

[Press Release. (Feb. 06, 2017). EY launches religious literacy training program for organizations London, 6 February 2017. E&Y. Source: <https://sites.tufts.edu/flecherrld/files/2018/03/intl-business-case-study.pdf>]



[Note: This press release has been removed from the E&Y site when last searched on May 11, 2024.]

EY launches religious literacy training program for organizations London, 6 February 2017

EY has announced the launch of Religious Literacy for Organisations (RLO), a diversity and inclusion training program designed to help organizations better understand religious inclusion and its positive impact on business process and performance. Developed in collaboration with Coexist House, an organization dedicated to transforming public understanding of the practices and perspectives of the world's religions, and with research from Professor Adam Dinham, an expert in faith and public policy at Goldsmiths, University of London, the program can support organizations and their people to take effective steps toward religious literacy and their perceptions of religious diversity.

Increasing demands for more impactful religious inclusion from government, workplaces and society are driving businesses to identify what is meant by religious literacy and why it is important. The Pew Research Center¹ estimates that religiously affiliated adults and children around the globe represent 84% of the world's population. Yet, secular assumptions still prevail, that religion is private and many organizations find faith a difficult social aspect to address.

Adam Dinham, Professor of Faith & Public Policy and Director of the Faiths and Civil Society Unit, Goldsmiths, University of London says:

“The concept of religious literacy starts from the observation that there is a lack of understanding about religion and belief in the workplace. However, it is not about religious education, or necessarily about having more religion in the workplace, rather, it is about having the confidence and skills to deal effectively and positively with religion and belief issues when they occur.”

As more evidence shows that recognizing religious diversity within the workplace can improve recruitment, retention of employees and team cohesion as well as maintaining an inclusive culture and enhancing brand and reputation, organizations will increasingly want to shift the dial on diversity.

The RLO program outlines what is meant by religious literacy and can help participants to explore their own perspectives of religion and belief, and to challenge their own thinking through interactive questions and answers. Participants are provided with views from selected leaders and professionals providing their own personal experiences of faith within the workplace and are provided with practical examples to help foster inclusion within a religiously diverse workforce. They will also be equipped with the skills and knowledge to ask more informed questions and provided with examples of how to recognize and foster inclusion within their teams.

Kamran Malik, EY Global Learning and Digital Engagement Leader, People Advisory Services, says:

“Rather than taking a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, the EY RLO toolkit provides a framework that can be integrated into a business’s existing suite of inclusive learning tools to amplify and add value to working relationships. Its application can help businesses recognize that a religious diversity framework can be used to support team cohesion, satisfaction and performance; attract and retain talent, customers, clients and partners; as well as enhance stakeholder experience and client relations.”

-Ends-

Notes to Editors

About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

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About EY People Advisory Services

As the world continues to be impacted by globalization, demographics, technology, innovation and regulation, organizations are under pressure to adapt quickly and build agile people cultures that respond to these disruptive forces. EY People Advisory Services believes a better working world is helping our clients harness their people agenda — the right people, with the right capabilities, in the right place, for the right cost, doing the right things.

We work globally and collaborate to bring you professional teams to address complex issues relating to organization transformation, end-to-end employee life cycles, effective talent deployment and mobility, gaining value from evolving and virtual workforces, and the changing role of HR in support of business strategy. Our EY professionals ask better questions and work with clients to create holistic, innovative answers that deliver quality results.



THE FLETCHER INITIATIVE ON RELIGION, LAW & DIPLOMACY

Conference on Approaching Religious Literacy in International Affairs

Panel 2

Religious Literacy in International Business

— *A Case Study of Global Business Operations* —

THE INSTITUTE FOR
BUSINESS IN THE
GLOBAL CONTEXT

Sponsored by:

This year, Ernst & Young announced the launch of a new training program, Religious Literacy for Organizations (RLO), which “help[s] organizations better understand religious inclusion and its positive impact on business process and performance.” Why would a “Big Four” accounting firm offer religious literacy training to its clients? What does this move mean for the consulting industry and global business?

This panel will discuss the practicality of religious literacy training in today’s global businesses, what religious literacy looks like in business operations, and why this trend should be on radar of today’s business students.

Relevant Documents:

- Ernst & Young, "[Press Release: EY launches religious literacy training program for organizations](#)"
- RFBF, "[Statistics on how religious literacy is important for business](#)"

Panelists will have 7 minutes each to give their response to the case study and the state of Religious Literacy in Business. This will be followed by a moderated discussion and questions from the audience via the Pigeonhole platform. ([URL HERE](#))

Moderator:

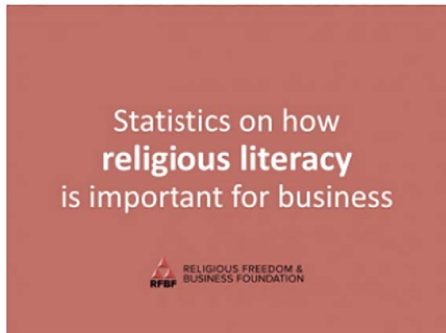
- Paul Lambert, Assistant Dean at Georgetown’s McDonough School of Business

Panelists:

- Dr. Ibrahim Warde, Professor of International Finance at The Fletcher School
- Dr. Brian Grim, President of the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation
- Joyce S. Dubensky, CEO of Tanenbaum

Statistics on how religious literacy is important for business

15 Feb, 2017



by Brian Grim

It just makes sense. If people are able to bring their “full selves” into the workplace without fear of being ridiculed or discriminated against for who they are or what they believe, then that’s good for business.

The most successful businesses encourage an environment in which employees can bring their “full self” to work. Employees need to feel comfortable being who they are in the workplace, including being true to their core identity and beliefs. That includes recognizing and respecting an employee’s religion and its practice.

This has a very clear action item for businesses. **Companies need to be religiously literate if they hope to recruit and retain top talent.**

In today’s increasingly more competitive business environment, companies will need to draw upon the talent and experience of every employee. They can’t afford to leave anyone out. If they exclude or alienate someone for reasons having nothing to do with a person’s ability to do the job, they might also be excluding the next great business solution or the next great product idea. The very thing a company might need for its success. At the very least, they’ll be missing out on lots of really great talent.

And as companies become increasingly more global, they’ll need employees who reflect the increasing diversity of their customers. They’ll need employees who can relate to the daily experience of customers and who can see the customer point of view. For potentially billions of customers, religious belief and practice are a part of daily life. Having employees who understand that will not only help companies avoid costly missteps, it will also help companies develop products and services better tailored to customer needs. That’s an essential part of being competitive.

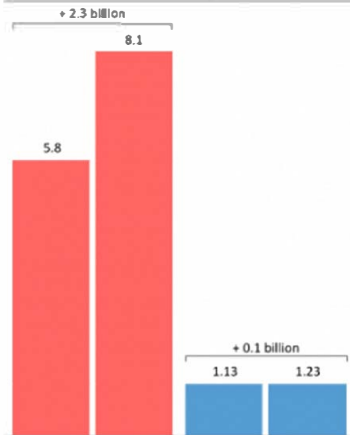
Indeed, companies that support religious diversity and freedom in the workplace sends two clear messages to current and prospective employees: (1) You can work here without changing who you are; and (2) the company respects all employees and will not favor certain employees over others, and that’s good for the business of all.

Here are some statistics that demonstrate the need for a company to have religious literacy.

STATISTIC 1: RELIGION IS REALLY, REALLY GROWING

Growth of religious populations worldwide projected to be 23 times larger than the growth of religiously unaffiliated populations

Religiously Affiliated Population (billions)	Religiously Unaffiliated Population (billions)
2010	2010
2050	2050



“The future size of religiously affiliated and unaffiliated populations” (2015). By Conrad Hackett, Marjrin Slonawski, Mikhaela Pirtlarikytenski, Brian J. Grim, Vigard Skirbekk. Demographic Research 32:27, pp. 829-842.

Chart: Religious Freedom & Business Foundation, 2017

For most of the world, religion is a key identifier. In an [award-winning](#) article in [Demographic Research](#), my colleagues and I recently demonstrated that not only is the vast majority of the world religions, but their numbers are projected to outgrow the religiously unaffiliated population by a factor of 23 over the coming decades.

This research is based on an analysis of more than 2,500 data sources.

The study and its connected Pew Research Center report show that between 2010 and 2050, the growth of religious populations worldwide is projected to be 23 times larger than the growth of religiously unaffiliated populations.

During this period, the number of people affiliated with a religion is expected to grow by 2.3 billion, from 5.8 billion in 2010 to 8.1 billion in 2050.

By contrast, the number of people unaffiliated with any religion (including those who say their religion is “nothing in particular” as well as self-identifying agnostics and atheists) is projected to increase by only 0.1 billion, from 1.13 billion in 2010 to 1.23 billion in 2050.

The median age of religiously affiliated women is six years younger than unaffiliated women. The 2010-15 Total Fertility Rate for those with a religious affiliation is 2.59 children per woman, nearly a full child higher than the rate for the unaffiliated (1.65 children per woman).

Conclusion: The religiously unaffiliated are projected to decline as a share of the world’s population in the decades ahead because their net growth through religious switching will be more than offset by higher childbearing among the younger affiliated population.

Of course, all projections of future trends must be taken with a note of caution. Indeed, unforeseen events will yield unpredictable consequences. With this caution in mind, we believe that demographic projections are of particular value because, as Voltaire observed, “the present is [literally] pregnant with the future.”

STATISTIC 2: RELIGION IS TIED TO ECONOMIC CHANGES BUSINESS MUST KEEP UP WITH

Dramatic religious and economic shifts will impact our planet in the decades ahead, according to a 2015 study by the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation, [Changing religion, changing economies](#). The study provides insights into the global marketplace's growing religious diversity by linking the best available demographic and economic data.

70 Years of Global Economic Change - 1980, 2010 and 2050
Top 5 economies by year according to GDP

1980	2010	2050
United States	United States	China
Soviet Union	China	United States
Japan	Japan	India
West Germany	Germany	Japan
France	France	Indonesia

Sources: International Monetary Fund (1970, 2010), OECD long-range projections (2050)

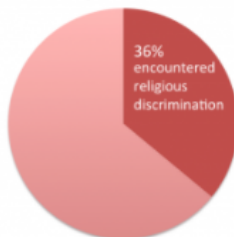
Changing religion, changing economies - October 2015 - Religious Freedom & Business Foundation

The growth of religious populations has implications for how the world's wealth will be spread about. The economic transformations of China and India are common knowledge. But, what is less well known is that the five leading economies of 2050 are projected to represent one of the most *religiously diverse* groupings in recent memory. For instance, today, seven of the G8 nations have Christian-majority populations. But by 2050 only one of the five leading economies is projected to have a majority Christian population – the United States. The other mega economies in 2050 are projected to include a country with a Hindu majority (India), a Muslim majority (Indonesia), and two with exceptionally high levels of religious diversity (China and Japan).

As religious diversity and religious populations grow, so does their potential impact, creating new challenges and opportunities for societies, governments and economies. This report is part of a “toolkit” developed by members of the [Global Agenda Council on the Role of Faith](#), and we thank the members for their input. The 2014-2016 Role of Faith Global Agenda Council sought to increase “religious literacy” – including awareness and understanding of the positive impact of the role of faith in various sectors – in our complex world.

STATISTIC 3: SURVEYS SHOW RELIGIOUS MAJORITIES AND MINORITIES FEEL EXCLUDED

Workplace Religious Discrimination Encountered by 1-in-3 U.S. Workers



More than one-third (36%) of workers say they have personally experienced or witnessed some form of religious non-accommodation in their workplace.

Source: “What American Workers Really Think About Religion,” Tanenbaum’s 2013 Survey of American Workers and Religion

Chart: The Weekly Number, Brian J. Grim, Aug. 11, 2014

A 2013 Tanenbaum [Survey of American Workers and Religion](#) concluded that religion is highly relevant in the workplace. The issues include not only whether a person feels unfairly treated on the basis of his or her beliefs – whether religious or non-religious – but also tensions around religion and religious misunderstandings in our diversifying global workplaces.

The survey found that people of all faiths, including those who belong to the “majority,” have religious needs that need to be addressed in the workplace. The survey concludes that “the accommodation mindset can be just as important to the man who is a white evangelical Protestant as it is to the woman who is Muslim or to others who follow a minority belief tradition ...” Main findings from the study include:

- One-third of respondents have seen incidents of religious bias in their workplaces or have personally experienced them.
- Half of non-Christians say that their employers are ignoring their religious needs.
- More than half of American workers believe that there is a lot of discrimination against Muslims.
- Nearly 6-in-10 atheists believe that people look down on their beliefs, as do nearly one-third of white evangelical Protestants and non-Christian religious workers.

The survey also concludes that when employers adopt an accommodation mindset and implement policies addressing religious diversity of all kinds, their employees experience higher job satisfaction than workers whose employers do not. Findings include

- Employees at companies that provide flexible hours for religious observance are more than twice as likely to say that they look forward to coming to work.
- 4-in-10 employees at companies without clear processes for handling employee complaints are looking for a new job, compared to 2-in-10 employees at companies with these processes.
- When companies have policies on religious discrimination, their employees are less likely to be looking for a new job.
- Regardless of a company’s size, workers whose companies offer education programs about religious diversity and flexibility for religious practice report higher job satisfaction than workers in companies that do not.

Both the survey and Tanenbaum’s ongoing benchmarking research show that while it is important to have policies, it is equally important to communicate those policies to your workforce.