



highest-ranked auto company because of its commitment to an inclusive work force and its strong community philanthropy.⁴⁸

In addition to achieving this coveted spot in *DiversityInc's* 2008 and 2009 rankings, Ford has earned positive recognition from other minority organizations. The Michigan Minority Business Development Council named Ford one of its 2008 Corporate ONE Award winners,⁴⁹ and the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation awarded Ford the "Fairness Award."⁵⁰ The *Hispanic Business Magazine* ranked Ford 29th in its Diversity Elite 60 Companies in 2008.⁵¹ Responding to the need to educate its employees about diversity, Ford developed the Multicultural Alliance. According to Director of Diversity and Worklife Planning and Peer Review Rosalind Cox, the Alliance's mission is "to educate Ford's departments on the benefit multicultural markets bring the company."⁵² And impressively, Ford leads all other automakers with the largest percentage of minority-owned or -operated dealerships in the United States.⁵³

Ford's diversity initiatives are both innovative and laudable; however, weaknesses remain. In 2006, Ford lost one of the auto industry's most influential women leaders, Anne Stevens, who was executive vice president and COO of the Americas. Further, in the Ford Motor Company 2008 *Annual Report*, there is no mention of domestic diversity as an organizational value or as a competitive advantage in the Chairman's Message from William Clay Ford and the President and CEO's Message from Alan Mulally. Mulally has yet to show whether Ford will remain as dedicated to diversity initiatives as it has been in the past.⁵⁴

Ford Motor Co. maintains that diversity is a "distinct advantage" and that diversity is one of their "top corporate priorities."⁵⁵ With such serious claims of diversity commitment—in light of the company's historical tie to diversity and its future plans to manage diversity—comes the responsibility of valuing the knowledge and experience of the older worker.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Nasser's progressive goal—to diversify Ford's workforce—backfire?
2. How did Nasser's personal story and work background affect his approach and philosophy on managing diversity?
3. Why was Ford's evaluation system, the PMP, the source of contention for Ford employees who felt discriminated against? In moving away from the PMP, what did Ford do to improve this evaluation system? Did these changes create a more accurate system of evaluation?
4. The number of older workers in the workforce is increasing—many people now work into their late 60s and 70s. How can businesses adapt to and benefit from this trend?

Notes

1. Mark Truby, "Age-bias Claims Jolt Ford Culture Change," *Detroit News*, April 29, 2001, http://www.zigonperf.com/resources/pmnews/grading_workers.html; Julie Foster, "Ford's Controversial Diversity Campaign: Automaker Faces Suit over Discrimination against Older White Males," *WorldNetDaily.com*, May 16, 2001, http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/printer-friendly.asp?ARTICLE_ID=22838.
2. Jacques Nasser live Web cast July 27, 2000, <http://www.npr.org/programs/npc/2000/000727.jnasser.html>.
3. Mark Truby and Bill Vlasic, "Bold Ford CEO Leads a Cultural Revolution: Nasser's Hard-driving Style Draws Praise, Criticism," *Detroit*