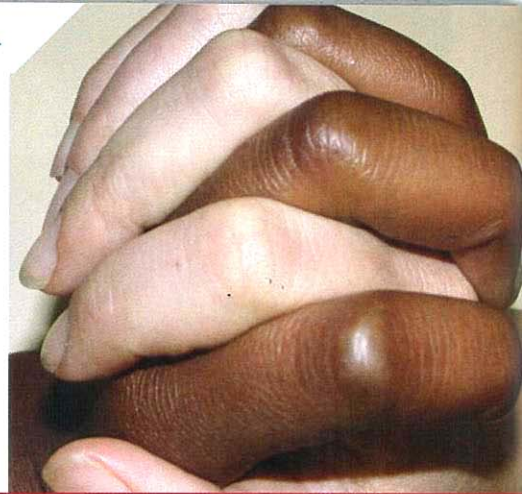
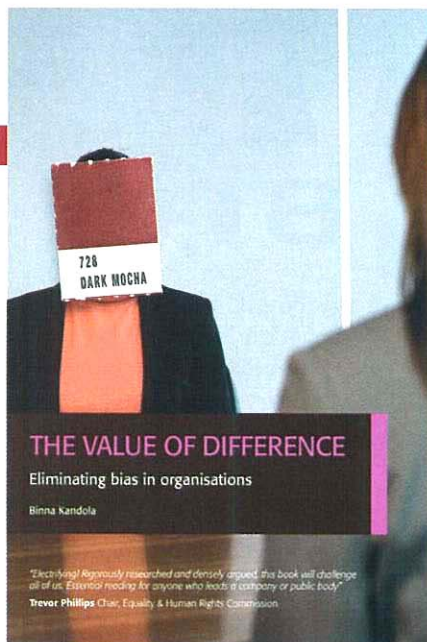


Book

of the month



The Value of Difference: Eliminating bias in organisations by Professor Binna Kandola OBE

Events such as the release of the film Philadelphia and the Stephen Lawrence murder in 1993 caused organisations to examine their potential for in-built prejudice and bias.

Over the last decade or more, diversity and difference has been high on HR's and organisations' agendas, rightly so. And yet if we believe Binna Kandola, progress in actually dealing with this has been patchy. According to Professor Kandola, businesses still have a tendency to recruit and promote people in line with old paradigms and even what he calls "old boys networks". As an HR professional, I tend to agree with him in that there has been success in raising awareness but changing behaviours is proving more challenging.

This new book is timely and important. When such an eminent figure in the world of diversity challenges us to think differently about difference, we should sit up and listen. The author is a psychologist and has researched widely to present us with a compelling argument

that implicates us all in the case for natural bias. He asserts that such bias is a function of deep rooted human conditioning and unavoidable. Merely writing rules and procedures around diversity does not tackle the real issues.

But this book is not simply an academic study. It is a practical tool that throws down something of a gauntlet to HR communities to step up their game particularly around presenting a powerful business case for action and supporting business leaders as they embrace their responsibilities. Indeed, this book should be mandated reading for senior management, as Professor Kandola is strong in his view that it is business leaders who create truly inclusive environments. He backs this up with case studies throughout drawn from his undoubted hands-on experience.

This is an honest, frank and challenging book that does not dwell in the negative but offers a positive and hopeful perspective with pragmatic ways forward.

Review by Tim Richardson
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