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## **RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

Religious diversity shall always remain a core issue for our company; reconciling a secular vision of what the workplace should be and the respect of diversity and personal religious choices of an employee is no easy task. Nevertheless, we at Sealmatic have made every effort in implementing a fair religious diversity in our recruitment and other related human resources programme.

### **Access to employment & Non - discrimination in recruitment:**

Discrimination in access to employment is a major barrier to achieving fair employment practices. Sealmatic has zero tolerance towards discrimination based on religious beliefs in the workplace, which perpetuates a lack of understanding of different cultures and religions within the workplace and the society at large. As a result, we have taken the many other steps to be an equal employer, irrespective of any religiosity.

### **Non - Discrimination at interview:**

A major barrier for religious tolerance is the persistence of discrimination against perceived religious groups. Discrimination at interview, particularly when the candidate wears specific religious dress or symbols, can take many forms is strongly prohibited at Sealmatic.

### **Conscious Inclusion:**

Sealmatic believes in recruitment policies and advertises to a diverse range of applicants. Interviewers are strictly forbidden to knowingly exclude the interviewee based on their religion, race or associated ethnicity by rejecting them or showing hostility in the interview. Exclusion of any form such as subtly, when jobs are only posted within closed networks is outrightly excluded from the company's recruitment policy.

### **Appropriate interview procedure:**

Interviewers are trained and counselled to be extremely neutral at Sealmatic and to strictly not ask different questions to the interviewee relating to their religion or religious symbol, putting the focus on the visible difference rather than on suitability

for the role. Further, a lack of conscious religious awareness in the recruitment policy can lead to insensitive or invasive questions being asked in the interview. This may not affect the likelihood of the candidate being successful but may cause tension and discomfort (such as questions about dietary restrictions, supposed origin of the candidate, marital traditions, or if they hold conservative views on society).

### **Anticipated discrimination:**

As an anticipated climate of hostility toward religious groups, candidates may choose to remove the symbol for the interview. This can lead to confusion, affecting the relationship with the employer and potentially presenting problems at later stages of employment. Freedom to wearing religious symbols - be it a tilak on the forehead or a woman's headscarf or a cross or a beard and turban - is a manifestation of the freedom of a person to practice their religion and is often a central aspect of the individual's life. If discrimination based on such grounds happens, it can have the effect of significant exclusion and hold back many religious groups from entering the workforce at the company.

### **Managing religious diversity:**

Barriers filled with prejudice towards religion (or some associated practices, behaviours and values) is seen as incompatible with working and contributing value to an organisation. However, there need not be a delicate balance of religious freedom and a productive working environment. On the contrary, employees who feel accepted and respected for who they are will be the most productive. Sealmatic has identified a range of practices and principles to positively manage religious diversity in the workplace:

### **Valuing difference & creating a culture of freedom, respect and dignity for all employees:**

Sealmatic has adopted an effective policy of religious inclusion with a robust analysis of why it needs such a policy. Such reasons are wide-ranging; however, our company has benefitted from thorough, open and inclusive ways of managing religious diversity as part and parcel of our broader diversity management efforts. A religiously diverse workforce expands the range of ideas, opinions, world perspectives and experiences within the organisation. Religious diversity increases the cultural and religious understanding of all employees. This awareness is necessary, not only in a global business environment, but also at the local/regional/national level to reflect the diversity of the customer base and society as a whole. A diverse team caters for increased cultural and religious sensitivity in business development and market exploration. Fair religious diversity policies will make the staff feel valued and respected, increasing productivity, loyalty to the organisation and staff retention.



**Creating a culture of freedom, respect and dignity for all employees:**

Sealmatic adheres to the basic fundamental of religious diversity management for its employees to prioritise creating a working culture of freedom, respect and dignity for all employees. Importantly, this includes a complete rejection of discrimination on grounds of religion, as laid down in the constitution of our country. However, managing religious diversity in a holistic sense also requires an active and bold move towards inclusion, beyond the prevention of discrimination.