

Diversity Programs Expected to Grow

Boston, Mass. -- Dec. 6

Corporate diversity programs are expected to grow by 10 percent in 2004 and maintain that pace next year, according to Mike Hyter, president and CEO of Boston-based consulting firm Novations/J. Howard Associates. "Inclusion and diversity training declined to some extent during the recession, but has clearly regained momentum," he said.

Hyter cited trends key to expanded diversity training:

- **Development of all employees:** More organizations will integrate their diversity efforts with overall development programs. While focus is still on the needs of specific groups, the new trend is to ensure that all employees are given equal access to skills training and other career opportunities.

Growing age Bias: Women, African-Americans and others in the workforce have made gains, but bias complaints by older employees continue to rise, and are now at the highest level in more than 10 years.

Advancement of Women: While women's needs continue to hold the attention of management, emphasis has shifted from just recruitment and retention to career development and advancement of women into the upper executive ranks, including C-level and corporate board positions.

Workforce globalization: No single factor has done more to transform and expand diversity training than accelerating globalization of the workforce. International trade competition, the Internet and economic integration have combined to redefine diversity. Global organizations seek global solutions, even when issues and demographics vary by country and region.

"Both training and diversity consulting have been around for more than a quarter century," Hyter observed. "But during the past two or three years, innovation and change have been without precedent. We foresee not only just healthy growth in such efforts, but also continuing adaptation to shifting employee populations and business conditions."