Allyship & Beyond: Actions are Louder Than Words

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@ThinkBluePR
#RaganDEI
Meet the Beyonce of the Business World

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Overview

In today’s climate, silence is violence. Voices need to be heard. It’s more than standing up for what’s right. It’s HOW we stand up. Today’s PR leaders are shifting messages around purpose. How can communications pros use allyship skills to fight for social justice?

Corporations are grappling with what to say—and where to say it—as riots erupt in major cities across the nation over the tragic death of George Floyd.

But to create real change, statements and one-off actions aren’t enough—communicators and organizations need to make a sustained commitment to new practices in social justice.

The purpose of this closing keynote is to challenge communicators to think about their role in the social justice landscape. Social justice can take various forms but as JEDI emerges, how can PR pros change the way they work while also helping to move the needle for clients and the industry.

We’ll explore:
• The roots of the term “ally” in social justice
• Understanding the term allyship
• Are you an agent, ally or accomplice?
Words of Wisdom

"Geography has made us neighbors.
History has made us friends.
Economics has made us partners, and necessity has made us allies." ~ John F. Kennedy

“I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept.” — Angela Y. Davis
Ally is a VERB

• First popularized during the suffrage movement and civil rights era, allyship centered on anti-sexist and anti-racist activism.

• Allyship is about listening. It’s about awareness and action. It’s constant education. It’s accountability.

• It’s using privilege to be a powerful voice alongside an underrepresented community.

• The injustice we refuse to speak about today can only form the basis for more injustice tomorrow.

• Trust is difficult to build but easy to break. We all benefit from our collective efforts towards dignity, respect and equality.
### Are You an Ally or Are you an Accomplice?

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<th>ACTOR</th>
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| • The actions of an Actor do not disrupt the status quo, much the same as a spectator at a game. Both have only a nominal effect in shifting an overall outcome.  
• The actions of an Actor do not explicitly name or challenge the pillars of injustice or systemic racism which is necessary for meaningful progress towards racial justice. | • An ally will mostly engage in activism by standing with an individual or group in a marginalized community.  
• An Ally is like a disrupter and educator in spaces dominated by Whiteness.  
• Being an Ally is not an invitation to be in Black and Brown spaces to gain brownie points, lead, take over, or explain.  
• Allies constantly educate themselves, and do not take breaks. | • Accomplices’ actions are informed by, directed and often coordinated with leaders who are People of Color.  
• An accomplice will focus more on dismantling the structures that oppress that individual or group—and such work will be directed by the stakeholders in the marginalized group.  
• Accomplices actively listen with respect and aren’t motivated by personal guilt or shame. Accomplices build trust through consent and being accountable. |

Source: Chart is From WhiteAccomplices.org
Understanding Your Role

“He who comes to equity must come with clean hands” and “He who seeks equity must do equity.”

- Social justice issues are immensely complex and emotional. Remember progress not perfection.
- In the backdrop of a global pandemic, people are craving transparency, trust and openness.
- Being an ally is more than being sympathetic towards those who experience discrimination.
- Allyship is continuous journey.

- It is more than simply believing in equality. Being an ally means being willing to act with and for others in pursuit of ending oppression and creating equality. Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth Dalai Lama, said, “It is not enough to be compassionate. You must act.”
Is your organization a Purpose-driven business?

• Purpose is not simply a substantive commitment to a cause, but a call to action to answer for ongoing years of entrenched biases and systemic racism (or injustice).

• Purpose-driven, diversity, equity and inclusion should be at the center of who you are and how you do business.

• Conduct an internal assessment to evaluate the diversity of staff and leadership to really move beyond making statements.

• Representation is an aspect of authentic transformation, not a tokenization.

• Justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) are not just internal or external strategies, they are one in the same. How can we champion JEDI if we do not also have a diverse workforce, that feels valued, and is empowered to work differently in order to dismantle inequitable patterns?
Key Takeaways

1. **Do Some Self-Exploration as an Ally:** To become a successful ally, you first need to understand your existing beliefs, feelings, and attitudes. Examine your motivations and behaviors with an open mind and critical lens. What do you believe? Allies should engage in self-examination to uncover their own bias and privilege, seek information to increase their awareness about the experiences of others, and find ways to make a positive impact.

2. **Self-identify as an Ally or Accomplice.** Being an ALLY means your words and actions show that you will not allow that pain to pass on and it will not happen in your presence. Learn and practice the skills of being an ally.

3. **Work Your Network:** Every ally can work within their sphere of influence to create change. You can participate in different ways through activism, advocacy, volunteerism etc. Enact social justice from positions of privilege. Go beyond allyship and work to foster true inclusion creating paths for equality and equity.

4. **Understand This is a Long-Term Strategy.** Advancing equity is ultimately about shifting power. Social justice today should be a business imperative because it is now a public mandate. Companies must not only share their values but they must act on those values consistently.
Thank You!