



PRSSA 2019 Bateman Case Study Competition Project Brief

The Client

The PRSA Foundation is an independent, 501(c)(3) charitable organization (the charitable arm of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) committed to promoting diversity among public relations professionals and companies so that they can best serve the public good and address the needs of a diverse world.

The Foundation acts as a convener, helping to foster collaboration within the communications profession by bringing together the leading players in the industry in a unified effort to improve diversity and inclusion.

The PRSA Foundation's focus is on supporting programs that attract, assist and prepare young multicultural adults to enter the public relations profession and working with employers and industry organizations to create workplace-based inclusion efforts that welcome, support and retain a diverse workforce.

In addition, the Foundation awards scholarships, grants and internships for deserving multicultural students to continue their studies in the communications professions and supports research and programming to better prepare young and mid-career multicultural professionals for careers in the field.

The PRSA Foundation also honors communications career professionals for their commitment to diversity and inclusion.

The Challenge

Census projections confirm the importance of racial minorities as the primary demographic engine of the nation's future growth, countering an aging, slow-growing and declining white population. By the year 2045, it is estimated that whites will comprise 49.7 percent of the population in contrast to 24.6 percent for Hispanics, 13.1 percent for blacks, 7.9 percent for Asians, and 3.8 percent for multiracial populations.

Diversity has become an ever-increasing issue for companies and organizations in the communications sector, as the demographics and cultural impact of a changing population begin to affect the success of marketing, communications and financial outcomes. Reaching communities of color, engaging them and including them in company outreach, product marketing, brand reputation and brand recognition is key to maintaining the continued relevance of communications.

For many communications companies and organizations, the lack of diverse employees and outside perspectives limits their ability to align with the needs of the marketplace. Increasingly, companies are not only seeking to identify and hire diverse candidates, but to retain them and provide the mentorship and leadership skills necessary for them to succeed with their organizations.

Much research is being done in this area, but much more needs to be done. As we continue to see the population demographics changing — age, color, culture — the need is more imperative than ever for inclusion and integration of diversity.

The Diverse Voices Initiative

The challenges of improving diversity and inclusion within the communications profession are widely known and have been affirmed by decades of research yielding consistent findings: the talent pool is small and disproportionate compared to demographics outside the profession, companies have difficulty developing multicultural talent and nurturing them to leadership positions, and an unconscious bias is pervasive.

From its unique position as a leader in the industry-wide effort to improve diversity and inclusion in the communications sector, the PRSA Foundation has created the Diverse Voices Initiative and its centerpiece the book *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership*.

Developed by the PRSA Foundation in conjunction with the Museum of Public Relations, *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership* features interviews with more than 40 multicultural corporate and public relations agency leaders who have risen to the highest levels in the communications profession. These executives share candid anecdotes detailing successes and challenges they have faced during their career as well as tips and lessons for those entering the field.

Diverse Voices is a valuable resource not only for students and educators, but also for managers of all levels in agencies, communications departments and organizations.

How Can the Diverse Voices Initiative Make a Difference?

- Provide inspiration and guidance to students studying communications;
- Encourage more people of color to join and stay in the field;
- Guide employers on ways they can better support diverse professionals as they move up the career ladder;
- Maintain inclusive environments in which multicultural perspectives are embedded in the work as well as in the culture;
- Provide ideas to organizations on how to do a better job of attracting, retaining and advancing diverse professionals.

The PRSA Foundation/PRSSA Connection

The overarching goal of the Diverse Voices Initiative is to enact positive change and combat the diversity and inclusion challenges within communications. PRSSA is the foremost organization for pre-professional students interested in public relations and related fields. As the standard-bearer for the development of thoughtful leaders destined to champion ethics and diversity initiatives in the field, PRSSA, with its more than 10,000 members organized into 300 plus national and international Chapters, is the natural choice to partner with the PRSA Foundation to help spread awareness and maximize the impact of the Diverse Voices Initiative.

Campaign Design

The campaign should target at least two of the following communities:

- College and University Communications/Public Relations Departments and Educators
- Students and Youth Communities interested in pursuing careers in the field
- Human Resources Departments in Local Businesses and Organizations

A successful campaign will include research, planning, implementation and evaluation. It should first evaluate current awareness levels of diversity and inclusion issues on your college campus and within your community. The campaign should be based on factual information and be relevant to target audiences.

Teams must use a variety of communications channels and formats and think beyond traditional public relations tactics.

Teams must create a campaign complete with communications strategies and tactics – to increase awareness and understanding of the diversity and inclusion deficits in the communications field, provide information about the mission of the PRSA Foundation and the Diverse Voices Initiative.

Teams should create informational events to support sale of the book, *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership* and create awareness of the diversity and inclusion challenge within a broader audience. Teams must evaluate and present the envisioned impact of the campaign against its objectives.

Overall Campaign Goal

To raise campus and community awareness about the diversity and inclusion challenge in the communications profession.

Supporting Objectives

1. Develop sale ideas for the *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership* book and/or fundraising ideas for the PRSA Foundation. All proceeds will help support grants/scholarships, research, awareness and advocacy initiatives funded by the PRSA Foundation.
2. Provide useful information about the diversity and inclusion challenge in the communications profession to interested students and faculty.
3. Educate all on the diminished pool of diverse talent in the communications profession.
4. Enlist the support of all stakeholders: students, faculty and local human resources professionals in this challenge.

Resources

Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership (Instructions on receiving the book will be provided by the end of September)

DV Curriculum Guide (details on availability TBD)

Primary research on Diversity and Inclusion in Public Relations and Communications can be found through organizations such as Page, the PR Council, Institute for Public Relations, The LAGRANT Foundation, the Plank Center and many others.