

Solutions start here: Power, PR's diversity deficit and driving sustainable change

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Pertinent Details

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Discussion Points

- This is not a new conversation.
- (R)evolution on diversity
- Trust the process?
- Strategies and tactics

This is not a new
conversation.

This is not a new conversation

- Moss Kendrix: 1940s
- Inez Kaiser: 1950s
- Call out of PR as a “lily-white profession”: 1980s
- Marilyn Kern Foxworth: 1990s



Marathons vs. Sprints

- "Revolution is not a one-time event." - Audre Lorde

R(e)volution on Diversity

R(e)volution on Diversity

- D
- DEI
- JEDI
- JEDIA

JEDIA

- Justice — fairness
 - 4 types: distributive, procedural, informational, and interactional (Rupp & Thornton-Lugo, DOI: [10.1093/OBO/9780199828340-0044](https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780199828340-0044))
- Equity — guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement
- Diversity
- Inclusion — the deliberate act of welcoming and valuing diversity
- Access — opportunity for all individuals to participate fully

Trust the (hiring)
process?

Myth of the Pipeline

- The diversity pipeline metaphor & myth
 - Simplistic and limiting (Cannady, Greenwald & Harris, 2014)
 - Doesn't consider organizational factors (Tindall, 2013)
- How pipelines operate in real life
 - On the wrong land
 - Corrode over time
 - Leaks and ruptures
 - Monitored constantly

Power & Homosocial Reproduction

Are you selecting candidates that most closely reflect yourself?

Are you choosing people who are socially similar to you?

Are your mentees

What are the demographics of your workplace?



“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.”

– *Sun Tsu*

What to do

- Think of the obstacle course.
- Consider pathways.
- Acknowledge the implicit biases that exist in hiring and retention decisions.
- Consider your internship and entry-level hiring strategies.
- Assess recruitment and retention efforts.
- Prepare and train people.
- Have open dialogues about these issues.

What to Do

- We need more co-conspirators and tempered radicals.
 - Co-conspirators for racial justice acknowledge that they are the architects and beneficiaries of white supremacy and, in turn, feel duty-bound to dismantle it. (<https://promise54.org/from-saviorism-to-co-conspiring/>)
 - Tempered radicals (Meyerson, 2001, Harvard Business Review)
 - “quiet catalysts who push back against prevailing norms, create learning, and lay the ground work for slow but ongoing organizational and social change.”

What to Do

- Consult regularly.
- Review the PRFest DRIVEN pledge. Use that to guide your efforts.
- Reconsider your C-suite.
- Give money, power, and trust to your JEDIA/DEI leader.
- Put money into training, support, recruitment, and retention efforts.

What to Do

- Work with trained experts.
- Use organization/industrial psychologists if doing anything about implicit bias.
- Work with search firms that specifically target and work with minority groups.
- Tap into MSIs and HBCUs for communication projects, interns, etc.

Final Thoughts

- Speed, stretch, and distance— all are needed during this time.
- Commit. Say. Do. Examine. Change.
- You will make mistakes. Your company will make a mistake. Apologize and reassess. Don't stop. Keep going.
- Think in terms of: Justice. Equity. Diversity. Inclusion. Access.



Additional Resources

- Organizations
 - Catalyst
 - Jopwell
 - PRSA Diversity and Inclusion Committee
 - PR Council
- Newsletters
 - Better Allies
 - Anti-Racism Daily
- Books
 - White Men on Race: Power, Privilege, and the Shaping of Cultural Consciousness (Feagin & O'Brien)
 - How to Be Antiracist (Kendi)
 - Tempered Radicals: How People Use Difference to Inspire Change at Work

