adjustments while they transition to their new culture. If you’re willing to adapt, you have an excellent chance of winning over these customers for life. And we can show you how.

Taking cultural influences into account

I (Michael) have spoken to more than 25,000 salespeople since 1990, and most agree that Middle Eastern, Hispanic, and Asian customers tend to want to negotiate the sales price of a product much more than someone who grew up in the United States. Does every Middle Eastern, Hispanic, or Asian customer insist on negotiating the sales price? Absolutely not! However, if these salespeople encountered someone from one of these cultures who wasn't a skilled negotiator, they would sense that something was unusual.

Although new immigrants in this country may try to become Americanized, they may still have cultural influences from their ancestors that influence the way they feel about money and about buying products. For example, my parents (Michael) instilled in me at a very early age that owing money is shameful. This ancient Confucian principle runs counter to Americans' tendency to charge every purchase from groceries to gasoline. Neither extreme is probably wise, but the fact is that different cultures have different beliefs about borrowing and saving.

Spotting Opportunities in the Multicultural Marketplace

The term *multicultural marketplace* inspires yawns among many ill-informed salespeople who think these niche markets represent nothing more than chump change. When we start to lay out the real numbers in dollars and cents, however, their eyes open wide, and their ears immediately perk up. The numbers are pretty impressive and represent tremendous opportunities for any business willing to invest a little effort in tapping into these markets.

In the following sections, we explore the collective purchasing power of multicultural markets and the potential upside for your business.

Measuring the purchasing power of other cultures

As the minority population has grown, its *purchasing power* (the financial means to purchase products and services) has also grown, but at an exponential rate. According to the Selig Center for Economic Growth, the combined purchasing power of the multicultural market has grown from \$1.39 trillion in 2000 to more than \$2 trillion in 2007 and is estimated to reach \$3 trillion in 2011.

This growth has far outstripped growth in the traditional White market. The Selig Center estimates that Hispanic purchasing power rose 307 percent from 1990 to 2007; Asian buying power increased 294 percent; Native Americans

were able to buy 190 percent more during the same period; African American buying power increased by 166 percent; and White buying power rose by only 124 percent.



Given the rate of exploding growth among multicultural consumers, you can expect more of your income to be from customers from other cultures, and this trend is expected to continue far into the foreseeable future.

Identifying the potential upside for your business

Statistics about the increased national buying power of minorities may not be sufficient to convince you of the potential upside for your particular business in your corner of the country. You can look up demographics for your markets on the U.S. Census Bureau's Web site at www.census.gov, but that may not tell you much, either. Sure, you can pull up a fact sheet that lists the total population of a given area and breaks it down into different groups, but the information can only act as a starting point at best and may even be misleading. For example, a new-home builder in Dallas found that while Asian Indians accounted for only about 2 percent of the city's population, they often comprised as much as 90 percent of the builder's home buyers.



For the most accurate and inexpensive source of data about the potential multicultural market for your company, look to your own experience and gather information from your staff and your competitors (see Chapter 2 for additional information):

- ✓ Ask your staff how many people from other cultures check out your goods on a daily basis without buying anything. This gives you a pretty clear indication of how much of the multicultural market is slipping through your fingers.

Probe a little further to explore possible reasons why people are shopping without buying. For example, your staff may notice that people ask about products or services you don't offer, or they may sense that shoppers don't feel welcome — your store or personnel may not be friendly or helpful enough for their tastes. By identifying the causes for your customers' dissatisfaction, you can often begin to identify solutions.

- ✓ Subtly engage your competitors' staff in a conversation to find out their experience in dealing with consumers from other cultures. If your competitors are selling well in the multicultural marketplace, you're doing something wrong. Find out what they're doing that you're not.

If you sell fairly expensive items, such as appliances, furniture, cars, or homes, and notice that multicultural customers visit repeatedly without making a purchase, you're definitely missing out on excellent opportunities. While consumers from other cultures often have money to spend, they rarely

have time to waste coming back to the same business. For some reason, they're attracted to your business but don't feel comfortable enough to buy from you. No need to panic, though — in the following section, you find out about the adjustments you can make to appeal to multicultural clientele.

Adapting to Changing Markets

In business, the fact that the only constant is change is almost cliché. Products are constantly being updated, markets fluctuate, and technology transforms everything almost daily. The composition of the marketplace is also in constant flux, becoming increasingly diverse.

The salespeople and business owners who thrive in the face of the ever-changing markets are those who are willing and able to adapt. Instead of fighting change, they embrace it. As a result, they're constantly gaining ground in the battle for market share.

Making your business more attractive to people from diverse cultures probably requires a lot less than you may expect. You just need to be sensitive to cultural differences. With a little training and practice, you'll be well on your way to making the necessary adjustments. In the following sections, we introduce several ways you can adapt in order to lay claim to your multicultural market share.

Getting a marketing makeover

Marketing and advertising professionals know exactly what is necessary to market effectively, because they've been doing it for years — studying the lifestyles and needs of their target markets to create a profile of the target consumer. The profile may indicate that the biggest opportunities are to be had by appealing to working-class people who live within a 10-mile radius of the store. It could be local middle-class people who own RVs. Or perhaps the target market is upper-class international travelers. Marketers and advertisers carefully study the target profile to decide which products and services may appeal to the group and how they can most effectively present their products and services to those consumers.

Unfortunately, many companies fail to realize that this same approach works just as effectively for the multicultural marketplace. To reach multicultural customers, you must get to know their lifestyles and needs. Trying to appeal to Hispanics is not enough, for example, because of the great amount of diversity among the Hispanic population. Some Hispanics have lived in the States much longer than others. Some are more Americanized. All of this can have an impact on your marketing strategy.

Revisit all of your marketing materials and decide what you need to do to make them more appealing to people from other cultures. In Chapter 5, we show you how to create a marketing campaign that has broad appeal. This includes making the following changes:

- ✓ Translating marketing materials into the language of your target consumers
- ✓ Removing anything that could offend the sensibilities of the cultures you want to attract, including cultural stereotypes
- ✓ Crafting ads directed at specific markets
- ✓ Communicating your commitment to family values
- ✓ Generating positive public relations in minority communities in your area and on the Internet

Reaching beyond marketing

Marketing can bring people through the doors or persuade them to call your office, but it can't guarantee a sale. Everyone in your company needs to be prepared to accommodate the new customers who require assistance. If the customers don't feel welcome at your place of business or feel that they're not treated with sensitivity to their culture, they won't buy from you. You can't blame it on the marketing, even though many companies do just that.



In addition to changing your marketing, train your frontline staff to make them culturally competent. Make sure they know and practice the Global Rule — treating customers as those customers want to be treated rather than making assumptions (see the “Embracing the Global Rule” section earlier in this chapter for more info). Studies show that people from every culture make purchasing decisions based on how they're treated.

In Chapter 6, we take you beyond multicultural marketing to show you how to build a comprehensive program that treats customers the way they want to be treated from initial contact to closing.

Tweaking your products and services . . . or not

Depending on what you sell, changing your marketing and packaging may not be enough to appeal to your multicultural clientele. You may need to make fundamental changes to your product line and the services you offer. To appeal to the increasing influx of Mexican immigrants, for example, many

grocery stores around the United States have added a Mexican foods section. Likewise, pharmacies often carry selections of personal-care items that are more familiar to customers from various cultural backgrounds.



You may or may not need to change your product line or the services you offer, but you should certainly consider it. The best way to find out whether a change is in order is to be direct — survey your customers. When interacting with customers from other cultures, ask whether they found everything they were looking for. Ask whether they have any recommendations for products they would like to see you carry or services you could offer.

After you know what your customers want, it's up to you to decide whether offering those new products and services is worth the effort. After conducting this research, the choice is up to you. See Chapter 7 for more details on offering in-demand products and services.

Mastering a new meet-and-greet strategy

Making a good first impression is of the utmost importance with any prospective buyer, but it's even more of a challenge when dealing with people from other cultures. Many cultures, for example, are simply uncomfortable with the standard handshake. In fact, any assumptions you make about how people want to be greeted may offend the other party and compromise your chances of making the sale.



In Chapter 8, we explain in great detail the do's and don'ts of meeting and greeting people from other cultures, but if you're looking for a quick tip to get you through the day until you can get around to reading Chapter 8, here it is: *Wait for the customer to make the first move.* If the customer reaches out to shake your hand, bows to you, or approaches you for a European kiss on the cheek, follow suit. Greeting customers as they like to be greeted is crucial for building positive relationships that lead to successful closings.

In Chapter 8, you also discover how the significance of eye contact varies around the world and what various forms of eye contact really mean. It can be just the opposite from what most Americans expect.

Adapting your sales presentation

As a salesperson, you're already well aware of the fact that you have to communicate differently with different people. You speak one way to men and another way to women, one way to young customers and another to more mature individuals. In the same way, your presentation will be much more effective if you adjust it for different cultural groups. In Chapter 11, we provide details on how to adapt your sales presentation and techniques, but in general, you can expect to make the following adjustments:

- ✓ Spend more time building relationships and trust (we devote Chapter 9 to this topic).
- ✓ Educate consumers more on basic features and benefits of your products and services (don't assume that your customers already know the basics).
- ✓ Adapt your presentation to learning styles that are more predominant in certain cultures.
- ✓ Become more family focused when dealing with clients and their children.

Many salespeople deliver a top-notch presentation but drop the ball during the follow-through. Because of their cultural illiteracy, they may misinterpret what the customer says or does as rejection, when the customer is really sending some strong buying signals. As a result, salespeople often fail to close sales with highly qualified buyers. For tips on picking up buying signals from multicultural clientele, check out Chapter 10. In Chapter 12, we reveal techniques for closing the sale.

Some people feel that working with multicultural customers requires more time than it's worth. Hopefully, the people who feel this way are your competitors, because you discover in Chapter 2 why being patient is well worth your time and effort.

Honing your negotiating skills for different cultures

Americans generally don't like to haggle. We expect people to set a fair price for whatever they're selling. If the price is too high, we don't buy the product, we see if someone else is offering the same product for less, or we look for a less expensive version. We trust that healthy competition will keep prices in check. We shop. We don't haggle.

Other cultures have transformed haggling into an art form. Merchants knowingly set prices a little high, realizing that customers are going to negotiate a lower price. When American salespeople meet people from these cultures, the salespeople quickly get flustered because the haggling never seems to end. In some cases, even after the customer signs off on the purchase, he still tries to negotiate a better deal!



As a salesperson who wants to sell to people from other cultures, you'd do well to acquire some self-defense maneuvers and become a black-belt negotiator. Otherwise, you'll see your commissions and company profits quickly disappear under the onslaught of constant haggling that's common in some cultures. In Chapter 13, you can begin training to earn your black belt in sales negotiating.

Building your referral business

Referral business . . . ahhh! The dream of every salesperson on the planet is to have a business built exclusively on referrals. No cold calls. No advertising. Just kick back and watch the eager customers stream through your door.

Although selling to cross-cultural customers may take a bit more time and effort to bring customers up to speed on your products and services, you can expect a big payback in the form of referral business. When immigrants arrive in this country, they don't know whom they can trust. They fear that merchants are going to take advantage of them because of their unfamiliarity with American products, services, and customs. So when they find a salesperson they can trust, they're quick to pass the word along to their friends and family members.



Not only does your superior service get you more referral business, but the referral customers already trust you, so you don't need to spend as much time building relationships and consumer confidence. Customers arrive ready to buy.

In Chapter 15, we explore referral opportunities in greater depth and show you how and when to ask clients for referrals without seeming too pushy.

Building a Diversity-Friendly Business

Advertising how diversity friendly you are is useless if you don't deliver diversity friendliness when your customers arrive. That would be like marketing a hamburger joint as a five-star restaurant. As soon as the customers pulled up to the curb, they'd realize the farce and keep driving.

If you're going to do diversity, do it right. Make sure your business and your staff communicate an openness to those from other cultures and a willingness to meet their needs. The following sections can get you started on the right track.

Modifying your store or office

Here's a homework assignment for you: The next time you go grocery shopping, jot down your grocery list as you normally do, but this time, take it to an ethnic grocery store and try to get everything on the list. If you are like most Americans, as you wander through the aisles, you probably feel the following:

- ✔ **Unwelcome:** You probably feel like you don't belong. You are a minority. The owner and other shoppers are probably looking at you wondering what you're doing here.

- ✔ **Confused:** You don't know where to look for the items you want because everything is arranged differently, the packaging is unfamiliar, and signs and labels may be in another language.
- ✔ **Disappointed:** The store doesn't carry the products or brands you want. The selection seems limited.

Now you have an idea of how multicultural customers feel. If you don't make some adjustments to your store or office to make it more culturally friendly, customers from other cultures are likely to feel uncomfortable when visiting your establishment.



In Chapter 7, we provide some tips and techniques you can implement to make your store or office more culturally friendly without turning off your traditional clientele. Simply put yourself in others' shoes, realize what it is about your establishment that may make it feel foreign and intimidating, and then develop ways to make it more friendly, such as

- ✔ Adding signs in the languages that your customers speak
- ✔ Packaging products in a way that makes them more appealing to different cultures
- ✔ Surveying customers to determine products and services they want and then adding these to your offerings
- ✔ Changing the décor to make your establishment feel more comfortable to other groups

Forming a multicultural sales team

Diversifying your sales force can make your business more appealing to customers from other cultures. You don't need to have Hispanic salespeople to work with Hispanic customers or Asians selling to Asians, but exhibiting an openness to other cultures can make everyone feel more welcome.



By embracing diversity not only in your customers but also when building your sales team, your business stands to reap several benefits:

- ✔ Customers from different cultures see that your business clearly values their culture and their people.
- ✔ A diverse sales staff can train one another on how to interact more effectively with people from other cultures.
- ✔ If your sales team has multilingual salespeople, they can assist in communicating with customers who don't speak English and in translating marketing materials.

Building and managing a multicultural sales team, including Caucasians, can be quite challenging. You often have to deal with different communication styles, deep-seated stereotypes, language barriers, counterproductive behaviors, and differences in how people view authority and make decisions. Although the benefits of having a multicultural sales team can be significant, you really need to develop the team with advanced planning and forethought if you want to realize those benefits. In Chapter 16, we show you how.



Failure to account for cultural differences when assembling a multicultural sales team can result in an increase in conflict, dissension, and mistrust, and a decrease in efficiency, productivity, and sales.

Extending diversity throughout your business

Your frontline staff are the greeters, receptionists, cashiers, and others who deal with prospective customers when they first arrive. These people are the face of your business. You can extend diversity to other parts of your business as well, by hiring people from other cultures to fill other positions that aren't as visible to customers and by purchasing goods and services from minority-owned businesses. The more you interact with a variety of people from other cultures, the more culturally aware you become and the more inroads you have into their communities.

Hiring and retaining people of color, however, is not quite the same as employing Anglo Americans. You have to make some fundamental changes in the way you recruit, hire, and manage people from other backgrounds to account for cultural nuances. Chapter 16 explains how to do this.



Everything you do to make yourself, your business, and your products more appealing to customers from other cultures requires time and effort. The same is true when it comes to finding, hiring, training, and retaining multicultural personnel. Most businesses that make the investment, however, discover that the long-term benefits far outweigh the costs.