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Building on the Promise of Diversity: How We Can Move to the Next Level in Our Workplaces, Our Communities, and Our Society

R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr.

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The ""numbers"" were achieved. The workshops attended. Most people in your organization have gotten their ""isms"" under control. But here you are again, recycling yet another round of costly diversity programs -- and still unable to overcome the problems and reap the benefits of your diverse workforce. That's because most organizations, despite good intentions and hard work, are stuck in their diversity efforts, says R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., a leading diversity expert who has continually raised the bar on how we think and act on a complex array of diversity issues. In our communities as well as in our workplaces, a feeling of frustration has emerged as the promise of the Civil Rights Movement and affirmative action has become overly politicized and polarizing. But managing diversity is not a new issue. In fact, it is both a hallmark and core challenge that organizations and society have confronted since the founding of America, ""an experiment in diversity."" Building on the Promise of Diversity is Thomas's impassioned wake-up call to bring diversity management to a wholly new level -- beyond finger-pointing and well-meaning "initiatives" and toward the shared goal of building robust organizations and thriving communities. This original, thoughtful, yet action-oriented book will help leaders in any setting -- business, religious, educational, governmental, community groups, and more -- break out of the status quo and reinvigorate the can-do spirit of making things better. The book includes a deeply felt analysis of the sometimes tangled intersections between diversity management and the Civil Rights Movement and affirmative action agendas . . . a personal narrative that charts Thomas's own evolution in diversity thinking . . . and a roadmap for mastering the powerful craft of Strategic Diversity Management™, a structured process that helps you: * Realize why multiple activities and good intentions are not enough for achieving sustainable progress. * Recast the meaning of diversity as more than just race and gender, but as any set of differences, similarities, and tensions -- such as workplace functions, product lines, acquisitions and mergers, customers and markets, blended families, community diversity, and more. * Accept that a realistic goal is not to eliminate diversity tension but to use it as a catalyst to address key issues. * Recognize diversity mixtures, analyze them accurately, and make quality decisions in the midst of differences, similarities, and tensions. * Build an essential set of diversity skills and develop your "diversity maturity" -- the wisdom, judgment, and experience to use those skills effectively. * Reflect on the ways you might be "diversity challenged" yourself. Diversity is the reality of America today. Whether you let diversity be a drain on your organization or a dynamic contributor to your mission, vision, and strategy is both a choice and a challenge. Building on the Promise of Diversity gives you the insights and skills you need to navigate through simmering tensions -- and find creative solutions for achieving cohesiveness, connectedness, and common goals.

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