

TITLE: Baking a New Cake: How to Succeed at Employment Equity
AUTHOR: Human, L., Bluen, S. and Davies, R.
PUBLISHER: Knowledge Resources, Randburg, 1999
REVIEWER: Fiona Donald, Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand

This book is based on the premise that a holistic process must be adopted in order to implement employment equity successfully. Merely focussing on numbers of previously disadvantaged people is likely to result in tokenism. Organisations need to examine and substantially change the way in which they approach this area. This book provides useful guidelines for line and human resource managers regarding practical aspects such as developing and implementing an employment equity strategy, the roles and responsibilities of various parties involved, conducting equity audits, recruiting and selecting employees and the development of people in the organisation. In addition, typical pitfalls are highlighted and factors that are critical to success are discussed. Although the book focuses largely on practical aspects regarding implementation, various discussions on salient topics that influence the context of employment equity are provided. These include, for example, diversity management, nationalism, culture, and facts and fiction regarding employment equity. Detailed aspects of the relevant laws are not included, but where necessary the applicable components of these laws are covered. The book concludes with a case study based on South African Breweries: Beer Division's experiences in the field. The recipes – in Baking a New Cake – are likely to be extremely helpful guides that can be applied to any organisation rather than prescriptive formulae. They are aimed at ensuring that organisations meet the critical success criteria specified in the book. The authors have drawn on their considerable theoretical and practical experience in order to make a significant contribution to the area that is quick and easy to read.

TITLE: Achieving Employment Equity: A Guide to Effective Strategies
AUTHOR: Thomas, A. and Robertshaw, D.
PUBLISHER: Knowledge Resources, Randburg, 1999
REVIEWER: Fiona Donald, Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand

This book provides a comprehensive guide to organisations seeking to achieve employment equity. Although reference is made to Employment Equity in the international context, the book is based on the South African Employment Equity Act. A useful summary of the Act is provided and references to its requirements are made throughout. A cover to cover reading of the book takes one through the various phases and steps involved in achieving employment equity in a systematic manner. Aspects included are: the context of employment equity; setting the stage; establishing a steering committee; developing a policy and plan; identifying barriers to effective implementation; aligning human resources and practices; providing feedback to employees and other stakeholders and bringing it all together. Practical information is also given regarding target setting and funding for training and study programmes. The issues and areas to consider are set out as checklists that both line and human resource managers could use in a quick and easy manner. Although comprehensive, the large number of lists tends to result in an information overload for the reader. The book could also focus more on the processes involved in achieving employment equity successfully. For example, the hidden barriers that are typically encountered are described but the reader may need more guidance on how to identify and deal with them. Achieving Employment Equity – sets out to provide a systematic guide to managers and is likely to become a cornerstone for companies embarking on this process.