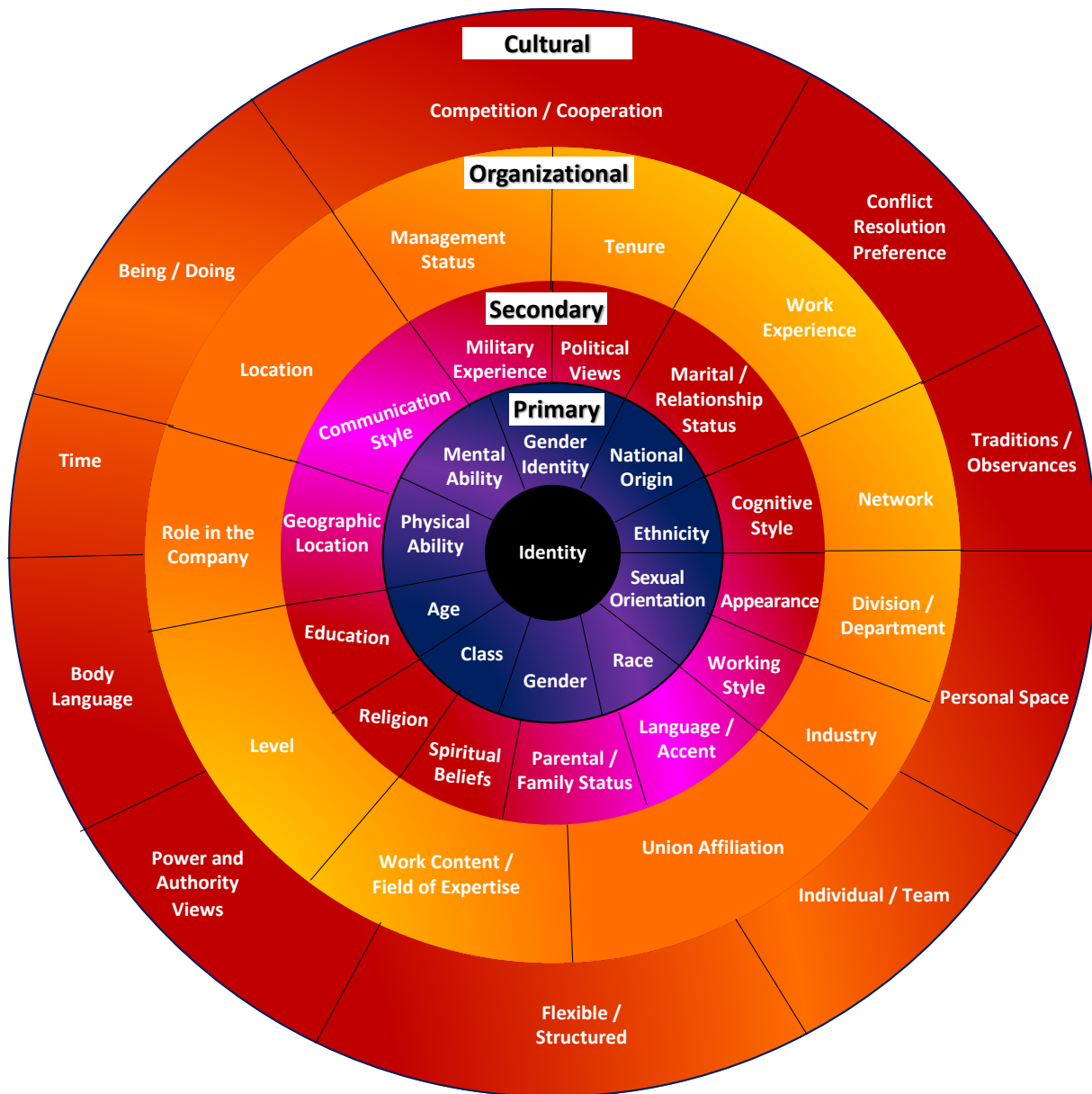




Dimensions of Diversity



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Source: Adapted from Workforce America! Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource, 1991. Diverse Teams at Work: Capitalizing on the Power of Diversity by Lee Gardenswartz, Anita Rowe, 2003. Global Diversity Puts New Spin on Loden's Diversity Wheel by Kimberley Lou & Barbara Dean, 2010.



What is the significance of the Dimensions of Diversity?

Marilyn Loden, the creator of the Dimensions of Diversity Model, developed the model to help people understand how group-based differences contribute to people's social identities. She “wanted to identify the differences that make a major difference—to show which dimensions of diversity are important in people's lives, and acknowledge their power, so that people who wanted to talk about them would be supported by the model.”

When studying the model, pay attention to the intersectionality that exists for yourself and others. Acknowledge all of the groups to which you belong. The various dimensions help shape who we are as humans and how we respond to those around us. Whether we realize it or not, we bring our dimensions with us into the workplace. They shape our leadership, interaction styles relationship management tendencies.

Identity

Identity is—Who I am. It is how I see/define myself, how other's see me and the characteristics that define me.

Primary Dimensions

Primary Dimensions are the most powerful differences. They are typically described as inborn distinctions that impact early socialization and future life. These dimensions shape self-image, worldview and identity or how we define ourselves. They exert primary influences on one's identity.

Secondary Dimensions

Secondary Dimensions reflect other differences acquired throughout life. These distinctions are those that can be modified or discarded based on individual life choices. They are less visible, yet, according to Marilyn Loden and Judy Rosener¹ have “a more variable influence on personal identity and add a more subtle richness to the primary dimensions of diversity.”

Organizational Dimensions

Organizational Dimensions are those attributes that define or pertain to the workplace. They are corporate or institutional affiliations and are associated with past and present experiences.

Cultural Dimensions

Cultural Dimensions are the traits, behaviors, preferences or values that are shaped by culture.

Personal Diversity Characteristics

Personal Diversity Characteristics are the attributes that identify individuals within each dimension.

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic Status affects outcomes in life, access and privilege

Exercise

1. Review the diversity dimensions wheel. Make note of how you identify at each level: primary, secondary, organizational and cultural.
2. Which personal diversity characteristics are most important to you and why?
3. What do you perceive is the greatest misunderstanding that people have about your personal diversity characteristics?
4. Where are you a member of the dominant culture (hold more privilege and power) and non-dominant culture (hold less privilege and power)?

¹ Loden Marilyn and Rosener Judy B (1991), *Workforce America! Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource*, McGraw-Hill.