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Host Andy Davis: Today I'm talking with Melissa Kramer. We're discussing a topic of importance to many people in the world of business—diversity in the workforce and more specifically, the advantages of a diverse workforce. Good afternoon, Melissa.

Guest Melissa Kramer: Hello Andy.

Host: Melissa, as a business consultant in this area, can you first let us know the major categories of diversity in the workforce?

Guest: Well, diversity can certainly take many forms, but the major categories are age, gender, race, and nationality.

Host: Are there others as well?

Guest: Sure, there's also geographical location, where a business or team is located. And there is level of education and sexual orientation.

Host: So then, given these forms of diversity, what is involved in managing diversity in the workplace? Is this about insuring fairness? Fair treatment of everyone?

Guest: Well, yes, fairness is a big part of it, but managing diversity goes beyond that. Managing diversity really concerns planning and implementing organizational practices in a company. We need to do this in ways that maximize the benefits of diversity while minimizing potential problems.

Host: So we're looking at diversity as having advantages?

Guest: Absolutely.

Host: I see. What are some of those advantages?

Guest: Well, in my experience working with several multinational corporations, I've seen three major advantages that seem to occur when there is diversity in the workforce. The first advantage is that the corporate culture is improved because employees are more motivated. Many people just find it interesting to work with smart, hard-working people who differ from them in various ways. Second, a diverse workforce tends to give companies easier access to different markets, and especially to overseas markets.

Host: Is that because there are people in the company who understand those markets?

Guest: That's right, but it's more than that. There's also an openness to other cultures or an interest in overseas markets in companies with more diversity.

Host: Well, that certainly makes sense. So what was the last advantage?

Guest: The third advantage I wanted to mention concerns creativity. Creativity is really about

combining ideas—often somewhat old ideas—in new ways. A diverse workforce can bring more ideas to the table, create more far-sighted solutions to problems.

Host: Melissa, after the break, can you give us some specific examples of companies that have employees located in different countries working together on projects?

Guest: Sure, sure. I'd be happy to ...

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Speaker: The US will add approximately 20 million new jobs from 2010 to 2020. That's a 14 percent annual rate of growth, which is far greater than the 6 percent average rate of growth over the last century. However, what I would like to emphasize today is that a small number of job sectors will account for 50 percent of that growth. Companies will be looking for college graduates with degrees in areas such as computer science, accounting, business, and economics. The future is really about information, so it's no surprise that careers in the areas of data mining, data analysis, computer programming, and web development will continue to be in demand. In the business arena, career opportunities in finance, investment, and business management will grow. We'll also see a strong need for people with training in healthcare and medicine, two areas that will add about 5 million jobs by 2020. That means that there will be a demand for dentists, nurses, and physical therapists. Finally, the construction industry will add around 1.8 million jobs, with commercial buildings and single-family housing leading the way.

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Professor Julian Young: E01 Hello. Last time we looked at trends in the job market and identified professions that are growing quickly. What I'd like to focus on this time is a core set of skills that are important in all of these growth sector professions. We've got four skills—or maybe more accurately skill sets—to review. **E02** The first skill set relates to communication. Almost every job now requires “excellent communication skills”—but what does that mean? Of course, good communicators must be able to express themselves clearly and positively—in both speaking and writing. But there's even more to it than that. Having strong communication skills is also being able to convey information to people simply, in a way that people understand you and want to respond to you. So it's about *connecting* with people, not just speaking and writing. Good communication skills means you can give and understand instructions,

listen to others and learn new things, make requests, ask questions, and give convincing answers when someone asks you a question. So it's important to note that good communication doesn't mean that you can use communication technologies well, but that you can communicate with people well. So it might be best to think of communication skills as "personal communication skills." **E03** The second skill set relates to your intuition. This is a skill set known as social intelligence. Social intelligence is a term coined by the American psychologist Edward Thorndike in the 1920s, to refer to the ability to get along with other people. To adapt to situations involving new people—and more fundamentally, the ability to "read" the emotional states of the people around you. This is a key skill set in many occupations because almost every job involves collaboration. And nowadays that means getting along with diverse groups of people. Social intelligence involves getting to know people who may be very different from you in terms of age, education, sexual orientation, and cultural and language background. You have to develop sensitivity to different people, to different ways of viewing the world. This skill set has become increasingly important in a globalized world. For instance, you might be working for a company where one person on your project team is in India, another in China, and another in Germany. The effectiveness of your work depends on the social intelligence of the people involved, right? Just having email exchanges and web meetings with the people on your project team isn't enough. It's about collaboration, connecting, and working harmoniously. And collaboration is about social intelligence. **E04** So that brings us to the third skill set, which is a bit more technical in nature. We call this "machine interfacing." In the same way that we communicate fluently with our business colleagues in personal interactions, we also need to navigate fluently in different technologies and software. We need to be able to create and manage documents and spreadsheets and presentations. We need to be able to use email, video chats, cloud computing, and social media. We used to think that only the IT people—the information technology staff—needed to understand the technology, but now everyone needs a basic understanding, and everyone needs an open mind to learning new technologies and new software as they develop. **E05** The fourth skill set is related to communication, intuition, and technology. This fourth skill is called sense-making. This means making sense of all the complex stuff that is going on around us. Whether we're in business, or education or medicine, or whatever—information is exploding and knowledge is increasing at a rapid rate. It's impossible to take in all the new information and learn all of the new knowledge in our field. Rather we have to try to "make sense" of the information around us. This means we have to learn how to categorize information—learn how to prioritize what's important. We need to be able to draw reasonable conclusions based on what

we understand. And we have to be able to ask good questions to find out what we need to know! **E06** OK, that's a quick overview of the four skill sets that are important in the workplace today. Whatever field you're in, you're going to need these four skill sets—personal communication, social intelligence, machine interfacing, and sense-making. It probably seems very daunting—like, how on earth am I supposed to acquire those skills?! Well, the good news is that all of these skills can be learned through hands-on experience. You start building these skills as soon as you are aware of them! That's right: The first step is simply to know about the skills. Once you can identify these skills, you can begin to observe people around you who have these skills. You observe, you ask questions, you try out the new skills, you ask for feedback: How am I doing? Can you help me with this? What can I do to improve my skills in this area? This attitude of wanting to learn is the most important strategy you can use. Using this strategy moves us into a positive learning cycle in which we set goals, we perform, we evaluate our performance, and we then set new goals. If you stay open to learning, you'll go far. All right, let's leave it there for now. See you next time.

HEAR the language page 38

- 1 Of course, good communicators must be able to express themselves clearly and positively—in both speaking and writing.
- 2 Good communication skills means you can give and understand instructions, listen to others and learn new things, make requests, ask questions, and give convincing answers when someone asks you a question.
- 3 And nowadays that means getting along with diverse groups of people.
- 4 Just having email exchanges and web meetings with the people on your project team isn't enough.
- 5 In the same way that we communicate fluently with our business colleagues in personal interactions, we also need to navigate fluently in different technologies and software.
- 6 We need to be able to create and manage documents and spreadsheets and presentations.
- 7 We need to be able to draw reasonable conclusions based on what we understand.
- 8 Well, the good news is that all of these skills can be learned through hands-on experience.

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Hugh: OK, so we need to discuss social intelligence, right? I for one really like this idea about intelligence. It really is a different kind of intelligence.

Ben: Sure. If someone is sensitive to other people's emotional states, then, yeah, I think that's a kind of intelligence.

Kenzie: Yeah, I agree. It seems to me that social intelligence it, it involves the ability to manage, to manage social relationships. Some people are naturally better at that than others.

Ben: Yeah, Hugh, you've got like a thousand Facebook friends and LinkedIn contacts! You must really know how to manage relationships.

Hugh: I guess. I mean, I just like people. I have a question though. Do you think this sort of skill, this sort of social intelligence, can be learned? Or do people have it naturally?

Shelley: You can learn social intelligence. For example, there are social intelligence training courses online.

Ben: I think those courses basically teach people to be, you know, more aware of themselves and others. To notice how they're communicating.

Shelley: Yeah. That's true. But social intelligence probably requires more than just awareness. Don't you think? It also involves overcoming bias.

Kenzie: Overcoming what?

Shelley: Bias. Am I saying that right?

Kenzie: Oh, bias, yes, you're saying it right. I think, another thing is having an open mind—and being willing to communicate. I mean, look at us, for instance. We talk with people from five or ten different countries every day at school, right?

Hugh: Easily. Maybe that makes us “socially intelligent.”

Kenzie: I think empathy is also a big part of it. You have to be willing to communicate, to listen, to really be supportive.

Shelley: I wonder how well we can empathize with someone from another culture?

Ben: Yeah, you're right. I still don't think I understand most of what Hugh is thinking most of the time. So

Hugh: Funny. OK, guys. So, we've talked a lot about interesting things that we can develop further. Why don't we sign off for now? See you in class.